

The Lenham Focus

FREE TICKETS to the Faversham
Literary Festival! *See inside (pages 3 & 5)*
for details... but hurry!



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Editorial

This month we have a **FREE TO ENTER** draw for tickets to the February Faversham Literary Festival!

All you have to do is send an email to the Editor at: editorialslf@outlook.com or davejuk@aol.com with your name, contact details and which of the events you'd like to attend (there are 4 FREE tickets to the **Rob Biddulph** main children's event and 2 FREE tickets to the **Lemn Sissay** evening event at the Festival). Winners will be notified direct – but you need to hurry as the deadline for applying is **15 February**. Each winner will receive 2 tickets for their chosen event.

See inside at **PAGE 5** for full details of the draw and **PAGE 12** for more details of other events at the Festival. Good luck!

One of our aims at *Focus* is to keep local Lenham residents informed of the events and social activities taking place in and around our villages. That's why, every now and then, we include a list of contact details so you can get in touch with the right person or organisation should you wish to find out more about a particular group or society. We are also now including a 'What's On' list of regular meetings and events held at the Lenham Community Centre so that you can see at a glance when groups meet. We hope you find this of value to you so that you can contact the organisers direct should you like to join in.

In addition to covering local news, events and personalities, we also try to cover wider issues of interest. Recent examples include the 'fors and againsts' of Vaping, how to claim if your vehicle is damaged by a pothole and gardening and cooking ideas.

Also, a few months ago we covered the 'Post Office scandal', which of course has had huge coverage in the press and elsewhere following the recent '*Mr Bates Vs the Post Office*' TV series. We explained the impact of the Post Office Horizon computer system on post office managers in Kent, resulting in prison sentences for many PO employees in our region, including postmasters in Maidstone, Ashford, Canterbury, Rochester and Medway. In all these cases the convictions were overturned in 2020/2021 after it emerged that the Horizon system was flawed.

We also cover health, wellbeing, climate topics, legal matters of interest and much more. Should you have a topic you'd like us to research and produce an article in our magazine, or if you wish to send a draft for us to consider, please let me know using the usual Editor email and we'll do our best to include it.

David Jackson
Editor

HELPERS ARE NEEDED for delivering your magazines. If you can spare a little time each month - only about 20 minutes a month – then please email me at editorialslf@outlook.com and we'll explain.

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

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

Tel: 01622 851542



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The Powers Behind The Throne

An illustrated talk by
Imogen Corrigan,

Thursday 22nd February
at 19.30 p.m

Lenham Community Centre

Entry £4

Members free



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Circulation 2,100 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 1st of the preceding month to editorialself@outlook.com or by phone/text on **07714 311008**.

Photos of the village and local events are welcome.

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Editorial: David Jackson

editorialself@outlook.com or 07714 311008

Advertising: James Collett

advertsself@outlook.com

Finance: Sue Summers

lenhamfocusinvoices@gmail.com

Proofing: Jayne Hewish

Special Interests: Danny Coorsh

Director: Russell Smith

Distribution: Jon Snepp 07971 249137

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FREE Tickets to the Faversham Literary Festival!

FOCUS is offering **4 FREE** tickets to the *Rob Biddulph* main children's event and **2 FREE** tickets to the *Lemn Sissay* evening event at the Festival. To enter the **FREE DRAW** for the tickets, send your name, contact number and chosen event to the editor at editorialself@outlook.com or by text to **07714-311008** by **15th February 2024**. Winners will be selected at random and notified. Each winner will receive 2 tickets for their chosen event.



**Saturday 24th
February 2024
at 10:00am
at St Mary of
Charity Church,**

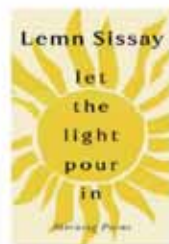
Faversham
Award-winning
author/illustrator
Rob Biddulph
returns to
Faversham for
another fun-

packed story-telling and drawing event! This time get ready to be propelled into a whole new creative universe: *Draw With Rob In Space*. Plus action from the final outing in the *Peanut Jones* trilogy, *Peanut Jones* and the *End of the Rainbow*, in which the notorious villain *Mr White* will stop at nothing to wipe out colour and creativity everywhere... but this time he's gone too far!

Rob is the author of many award-winning picture books. In March 2020 he started *#DrawWithRob*, which became an internet sensation culminating in becoming the Guinness World Record holder for the

largest ever online art class when 45,611 people tuned in to his live *#DrawWithRob* on YouTube. Children under 12 must be accompanied at all times.

An evening of poetry with
LEMN SISSAY



**Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 7pm at
St Mary of Charity Church, Faversham**

We are delighted to welcome Lemn Sissay back to Faversham to perform from his latest poetry collection *Let the Light Pour In*.

Lemn begins every day by writing a short poem as dawn breaks. Life-affirming, witty and a way of starting each day with an act of hope, he has collected some of these poems, going back 10 years, into one volume. Come listen, be entertained and inspired.

Lemn is a BAFTA-nominated, award-winning writer and broadcaster. He is the author of Sunday Times bestselling memoir *My Name Is Why*, numerous collections of poetry, plays for stage and radio, and in 2019 he was awarded the PEN Pinter Prize. In 2021 Lemn received an OBE for services to literature and charity.

The Lenham School report

By E. Rushton and C. Dawber



This term at The Lenham School saw students participate in the annual Kent Youth County Council Elections. We were given the amazing

opportunity to vote for our representatives on the KYCC, choosing the individuals who will stand up for our rights as young people.

Our Chance to Vote

The whole process of voting was incredibly exciting, with personal development sessions dedicated to helping us choose who we would individually vote for. Then we were taken down to vote – just like we would in a real government election. This gave us a fantastic experience of what it's like to participate in meaningful, society-changing activities, and allowed us to have a voice. It was especially great because we have one of the electives right here in our club!

Evie's Campaign

I was so excited to put myself forward for this role! When the application was given to us, I knew that this was my calling. I wanted to give the young people of Maidstone a voice, and this was my chance to do just that.

For my campaign principles, I chose three things which are really important to me; mental health; bus overcrowding; and Kent Youth Clubs. My hopes were high, but I was still over the moon when KYCC emailed me and told me that my application had gone through. Then, it was off to the polls!

After election day, I had a nervous wait to find out what would happen. Eventually I discovered that I am now a deputy! As a deputy I will be able to help the local community and stand up for student voice in exactly the same way that a member can. And, next year, I get to run for election again! As a deputy on KYCC council, I am so proud to be representing The Lenham School, and I can't wait to make a genuine difference for the young people of Maidstone.

Lenham Gardening Society

FEBRUARY SOCIAL

This is a **members only** meeting on **Thursday 15th February at 7.30 p.m in the Community Centre**. Tickets may still be available from Pat Hollis.

The festivities will begin with a sumptuous buffet followed by a quiz & heads & tails.

More information from me, Margaret Baines on 07917401228 or gardenlenham@gmail.com



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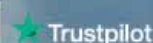
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You will see regular updates on all the parish council's activities in the Focus, our website and social media.

Lenham Parish Precept, 2024/25

Lenham Parish Council has worked hard during a tough year to review all its outgoings and how best to structure the money it gets from the parish precept and other income.

As a result, for the coming financial year (2024/25), we have managed to **not increase** the parish precept: we have held the charge for a Band D property at £135.

At a time when everyone will doubtless see increased demands from both Maidstone Borough Council and KCC in their Council Tax bills, Lenham Parish Council will not be adding to the financial burdens people are currently experiencing for the next financial year.

This has been achieved because, due to the current developments, the number of “qualifying” Band D properties has increased. The qualifying Band D properties are a factor the parish council must use to calculate the parish precept element of Council Tax. The increase in qualifying Band D properties in the parish has given us some welcome financial headroom to absorb additional costs for the coming financial year (2024/25).

We cannot promise that this will be the case for future years. However, one of the often-overlooked outcomes from new homes is that, as the number of “qualifying” Band D properties increases, this has the potential for a positive impact on calculations that affect the parish precept. All the while this situation

continues it provides the parish council with a measure of financial headroom which we have been able to take advantage of for the next financial year.

Additionally, because of an agreement to sell a strip of land at William Pit Field to the company which will be developing the land west of Old Ham Lane (outlined as strategic site 5 in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan), we have a windfall which has delivered some additional income for capital projects. Over the next few months, the parish council will be gathering costs for these current items on the “to-do” list to ensure that we make the maximum use of these funds.

We have managed this despite needing to ring-fence funds in case we need to react to the outcome of the review of the Local Plan. This still contains a proposal to parachute 5,000 new dwellings, which amounts to a new town, onto the eastern edge of the parish from 2031.

Some will say “why fight the inevitable?” We firmly believe, as do others who we speak to on a regular basis, that Lenham has committed to more than its fair share of development up to 2031 (from the outcome of the 2017 review).

We still believe that this proposal for a new town is undeliverable, unsustainable and in the long run will not materialise because the myriad of issues surrounding its proper deliverability are going to prove too costly to overcome.



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All you need to know about the Faversham Literary Festival

The sixth **Faversham Literary Festival takes place 16–25 February** in various venues around the town, with more than 60 events on offer for book lovers of all persuasions. Over ten days the town will be buzzing with book chat, offering a chance to meet famous faces and well-known authors, hear local authors talk about their work, plus family events, comedy, writing workshops and much more.

The festival opens on **Friday 16 February** with TV chef and national treasure Rosemary Shrager talking cosy crime with a culinary twist. This is followed by a few tipples with local author Henry Jeffreys celebrating Kentish wine, with tastings from local vineyards.

Some of the well-known faces at this year's festival are author and actor Dame Sheila Hancock; double Olympic medallist Dame Kelly Holmes; poets Roger McGough and Lemn Sissay; political chat with Gavin Esler; former Sex Pistols frontman Glen Matlock, plus Charlie Higson on the 2 Tone music revolution; fiction best-sellers Jeanette Winterson, Alexander McCall Smith and Kate Mosse; science chat with Steven Moffatt, writer of the Dr Who and Sherlock series, plus astronaut Tim Peake. Plus a great selection of family and children's events.

There's a great line-up of Kent and local Faversham authors, including Rod Edmond on walking the East Kent coast; journalist Glyn Brown's very funny memoir; Whitstable crime writer Lesley Cookman; geopolitics with Kerry Brown; founder and editor of The Spire, Andy Capon, talking about how humour turned his life around; storytelling sessions with local writers; a panel debate celebrating sci-fi writer Iain M Banks, who lived in Faversham at the

beginning of his writing career. Plus free talks and events on offer, including a full day of local poetry in the Guildhall.

Among the highlights for children and teens, draw-along sessions with Rob Biddulph, plus bestselling creator of the Bunny vs Monkey comic books Jamie Smart. Absolutely unmissable for teens,

Alice Oseman, creator of the global smash hit coming-of-age romance Heartstopper, will be in Faversham for a very special in-conversation event with poet Michael Pedersen.

Please visit the festival website to view the full programme at: **www.favershamliteraryfestival.org** where you can grab yourself some tickets, meet the authors and get your books signed. Also check out the advert in the *Focus*. There's something for everyone!





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Climate Change is Happening

Pat Crawford provides the RURAL FOCUS PRESS GROUP COMMENT AND ADVICE COLUMN

Long, long before words such as 'Climate Change', 'carbon' and 'sustainable' entered everyday parlance, King Charles recognised that the global climate would become the most important issue of our time.



Climate scientists aside, the King is undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable people in the world, thus it was fitting that he addressed COP28 in Dubai. Warning that the dangers of Climate Change 'are no longer distant risks', he said he was 'greatly worried' that countries were so 'dreadfully far off track' in efforts to address the crisis. He also said "In 2050 our grandchildren won't be asking what we said, they will be living with the consequences of what we did or did not do" but his final words were the most telling: "The Earth does not belong

to us, we belong to the Earth". (Climate Change is defined by NASA as 'a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates'.)

Despite the 40.3C recorded in Lincolnshire last year, a jump from previous highest temperature of 38.7C recorded in Cambridge in 2019, at the present time the UK is escaping the most direct effects of Climate Change but some big food producing countries are already severely affected. Consider this in line with the fact that in 2022 the UK produced 58% of domestic consumption; the remaining 42% of our food was imported. Our farmers and growers could increase production but they need to be encouraged by consumers actively seeking labels that identify UK/Britain. Aligned to this, there must be greater recognition of the very high food safety standards maintained in this country and, as a nation of supposed animal-lovers, surely we need to acknowledge the rigorous livestock management standards upheld by our farmers?

Problem. It is estimated that one-third of food produced globally is wasted. Another problem. We – and many other countries – continue to build houses that don't factor in climate-related risks. The UK persists in building properties that fail to retain heat in the winter and aren't cool in the summer.

This would be relatively easy to change but, in a country that values history, tradition and conservation, this leads to an even more massive challenge; how are we to decarbonise existing housing stock, some of which is several hundreds of years old?

Meanwhile: It is a sad fact that many of the promises made at COP27 (held in Sharm El Sheikh in 2022) have been either watered down or shelved, largely due to governments around the world

being forced to concentrate on current economic problems. Only time will tell if COP28 pledges fare better.

And: a report has found the US is warming about 60% faster than the world as a whole and that extreme events cost the economy nearly \$150bn each year.

Globally, the climate crisis is making food less available and more expensive. Spain had unprecedented temperatures of 30C in the month of November.

Green Book



**LENHAM
FILM CLUB**

at Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way

Friday February 9th

**Performance begins 19.30,
doors open 19.00**

Running time 2hrs 4 mins

Three Oscars were awarded to the highly acclaimed *Green Book* (12, 2018), including the Best Picture award. And no wonder. The African-American snobbish classical pianist Dr Don Shirley hires Italian-American tough nightclub bouncer Tony Lip as his driver for his upcoming concert tour of America's Deep South. The two men lead very different lives and so barely manage to get along with each other at first; but this changes to an unexpected friendship by the time they reach their destination. In 1962, racism and segregation are at a peak and the guide that they take with them on the drive, *The Negro Motorist's*

Green Book, is all too necessary. Based on a true story and with brilliant performances especially by the two leading actors, *Green Book* deserves all the awards it won. It's a fabulous and moving film.

Directed by Peter Farrelly.

Our March 8th performance takes us on another journey, this time of 450 miles on foot in Britain in the unforgettable *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*. Jim Broadbent stars as Harold Fry who sets off from his Devon home to see his dying friend Queenie.

Please get in touch for more information or to join our mailing list.

Admission: Members £4, Non-members £5, under 16 £2, Under 5 free.



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Line-up includes:

JCharlie Higson

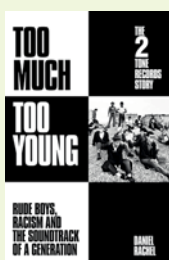
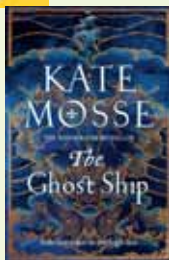
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Visit the website for info and tickets:

www.favershamliteraryfestival.org



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HI KENT HEARING AID AFTERCARE CLINICS NEXT SESSION IS 15th February in the Lenham Community Centre

HI KENT run clinics all over Kent to help people with NHS hearing aids look after their aids to keep them working effectively by cleaning and replacing tubing and issuing new batteries - all free of charge & run by its wonderful volunteers! Visit our Lenham clinic at least every 3 to 6 months - dates and times are in this magazine, the next session is on 15th February.

Having access to this very local service means that costly and time-consuming trips to the hospital Audiology department are not always needed. Our volunteers can also advise on the other services available from Hi Kent.



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Lenham Meadows Trust

Countryside and community

A Magic Little Grant for the Trust!

We're delighted to report that we have been awarded a Magic Little Grant. We received a £500 boost to our funds from the Magic Little Grants Fund through the partnership between Localgiving and Postcode Society Trust. Postcode Society Trust is a grant-giving charity funded by players of the People's Postcode Lottery. Localgiving is the UK's leading membership and support network for local charities and community groups. We're very grateful for the support we've received from these organisations.

We'll be utilising this grant to help fund maintenance work at Kettle Meadow in Lenham Heath. Our planned work includes weeding, the sowing of wild-flower seeds and the installation of fences around the ponds in the field. Then later in the year, we plan to hold

educational and open events at Kettle Meadow.

Lenham Parish Council recently asked a specialist tree company to carry out a comprehensive inspection at a number of locations around the Parish, one of which was Glebe Pond. This survey will enable us to find out valuable information about the health of our trees. We'll update more in future articles.

We're currently looking to expand our management team and are looking for people to help us manage the Trust, assist with communications and with co-ordinating our events. 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:



enquiries@lenhammeadowstrust.org



www.lenhammeadowstrust.org



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The Stedman Dynasty

A poem from Karen Stedman Palin

Our family name is Stedman,
you'll find us far and wide
but Kent was where we came from,
where many lived and died.
You'll find us there for centuries, on
gravestones and in church records
births, marriages and deaths, for many,
many decades.

A village called Lenham is
our ancestral home,
descendants still go back there
no matter how far they've roamed.
You won't believe how many,
share our genes and DNA
we're nothing but prolific,
there's thousands of us today.

So we'll start with George Stedman,
though it goes further back than that
a labourer of the land was he,
with a long beard and a hat.
His wife she was called Mary,
her family name was Neaves
they had fourteen children,
must've brought Mary to her knees

'Twas in the 1800s,
new horizons in their minds
the Mormons came to Lenham,
promising lives of a better kind.
So good old George and Mary,
who by then were getting quite old,
decided to pack and up their sticks,
a move I'd consider rather bold

They took twelve of their children
and went up to Liverpool,
and there they caught a great big ship,
it must've been quite cool.

They sailed the seas for many days,
disembarking at New York
for the people of little Lenham,
I bet it caused a lot of talk.

But back in good old Lenham,
two kids remained right there
I wonder why they didn't go,
perhaps they didn't dare.

Perhaps they meant to follow on,
but just didn't have the cash,
or perhaps they thought their parents
were really rather rash.

I think that many families left
Lenham during that time
wooed by having many wives,
and a life much more sublime.
I imagine them in wagon trains
trailing across the USA,
did they meet red indians?
They survived it anyway.

They ended up in Utah,
in the city of Salt Lake,
they settled there for many years,
and great lives they did make.

Meanwhile back in England,
life it carried on,
and George's son Henry's wife,
gave birth to their youngest son.

This son that they called Edward,
my great-grandad no less,
he grew up and married Annie Smith
and with children they were blessed.

They had another Edward,
they called him Edward John,
and he married a local lass Milly,
and my dad was their son.

They didn't marry in Lenham,
they moved a county away,
they went to live near Guildford,
and remained till their dying day.
When my dad grew up he moved,
up North with his new bride,
assisting the scattering of
Stedmans far and wide

Lenham is now a memory,
in our family history tree,
I'm proud to be from Lenham,
it's a beautiful village to me.

I've visited and wandered,
touching walls and ancient stones,
thinking of my ancestors and the
places that they did roam.

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Wednesday 28th February 2024

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We then have a Fish & Chip Lunch in Maz's
Fish & Chip Restaurant in Bexhill—Marino's.

£40 per person

includes cod & chips, mushy peas, bread & butter & a tea or coffee

**Pick ups: 09.00 Carrs Yard, 09.15 Dog & Bear Lenham
09.30 The Rose, Bearsted**

BOOKING FORM—BEXHILL—28th February 2024

Name:..... Tel:

Address:.....

Email:..... No. of seats:.....@ £40 each

Pick up point:.....

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Tel: 01233 840651 e-mail: carrscoaches@btconnect.com**

Recipe of the Month

Granny's Warming Vegetable Soup

The selection of root vegetables can be whichever you like. The soup will serve 6.

Ingredients:

6 medium Carrots
1 large Potato
1 large Parsnip
1 large Turnip
1 Onion: all chopped
2 tbsp oil
25g butter
1½ litres water
300 mls milk
3 tbsp crème fraiche
2 tbsp chopped dill,
1 tbsp lemon juice,
1 piece fresh ginger peeled and grated,
Salt & pepper
Fresh dill to garnish

Method:

Put the chopped vegetables in a large pan with the oil and butter. Fry lightly then cook over a low heat for about 15 minutes stirring the pan occasionally. Add the water and bring to the boil.



Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft.

Add the ginger and blend with a stick blender (or put vegetables in a blender) and puree until smooth. Return to the pan, add the milk and heat gently while it slowly reheats.

Remove from the heat and stir in the crème fraiche, lemon juice and dill seasoning as necessary.

Reheat very gently not allowing it to boil. Serve garnished with the dill and/or croutons.

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Lenham WI

The latest news from Chris Godden

Well it is lovely to see the days getting longer and know that spring is round the corner. We have all been busy booking speakers for this year so that we have an entertaining programme. This month we have the Women's Institute Federation Green Team coming to talk to us about their work.

**Green Team**
greenteam@wicwi.org.uk

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT RECYCLING

We all try to recycle as much as possible, which is great, but not everyone out there does and you will undoubtedly see the results wherever you go. Rubbish thrown in the streets, verges, hedges where does it all come from?

But you **CAN** do something about it. Why not get yourself a simple litter picker- upper and a black sack. That is really all you need. Or join one of the many Council organised litter picks and they will supply you, along with the loan of a very fetching yellow vest.



This is one of many that are run on a regular basis to help keep the Tunbridge Wells Common clear of cans, bottles, empty vaping tubes, plastic, bits of foil, polystyrene take-away containers and all sorts of weird and extraordinary things people just throw away as they walk.

The most unexpected things I have found? Firstly a Bible, and then a mobile phone (which I took to the local police).



I cannot tell you how good you feel when you have spent just an hour, yet filled up a complete sack. Getting plastic out of the soil is even better than recycling, and doing it in a group is very rewarding.

And once you have got yourself into the swing of things, why not take your sack with you whenever you are out walking and just do a bit each time. You really will be making a difference as particularly the plastic you rescue will be out of the earth and no longer breaking down into micro plastics which could never be recovered.

P.S. I promise you that in KENT you will not be treated as someone who is "fly-tipping". A small council in Sussex took this view but has now lost in the Courts and changed its policy. Kent has confirmed it welcomes litter pickers ... just leave the bag tied up near a roadside litter bin.

On 17 October last year, members came together in Westminster at the WI's Climate Conference to explore different aspects of climate change and take part in discussions about women's participation in climate leadership schemes, climate science and political responses, building an inclusive climate movement, ways to improve the UK's biodiversity and community climate action. The findings of the conference outlined the climate priorities of members, identified current climate policy gaps and formed the basis of The WI's future climate campaigning. Watch this space.

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

A book I enjoyed recently was *Great-Uncle Harry*. A tale of War and Empire by the celebrated author and documentary maker Michael Palin. Many books are written about the first World War often exploring its politics or poetry, but few books recount the day-to-day life of the ordinary service man or woman.

Many years ago, Palin discovered that his grandfather had a younger brother who had died in tragic circumstances aged 32. From a collection of diaries, military and colonial records and family photographs the author has pierced together the life of his relative.

"Great-Uncle Harry is an utterly compelling account of an ordinary man who led an extraordinary life. A blend of biography, history, travelogue, and personal memoir that is Michael Palin at his finest."

Harry, born in 1884, was the youngest child in the Palin family. Son of an Oxford don and his Irish American wife, he had a happy childhood in a sprawling vicarage. A true child of the Empire but lacking the academic ability of his older siblings, Harry decided to try his hand working on the Indian railways and the tea plantations. When this did not satisfy his quest for adventure he moved to a farm in New Zealand.

Meanwhile political tensions were erupting far away in Western Europe and there was a call to arms for young men and women to serve the war effort. Harry and

his friends enlisted in 1914 in the first Battalion of the Canterbury Regiment of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force destination Suez Egypt.

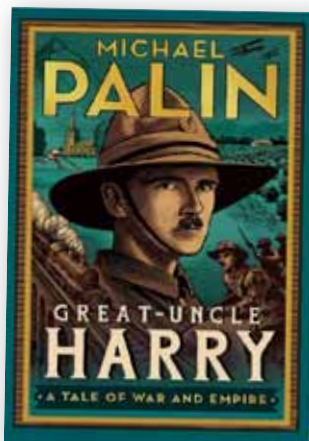
Soon after arriving in Europe Harry was deployed to the Dardanelles where he fought in and survived the carnage of the Gallipoli campaign. The ANZACS were a distinctive bunch with their "lemon squeezer" hats to deflect the rain. They took heavy casualties before

leaving for the western front.

Palin's great-uncle Harry survived a brutal four and half months on the peninsula and almost survived the Battle of the Somme, being one of the very last members of the New Zealand forces to die in that offensive.

Harry Palin lived a brief and unremarkable life. He was not awarded any military honours and his diaries record the trivial and the mundane. Socks knitted by his sisters to keep his feet dry in the trenches and the possibility of leave to visit his mother in Tonbridge. In fact, home comforts that keep us going in adversity.

Most of us have a distant relative who lived and sometimes died in the war and this book could be a testament to any one of them. Harry died and was buried in the mud of Flanders; his mortal remains like the Unknown Soldier known only to God. Michael Palin has given Harry a voice and his free spirit lives on over a hundred years later in his great-nephew. Some family traits never change.





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Simple Well-being. The process of loving others

From Vladimir Barkanov and continued from his previous article

The understanding that when we love someone what we receive back is not the love of that person, but the “beauty”, flourishing of that person, which is a game-changer in loving others.

Based on this understanding it becomes clear that love is not a feeling but an action, directed to create a short or long-term environment that will stimulate a positive response or development in another person, which will be perceived by us as a stimulating power of beauty. In this respect, love is not a noun, but a verb. Furthermore, such an approach, even though it may seem very complicated, will clear the understanding of what love is and guarantee its growth.

There are a few interesting points that can be raised about different perceptions of what love is. Let's look at the classical perception of love – I love someone and expect love in return. It may sound fair, but there is unavoidable selfishness in this formula. Even if I don't accept it as true, if I expect to be loved in return, I love that person for my sake. Also, in these relationships comparison is unavoidable. Sooner or later, I'll begin to compare how much I give and how much I receive, and that is a killer for any relationship, be it between partners, friends, or parents and children.

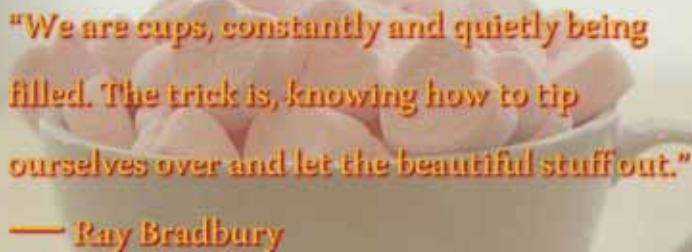
But what if I love someone to bring up their “beauty”?

In this relationship, I receive a “reward” by seeing the happiness of another person caused by me. In this formula, I cannot achieve results focusing on my expectations. To create an environment or situation that will make another person happy I must focus on that person; on that person's situation and needs. You love the person for that person's sake. The “reward” comes as a side-effect.

The stimulation received from being a source of happiness for someone could be overwhelming, but you will not expect it. Even if you expect such stimulation, could it be perceived as selfish? If it could, then it would be a new definition of selfishness – a positive one.

Have you ever experienced a situation when you gave someone a present or helped someone and all of a sudden saw tears of happiness in that person's eyes? If you have, you know what I am talking about when I talk about an enormous stimulation of “beauty”. And here is the thing; the more you experience it, the more you will be drawn to experience it again, and the easier it will be to love others.

Your love will grow, and so will your happiness. Loving others is the highest form of self-love.



“We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out.”
— Ray Bradbury



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Brain Train sessions use cognitive stimulation therapy techniques, an evidence based programme that helps with the symptoms of dementia. Groups are fun, engaging and sociable, providing stimulation for thinking, concentration and memory. Sessions are based around existing cognition and set in small groups to help improve confidence, self esteem and motivation.

The day is run at a relaxed pace with activities including singing, games and a light physical activity. There is a lot of laughter and chatting over tea and biscuits, where new friendships are formed and clients are given the opportunity to share their experiences and support one another.

Attending the group also offers the additional benefit to carers, enabling a break from their caring role.



**Every Wednesday at Lenham Community Centre 9.30am to 2pm
and Tuesdays and Fridays at Ditton Community Centre 10am to 2.30pm.
For more information on our sessions and how to become a member
contact Alison, Helen or Louise for more information**

braintraincog@gmail.com 07544 851 024 Find us on FB

**Weekly session at Lenham, Wednesday 9.30am to 2pm
Fee payable, this includes lunch and refreshments**

Peace on earth and goodwill toward men

A letter from Phillip Robling, B.Sc. (Hons); PGCE; Pastor (retired)

By the time that this article is published we will be well into 2024, and all thoughts of Christmas will be as far away as ever.

But what has Christmas meant to you? Has it been a round of Christmas parties celebrating with friends or work colleagues? Or a time for meeting up with family and having a beautiful roast Turkey or similar for Christmas lunch? Of course, there is much more to Christmas than all of this, and it is the message of the angels that first Christmas that keeps on recurring in my mind.

I am often asked the question “Why is there so much evil in the world?” My answer tends to come back to the message of the angels who said that it was one of “Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.”

It is true to say that we see extraordinarily little peace and goodwill around in the world today. For the past two years or so we have seen the devastation that war between Ukraine and Russia has brought to our TV screens. Mothers and children fleeing the war zone into Poland leaving behind their husbands to fight for their country, and not knowing whether they will see them again. Currently we have been faced with newscasts of what happened on the 7 Oct in Israel, and the consequent horror of what is happening in Gaza. Further afield there have been attempted coups in Africa and mass shootings in the US, where shooters have opened fire on



schools of innocent children. Politicians in the US have a gun law which entitles every citizen to bear arms, but little control as to who owns them.

Here in the UK we have seen on a regular basis news bulletins of murder all too often. Some as young as 12 have been taken to court because they have plotted to murder a teenager. There is an epidemic of knife crime in our own land.

Where is society going wrong? I come back to the title of this article that the world has totally ignored, it would seem. There can be no peace or goodwill in this world unless individuals come to have a relationship with the “Prince of Peace.” Such a relationship does not come about just because of going to church. To have such a relationship, we must listen to the words of Jesus when he spoke to a man called Nicodemus. He told him that he had to be “born again.” That is the only way that we can be assured of knowing the “prince of peace” in our lives.

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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)

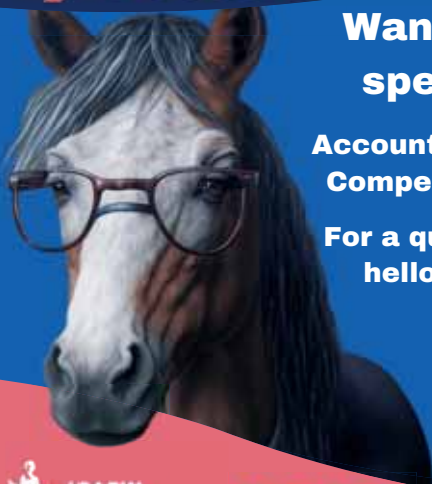
Parishioners may attend all meetings

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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 (2 nd 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 (1 st 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 member 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 Bellringers	Laurence Bond	01622-853750
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 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

Lenham Community Centre - Regular Clubs/Classes/Societies - February 2024

ACTIVITY	WHEN HELD	TIME	CONTACT No
Abundant Energy Tai Chi	Weekly Monday	0930-1030	07985 001782
Abundant Energy Qigong	Weekly Monday	1045-1145	07985 001782
Baby Ballet	Friday	0930-1045	07866 316056
Country Ways Knitting	2nd Monday	1330-1630	01622 858658
Country Ways Quilting	1 st & 3 rd Tues	1330-1630	01233 879507
Country Ways Rugmaking	2nd & last Wed	0900-1300	07784 892160
Craft & Chat	2 nd Wednesday	1330-1730	01622 851885
Craft & Chat	Last Saturday	1330-1730	01622 851885
Feathers Badminton	Weekly Monday	2000-2200	07866 151370
Film Club	2nd Friday	19.30-2200	
Gardening Society	3 rd Thursday	1845-2200	01622 430649
Hatha Yoga	Weekly Monday	1815-1945	07850 355918
Kent School of Bridge	Weekly Thursday	1330-1730	01622 891964
LenARA Bowling	Weekly Tuesday	1330-1700	01622 858439
LenARA Line Dancing	Weekly Wednesday	1845-2115	01622 859725
LenARA Members	4th Wednesday	1230-1700	01622 851763
LenARA Petanque	Thursday if weather allows	0900-1300	01622 858439
LenARA Zumba Gold	Weekly Wednesday	0900-1030	01622 850228
Lenham Art Group	Weekly Thursday	1000-1300	01622 858238
Lenham Badminton	Weekly Tuesday	2000-2200	01622 858561
Lenham Ballet School	Monday/Tuesday	1700-2030	01622 850329
Lenham Ballet School	Thursday	1630-2100	01622 850329
Lenham Ballet School	Weekly Saturday	0900-1530	01622 850329
Lenham Heritage	4th Thursday	1900-2130	01622 850228
Lenham Toddlers Pre-school	Weekly Tuesday	0930-1130	01622 858919
Lenham WI	2nd Thursday	1845-2200	01622 858658
Make & Shake (Pre-school)	Weekly Wednesday	1030-1300	07894 160906
Parish Council	1st Wednesday	1930-2230	07894 160906
Parish Council F & G P	3 rd Wednesday	1930-2200	01622 829034
Parish Council Planning	1st Monday	1930-2200	01622 829034
Pathways Church	1 st & 3 rd Sunday	0830-1330	01622 850266
Sing & Shake (Pre-school)	Weekly Monday	0930-1300	07894 160906
Telisa Tai Chi	Weekly Wednesday	1730-1830	07734 108683
Zumba with Rosie	Weekly Tuesday	1830-1930	07809 490982



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Getting people the care they need locally – the launch of 'Pharmacy First'

Our local MP and Health Minister, Helen Whately, explains

The faster you can get the care you need, the better health you'll be in. This simple but powerful idea is at the centre of everything I'm working on as a Health Minister at the moment to reform our health and social care system. By bringing care closer to home and identifying conditions when they're more treatable, we can help people stay out of hospital and live healthy and independent lives for longer.

Primary care services like GPs have a huge role to play in this, but since the pandemic lots of people locally have found it harder to see their GP. That's why I've made GP and dentist appointments one of my 5 local priorities for Faversham and Mid Kent, and I'm pleased to report on recent progress.

In October 2023 there were more than a million appointments offered by GPs in Kent and Medway – an increase of nearly 20% in the last two years alone. Two-thirds of these appointments are taking place face-to-face, and GPs deserve a huge amount of credit for making this all happen.

I've also been supporting local GPs to expand in Faversham and Hollingbourne, and I'm still working on bringing new services to Park Wood and to Teynham. These expansions will be supported by the new Kent Medical School which I campaigned for when I first became an MP. It opened in 2020 and will soon be churning out new doctors, who we know often stay working near where they train.

However with demand still on the rise we've got to change how we do things too, and that's why from the 31 January the government is launching Pharmacy First.

There's a reason why the local pharmacy is often the first place we go when we're ill or need advice. You might have to queue for a few minutes, but if the pharmacy's open you can guarantee you'll be seen that day. From this month we're going to make even better use of their skills. We're expanding their role and for the first time ever allowing them to prescribe some medicines, as well as increasing access to things like blood pressure checks and oral contraceptives.

These plans go hand in hand with cutting bureaucracy for GPs, hiring 26,000 more primary care professionals, and putting in place new phone systems to finally end the 8am rush for appointments. These changes are to help people get care more easily, and I'd love to hear how they're working out for you. Please do pop into your local pharmacy and have a chat about what they offer, and keep letting me know about any problems you're having in your area.

At the same time I'm also working to increase the number of NHS dentist appointments locally, and I'm currently campaigning with other Kent MPs for a new Kent Dental School.

You can find more information about this and all of the above on my website – **www.helenwhately.org.uk**

Could bell ringing be your new hobby in 2024?

Laurence Bond, Tower Captain explains



If you would like to try to learn to ring the lovely bells at St Mary's here are a few points that we hope will encourage you to come along and give it a go:



It's a very inclusive hobby - as long as you're tall enough and aged over 11 you can ring bells



There is a structured programme to teach you which is safe plus we have a safeguarding policy in place



It's free



It's very sociable and we try to make our practices fun



Ringling bells is good exercise for the brain as well as the body plus there's no need to be 'musical'



You don't have to come to practice every week - we know that everyone has busy lives



You can be religious but you don't have to be



Bell ringing is multi-generational - we currently have 3 generations of one family ringing



Ringling bells can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be - there are no targets other than to handle a bell safely and competently.

The bellringers at St Mary's Church meet every Tuesday evening from 7.30 until 9.00 pm.

If you would like to come and see what we do and have a look at the bells, please come along on to our practice on any Tuesday.

After that we can arrange a practice session which would last for about 1 hour at a time to suit you. The entrance to the ringing room is through the kitchen and up the stairs.





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Lenham Community Centre

Monday 9:30-10:30am ~ Tai Chi

Monday 10:45-11:45am ~ Qigong

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OPENING HOURS REVIEW LENHAM LIBRARY

Following a small review of our opening hours, and the usage at the branch, from **5 February 2024**, the hours at Lenham Library will be as below.

The overall number of hours open remains unchanged.

Current Opening Hours

Monday	1pm – 6pm
Tuesday	9am – 2pm
Wednesday	2pm – 6pm
Thursday	1pm – 6pm
Friday	9am – 2pm
Saturday	9am – 1pm

New Opening Hours

Monday	9am – 1pm & 2pm – 5pm
Tuesday	9am – 2pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9am – 1pm & 2pm – 5pm
Friday	9am – 2pm
Saturday	9am – 1pm

For any queries, please speak to a member of staff.

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February Anniversaries

FACEBOOK



It's **20 years** since the launch of Facebook, on 4 February 2004, which was originally built to connect Harvard students. Mark Zuckerberg's social media

'The Facebook' website soon went global. Now it's the flagship product of one of the most valuable companies in the world with nearly three billion active monthly users, over a third of the world's population.



Weather anniversaries

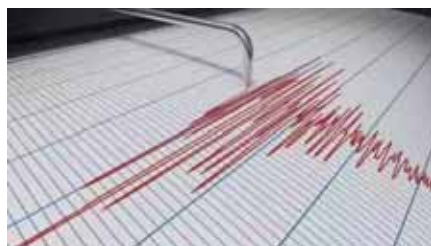
10 years ago, on 5 February 2014, part of the South Devon Railway sea wall carrying the railway line linking London with the west of England was washed away by a powerful storm that has hit the UK overnight. Thousands of homes were also left without electricity. Prime Minister

David Cameron announced that an extra £100 million would be spent on dealing with the aftermath of the floods that hit the UK.

It is the **5th anniversary** of the highest recorded temperature recorded in the UK for the month of February. A temperature of 20.3C (68.5F)

was recorded in Trawsgoed, Ceredigion on 25 February 2019.

Also **10 years ago**, on 20 February 2014 a 4.1 magnitude earthquake was recorded under the Bristol Channel.



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**Wednesday 14th February
at 2.30 pm**

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of Needlework, Fellow of the Royal
School of Arts, the Chartered Institute
of Marketing and of the Society of Dyers
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We keep fighting ...

This is our last chance to stop the proposed Heathlands 'new town' from being included in the Local Plan. The development is 2.5 times bigger than Mote Park. Imagine 30 years' of dumper trucks; sewerage dumped in "wet lands" next to Lenham. The list goes on.

We now need to move quickly to ensure we have the necessary funds for legal action to challenge the Local Plan – if we are required to do so – which could cost around £40,000.

We urgently need your help. We know times are difficult for many with the current cost-of-living increases, but if you feel you can make a donation or pledge (see more below), whatever you can afford, then here is how you can donate:

- Cash transfers can be paid to Save Our Heath Lands: Account Number: 56825161. Sort Code: 60-01-21
- Donate online or make a pledge, at **www.saveourheathlands.co.uk/ways-to-donate**
- If you have cash or cheque donations, please call Kate Hammond 07925 606 236 and she will arrange for the funds to be collected. Cheques to be made payable to: Save Our Heath Lands.

Our New Supporters' Pledge Fund

We have spent the last three years opposing the disastrous Heathlands

proposal through the regulatory planning system. However, in the unfortunate event that the planning system fails our community, we believe we will be left with no choice but to mount a legal challenge on the decision to adopt the Maidstone Local Plan.

To mount a legal challenge, we will have to move extremely quickly.

To help us gauge how much we will have in our 'fighting fund' to pay for legal representation we are asking those who feel they can to pledge any amount of £500 or more. This will help us know what funds we have before we commit to any legal support and allow us to call upon funds swiftly in an equitable way. We would only be looking for 10% of the pledge to be paid now. The remaining amount will form part of our funding plan and be requested only if needed.

To pledge £500 or more to our Supporters' Pledge Fund, please visit our website **www.saveourheathlands.co.uk** to find out more and download a pledge form.

ALSO use this website to sign our petition asking Maidstone Borough Council to pause their Local Plan (like 55 other Local Authorities), to re-assess the actual local need for new homes and re-submit a revised plan that adopts a brownfield-first approach to remove thousands of greenfield sites earmarked for development.



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Countryways Quilters and Stitchers

Pamela Gillard's update



Our new year started with friends all around as the first Quilters meeting was on the 2nd of January. It was nice to just relax and chat after all the work involved over the holiday preparations.

Some of us are on a diet. You know how New Year's resolutions go. Are you still on yours? Maybe some of you haven't actually started your resolutions yet. Maybe we can help. If one of them was to become more sociable and another was to learn a useful skill then you've hit the jackpot. We're a two for one deal!

Since lockdown we've all become more stay at home types and it's kind of lonely and depressing really. Nothing lifts your spirits more than chatting over a cup of tea (or coffee) with a

friend, and it's even better when you have some sewing to catch up on. If you don't know how to sew and would like to learn, we can teach you. Hand stitching, embroidery, or even the sewing machine if you want to learn. Yes we are quilters (mostly) but we do lots of other things. And it's all about the company too.

If you're lacking inspiration, well that's my job, I come up with ideas of what could be fun to learn. Or you can bring along what you want to work on. Even your knitting. Just come and join in the fun. This month we'll be meeting on February 6th and 20th. We will be making a quilted wall-hung organiser for your sewing room or office. If you'd like to come along, call me for a supplies list.

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



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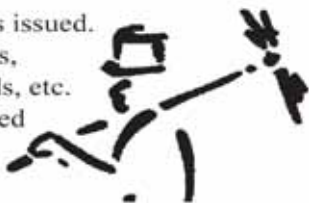
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ALCOHOL & PAINKILLERS

By Rich Nairn

6TH JANUARY 2024

BEFORE THE DAYS OF PARENTING, MAI AND I WOULD LOVE A TRIP TO BLUEWATER SHOPPING CENTRE. WE NEVER UNDERSTOOD FRIENDS OF OURS SAYING IT WAS TOO BUSY.

OF COURSE, NOWADAYS, WHEN WE ARE FORCED TO VISIT DURING THE WEEKEND, WE SEE THE PROBLEM.

Blando's

Mann Summers

HOLD MY HAND, SKYE... IT'S A SHOPPER TSUNAMI!

THIS WEEK WE HAVE SUFFERED THE POST-CHRISTMAS JANUARY SALE INSANITY SO THAT SKYE COULD ENJOY SOME OF THE FACILITIES.

EARLIER IN THE WEEK IT WAS A BOUNCY AFFAIR, FOR WHICH WE WERE ONLY REQUIRED TO SPECTATE.

I WANT A GO!

I WANT A COFFEE.

WATCH ME!

BUT TODAY IT INVOLVED CLIMBING WALLS, FOR WHICH I WAS REQUIRED TO HELP OUT.

CATCH ME DADDY!

URGH!

TO THE CHEMISTS FOR PAINKILLERS NEXT, RICH?

CRACK!

OLD DAD SYNDROME IS IN FULL EFFECT.

Words, Phrases, Formulae, Abbreviations

That you weren't familiar with, didn't know existed – or had a different meaning not so long ago...



Pandemic

While pandemic is certainly not a new word, it has become a far more commonplace part of our daily conversation. A good definition might be "a pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease that affects large numbers

of people." The distinction between pandemic and epidemic is that pandemic applies to a disease that has spread to multiple countries and continents, while epidemic is a disease that has spread over a wide geographic area, though not internationally or globally. Epidemiology is the branch of medicine dealing with the incidence and prevalence of disease in large populations and with detection of the source and cause of epidemics of infectious disease.



COVID-19/Coronavirus

You may be tempted to use COVID-19 as a synonym for coronavirus, but that will confuse matters. COVID-19 is the name of the disease that the novel coronavirus causes. It stands for "coronavirus disease 2019."

$R = 1$

The now-famous formula, where R stands for reproduction or reproductive.

It is the average number of people that a person with an infectious disease is expected to spread the infection to (in population immune to the disease). In other words, if one person is infected, how many other people will they infect? If R is greater than 1, it can spread in a population and cause an outbreak. Estimates vary, but one study measures the R of COVID-19 at 2.2. That means that, on average, each person infected with COVID-19 spreads it to two other people. For comparison, the R of measles is estimated between a value of 12–18; seasonal strains of the flu have been estimated at 1.3.



Quarantine

One of the most challenging parts of our new normal, quarantines are defined as "a way of separating and restricting people who have been exposed to a disease, such as COVID-19, to see if they too have become infected and get ill."

Lockdown and Shutdown

Slightly different than quarantine and self-quarantine, lockdown (voted 'word of the year!') and shutdown are



being used by many to describe more general and widespread restrictions on movement, work and travel on all people in a city, region or country.



Social Distancing

It's probably fair to say that prior to March, the phrase social distancing was one few of us had used. It's

putting physical distance between yourself and other people. This means avoiding groups of people (parties, crowds, queues) and maintaining distance from others when possible.

Bubbles

We used to think of bubbles as things we generated in the bath, or the ones children



made from a spoon-like piece of plastic dipped in soapy water. Not anymore! Now it's the strange concept of keeping certain people together and others apart...

Flattening the Curve

A strategy to reduce the number of infections– and controlling the R number (as above).

Contact Tracing

Means the practice of identifying and monitoring individuals who may have had contact with an infectious person as a means of controlling the spread of a communicable disease. A way of isolating Super-Spreaders (highly contagious individuals capable of transmitting to an unusually large number of uninfected others).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The items that have been in woefully short supply in this country, PPE is specialised clothing or equipment, worn by an employee for protection against infectious materials. Now encompasses such items as gloves, gowns, aprons, masks, respirators, goggles, face shields and anything else you can think of.



Furlough

What on earth is that?? We all know now it's a temporary layoff from work used as businesses conducting non-essential activities were closed. This was done to prevent the spread of the disease by banning large gatherings.

Herd Immunity

Is the immunity or resistance to a particular infection that occurs in a group of people or animals when a very high percentage of individuals have been vaccinated or previously exposed to the infection.

WHO (what??)

Stands for the World Health Organization, a United Nations agency based in Geneva, Switzerland, whose role 'to direct and coordinate international health within the United Nations system through the life-course; noncommunicable and communicable diseases; preparedness, surveillance and response; and corporate services.'. So that worked then!!

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Climate Change

A local resident, Ellie Stevens, makes a plea to us all

**‘The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.’
(Robert Swan, OBE, Polar Explorer)**

*Before you start reading, please note
- I am not an expert in the field. I'm an
average citizen just trying to make
sense of this crazy world!*

Do you feel powerless in the face of climate change? Like me, do you do your best to recycle, eat less meat and use the car less but then often wonder: is this making any difference? After some pondering, reading and watching many of the recent climate change TV programmes, I've decided that yes, we, the public, can make a difference. And I ask you to join me to be part of the climate change solution. What we need right now is hope. Hope must come from action.

Whether we like it or not, the climate on earth has changed and is changing. According to the UN: ‘To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050’. At the moment, we're heading towards an average global increase of 2°C or higher. This will have consequences for all our lives – particularly our children and grandchildren.

But it's not too late to reverse this pattern. Did you know that the UK's Climate Change Committee has provided the Government with a credible plan to reach its target of Carbon Net Zero by 2050 without hurting the economy? It's



all possible. BUT... the Government is not quite sticking to this plan, even though they have commissioned the research. (They are currently still giving oil and gas companies huge tax breaks - money which could be invested in green technology; being incredibly slow to encourage onshore wind farms; and preside over a housing stock that has some of the worst insulated homes in Europe). To avoid this crisis, the world needs to come together and keep to its pledge of Carbon Net Zero by 2050. However, you could argue, why does the UK need to bother if other countries aren't? But as compassionate human beings, surely we have to lead by example?

So, while individuals alone may not be able to make the drastic emission cuts to slow down climate change, it's essential that we take action to raise the importance of this huge issue to businesses and politicians. Ultimately, politicians want our vote and businesses want our custom; if we all demand their true commitment to Net Zero by 2050, then change will have to happen.

What can we do?

A lot! The advice from Imperial College, London is that 'using your voice as a consumer, a customer, a member of the electorate and an active citizen, will lead to changes on a much grander scale.'

- Write to our MPs (see www.moralfibres.co.uk on how to do this) or attend one of their surgeries. Personal emails are more effective than mass petitions. Tell them how important the climate change crisis is to us and that we're concerned the present government is veering away from Net Zero by 2050. If enough of us speak up, they will have to listen. See template letters at: www.hftf.org.uk/template-letters

- Continue to consider our life style choices – fly less, use the car

less. Continue to reduce what we consume, re-use and repair what we can and recycle. Shop wisely and let businesses know if we are not happy with their policies.

- Talk to everyone we know – friends, family, neighbours - about climate issues. If you haven't already, watch *The Great Climate Fight* and *Chris Packham: Is It Time to Break the Law?* – stream both for free on Channel 4 and check out the following websites for help with making lifestyle choices:
www.theccc.org.uk
www.un.org/en/climatechange
www.imperial.ac.uk

Thanks for reading. We need to mobilise a ripple of change through the population. Be part of the solution - together we are stronger. Let's keep hopeful and act!



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A romantic dinner table is the background for the advertisement. Two hands are clinking champagne flutes filled with bubbly. In the foreground, there's a pizza with toppings, a glass of red wine, and scattered red rose petals on a wooden table. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

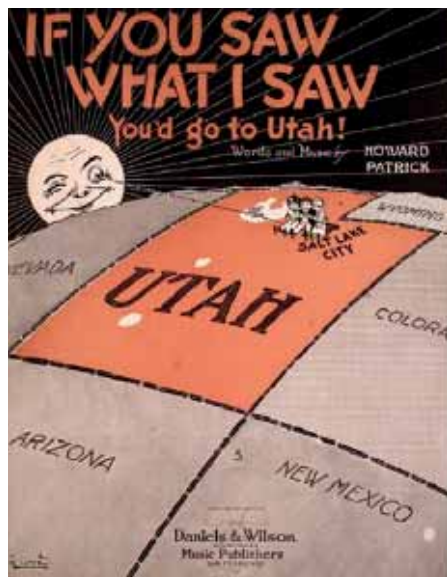
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The Mormons in Lenham....



a story from Woodside Green



Perhaps you have never heard of “Woodside Green”, but Woodside Green is, like West Street or Warren Street, part of the Parish of Lenham.

Historically, people living outside of the village often felt that they were an afterthought when it came to parish politics, which were, until not too long ago, represented by the church. Perhaps it was the disenchantment with the church which made one young man, James Turner (born 28.3.1819), turn to the Mormon Church (see also the article: ‘My ancestral Home’ in the December *Focus*).

James Turner was the son of Mary Stedman and James Turner, who ran a public house which became known as “*The Duke of Wellington*”. The Turner family owned the popular pub in Woodside

Green well into the 20th Century (see www.heritagelenham.co.uk/public-houses)

James Turner had married Mary Finch from Otterden in 1840 and moved with his wife to London where he became a baptised member of the Mormon Church in 1850. He was sent to Lenham as a missionary where he encountered “considerable prosecution” and “opposition”. He emigrated in 1854 to join his brethren in America. At that time, the Lenham Mormon congregation, which he had set up, had 30 members. Some of them followed his example and also emigrated to America.

Turner was ordained a priest in 1857 but was sent on a ‘military’ mission and it is likely that he was involved in the Utah War. He was ordained a high Priest in 1866 and became a counsellor to a Mormon bishop.

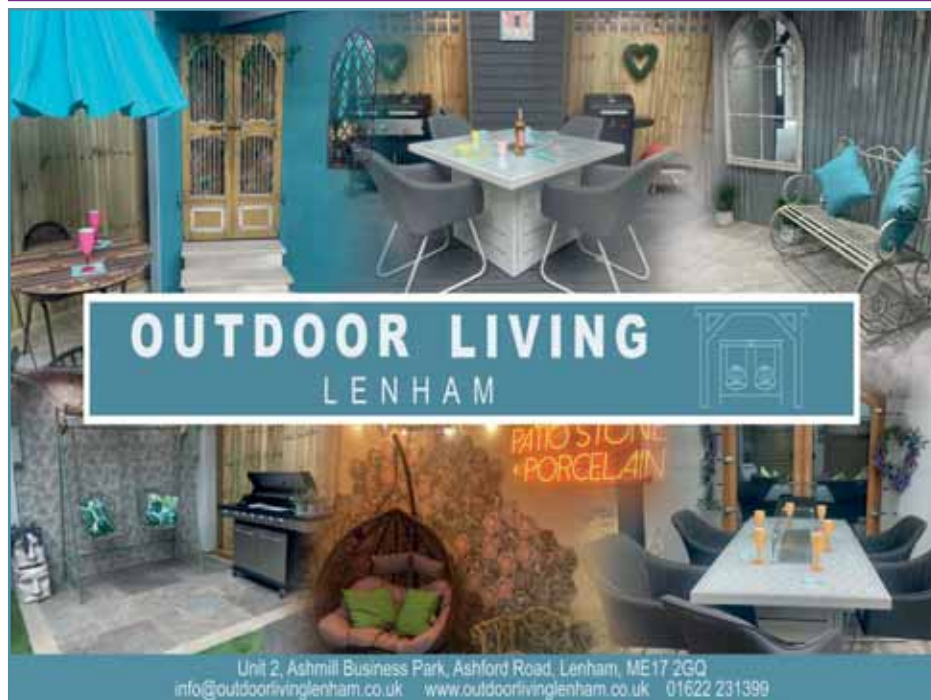
The main obstacle to Utah being recognised as a State of the United States of America was the fact that Mormons were allowed several wives. In order to become a state of the USA this practice was outlawed. James Turner was arrested in 1887 and held for 50 days on the charge of “unlawful cohabitation” with several wives. It was, however, only in 1890 that the Mormon Church rescinded its polygamy laws. James Turner died in September 1895 and did not live to see Utah become a member state of the US on January 4th 1896. He, a man of humble beginnings, is still revered as a prominent member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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Nature Watch

The cuter side of garden nature.

From Darren Hammond

The birds and the bees are not the only animals to make up what we can see in our gardens and in the undergrowth of the countryside. There are many other creatures like badgers, foxes, hedgehogs and the much maligned mouse, along with its cousin, the vole.

Here I will focus on two particular kinds of the little furry creatures; the **wood mouse** and the **bank vole**.



This tiny little mouse is related to the house mouse but has several differences. If you're lucky enough to spot one look out for the larger ears and bigger eyes relative to their size which are two of the bigger differences between the two. They are also quite different in colour and a house mouse is very unlikely to be seen outdoors.

The wood mouse is probably most common in woodland, rough grassland and gardens. It is mostly nocturnal and an agile climber. Even though they are perhaps the most common rodent in the UK, they are also very shy and nervous and will scamper to safety with any movement or sound.



Wood mice feast on nuts, seeds and invertebrates (like worms and caterpillars) and will gather food stores of berries and seeds in the autumn, which they keep in underground burrows or, believe it or not, sometimes in old birds' nests.

The chestnut-brown bank vole is our smallest vole and can be found in hedgerows, woodlands, parks and gardens. It eats fruit, nuts and small insects, but is particularly keen on hazelnuts and blackberries. Bank voles are very active and agile animals and incredibly quick so it can be very hard to spot them. If you hear a rustling in the leaves under a hedge or round the edge of a garden, stay very still and you may be lucky enough to see one.



The bank vole is a rich, chestnut-brown above, and white below. It is richer in colour than the similar field vole and has a longer tail compared to its body length. Voles have blunter, rounder faces, smaller ears and eyes, and shorter tails than mice.

They live in shallow burrows, but may make grassy, round nests above ground if the soil is unsuitable for digging.

Also bank voles do not hibernate so can be seen all year round.

Even though they are rather shy, around built up areas or gardens they may be a little braver and you may even see one on a bird feeder or table.

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Christian Message

Love is in the air!

From Ben Doggett, Pathways Church

This month we celebrate Valentine's Day and many will prepare elaborate displays of love for those nearest and dearest to them! Perhaps you'll be writing a card, buying a gift or presenting some flowers to someone special in your life? Valentine's Day can also serve as a welcome reminder that even our most sincere displays of love cannot come close to the love that we have received from God.

In the Gospel of Luke (15:11-32) Jesus shares the parable of 'The Prodigal Son'. It tells of a son who asks his father for his share of the inheritance whilst his father is still living. Despite how hurtful this would have been, the father agrees and gives his son the money. The son soon moves away and squanders the inheritance on wild living. He runs out of money, hits rock bottom and eventually decides to return home and ask his dad to live as one of his servants. The incredible twist comes in the father's response to his son and it is designed to

show us the love of our Heavenly Father towards us. Rather than reject or berate his son, the father ran to meet him and embraced him in a huge bear hug. He bestowed gifts upon him and laid on an extravagant feast to celebrate that his son had returned home.

Beyond displaying God's love through parables, Jesus demonstrated it through his life and ultimately through his death. The theologian Thomas Goodwin put it this way; "Christ is love covered in flesh". Jesus showed that there is no length that our Father God won't go to in order to lavish love upon us. All we need to do is begin the walk home and receive the embrace of the Father who runs to meet us.

I'll give the final word to the author Dane Ortlund who beautifully states; "Even the most intense human love is but the faintest echo of heaven's cascading abundance. His heartfelt thoughts for you outstrip what you can conceive."

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'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 4 February

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Wednesday 7 February

9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

Sunday 11 February

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Sunday 18 February

8.00am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Morning Worship

Sunday 25 February

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Kevin Gurr reflects on the passing of his dad, Mike

Dad's full name was Michael John Gurr but everyone knew him as Mike. He was born on 11th July 1938 at Old Shelve Farm, Lenham. Mike had two brothers Peter and Don and two sisters Vera and Pat.

He went to school in Lenham and at the age of 12 joined Lenham cricket club and he became a fast bowler. In 1957 he completed his national service in the Royal Artillery serving a year in Cyprus during their war of independence. When he returned he went to work for Marley Floors where he worked until he retired at the age of 62.

He joined Lenham Fire Brigade when he was 25 years old where he served for 30 years attaining the rank of Sub Officer. The station had an excellent First Aid team; they won many awards including the Kent competition and came fourth in the English competition the same year. The fire station was very active in supporting the Brigade's benevolent fund and always took part in the village carnival leading the procession through the village.

He joined the Royal British Legion for many years and was Standard Bearer for the Lenham branch for around fifty years. This was something he was very proud of. He attended the Royal Albert Hall carrying the Lenham standard on three occasions for the National Remembrance Service. He also attended numerous events in the UK and Europe.

He paraded on the Queen's silver jubilee in front of the then Prince Charles at Horse Guards Parade and the Queen at Windsor Castle. He paraded a second time for the Queen at the Royal British Legion village.



He also attended the Menin Gate in Belgium several times including the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War and never missed an opportunity to parade in the village church on Remembrance Sunday.

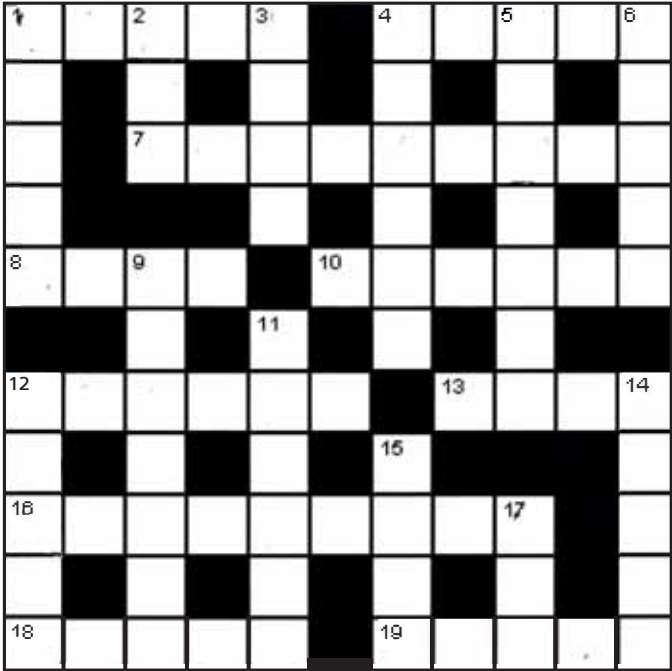
Mike was a member of the St. Johns in Lenham for 17 years. He was on the committee of the Forge house charity, which is now the Hatch charity and he was a bell ringer at Harrietsham. When not involved in village organisations he could be found playing whist at the working man's club, enjoying going to the Lenara association and Lenham gardeners.

Mike was a great family man and was married to his wife Eve for 57 years. He had two sons John and me, Kevin, and five grandchildren Shane (who unfortunately passed early), Andrew, Jennifer, Leon and Kai and two great grand-daughters Lilli and Ellie. Although he did many things, in everything he did, he always included his family. He loved spending time with the children and particularly loved swimming with them.

The whole family would like to thank all those that came out to remember him on his funeral, which was held on 19th December 2023 at St. Marys church.

Focus PRIZE Crossword February 2024

The December winner was Jennifer Alleyne of Lenham – well done!



Answers for January 2024
Focus Crossword



Across clues

1. Material used for drying up plates etc. (5)
4. A baby hen. (5)
7. Child's name for a female farm animal. (5,4)
8. 3X3. (4)
10. Not neat. (6)
12. Not so dry. (6)
13. The direction in which the sun sets. (4)
16. It makes a noise when someone wants to talk to you. (9)
18. Speed.(5)
19. Stockings are sometimes made of this. (5)

Down clues

1. Circus entertainer. (5)
2. Possess. (3)
3. Lower part of your arm. (4)
4. Shedding tears. (6)
5. To think very highly of someone. (7)
6. A usually small collection of money from several people. (5)
9. Wild plants that can sting you. (7)
11. Humans in general. (6)
12. She can fly a broomstick! (5)
14. Get fit for sporting activities.
15. Feeling unhappy. (4)
17. Type of fish often served 'jellied'. (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 entry into Lenham Parish Council office at 1A High Street or Lenham library **no later than 20 February** 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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