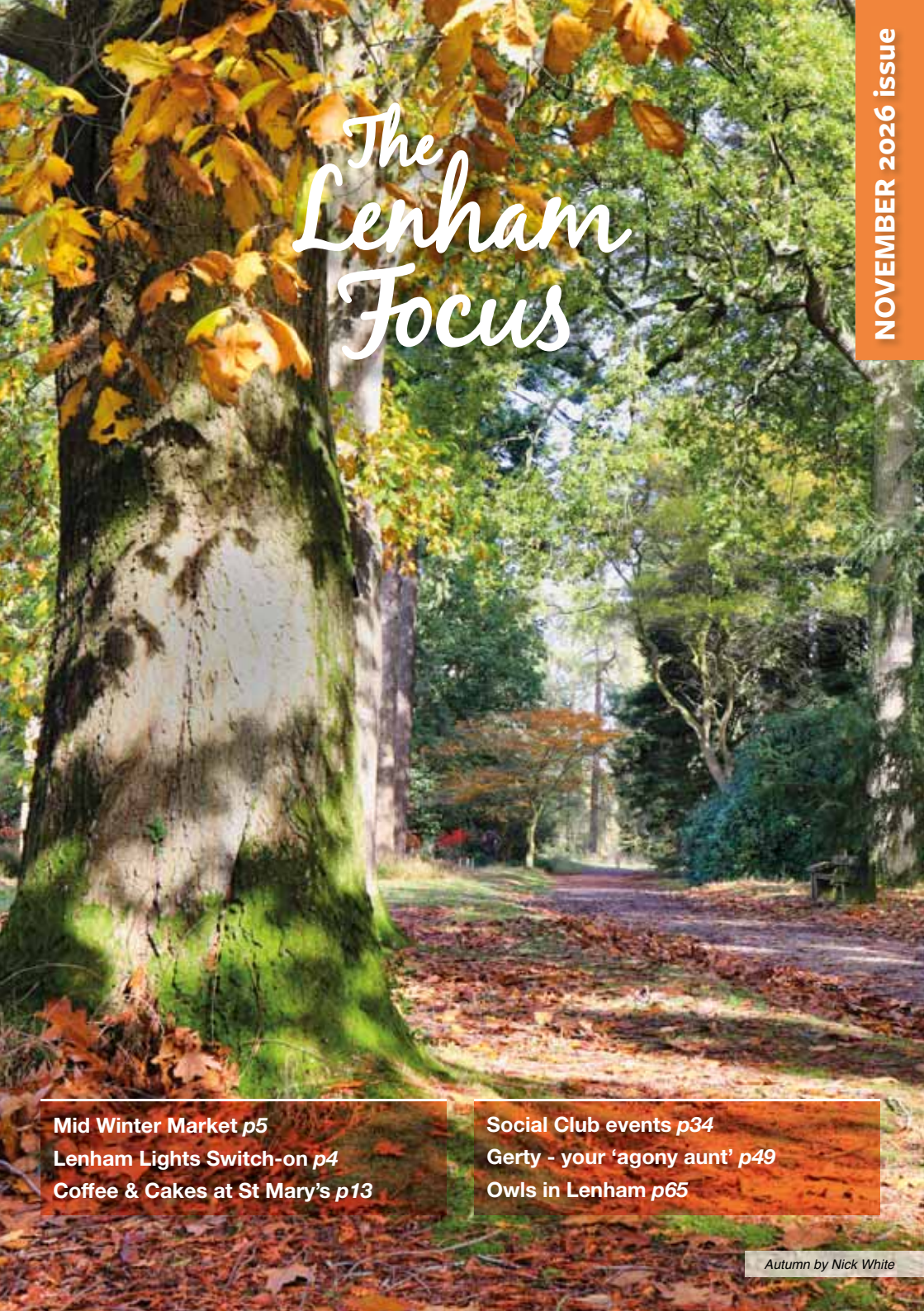
The Lenham Focus

NOVEMBER 2026 issue



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Autumn by Nick White

Editorial

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

October saw great activity in the Tithe Barn – notably the annual Lenham Meadows Trust annual *Apple Pressing Fun Day* when many, many village families came to join in the fun. This event is a major fundraiser for the Trust and they have asked me to offer you a huge '***thank-you***' to all who came and supported them and made purchases or left donations. More on that next month!

Two more pieces of positive news as the year draws to a close. **First**, it looks very likely that the *Lenham Film Club* will be back with us in the New Year – a great relief to those who have spent so much time and effort in the past and a lovely boost to our village.

Second, following pleas for help in distribution and editorial work for your *FOCUS*, we have had quite a bundle of offers of help – all gratefully received – and we're in touch with everyone who volunteered their services.

There are two huge events in Lenham this month. The annual '*Handmade Mid Winter Market*' in the Tithe Barn, which runs from 13th to 15th November and the *Lenham Christmas Lights Switch-On*, performed by the appointed **Legend of Lenham**, from 2:30pm on Saturday 28th November, with live music from '*Hullabaloo*', plus a Christmas market, choir and acting from the Lenham schools, food and drink and linked events in the Social Club, St Mary's church and the local pubs.

And I end with a short poem from a reader on their take of November.

Hello November!

November is the month of poets,
thinkers and tea drinkers.
The month when leaves take the chance
for a dance.
November is the month for contemplation,
more than December
which leaves you breathless with parcels,
people and parties.

David Jackson | Editor

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WHAT'S ON NOVEMBER

Here's a quick look at the events around Lenham in the coming month. There may be more information inside……

Got an event you'd like included next month? Send an email to the Editor.

- **Friday 6 at 8pm:** *Karaoke night.* **Venue:** Lenham Social Club. **FREE** entry
- **Friday 6 at 7pm:** *Quiz Night.* **Venue:** Dog & Bear pub. Purchase tickets on the night
- **Saturday 7 at 8:30pm** *Live band 'Avanzi'.* **Venue:** The Red Lion pub. **FREE** entry
- **Saturday 7 at 7:30pm:** *'Sam Brothers' folk and blues evening.* **Venue:** The Pavilion, The Moat, Charing. **Cost:** £8 – non-members of Charing Arts £10
- **Saturday 7, 14, 21, 28:** *Pizza & Wine.* **Venue:** Wildshark Vineyard, Harrietsham. **Cost:** From £13.50
- **Saturday 7 & Sunday 8:** *Fireworks Spectacular.* **Venue:** Leeds Castle. Tickets from website
- **Sunday 8 Nov – 10am-4pm:** *'Polly had a Dolly' event.* **Venue:** Kent Loves… , High Street, Lenham. **FREE**
- **Sunday 8 – 9am-midday:** *Craft Fair* **Venue:** Lenham Social Club. **FREE**
- **Sunday 8 – evening up to 8pm:** *Annual 'Magical Fireworks display'.* **Venue:** Who'd A Thought It, Grafty Green. **FREE**. Food & drinks available
- **Sunday 8 & 22:** *Raclette Grill & Wine.* **Venue:** Wildshark Vineyard, Harrietsham. **Cost:** £39pp
- **Tuesday 10 at 8:30pm:** *Quiz night.* **Venue:** The Red Lion pub. **FREE** entry
- **Wednesday 11 at 2:30pm:** *'Hot stuff – the birth of studio glass' talk.* **Venue:** Millennium Hall, Egerton. **Cost:** £8 – refunded if joining the Egerton Art Society.
- **Friday 13 – 5pm-7pm; Saturday 14 – 10am-4pm; Sunday 15 – 10am-4pm:** *Handmade Mid-Winter Market* **Venue:** The Tithe Barn, Lenham. **Cost:** £2 for Adults, Children **FREE**
- **Friday 13 at 8pm:** *Country singer* **Venue:** Lenham Social Club. **FREE**
- **Friday 13 & 27:** *Cheese Fondue & Wine Evening.* **Venue:** Wildshark Vineyard, Harrietsham. **Cost:** £35pp
- **Saturday 14 – 9.30am-5pm & Sunday 15 – 10am-4pm:** *'Kicking off Christmas'* demos all weekend. **Venue:** Kent Loves… , High Street, Lenham. **FREE**
- **Thursday 19 from 11am:** *Come for Coffee and Crafts + sale of gifts.* **Venue:** Charing Heath and Lenham Heath Memorial Hall. **FREE**
- **Saturday 21 evening:** *George Michael Tribute.* **Venue:** The Wishful Thinker. Book via website
- **Saturday 21 to 3 Jan 2027:** *'Wallace and Gromit – A cracking Christmas Caper'* **Venue:** Leeds Castle. **Cost:** Included in entry ticket
- **Thursday 26 at 8pm:** *Quiz Night* **Venue:** Lenham Social Club. Purchase tickets on the night
- **Saturday 28 from 2:30pm:** *The Lenham Lights Christmas Switch-On.* Lights Switch-On at 6pm with music, singing, market stalls, food & drink. **Venue:** Lenham Square. **FREE**
- **Saturday 28 – 2:30-5pm:** *Coffee and Cake* to coincide with the Lights Switch-On. **Venue:** St Mary's Church, Lenham. **FREE**
- **Saturday 28 at 7:30pm:** *'Sean Pout'* live music in the bar, to coincide with the Lights Switch-On. **Venue:** The Red Lion pub. **FREE**
- **Saturday 28, During the day:** *Santa's Grotto* – part of the Lenham Lights. **Venue:** Lenham Social Club. **FREE**
- **Saturday 28 at 7:30pm:** *Bingo night.* **Venue:** Lenham Social club Member's night
- **Sunday 29 at 7:30pm:** *Museum of life – ordinary items and their stories.* Heritage group. **Venue:** Lenham community centre. **FREE**
- **Sunday 29 – 10am-3pm:** *Christmas Craft Fair.* **Venue:** Wildshark Vineyard, Harrietsham. **FREE**

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- THE TOWN CRIER AWARD FOR BEST DRESSED WINDOW
- SANTA'S GROTTO IN LENHAM SOCIAL CLUB
- CHRISTMAS MARKET
- FESTIVE FOOD AND DRINK
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Saturday 28th November 2026

EVENT STARTS 2.30PM | SWITCH-ON 6:00PM | FINISH 6.30PM

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You're invited to the

HANDMADE

Mid Winter

MARKET

November 2026

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Saturday 14th 10am-4pm

Sunday 15th 10am-4pm

Tithe Barn

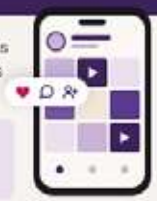
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Holigans Winter concert

(see also the poster in this *issue*)

It's that time of year once again and the very popular Holigans Winter concert will soon be upon us!

We are busy rehearsing a lovely collection of old and new favourite songs as well as some new surprises with a winter theme. This year we are excited to be joined by the newly formed ***Holigans Junior Choir*** with children from Lenham primary school.

Please note the altered ticketing arrangements this year.
We are limited to the numbers allowed to congregate in the church so to avoid disappointment, tickets must be purchased in advance, still at the bargain price of **£5 per adult** with a new **£1 ticket for children under 18**. This will ensure we are within the church's insured capacity.

NO TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE DOOR and must be pre-purchased from *The Heart of Kent Hospice charity shop* during opening hours and *St Mary's church coffee mornings* on Saturdays.

Tickets will be available for sale from 31st October for the concert, which is on Friday 4th December.



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Holigans Winter Warmers

Friday 4th December 7pm

St Marys Church, Lenham

join us for an evening of songs and singalongs at our popular Christmas Concert, all proceeds will go to the Lenham Village Hub Project & Heart of Kent Hospice

Donations for refreshments available during the interval

Tickets on sale 31st October from Heart of Kent Hospice charity shop & St Mary's Church Lenham Saturday Coffee Morning

Tickets: £5 Adult - Under 18's £1

To secure your entry, please purchase your tickets in advance.

No tickets will be sold at the venue on concert day

Harrietsham and Lenham Scout Group

As you may be aware there has been a Scout Group covering both villages since 1993.

We deliver Scouting to our young people, starting from the age of 4 up to 14 years.

This includes:

- Squirrels 4-6 years
- Beavers 6-8 years
- Cubs 8-10 ½ years
- Scouts 10 ½ -14 years

Our dedicated Team of Volunteers run the meetings during term time giving the young people a range of activities and necessary life skills.

However, I am sure, like all voluntary organisations there is always room for more volunteers.

This is an appeal!

We need more volunteers.

If you think you would like to help, or you know somebody that may, then please get in touch using the details below. We especially need help in our **Squirrel** section.

It is important that we maintain and continue giving our young people the opportunity to experience Scouting.

To help, or for more information, please contact me,
Eric Seales (Group Lead Volunteer) at email: **ericseales@btinternet.com**

HERITAGE LENHAM

Annual Meeting & Museum of Life
Ordinary items and their story

NOVEMBER 29th

at **19.30** in the Lenham Community Centre

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The Lenham Vicar Who Went To See Henry VIII

HERITAGE LENHAM

by Henny Shotter

Have you ever wondered whether the craftsman who carved this statue in the chancel wall of St. Mary's had visited one of the Lenham's pubs beforehand? With all respect....he just did not get his angles right!

However, there might be an explanation: The statue of this gentleman, a priest, was not intended for placing in a wall. Was he 'walled up'?

The story goes as follows: In 1541, after the destruction of the Shrine of Thomas Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral, Henry VIII gave the order that all churches in the diocese of Canterbury should be searched for shrines, coverings of shrines, tables or monuments of miracles. Any such monument should be taken away, so that there would be no trace left.

The vicar in Lenham, Robert Searles, who was also a preacher in the Canterbury diocese, had strong Catholic leanings and did not agree with Henry that having 'shrines' to saints was idolatrous. There were several images of saints in his church. One saint, whom he especially worshipped, was Mary, the mother of Jesus, and there were several images of her in Lenham.

Being a man of strong conviction, Searles decided to speak to the king and travelled to Hull where the king was at the time. He didn't know that Henry was seriously annoyed with the slow progress of the Reformation, which he had observed on his travel to Hull. Searles's visit came at exactly the worst possible time! Henry took note of Searles' concerns and handed him a letter to Archbishop Cranmer. In this letter he asked Cranmer to send this vicar from Lenham to prison!

It speaks for Cranmer that Searles was spared imprisonment on this occasion. In order to 'control' Searles, Cranmer appointed a new curate, Thomas Dawby, who was a radical reformist and very much in favour of taking down statues and images. He has been described as 'the glaring offender in this matter'. We know that the Lenham congregation pleaded with him to leave them their images and their rood screen, pointing out that there were other churches which still had them or had even put up new ones.



Dawby later became vicar in Wychling, from where it is reported that he took down and destroyed eight images of saints. We don't know how many images Dawby took down and destroyed in Lenham. The effigy of the priest was, unlike in many other churches, spared (was it 'walled' up?) After Dawby had left Lenham, he asked his successor to break into the churchwarden's house and steal the key to the church. After gaining entrance, they dragged out a statue of the Virgin Mary, 'Our Lady of Pity', which had been near the High Altar, and smashed it up. The image shown here is stylistically close, albeit the Lenham sculpture might have been less skillfully carved!



The Pieta at St. Severin in Cologne courtesy of Wikipedia CC BY-SA 3.0

Robert Searles remained in Lenham until 1546 and died in 1571. Although he was heavily involved in plotting against Cranmer (The Prebendaries Plot) he was spared major retribution. It seems however that Searles was not that kind to Cranmer when he was in trouble during the reign of Mary I. That however will need further research.

A longer version of this article can be found on our website: **www.heritagelenham.co.uk**

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‘Kent Loves…’ Artists

Meet Lisa Humphreys of ‘Trinkets’



Three years ago, I wandered into *‘Kent Loves…’* with a couple of jewelled Christmas trees and wreaths. I had no grand business plan, no five-year strategy and absolutely no idea what I was starting!

Thankfully, Jo, the owner of Kent Loves…, was wonderfully supportive. She encouraged me to make more, try new things and, most importantly, believe that people might actually want to buy them.

And that was where the trouble began…

Since then, crafting has rather taken over my life. I’ve made jewelled cards, letters and animal pictures, puzzles, signs, bracelets and all manner of trinkets — including a particularly fabulous rhinestone giraffe head. Because, quite frankly, every home needs one.



Crafting originally came into my life for a very different reason. Anxiety was one of the lasting effects the Covid period left me with and a therapist suggested that having something creative to focus on might help. She really had no idea what she’d unleashed.

I now have a craft shed, a house full of half-formed ideas waiting for their moment, enough supplies to open a small warehouse, and a ridiculously large laser-cutting machine that I absolutely love. More importantly, I’ve discovered a whole community of wonderfully creative, like-minded people. Joining Jo’s shop gave me a new purpose, somewhere to experiment, and someone who encouraged me to keep going — even when I wasn’t quite sure what I was doing!

Of everything I make, my jewelled cards remain my favourites. I love taking old, discarded or broken jewellery and turning it into something completely new — something that, hopefully, people will want to keep.





So, three years after those first Christmas trees, I’m still happily experimenting, making, learning and selling my sometimes slightly dubious wares.

And I’m having an absolute ball doing it.

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A day in the Osteopath Clinic

With Chris Tempest "The Lenham Osteopath"

No.28 High Street, Lenham ME17 2QD
www.thelenhamosteopath.co.uk

Welcome to this edition of a day in the clinic with the Lenham Osteopath. It's been a few weeks since I last spoke to you all about various health issues and this month I have a new one for you. As the days get shorter and winter days approach us, we delve into indoor running season. It's time to discuss those running niggles we all can struggle with, novice or not!

RUNNER'S KNEE

Runner's knee is the common term used to describe any one of several conditions that cause pain around the kneecap, also known as the patella. These conditions include anterior knee pain syndrome, patellofemoral mal- alignment, chondro-malacia patella, and iliotibial band syndrome. As the name suggests, running is a common cause of runner's knee, but any activity that repeatedly stresses the knee joint can cause the disorder. This can include walking, skiing, jumping, cycling, and playing football.

What are the main signs and symptoms of runner's knee?

The hallmark of runner's knee is a dull, aching pain around or behind the kneecap, or patella, especially where it meets the lower part of the thighbone or femur. You may feel pain when: walking, climbing or descending stairs, squatting, kneeling, running, sitting down or standing up & commonly sitting for a pro-longed time with the knee bent. Other symptoms include swelling and popping or grinding in the knee.

What causes Runner's Knee?

The pain of runner's knee may be caused by several factors but predominantly irritation of the soft tissues or lining of the knee, worn or torn cartilage, or strained tendons. Any of the following can also contribute to runner's knee;



overuse, trauma to the kneecap, misalignment of the kneecap, complete or partial dislocation of the kneecap, flat feet, weak or tight thigh muscles, inadequate stretching after exercise, arthritis, a fractured kneecap plica syndrome or synovial plica syndrome, in which the lining of the joint becomes thickened and inflamed. In some cases, pain begins in the back or hip and is transmitted to the knee. This is known as "referred pain."

How can it be treated?

There are various techniques in practice that we use to resolve and speed up the symptoms/ process of runner's knee. The main would be manual therapy, followed by and complimented with exercises, non-steroidal anti inflammatory drugs and painkillers if needed.

Medical acupuncture can also really excel in this condition - we've had some incredible results in practice using this method. All of the above aim to reduce inflammation and improve mobility.

How can Runners knee be prevented?

Simply put - Remain supple: Stretch, gradually increase training and use good quality running shoes. (Also worth noting, a gait analysis is worth every penny!)

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Lenham Primary School

Andrea McCluskey
Headteacher
Lenham Primary School
www.lenham.kent.sch.uk
01622 858260

A Fantastic Start to the School Year at Lenham Primary School

I cannot believe how much has happened since our return in September and, before we know it, we will be preparing for our Christmas celebrations!

This academic year at Lenham Primary School has started with a bang. Our new Rainbow Class children have settled brilliantly into school life. They are working hard with their phonics, making new friends and embracing all the opportunities around them. I have particularly enjoyed teaching them dance and music each week and watching their confidence grow.

We were also delighted to officially open our new Forest School site. The children are thoroughly enjoying their sessions and making the most of the exciting outdoor learning opportunities available to them. As the site opened sooner than originally anticipated, we are currently asking for parental contributions towards Forest School sessions while a member of our staff completes the extensive training required. In the meantime, we are using a qualified Forest School practitioner to lead sessions. The children absolutely love the new site and the experiences it offers.

It has also been a busy term for sporting and enrichment activities. Our boys' and girls' football teams recently attended a tournament at Gallagher Stadium, where they played brilliantly and represented the school with PRIDE. A group of children from across the school were also invited to attend the press launch for Beauty and the Beast at the Hazlitt Theatre. They thoroughly enjoyed the preview and found it very funny!

Our Year 6 pupils have also returned from their residential trip. Throughout the experience, they demonstrated incredible resilience, teamwork and determination. They made their teachers extremely proud and created memories that will stay with them for years to come. Thankfully, they did not keep the staff awake too late either!





We are also delighted to have added several achievements to our celebration wall. Lenham Primary School has been awarded the Music Mark in recognition of our commitment to music education, including the private music lessons offered in school and our whole-class Year 4 ukulele programme. We also raised an impressive £170.49 for Macmillan Cancer Support through a successful cake sale.

In addition, we recently received thanks from the British Deaf Association for funds raised through a special assembly delivered in sign language. This year, we are taking our commitment to British Sign Language even further. Every class has signed up to School of Signs, providing children with the opportunity to learn and develop their BSL skills.

We hope this valuable experience will help our pupils build confidence, communication skills and a greater understanding of inclusivity.



As always, we are incredibly proud of our pupils and the enthusiasm they bring to school every day.

Lenham Gardening Society

From Margaret Baines

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

19th NOVEMBER 2026 at 7.30PM

All proposals for committee membership should be with the Chair 1 week prior to the meeting.

The AGM will be followed by a Cheese & Wine evening. **Tickets £8pp members only**.



This will be the final meeting of the society for 2026; we meet again on 21st January 2027.

Membership costs £8 annually with £1 entrance fee at monthly meetings.

Refreshments served after the talk. Visitors are welcome to meetings except February, July and November which are members only social events.

For further information: Email: gardenlenham@gmail.com or Tel: 07917401228

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Run by family of three (Father, Mother & Son) - John, Joan & Alex, they have been providing printing services for Lenham & surrounding areas since their inception in 2001, and have grown steadily year on year.



Known for their personal approach to work, fantastic service, and attention to detail, they have been a real asset to the community and still continue to be.

But this move is positive for both them and their customer base, as it means expansion and more potential, therefore providing print to businesses and residents in Lenham will continue as normal.

"It's an exciting time for us here", explains son, Alex Perseval. "Having grown up in Lenham and seeing the business grow over the last two and a half decades, it'll be a big miss for Lotus to leave the area, but thankfully we're only down the road and still live locally, so we'll be able to work with our existing customers as normal with no issues.

Our new factory is much larger which in turn allows us to provide new services, be more versatile, and offer reduced turnaround times on production. It was an opportunity we couldn't ignore and so far it's been very promising.

We hope to still see familiar faces and provide our usual service to those who we have had the pleasure of working with over the years."

Lotus offers a variety of print services; from office stationery and brochures, to large signs and banners.

Readers of *Lenham Focus* can get 15% off any print order with Lotus when they quote 'Lotus Focus', valid until 31st January 2027 (valid once per customer).



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Climate Change Is Happening

From Patricia Crawford & RURAL *FOCUS* PRESS GROUP

The weather extremes occurring this year must surely convince sceptics that Climate Change is neither a myth nor a figment of imagination. Of course, weather-related problems and disasters aren't new but there are now more of them, they are more severe (Extreme Weather Events) and they are increasingly devastating. The horrific floods in Nepal are among the latest catastrophic events and scientists have confirmed that the glacier collapse which caused the problem was associated with Climate Change.

Scientists have warned that the 'Super El Nino' which formed a few months ago may result in Extreme Weather Events that could cause damage and devastation costing trillions. El Nino is a natural climate pattern but debate is continuing concerning the extent to which it is affected by the rising temperatures associated with Climate Change. Meanwhile the heatwaves occurring in the UK this year are related to El Nino and scientists warn that, if temperatures continue to rise globally, the UK could experience heatwaves of 40C-plus.

The drought occurring in a large part of the UK this year, including in large parts of the south-east, has worrying implications for food security with farmers and growers battling to keep livestock cool and hydrated and crops watered. A solution to deal with future water shortages - a start-up in California has used high-tech drones to enhance clouds that then generated about 19 million gallons of water in three hours. Food is vitally important so it's good to know the Prime Minister has told MPs that he will focus on farming – no details at the time of writing.

Trees do amazing jobs: they absorb carbon dioxide and provide oxygen; they give us shade and they benefit wildlife. They are beautiful and they enhance natural and developed environments. Many trees produce nutritious fruits and nuts that are important sources of food. The root systems of trees are deep and they help to prevent soil erosion, reduce runoff and flash flooding. Trees provide windbreaks and reduce noise pollution in cities and along motorways. They provide timber for building, furniture production and hundreds of other uses. Imagine the benefits if everyone planted just one tree!

Generally speaking, established trees cope well with hot weather but newly planted saplings require watering. When a hosepipe ban is in operation, use chemical-free greywater from sinks, baths and showers. Check the best species to suit a specific location and soil and, when space is limited, use the RHS website for advice about growing trees in containers.

Cash-strapped governments around the world, desperate to rebalance their national economy, are resulting in projects aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels being shelved. Meanwhile the housing crisis in the UK, Europe and other parts of the world continues with large numbers of houses still being built that don't incorporate climate resistant technologies!

Countryways Quilters and Stitchers

From Pamela Gillard

November is a busy time for us all as we prepare for Christmas holidays. Well it's even busier for crafters if they are trying to get projects finished for gift giving.

Our quilting group's also busy finishing our Christmas projects because this is our last month for the year.

We don't have meetings in December. This is when I need a rest to get myself geared up for 2027, when I will be teaching new skills needed by our new Quilters if they are going to finish making the quilts they started this year. We have some fun news skills for you to try your hand at in the New Year. Let me know if you'd like to find out more.

Come join us at one of our meetings 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.



Our meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month except December and we'd love to see you. We meet in the Osborne room in the Lenham Community Centre from 1:30 to 4:30. If you'd like more info on our group or a copy of our 2026 programme, please contact me, Pamela Gillard at 07914 809946 or email moonbeamspinner@gmail.com



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Lenham Social Club

A BIG ‘Thank You’ from everyone at Lenham Social Club.

What another great month it’s been at Lenham Social Club, and as always, it’s been fantastic to see so many familiar faces, new faces and plenty of community spirit throughout the club.

We recently held our 1st Annual Dog Show – and it was a huge success! It may have been our first, but it certainly won’t be our last!



A massive thank you goes to everyone who helped make the day possible, especially those working behind the scenes. From getting the garden ready and looking its best, to our Best in Class sponsors, our fantastic staff, our customers and, of course, all the wonderful doggies who came along and took part.

It was brilliant to see the garden full of people enjoying themselves, and we’re already looking forward to doing it all again next year!

And November is looking just as busy…

- Every Thursday morning between 9.30am and 1pm is our *Coffee Morning*. A chance to pop in, enjoy a cuppa and a biscuit for just £1, and have a chat with others



- First Thursday of the month 2pm till 4pm is our *Afternoon Hub*. Enjoy a relaxed afternoon with different activities each month like fish and chips, quizzes, music and of course plenty of friendly company.

Plus all this lined up:-

- **Friday 6th November**
  Karaoke – 8pm
- **Sunday 8th November**
  Craft Fair – 9am till midday
- **Friday 13th November**
  Country Singer – 8pm
- **Thursday 26th November**
  Quiz Night – 8pm
- **Saturday 28th November**
  Santa’s Grotto – daytime, as part of the *Lenham Lights Switch On*
- **Saturday 28th November**
  Bingo – 7.30pm, Members Night

There’s plenty to look forward to, with something for everyone. We’re incredibly grateful for the continued support of our members, customers, volunteers, staff and everyone who helps make Lenham Social Club such a welcoming place.

Here’s to another busy month – and plenty more to come!

Come For Coffee on Thursday 19th November

It is never too early to start thinking about Christmas



Do you craft?

We are inviting any local people to have a FREE table at our Coffee morning at the Charing Heath & Lenham Heath Memorial Hall

from 11am-12 (ish)

(set up earlier)

There will also be an opportunity for people to make and buy their own wreaths – all materials provided.

****

……..and if you don't craft do join us for coffee with a chance to shop for Christmas

Please contact either Peta Maidment on 01233 713495

Or Sharon Barkley 07748785748 or via FB if you are interested

An update from your local MP, Helen Whately

This summer, Kent was officially classified as being in drought. We've had a hosepipe ban virtually all year round and multiple major water outages. Water is being tankered along narrow country lanes just to keep our taps flowing.

The fact is, we don't have enough water to supply the current population of this area, let alone thousands more houses. There are 20,000 new houses proposed for Faversham and Mid Kent alone.

Helen taking her 7,000 strong *'Stop the Sprawl'* petition to Downing Street for the direct attention of the Prime Minister. She is now applying for a debate in Parliament to keep the pressure on Ministers to reduce our housing numbers.

Don't just take my word for it. South East Water has said publicly there's not enough water for development planned in neighbouring areas like Tonbridge and Malling. I'm waiting for their judgement on the houses planned for Maidstone and Swale.

There is a new Kent reservoir coming but it won't be operational until the mid-2030s at the earliest.

In the summer, the housing secretary at the time (Steve Reed MP) told BBC South East that new homes "will not be built" if the infrastructure to provide them with water is not in place. That should mean a hard 'no' for the 8,400 houses proposed for Highsted Park near Sittingbourne.

But the change of Prime Minister means a change of Secretaries of State – and that decision will now be made by the current Housing Secretary, Angela Rayner, in November. I am working with local councillors and campaigners to persuade her to refuse the application.



Helen Whately MP at Number 10, Downing Street

Thank you to everyone who has supported my campaign to get the Government to think again about the volume of houses being imposed on rural Kent.

I know we need more homes, but it simply doesn't make sense to build 20,000 more houses on greenfield sites meanwhile brownfield sites in London and other towns are left undeveloped.

If you agree with me, please give me your backing by signing my *Halt the Houses petition* at **www.HaltTheHouses.com**.

Best wishes

Helen

e: helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk
t: 0207 219 6472

The Arts Society Egerton

The Arts Society brings people together through a shared curiosity for the arts

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Wednesday 11th November:

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Presented by **Mark Hill**.

Mark is perhaps best known as a miscellaneous expert on the *BBC's Antiques Roadshow*. He is also an auctioneer and Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars and a Freeman of the City of London.

Visitors are always very welcome at £8 (cash; just turn up and pay on the door), refunded if you join.

To find out more please visit: www.theartssocietyegerton.org.uk or contact our Membership Secretary, Christine on cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377

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Update from Len Valley Practice

From Georgia Lane, Operations Manager

Our Flu and COVID-19 vaccination clinics are now underway. If you are eligible for a vaccination and have not yet received your invitation text, please get in touch with our Reception team, who will be happy to help you book an appointment. If you are unsure whether you are eligible, further information is available on our website.

Our new 24/7 Pharmabox prescription collection service is also now up and running, giving eligible patients greater flexibility when collecting their repeat medication. If you would like to sign up for the service, consent forms are available to collect from the surgery or dispensary. When completing the form, please make sure you provide the correct contact number, as this will be used for notifications about your prescription collection.

As we head towards winter, we would also like to remind patients that there is lots of support available for common illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats and other minor conditions. Our website has a range of useful self-help guides, and further advice can be found on the NHS website.

Your local pharmacy can also help with many common illnesses and minor health concerns, with pharmacists able to provide advice, recommend appropriate treatment and, where suitable, provide treatment through NHS services without you needing to see a GP.

Winter is traditionally one of the busiest times of year for general practice and the wider NHS, so we would encourage patients to make use of all the services and information available to them. This can often help you get the right advice or treatment more quickly, while helping us to keep our appointments available for patients who need to see us.

Of course, if you are concerned about your health or need support from the practice, please do get in touch with us, we are here to help and will make sure you receive the appropriate care.

Thank you for your continued support.

LENHAM FILM CLUB

at Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way

Good News!!!

Lenham Film Club will be reopening.

With a spring in our step, we'll be back with you in late spring 2027.

We'll be in touch nearer the time to give you the exact date and to hear whether you have favourite films you'd like to see. Meanwhile a happy festive season to you all.

The Lenham Film Club team

lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com www.lenhamfilmclub.org @lenhamfilmclub

Contact Details For Local Groups

Badminton	Alan Williamson	01622-858763
Badminton Club Feathers	Robert Day	07984-948524
Borough Councillor	Chris Houliham	chrishouliham@maidstone.gov.uk
Bowling Club	Lyn Fuller	01622-851538
Bridge Club	Keith Rylands	01622-891964
Brownies (2nd Lenham)	Andrea French	01622-851646
Cat Protection	Mid-Kent Branch	0345-3712758
Church Office	Sarah Hills	01622-850604
Community Warden	Laura Worthington-Plant	07353 004630 Laura.Worthington-Plant@kent.gov.uk
Dog Warden (Louise Duke)	Community Protec'n	01622-602117
Drama	Gail Kelly	01622-850671
Fitter/Stronger classes	Paula Hickford	07759-446214
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	Sarah Emberson	sarah.emberson@kent.gov.uk
Kent Highway Services	Roads, paths etc.	03000-418181
Kent Wildlife Trust		01622-662012
Lenham Ballet School	Erica McCabe	07866-316056
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	Amy Myers	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 (Tues-Thurs 10am-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 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	07803-937345
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
Sittingbourne Valley FC	Paul Hewish	07795-324062
Vicar	*Vacancy*	churchoffice@lvb.org.uk
Wellbeing Community Group	Vladimir Barkanov	07877-143088 wellbeingcg@outlook.com
Women's Institute	Chris Godden	01622-858658

Lenham Community Centre - Regular Clubs/Classes/Societies - November 2026

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**
Country Ways Quilting	1st & 3rd Tuesday	1330-1630	01233 879507
Country Ways Rugmaking and quilting	**2nd & last Wednesday**	**0900-1300**	**07784 892160**
Feathers Badminton	Weekly Monday	2000-2200	07984 948524
Gardening Society	**3rd 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**	**1900-2115**	**01622 859725**
LenARA Members	4th Wednesday	1230-1700	01622 851763
LenARA Petanque	**Thursday if weather permits**	**0900-1300**	**01622 858439**
LenARA Zumba Gold	Weekly Wednesday	0900-1030	01622 850278
Lenham Art Group	**Weekly Thursday**	**1000-1300**	**01622 858238**
Lenham Badminton	Weekly Tuesday	2000-2200	01622 858561
Lenham Ballet School	**Monday/Tuesday**	**1700-2030**	**07866 316056**
Lenham Ballet School	Thursday	1630-2100	07866 316056
Lenham Ballet School	**Friday**	**0930-21.30**	**07866 316056**
Lenham Ballet School	Weekly Saturday	0900-1530	07866 316056
Lenham Heritage	**4th Thursday**	**1900-2130**	**01622 850228**
Lenham Toddlers pre-school	Weekly Tuesday	0930-1130	01622 858919
Lenham Meadows Trust	**3rd Thursday**	**1900-2100**	**07831 308267**
Lenham Toddlers Pre-school	Weekly Tuesday	0930-1130	01622 858919
Lenham WI	**2nd Thursday**	**1845-2200**	**01622 858658**
Parish Council	1st Wednesday	1930-2200	01622 829034
Parish Council F & G P	**Monday after P&I**	**1930-2200**	**01622 829034**
Parish Council Planning (P&I)	3rd Wednesday	1930-2200	01622 829034
Pathways Church	**Weekly Sunday**	**0830-1330**	**01622 850366**
Telisa Tai Chi	Weekly Wednesday	1730-1830	07734 108683
Zumba with Rosie	**Weekly Tuesday**	**1830-1930**	**07809 490982**

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Remembrance Services

Sunday 8th November

10.15am

and afterwards at the REME memorial, Lenham Cemetery

Tuesday 11th November

Prayers outside the church for 11am

(gather from 10.45am)



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House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

0207 7219 6472

helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk

helenwhately.org.uk

LENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Council meet on the first Wednesday of each month.

Our committees also meet once a month. These are:-

Finance & General Purposes

Planning & Implementation

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

(Clerk) 01622 829034

clerk@lenhamparishcouncil.org.uk

www.lenhamparish.org.uk

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HEARING AID CLINIC

19 November (1:30–3pm) in the Lenham Community Centre

Our NHS hearing aid aftercare clinic is held at the Lenham Community Centre in Groom Way, Lenham on the third Thursday of each month. Just come along to collect batteries and have new tubing and domes fitted to your aids. Please remember to bring your NHS record book or card. Here is what one Lenham resident has to say about the clinic...

"It is good to have the opportunity to say just how much I value the service by HI Kent. The feeling that I can walk to the centre each month if need be and that there are always nice people to collect my batteries from. When I have problems, they sort things out for me, without having to try and get an appointment and feeling guilty about taking up time in an overstretched NHS. Thank you so much to the volunteers for giving up your precious time and making me feel at ease and reassured - it means so much".

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Guidance from Gerty

You got a problem (real or imagined)? Write to *Gerty* via the editor at **editorialslf@outlook.com**.
Gerty: Solving the problems nobody else takes seriously…

Dear Gerty,

I'm becoming increasingly concerned about my garden gnomes. I have six, and every morning at least one of them has moved. Yesterday Barry was facing the shed. Today he's by the birdbath holding a fishing rod I don't remember buying.

My husband says it's foxes. I think something more sinister is going on.

Worried of the Weald

Dear Worried,

Your husband is clearly in denial.

Gnomes are notoriously territorial and six is far too many for an average-sized garden. Barry has obviously established himself as leader and I fear the fishing rod means he is preparing to become self-sufficient. Do not confront him. Move one gnome into the front garden as a warning to the others and monitor the birdbath closely. If tiny deckchairs appear, you've lost control completely.

Gerty x





Dear Gerty,

Every cat in the village appears to use my begonias as a public convenience. I have tried citrus peel, pepper and shouting "SHOO!" through the kitchen window.

Nothing works.

Desperate in Doddington

Dear Desperate,

You have made a classic mistake. You believe these are your begonias. They are not. They belong to the cats now. Your options are limited. You can cover the flowerbed with netting, install a motion-activated sprinkler, or simply put up a tasteful little sign saying "CAT TOILET – PLEASE LEAVE AS YOU WOULD WISH TO FIND IT."

Village cats respond well to passive aggression.

Gerty x

Dear Gerty,

My neighbour puts her wheelie bin out before mine every single week. Last Tuesday she put it out at 3.15pm. Bin day is Wednesday. I feel she is trying to make a point.

Irritated, Kent

Dear Irritated,

She absolutely is. This sort of behaviour cannot go unanswered. Next week, put yours out on Monday. Say nothing. Maintain eye contact.

Gerty x

Julie's Top Eco Tips...



Soda Crystals! One simple product, so many sustainable uses!

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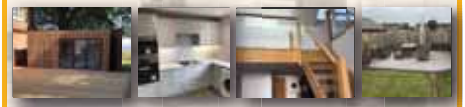
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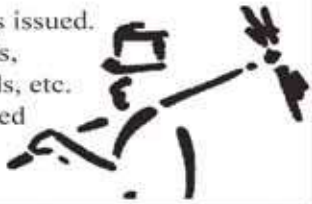
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A View From Across The Pond

By Diane Bonfonte, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

GPS: LAKE ONTARIO (43°30'N, 78°00'W)

Canada contains 2 million fresh water lakes. The most famous are the 5 'Great Lakes'.

LAKE ONTARIO, 14th largest in the world, only touches Ontario's shorelines in Canada. Named by indigenous peoples as 'great lake' or 'lake of shining waters' it was first mapped by British and French circa mid-1600's' with Niagara's awe-inspiring cataracts.

Totaling 7,340 square miles (55% inside Canadian borders), recently its historic name has been attacked with a stroke of a Presidential pen, but, will ONLY ever succumb to any challenger with a series of specific strokes - butterfly, breast or side!

Beaches, plaques, parks and points celebrate and honour solo conquerors who defied daunting odds to successfully swim across minimally 32 miles (usually from Niagara area to greater Toronto or vice versa).





On September 8, 1954 at 11:07pm, 16 year old Toronto born **MARILYN BELL**, dove into dark waters swimming continuously until 21 hours later, she reached Toronto where an estimated 250,000 gathered to witness history - the first person to defeat these waters!

For decades, previous records have been broken - all continuous swims. Not all have been from Canada: Australia, Mexico, UK, Italy and USA to name a few. They established new crossing achievements considering age, grueling extended routes and physical disabilities like Cerebral Palsy and leg amputations.

Canadian Vickie Keith, swam Lake Ontario 5 TIMES (always continuously) choosing different routes affecting her time spent in the water. She also completed swims across ALL 5 Great Lakes, the Catalina Channel, Sydney Harbour and in 1955, the youngest person to swim across the **ENGLISH CHANNEL**!

The world's most famous swim, the **ENGLISH CHANNEL**, is the "benchmark" challenge, a waterway's 'Everest'. Geographically from Dover, across the narrowest point to France, it is substantially more daring due to changing currents making it incredibly difficult to swim a straight route. Also, just imagine the frigid water temperatures, creatures like the dreaded jelly fish and mostly, the unpredictable weather like fog.

Usually departing from Dover's King's Holiday Park, incredibly 100's have triumphed! In 2025, the 100th anniversary of **CAPTAIN MATTHEW WEBB's** achievement to have been the first to swim across the Channel without any artificial aids was observed and **GERTRUDE EDERLE's** same milestone feat (a.k.a. 'Queen of the Waves') was commemorated this past August in Dover.

The tales and trials of marathon-style swimmers are extraordinary examples of human tenacity that the peoples of England's Kent and the Province of Ontario have hosted historic and heroic events on their shores.



Niagara 'On The Lake' plaque – unveiled 1994 looking towards Toronto.

The King's Head, Grafty Green



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Parish Council news

Chair – Cllr John Britt

You will see regular updates on all the parish council's activities in the *Focus*, **www.lenhamparish.org.uk** and social media.

Advance warning

South East Water will be renewing pipes in the Lenham area starting in late October through to the early New Year. This will involve a series of "rolling" road closures.

Work will start in the Square and move along the Old Ashford Road to the A20 and then move to Ham Lane. We have been reassured that the road closures will be lifted over the Christmas period and then resume on 2 January 2027. Both sets of works will involve temporary traffic control at some point.

There may also be interruptions to the water supply as the new pipes get connected; those affected will be given at least 48 hours' notice of that happening.

Preparing for winter

As the nights draw in and the overall temperature gets colder, we are all being encouraged to have a back-up plan for the likelihood of service failures, like power cuts or issues with water. So, I thought it might be useful to repeat some of the national advice in order that we might be a little more prepared for "when" rather than "if" …

If there are power cuts we can lose all sorts of things we rely on, such as heating, the ability to charge our mobile phones (although the signal may also be affected), those of us who now rely on the internet for our "landline" will also find that doesn't work. On a practical note, then, here are some obvious, but often overlooked suggestions:

- In a power cut, torches are safer than candles, so make sure you have a good torch and a supply of the right batteries;
- a small battery powered radio will allow you to hear local news broadcasts, I remember during the "great storm" of 1987 I listened to local radio and realised the impact of what I was experiencing was quite widespread, which helped;
- if the power goes, so will the internet and probably access to apps like Facebook (which I know many rely on for local news);
- if you have one, make sure your portable power bank is charged, this will keep your mobile phone, and other small devices, charged;
- medical equipment – if you rely on powered medical equipment, make sure you are registered with the service provider so that if the power goes, they have your details;
- make sure you are registered with all the relevant national service providers as well, gas, electricity, water – they all have a "service user" register for those who are vulnerable, so make sure your registration is up to date;
- food – it's probably a good idea to have tinned or non-perishable food "in a cupboard" which can be eaten without the need to heat it – especially if you are all-electric;
- don't forget your pets – have a bit of extra food just in case you can't get out or supplies in the shops are restricted;
- toilet rolls – I'm sure we all remember the run on those – I'd suggest a backup supply; that's the first thing that goes short!

- We've all experienced the fragility of the water supply, recently. The national advice is that we all need around 3 litres of water per person, per day for health issues, while washing, toilet flushing, etc. are likely to require a further 7 to 10 litres per day – that's a lot and most people underestimate how much is needed. Clearly, if water is interrupted the water companies will (eventually) set up water stations (and in Lenham that's usually in the car park of the Lenham Community Centre) but having some initial back-up supplies is probably a good idea – and, of course, not everyone has access to a vehicle to fetch heavy cases of bottled water;
- check your neighbours, to make sure they're OK and see if you can help with fetching things like bottled water or other necessities.

If bad weather is expected, there is now a national alert system that sends an alarm and warning to every mobile phone in the area. This was last used during the summer to alert us to possible extreme heat. As things move fast these days, a little preparation is always a good idea!

Remembrance services

The Remembrance services this year will take place on Sunday 8 November, in St Mary's Church, Lenham – for full details check announcements and social media.

As always, the church service will be followed by a special service of remembrance for the fallen REME soldiers buried in the Lenham Cemetery.

Armistice Day (the 11th hour on the 11th day – which marks the exact time the First World War ended) will be marked outside St. Mary's at 11 o'clock on Wednesday 11 November, gathering from 10:45.

… And finally …

The Great Lenham Christmas "switch on" will take place in The Square on Saturday 29 November with events starting at 2:30. The Big Switch On will take place during the afternoon - see social media for exact timings.

Put the date in your diary now!

Recipe of the Month

Cold Brandied Coffee

Ingredients:

6 eggs

½ cup sugar

3 cups coffee (fresh not instant)

4 tbsps good Brandy



Method:

Beat the eggs until light & frothy, add ½ cup of sugar and beat again until smooth. Add the piping hot, fresh coffee very slowly, stirring so as not to cook the eggs. Add the brandy.

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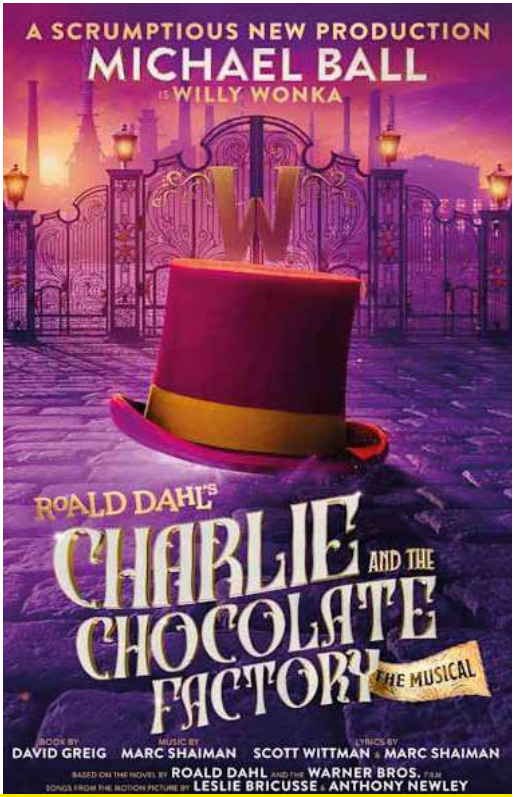
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Nature Watch

By Darren Hammond

Firebugs are hot this year

This year has been a bumper year for seeing a lot more bugs and butterflies and some very different to the ones we normally see.

I have noticed a couple in particular, one being the hummingbird hawk moth and the other the amazingly coloured firebug. While the firebug has been spotted in the UK, it has been classed, till recently, as rare as it was only found in Devon. This year has been particularly hot and therefore a lot of new sightings have sprung up.







Origin story

This wonderfully coloured bug is found commonly in mainland Europe and regions much further afield, but historically in the UK it was only found on the island of Ore Stone in Devon. In recent years (only the last couple really) the firebug has extended its range, including moving into Kent.

What they look like

The firebug has a very bright red body with incredible distinct markings that kind of look like a mask. The spots and triangle look very much like eyes and a nose.

They have a flattened, oval-shaped body, usually reaching about 10mm in length, and their colour and markings make them easy to spot against green grass or bark. They can sometimes be confused with the cinnamon bug which looks a bit like them but has a mostly red head.

Where to see them

Firebugs can be found around a few different trees like lime and chestnut trees and tree mallow, among others, feeding on fallen seeds and dead plant tissue.

Sometimes they even eat dead insects, so they act as a garden clean-up crew. They can gather in large numbers; one gathering

Photos relating to Nature Watch pages: © DPH Nature Photography





was at least in the hundreds that I witnessed, or they can be found on their own or in small numbers.

They can be found year round although they are much more active in the warmer months when they tend to gather. They like to sunbathe to get warm so you will often see them on the sunny side of a tree, fence or in sunny patches on the ground.

Though they have wings, not all fly

Despite being a bug, most individuals are what are called “brachypterous”, which means their wings are too short for flight, leaving them grounded and fast-moving on foot.

Only a few of the adults will have wings long enough to fly and these adults are thought to be the ones that are the reason for their spread to the UK and the new areas they are found in.

Do the bright colours mean danger?

The Firebug is completely harmless to humans. They do not bite, they do not sting and they do not carry diseases. Their bright colours are “aposematic,” which is nature’s way of saying “I taste bad.”

While not deadly, birds and predators usually avoid them because they produce a foul-smelling (but non-toxic) liquid when threatened. And unlike many other garden bugs, they rarely cause much damage to healthy plants, as they prefer fallen seeds over fresh leaves.



Fun Firebug Fact

Firebugs were the subjects of a major scientific breakthrough!

In the 1960s, researchers discovered that certain American paper products contained a chemical that acted like a “juvenile hormone” for these bugs, preventing them from ever reaching adulthood — a discovery that helped scientists understand how to create safer, hormone-based pest controls.

However this chemical was not in European paper products.

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Brighten The Dark Days

Says Gail Duff (07720-592126)

I am writing this a few days after the Autumn Equinox and, although the evenings and the mornings are getting gradually darker, the sun is still shining and the days are still warm.

By the time you read it, our mornings and evenings will be considerably darker and, unless climate change has gone totally out of control, we will be experiencing much colder weather. Sometimes, the dark and the cold can make you feel down, but singing with other people has been proved to lift the spirits considerably.

Combine this with an evening walk around local lanes with a bunch of friendly people, providing householders with a little Christmas entertainment and a chance to help a local charity and you may have found the recipe for brightening your mood.

It is time once again to give you advance warning of our annual **Carol Singing jaunts around Lenham Heath and Charing Heath**.

We will be pleased to welcome both residents and those from further afield to come and join in the singing around these villages in the run-up to Christmas.



The dates are **Thursday 17th December (Lenham Heath)** and **Monday 21st December (Charing Heath)**. Put the dates in your diary and look out for an article in the December *Focus* Magazine giving details of times and venues.

As usual, we will collect for **The Martha Trust** (***www.marthatrust.org.uk***), an organisation based in Deal which provides inclusive, lifelong care for people with profound physical and multiple learning difficulties.

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Simple Wellbeing: Savour the Season

By Vladimir Barkanov

In my earlier articles, I have already raised the topic of savouring — something I cannot praise highly enough. It is simple, accessible, and yet remarkably powerful. When we savour, we become more mindful, more connected with our emotions and more capable of experiencing happiness. It can calm the mind, reduce anxiety, and interrupt negative thought loops. All we need to do is notice something beautiful, and then notice the positive emotions that arise within us in response.

Over the past couple of years, I have had the opportunity to see how simple wellbeing practices — including savouring — have brought greater joy, and even a sense of serenity, into the lives of several friends who are actively putting them into practice. It is remarkable how much transformation can be achieved with practically no effort.

There are countless things we can savour. This time, however, I would like to encourage you to savour the season — and more particularly, autumn. Of course, every season is worth savouring, and everyone has their own preferences and favourite time of year. But autumn offers so much richness.

The summer heat has passed. Nature begins to change. Soon the trees will turn, bringing their own special magic. The smells shift too, offering that earthy scent of fallen leaves that is so distinctive.

Yes, autumn eventually brings some discomfort, but if we pay proper attention, we can discover that even the less comfortable aspects of the season can be savoured. Shorter days bring earlier — and often more spectacular — sunsets.



Strong winds make the trees move in such an extraordinary way. Rain has its own charm. Even the combination of rain, wind, and cold can be appreciated if we allow ourselves to notice the strength and playfulness of nature.

And then there are the Halloween decorations, harvest celebrations, and apple-pressing days — moments that bring a sense of community and belonging.

I cannot confidently say that autumn is my favourite time of year, nor could I say that about any other season. But I love autumn for its variety. It teaches me to love many things — different, contrasting, and unexpected. It also makes me feel grateful for all the gifts nature offers us, a feeling I am sure many of you will recognise.

Let us notice it more this year, and see whether it enhances our lives.

Christian Message

The Kindness That Changes Us

From Ben Doggett, Pathways Church

"Be kind."

It is a simple message and one that we seem to hear increasingly often. In a world where people can be quick to criticise and tear one another down, kindness is certainly something worth encouraging! But what does kindness actually mean?

The picture of kindness that is painted in the Bible is much richer than simply being nice or polite. In the New Testament, the Greek word that is translated as 'kindness' carries the idea of a kindness that meets a real need. It is kindness that is expressed at just the right time and in the just the right way. It is kindness that does something. And the Bible says that this kind of kindness begins with God.

Paul writes in Titus 3:4-5: But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. God's kindness is not just a warm feeling towards us. It is kindness in action. He offers us forgiveness, frees us from shame and guilt and gives us new life with him. God's kindness is intended to lead us home to him. His response to us is not condemnation but an invitation to repentance, mercy and restoration.

His invitation is not to carry an unbearable burden but to discover the kindness of his heart. The more we understand God's extraordinary kindness towards us, the more it changes how we see ourselves and subsequently how we see other people.

Rather than simply trying harder to be nice, we are invited to allow God's kindness towards us to produce kindness through us. Elsewhere in his letters, Paul encourages us to look beyond our own interests and consider the interests of others. Sometimes that will mean something significant. More often, it will be smaller, like noticing someone who needs encouragement, giving someone our time, or helping when it's inconvenient.

These small acts matter. They can change the atmosphere of a home, a workplace or even a community. Instead of simply going along with the existing culture, consistent acts of kindness can create a new culture, one that begins to look a little more like God's kingdom.

Of course, kindness can be costly. We may give to people who cannot give anything back, or to people we don't think deserve it. Our kindness may go unnoticed. But God's kindness towards us was never dependent on us deserving it. Perhaps the place to begin is simply to receive it. To open ourselves up to the kindness of God and to allow it to take root in us. Then, one ordinary day at a time, we can become people through whom that same kindness reaches others.

Len Valley Benefice

Everybody is welcome

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.
1 John 4 v7 (part)

Sunday 1 November
9:15am Lenham: Breakfast Church
11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Wednesday 4 November
9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion

Sunday 8 November
10.15am Lenham: Remembrance Service

Sunday 15 November
8.00am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)
9.15am Lenham: Breakfast Church
11.00am Lenham: Morning Worship

Sunday 22 November
11.00am Benefice Holy Communion Service at Ulcombe

Wednesday 25 November
7.00pm St Mary's, Lenham: Installation and Induction of the Revd. Simon Tillotson as Rector of the Len Valley Benefice at St Mary's, Lenham

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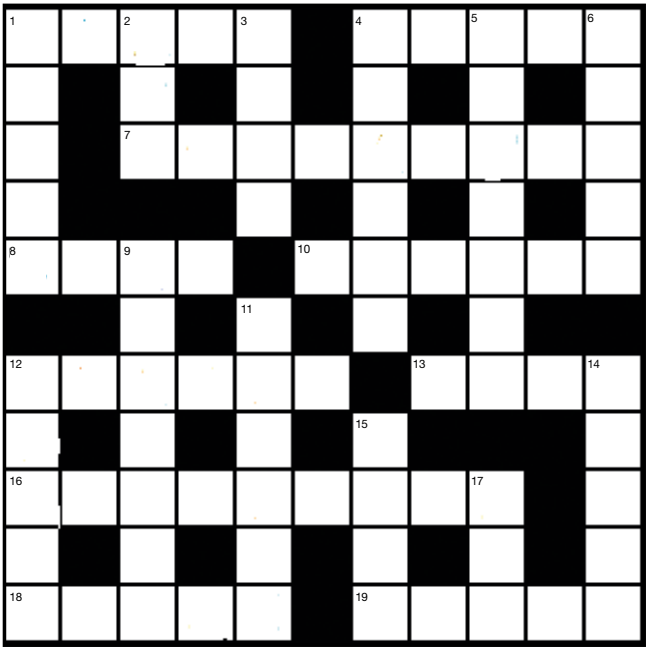
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Focus PRIZE Crossword November 2026

The winner of the September crossword is Maureen Town of Lenham Heath. Well done!



Answers for October 2026 *Focus* Crossword



Across clues

1. Bird that is sent as ‘round’ at Christmas. (5)
4. Full stop, for example. (5)
7. Musician who likes to blow his own. (9)
8. Where Carnaby Street is. (4)
10. Walks in a proud confident way. (6)
12. Raptor (anagram). (6)
13. A green winged duck. (4)
16. A type of collective investment. (4,5)
18. Long-legged heron. (5)
19. Male duck. (5)

Down clues

1. South American ostriches. (5)
2. A night time flier. (3)
3. A type of word that is used to name any object. (4)
4. Small brown songbirds. (6)
5. Enter uninvited. (7)
6. Seabirds associated with ‘sandwich’. (5)
9. Dog related to a Beagle. (7)
11. Small bird commonly seen in New Zealand. (6)
12. What to do to a rose in winter. (5)
14. Stay somewhere for a short time. (5)
15. Supply money for a cause. (4)
17. Cha. (3)

A **£10 voucher**, donated by your crossword compiler, will go to the first correctly completed crossword picked from your entries. Please complete the box below and hand your entries into the Lenham Parish Council offices at 1a High Street Lenham or into the Lenham library by **no later than 23 November** 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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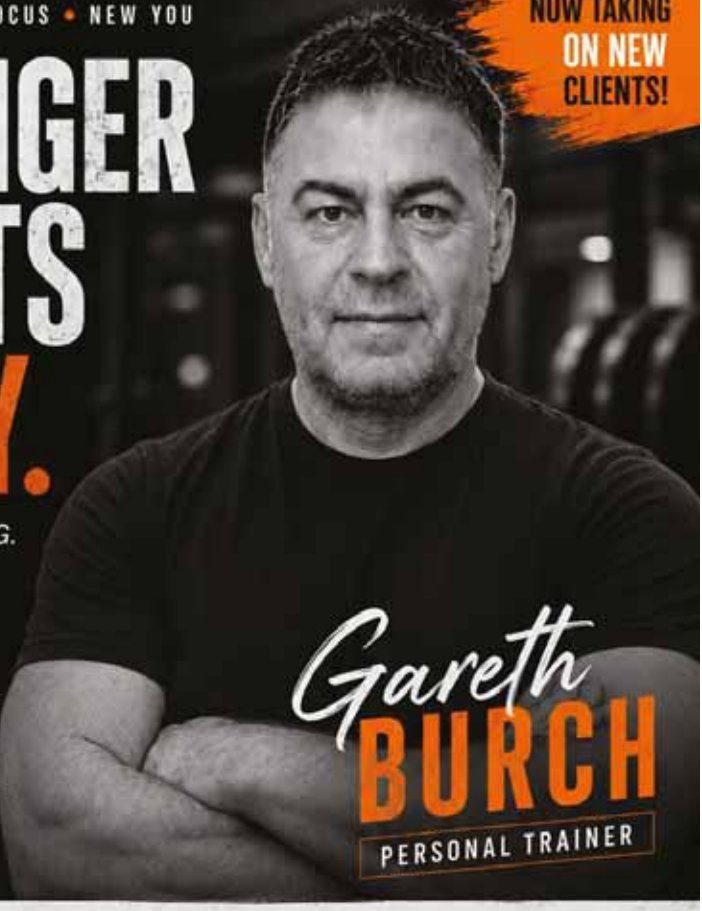
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