



IGHTHAM MAGAZINE

MAY 2026
PUBLISHED FOR THE COMMUNITY
BY ST PETER'S CHURCH

£1.00



Services in the Benefice in May 2026

	Ightham		Wrotham	
Sun 3rd May	9am	Breakfast@Church	10:30am	Holy Communion with Healing Prayers
	6pm	Evensong		
Sun 10th May	10am	Holy Communion	9am	Breakfast@Church at Wrotham Pavillion
			10:30am	No service
Sun 17th May	10am	Service of the Word	10:30am	Holy Communion
	6pm	Evensong		
Sun 24th May	10am	To be confirmed 10:30am Sung Matins	9am	Breakfast@Church
Sun 31st May	10am	United Benefice Holy Communion		No services

Wednesday services

Wednesday services

6th May	10am	Morning Prayer
13th May	10am	Holy Communion
20th May	10am	Morning Prayer
27th May	10am	Holy Communion

Churchyard Working Party

There will be a churchyard working party on Saturday 9th May from 10am until noon. There is plenty to be done to help keep our churchyard as a haven for both people and wildlife and many hands make light work. Please bring your own tools. Coffee and biscuits will be provided. For more information please contact Naomi Webster 07421 832919 or churchwardens@ighthamchurch.org.uk.

THANK YOU!



Penny for your thoughts...

May is a wonderfully anticipatory month as it hovers in the calendar just before June, and mid-summer.

It's also a brilliantly floral month, with Chelsea, local craft fairs, and flower festivals. All these elements are reflected in this month's Magazine. You can help garden in the churchyard; take a botanical drawing class at Great Comp; gain inspiration from Tom Hart-Dyke's World Garden at Lullingstone; learn about veggie planting at

Penshurst or have an introduction to beekeeping at Bore Place and much more besides. What wonderful indulgences lie ahead! The greatest anticipation though, is almost at an end as the Benefice's new incumbent, Revd Stewart Gibbs arrives in June. So let's delight in May with the knowledge that there's something even more exhilarating to come in June! As Martin Luther King Jr reputedly said, "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." May is, so to speak, the first step into an exciting future! Hurrah!

Penny Cracknell

CONTACTS

The Benefice of Ightham and Wrotham THE PARISH OF ST PETER'S, IGHTHAM

Registered Charity No. 1136162

Rector: Parish in vacancy
Church Warden: Naomi Webster T: 07421 832919
E: churchwardens@ighthamchurch.org.uk
Benefice Administrator: Jane T: 07940 547310
E: admin@ighthamchurch.org.uk

IGHTHAM MAGAZINE

Editorial: Penny Cracknell T: 07811 066253
E: cracknellpa@gmail.com
Advertising: E: stpetersadverts@btinternet.com
Subscription: E: magazine@ighthamchurch.org.uk

Copy deadline for the June edition is 15th May

MEDITATE

HAVE YOU HEARD OF?

If you want an example of someone who can show you their faith through their works, Caroline Chisholm is a saint for you. This doughty little 19th century English woman had such a compassionate heart that she helped tens of thousands of people, from India to Australia.

Caroline was born in Northamptonshire in May 1808. Her father William was a pig dealer, and already had 15 children, by four wives. When Caroline was about five, her father brought a poor maimed soldier into the family home and urged his children to look after the wretched man well, as he had fought for their freedom. This disinterested compassion for a poor struggling 'outsider' would become the lodestar of Caroline's life.

In 1830, when Caroline was 22, she married Captain Archibald Chisholm, of the East India Company Army. Out in Madras, Caroline grew alarmed for the young girls growing up in the barracks. She founded the Female School of Industry for the Daughters of European Soldiers, to provide a practical education.

After having two sons and working on the Indian subcontinent for a number of years, Captain Chisholm was granted a two-year furlough in 1838 on grounds of ill health. The family moved to the sunshine of Australia, near Sydney. Here Caroline was appalled at the conditions that faced emigrants, especially female, arriving in the colony.

Many ended up working the streets, just to survive.

Caroline stayed for seven years in Australia, placing more than 11,000 people in homes and jobs, and in all, her Female Immigrant Home helped more than 40,000 people. Highly respected by the government, she gave evidence before Legislative Council Committees, but accepted money from no one. When Archibald left the army in 1845 he and Caroline toured Australia at their own expense, collecting more than 600 statements from emigrants that detailed the truth about the problems of emigration.

Back in England, the statements caught the attention and respect of Charles Dickens, the House of Lords Select Committees, Lord Shaftesbury, Sir Sydney Herbert, Wyndham Harding FRS and even Pope Pius IX. Caroline and Archibald went on to help more than 3,000 people safely emigrate to Australia, before moving back there themselves, where they both died in 1877. In his novel *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens is said to have partly based the character of Mrs Jellyby on Caroline Chisholm.

“**But the silence in the mind, is when we live best, within a listening distance of the silence we call God . . .**

RS Thomas

PLAXTOL LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The Development of Houses

David Carder gave a superb talk on the construction of medieval houses with explanatory architectural drawings. These were illustrated with photographs of medieval houses at the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum. This museum, opened in 1970, was the vision of Roy Armstrong, historian and educator who rescued and rebuilt the houses on the museum site in a stripped-down form. One of these houses is currently known as the BBC home of The Repair Shop. We were first introduced to a replica of a simple Anglo Saxon flint home c950 with a thatched roof. It had a stone bread oven, open hearth and unglazed windows. David Carder next explained how box framed timber 14th century houses were pre-assembled and transported to the site. Carpenters' marks showed where each timber fitted to the next. Wealden hall houses are local to Kent and Sussex. There are 390 in Kent. Spoute House is a Plaxtol example with its jettied first floor. These hall houses had open hearths, open to the roof with a smoke vent or louvre, usually obvious by the dark smoke markings on the roof timbers. Once chimneys were built, floors became possible making two extra rooms in

the solar but dividing the open hall into two. The buttery was where the beer butts were kept. The central position of the chimney and the main entrance often denotes the previous existence of an older hall house. Roof construction was complicated. A-frame roof timbers were strong but needed support from a crown post to prevent lateral movement, not to support the roof itself, contrary to what many of us thought. Hipped roofs had small triangular gables to allow space at the top for where the roof timbers met. When very small they were called gablets. There is an example seen today at the end of the roof in 1 Church Row. After such an illuminating talk most of us will be looking at the older buildings in Plaxtol with fresh eyes.

V.Dusseck

**Our next talk will be on
Tuesday 12th May at 8pm
in the Memorial Hall when
after the AGM Dr. Daniella
Gonzales will talk on
Researching the Archives for
Beginners.**

plaxtollocalhistory.wordpress.com



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COMMUNITY EVENT

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IGHTHAM RECREATION GROUND

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come and have fun!**

food &
drink stalls

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LOOKING AHEAD

As we pause and catch our breath at the end of the interregnum, preparing for the next chapter with our new Rector to begin; it seems an appropriate moment to explain how our church is managed. It's an exciting time and if you were interested in joining the PCC you could play a part in helping steer this next stage of the journey at St Peter's. Let me tell you more.

What PCC should really mean... People Caring at Church?

Officially PCC stands for the Parochial Church Council - a bit of a confusing mouthful! The PCC is the church's decision-making body, led by the Rector and the Church Wardens. It's essentially like the Trustees of a charity, the management team of a school or a co-parenting team in a family - they are people who care and want to make a difference for others.

PCCs are formally elected at the Annual Meeting (St Peter's is on Sunday 10th May) and provides an opportunity for us to look back at the past year and forward to the new year ahead. This year, of course, it's a really exciting time as our new Rector, Rev Stewart Gibbs will be installed in June, so the PCC will help shape this next chapter in our church family's life. Being on the PCC, and particularly being a Church Warden, is rather like running a household. We want to make sure that everyone is okay, and that things are running smoothly with a wary eye on the building and the finances. The good thing about doing this as a PCC is that you are part of a team, and many hands make lighter work.

Your chance to join

This year we have a couple of PCC members, as well as the ongoing vacancy for a second Church Warden, so if you have felt called to get more involved with the church, this could be your moment! Being relatively new to St Peter's isn't a problem as we like a mix on the PCC of both longer-term church family members and those who are newer who bring fresh perspectives and new ideas.

What's involved?

There are 6-7 PCC meetings a year, usually held on Monday evenings in the Church Centre or sometimes on Zoom - we know that this can help people attend when they can't physically get to the church centre, eg to help with child care. There are opportunities to get involved in particular interest areas; some people are more involved with aspects of pastoral care, while others are more involved with building maintenance or community events, or provide a more general perspective. Find out more

If you are interested or have any questions, please speak to Naomi, the Church Warden, or another PCC member. David Colbear has offered to chat with anyone curious about balancing being a PCC member with family life. And of course, even if you don't want to join the PCC, you are still welcome to come to the APCM on Sunday 10th May (those on the electoral roll can vote) and we will have lunch in the Church Centre afterwards.

To help us gauge numbers for catering, if you are planning to come to lunch, please add yourself to the list by clicking here or using the QR code: <https://forms.gle/cQxeefGcVDSHdgPm7>



And if you are not yet a regular church attendee but have some questions or feel a nudge to explore ideas of faith further, check out this month's article by Max Robinson about his journey, Coming to Faith.

Thank you

Finally a big thank you to all the current PCC members for their dedicated work in keeping things running smoothly over the last interregnum year. It has been a team effort and we are all really excited about the new era beginning in June.

Best wishes,

Naomi Webster – Church Warden

IGHTHAM IGHTHAMS

On Saturday 9th May we will have our monthly Men's Breakfast at the George and Dragon in Ightham, at 8.30 am. This continues our monthly visits which have taken place for over 15 years. We enjoy an excellent full English breakfast on the second Saturday of the month.

We will be very pleased if any newcomers would like to join us for some good conversation over a leisurely breakfast in lovely surroundings. If you would like to join us and / or would like to have a regular reminder, please can you let me, John Webster, know via email: jnhjk.webster@btinternet.com; or phone: 01732 884819.

Please book your place by contacting John Webster jnhjk.webster@btinternet.com.



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10.15am
to 11.45am
every
Wednesday

Church
Centre

The charity for May is **Christian Aid**, celebrating Christian Aid Week (10 – 16 May). The charity exists 'to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty'.

MORE IGHTHAM IGHTHAMS

Ightham Magazine

Subscribe to the Ightham Magazine and keep up to date with local news and events; read the latest Parish Council deliberations; and find contacts for local trades. The annual subscription is £10, for 10 issues delivered free to your door. Payment can be made by standing order, cheque or cash. To subscribe, please contact E: magazine@ighthamchurch.org.uk



St Peter's Church Parent, Baby & Toddler Group

New to Ightham? New mum at home? New child carer?



**Thursday
10 - 11.30 am
(term time only)
in St Peter's
Church**

From napping newborns to toddlers on trikes, this friendly and welcoming group would love to see you! Come along to meet local Mums and carers over coffee/tea, and yummy home-baked cake.

Need to know more?

The Group's leader, Kirsty Mitchem, will be delighted to hear from you. T: 01732 885072.

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Please note that the new email address for the Parish Clerk, Sarah Huseyin, is:

clerk@ighthamparishcouncil.gov.uk

The new parish website address is:

www.ighthamparishcouncil.gov.uk

ST PETER'S NEWS

Green fingered collaboration School children help with planting new churchyard trees

Following the removal of the problem trees from the churchyard at the end of last year, the church's Green Team was keen to ensure new saplings were planted before the Spring growing season began. Luckily they were able to get some help from Ightham Primary School's Eco-Council and Science Ambassadors!



Church Warden Naomi and Jenny from the Green Team went into school for a fun, interactive session on the importance of trees and picking the right tree for the right place. With the children's help, a plan was devised to plant 34 native saplings grown by the Woodland Trust. These included suitable species for hedgerows and supporting wildlife including blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose and hazel amongst others. The following week the children visited the church and despite the rain helped plant the saplings to start creating a hedgerow between the Church

Centre and neighbouring Church Cottage. The Green Team also planted additional saplings at the bottom of the church yard to support the meadow area's biodiversity. We look forward to watching the saplings grow and support more biodiversity around the church. Thank you to Mrs

Cook and everyone who helped arranged the visits and especially the children for their hard work despite the rain!

CHURCH COMMUNITY SPRING CLEAN

Ahead of the new Rector's arrival, we'd like to give the church a good Spring Clean so it's looking its best for Stewart's arrival. As they say many hands make light work so if you are able to lend a hand we will have a drop-in cleaning session on **Saturday 30th May from 10am to 2pm**; come for as long or as short a time as you can. There will be a variety of tasks for all abilities and ages - children welcome too! We'll provide tea and cake to keep everyone energised. Please help us make our church shine!

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MAY we suggest . . .

- Seeing The HandleBards at **Riverhill Himalayan Garden** for a bicycle-powered, laugh-out-loud production of Shakespeare's As You Like It. Fri 22 May, 5 – 7pm.
- Touring **Lullingstone Castle's** exotic World Garden with Tom Hart Dyke, a whistle-stop tour of 7000 plants! 1-4 May, 1.30 pm daily.
- Joining Cygnets Art School for a family-friendly Botanical Art Workshop at **Great Comp Garden**. Sun 17 May, 10 am – 12.30 pm
- Taking a fun trail at **Ightham Mote!** Ruby Plants a Radish Trail. Mon 11 to Sun 31 May, 10am-5pm. Or picnic on the North Lawn to hear the fantastic Kent silver band, Biggin Hill Band, Sun 24 May.
- Learning how to plant your own vegetable garden at **Penshurst Place**. Wed 13 May, 10am – 1pm.
- Visiting **Hever Castle** for Castle Canines, a fun filled dog event! Sun 10 May, 10.30 am – 6 pm.
- Considering a new hobby with a day's Introduction to Beekeeping at **Bore Place**. Sun 17 May 10 am – 4 pm.
- Gaining inspiration at **Knole** from artist Chinwe Russell and chat to her about the bold and colourful paintings in the 20 Historical Women Who Changed the World series. Fri 8 May, 3.30 – 4.30 pm.

Check websites for full booking and ticket details.

All book worms should head to Borough Green and Sevenoaks Libraries where they'll find a cornucopia of literary delights, including children's activities! Check the Kent Library service website <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries> or call



T: 03000 41 31 31 for opening hours and up to date information.

Ramblers -

May 2026

Stroll or stride . . .

. . .with our friendly group of Kent Ramblers, part of the national Ramblers walking organisation.

You don't have to be a Ramblers' member to sample a few walks to help you decide if you'd like to join. If you're new, we suggest contacting the walk leader beforehand to check their walk's suitability.



May's rambles remind us of the area's rich heritage of history, agricultural glories and natural beauty. Full details can be found on [Upcoming Walks](#) link or [Facebook page](#) or E: info@tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming you!



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IGHTHAM WI

Another full complement of members gathered for our April meeting with five on Zoom plus two visitors from Australia (daughter and granddaughter - visitors always welcome).

Last month's Minutes were approved together with the Committee and social activity reports. A beautiful and very welcome display of raffle prizes made members keen to buy a winning ticket! The President then introduced our speaker for the evening, Eddie Prescott on 'The Airmen of RAF West Malling'.

Kings Hill was formerly known as Kings Wood and we were shown various aerial maps from 1906. Names have changed over the years from Maidstone School of Flying, Maidstone Airport and Malling Aero Club which hosted flying clubs and air shows. In 1940 - 1945 RAF West Malling became a key World War II night-fighter base and although badly bombed during the Battle of Britain, was known for defending London against V1 flying bombs. It hosted Bristol Beaufighters, de Havilland Mosquitos and the wonderful Spitfires that we still sometimes see flying over Kent.

There were a lot of courageous young airmen that flew out of RAF West Malling. One infamous Eric "Winkle" Brown flew 487 types of aircraft and held the world record for aircraft carrier deck take-offs and landings.

theWI INSPIRING WOMEN

Also Guy Gibson, Bob Graham, Johnny Johnson, to name just a few, and a photograph we all recognised was that of Flight Lieutenant Peter Townsend.

Although Kings Hill is now totally unrecognisable as an airfield, there are various commemorative statues scattered around as a constant reminder of the brave men who fought and the vital role they played in WWII.

New members and visitors are always welcome. Any enquiries, please contact Helen Johnson, President, Ightham WI.

E: happyflowersgs@live.co.uk

***May meeting: AGM plus
traditional Plant Stall***

The Tennis year starts 1st April - join now!

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CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2026

Christian Aid Week will take place from 10th - 16th May this year. St Peter's house-to-house collection will return in the same format as last year. Envelopes will be delivered to houses within the village but, instead of being collected, instructions will be included to donate online or to return your envelope to a designated drop-off location.



We will also be holding a plant sale and coffee shop on Saturday 16th May at the Church Centre from 10am - 12 noon. Plant donations would be warmly welcomed, please bring along on the day. If you have any queries, or wish to donate plants in advance, please get in touch with Sarah Reid: sarahlou8u@gmail.com or 01732 789400.

Our e-envelope may also be accessed here: <https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2026/st-peters-ightham-envelope>

Or scanning this QR code:



FROM YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

“Water is a very basic thing that we should be able to provide to all our homes across the country.” That was the Minister’s response when I hosted a debate in Parliament on the inadequacy of our local water system, particularly in the light of housing targets being imposed on our Councils. Yet, as many residents will remember, parts of our community went days without water as recently as January.

Water is the most essential resource we have, and yet plans are moving forward for thousands of homes across our villages without the necessary supporting infrastructure. This isn’t the fault of our Councils, the housing targets are mandated by the Government and they don’t take into account water infrastructure constraints.

In a letter to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, South East Water confirmed that current infrastructure can support drinking water for just 6,318 homes between now and 2042. This stands in stark contrast to the Government’s housing target of 19,620 homes for the same area. Quite simply, the numbers do not add up.

In Sevenoaks District Council area South East Water are one of four suppliers. However, each of them fails to engage in detail with the Council on planning proposals. This is a system which must change.

When questioned about their legal obligations under the Water Industry Act 1991, South East Water acknowledged that they do not have sufficient supply to meet this level of demand. They also warned that the likelihood of further

outages, like those experienced in January, would increase as more homes are built.

Even with planned improvements set out in the Water Resources Management Plan, South East Water has stated that they will still fall short of meeting the Government’s targets. While the Government has indicated an intention to address these issues, the proposed solutions are long-term and fail to account for the fact that many of these homes are being built now.

I will continue to press the Government to bring housing targets in line with infrastructure capacity. In the meantime, I encourage residents to share their experiences so I can continue to represent your concerns. You can watch the full debate on my YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@tomtugendhat



Contact details:

E: tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk
T: 01732 441563
Post: 130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SP
Web: www.tomtugendhat.org
Social Media - @TomTugendhat

Best wishes
Tom
Tom Tugendhat MBE MP - Member of
Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling

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IGHTHAM QUILTERS AND CRAFTERS



Are you a crafty person interested in quilting, knitting, embroidery or any similar hobby?

We are a friendly group who meet at Ightham Village Hall every other Wednesday, 10 am - 4 pm.

It costs £8 a day which includes tea, coffee and cake. There is free parking and easy access.

If you would like to join us, get more information and enjoy a free taster session, please contact Judy at judy.beaven@hotmail.co.uk

We would love to see you!



Songs for a summer evening *King's Men*

St Peter's Church Ightham TN15 9JD
14th July 2026 Bar 7pm Concert 7.30pm

Tickets £25 by phone or in person:

The Hutch Deli, Sevenoaks Road,
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01732 781134



Photo: Martin Bond
<https://www.kingsmencambridge.co.uk>



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Highway problems including potholes, drainage and overgrown roadside foliage: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Community Police Contact:

Our local contacts are: Inspector Terry Newman;
Sgt Nick Atkinson; PC Dylan McElligott and Irina Mgebrisvili, Community Liaison Officer - PSE.



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COMMUNITY EVENT

You are invited by

Thursday, 7th
May 5.30pm



to attend a

Refreshments
provided

Horticultural & Hanging Basket Demo



@ **Greenacres Garden Centre**

Borough Green Road, Ightham, TN15 9JA

Please contact Cedric, 07730 733 894 or Paula, 07753 408 755 to book your place

NEWS FROM IGHTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ightham School have been enjoying a well-deserved Easter holiday. We look forward to telling you about their summer term experiences in our next issue.



FRIENDS OF IGHTHAM SCHOOL

Friends of Ightham School (FOIS) are an active support and fundraising group for Ightham Primary School.

We are always keen to hear from new 'friends' and grateful to everyone who is already involved. Get in touch by contacting Mark Keenor, Chair of Trustees, 07770 440343

COMING TO FAITH:

by Max Robinson, PCC Treasurer and Occasional Preacher at St Peter's Church

The following is a synopsis of a talk I gave at St Peter's on Sunday 19th April 2026 which, coincidentally was the 40th anniversary of the event described below.

We were sitting on a sofa at home with my wife Judith's father and he dropped dead of a heart attack in front of us. The day before his wife (Judith's mother) had died of cancer, and the week before that my father had also died of cancer. We had lost 3 parents in the space of 8 days. Devastating. Judith's parents were in their 50s, and Judith's dad would have been lost without his wife. I remember saying to Judith – "it's like a miracle, he has been taken to be with her".

What is odd about that comment is that until that point I had been an atheist. I did not believe in God or Jesus, but suddenly something, seemingly supernatural, had happened that made me question my lack of faith. I'd not really given it any thought previously, but now I felt I needed to investigate.

Looking back, I'm not sure whether I was searching for God or he was searching for me. Because unbeknownst to me, God was already on the case. I found myself in a kind of Christian sandwich!

We were living in Hong Kong at the time, and we had recently hired a new Filipino helper who it turned out was an evangelical Christian. She had been praying for us. And at work, I discovered that my boss was studying to become an ordained Church of England priest, and that he too was praying for us. He was someone I could talk to about it - I could pop into his office and talk about the existence of God, about Jesus, and about the bible. God was making it as easy for me in my hunt for the truth as he possibly could.



In my logical way, I concluded that before I could believe that Jesus was the Son of God, I needed to believe that there was a God who had created everything. No-one has been able to prove the existence of God, or disprove it, but what were the arguments for and against, and what seemed to be the most likely truth?

So I started to read books about the existence of God, and was surprised at how much the story of creation in the bible aligned with the scientific theories around Big Bang and evolution. That, and

the evidence of the amazing natural world around me, convinced me that, on the balance of probabilities, there had to be some intelligent designer, a divine creator, behind it all.

At this stage I hadn't really considered God's relationship to us, as humans, merely that we were his creation. But of course, he does have a relationship with us – he loves us so much he sent his son to die for us. But that seemed like a very big step for me. How did I know Jesus was real? We know about Jesus from the bible, the New Testament, and how could I trust that as a reliable record?

Fortunately, the question "how do I know that the New Testament is a real historical document" was a fairly easy one to answer. There are massively more examples of the various gospels and letters in existence written shortly after Jesus' ministry than any other event in ancient history. Our knowledge of Roman history is mostly based on the writings of a single person, whereas there are numerous documents and different testimonies in the bible, quite a bit of which was corroborated by archaeological evidence.

The gospels were written somewhere between 35 and 60 years after Jesus' death, well within the lifetimes of eyewitnesses to what happened. How well do we remember stuff that far back? Nearly 57 years ago, on 20th July 1969, Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon. I'm sure that many older people today remember vividly what happened back then. If we can remember that far back, so could the eyewitnesses to the extraordinary events around Jesus's death and resurrection. So I became comfortable with the reliability of the New Testament as a historical document.

But the more difficult question I had to wrestle with is whether what was written was true, whether it actually happened. Did this man Jesus perform miracles, bring dead people back to life, die himself in agony on a cross and then come back to life, and proclaim he was the Son of God. It all seemed far-fetched, but if it was true, then it would be hard not to believe that he was the Son of God.

The thing that convinced me (and on which the whole Christian faith hangs) was that Jesus died and came back to life, and his disciples and others witnessed it. Imagine the scene. You are a group of simple men and women who have been following Jesus for up to 3 years thinking he was the Messiah. In the space of 24 hours the Jewish leaders have seized your leader, tried him and put him to death in the most horrible way.

All of a sudden, your dreams and hopes have gone out of the window. You are now in fear for your own life. No wonder the disciples scattered and were terrified.

What happened to change them, to make them put their heads above the parapet? It must have been something extraordinary, and the only plausible explanation is that they saw him alive after he had died. Looked at it another way, why on earth would you make up a story that Jesus had risen from the dead if it wasn't true? What would be the point? The only way that the people who proclaimed that Jesus was risen would be if they saw it with their own eyes and realised that death had been overcome. And so I believed it too.

One evening I sat down and prayed to God, asking him to show me he was there and to send his spirit to me, and that I was sorry for all the wrong things I had done. And the Holy Spirit came to me. Suddenly the idea of seeing is believing changed into believing is seeing. I was more aware of my sin, things I had done wrong. While I continued to think and do wrong things, I felt genuine remorse but I also knew that because of Jesus's death on the cross I was forgiven and right with God. I became a new person; I was reborn.

If, having read this, you would like to explore your own faith or have questions and would like to speak to someone, you are warmly invited to join us at a Sunday or Wednesday service, there will always be someone around to chat with afterwards, or if you would like to speak to a member of the ministry team outside a service, drop Naomi, the Church Warden, an email and she will put you in touch, churchwardens@ighthamchurch.org.uk And of course, from June, you will be able to chat with the Rector once he's installed.

"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:39

SHIPBOURNE FARMERS' MARKET



We were delighted to have a record number of visitors at the Market leading up to the Easter weekend. With so many Easter items on offer – chocolate eggs, hot cross buns (over 150 sold on that Thursday), spring bouquets, simnel cakes, local wines, Easter lamb, and alpaca knitted chicks – it was the perfect location to buy everything for the long weekend.

With the longer days and the warmer spring sunshine, we welcome one of the great treats of the year - Asparagus. It is at its best when picked and cooked within hours, something easily achievable when bought locally at the market. Make the most of the delicate flavour by serving simply steamed with melted butter or a hollandaise sauce. As the season progresses use in risottos, tarts, salads and soups.

Will's wild sea trout is one of the season's great treats and lemon sole, cod, halibut and sea bass are all good at this time of year.

Beef and pork will be at their most succulent as the grazing starts to green up. Now is the time to splash out on steaks, chops and fillets and use them simply cooked – grilled, stir fried or griddle cooked for lighter meals.

Alongside asparagus other spring vegetables are also starting to appear after the cold of the winter. Look out for

tender little early new potatoes, leaves such as spinach, watercress, rocket and lettuces can now be found sitting alongside the last of this year's main vegetable crop of purple sprouting broccoli, spring cabbage, cauliflower, spring greens, spring onions and radishes. Radishes, spring onions and samphire mean that lighter eating is on the menu rather than the heavier menu of winter.

By the end of the month the earliest gooseberries should be available, ready to pair up with their perfect partner – delicate fragrant elderflowers. Just add a head or two of creamy white flowers (pick away from roads or sprayed fields and shake to remove bugs) to the gooseberries for a few minutes as they cook then lift out and discard. The distinctive flavour will remain for crumbles, cakes, fools or creamy desserts such as crème brûlée and panna cotta.

To stay up to date with “what’s on” at the Market, request our weekly e-newsletter by visiting www.shipbournefm.co.uk or email lindsay_miles@btinternet.com

COOKERY CORNER

ASPAGUS AND MUSHROOMS ON SOURDOUGH

Serves 4 / 20 mins / Super Easy

- 4 cloves of garlic
 - Olive or rapeseed oil
 - 4 slices of sourdough bread
 - 2 handfuls of mushrooms
 - 500g fresh asparagus
 - 1 small handful of fresh flat-leave parsley
 - 8 tbsps Worcestershire sauce
 - 1-2 knobs of butter
1. Peel and finely slice 4 cloves of garlic. Put a large frying pan on a high heat and add a good lug of olive or rapeseed oil. Put 4 slices of sourdough bread into the toaster.
 2. Slice 2 handfuls of clean mushrooms

and 500g of washed asparagus (woody ends snapped off) into bite-sized chunks. Add them to the hot pan with the sliced garlic and toss and fry for around 4 minutes.

3. Finely chop a small handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley and add most of it to the pan, along with 8 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce and a knob or two of butter. Take the pan off the heat and shake and stir around for 30 seconds or until the sauce has reduced down.
4. Season to taste, then spoon over the slices of hot toast and top with the rest of the parsley.

Stallholder Shopping List:

- Sourdough – Ridwan The Baker
- Garlic, mushrooms, asparagus, parsley – Watts Farms
- Rapeseed oil – The Cooperative Stall

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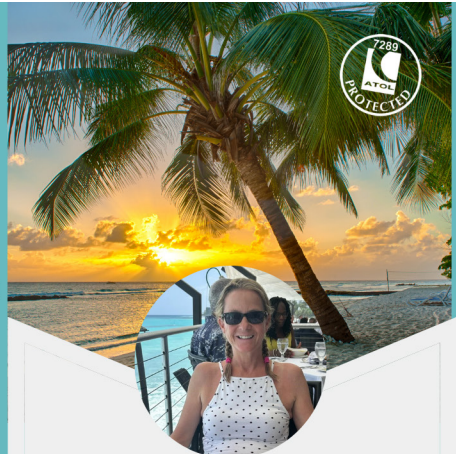
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BRAIN MATTERS... movement matters

Heading into May we yearn for the warmer weather that has been teasingly sporadic thus far! Summer brings forth a wish for movement, joy and relaxation. Let's delve into why movement is protective not just for our body but also our mind...



We know that if we move more, we improve both our cardiovascular health and blood flow which all improves our overall wellbeing and general health. It helps regulate blood pressure, blood sugar and gives us some protection. But are there specific movements that benefit our brains in other ways? Let's explore why resistance training helps to slow brain aging. We often think of lifting weights as something a certain demographic takes part in and that its main purpose is to change how a body looks and feels. Perhaps we feel it's not for us! But think again . . .

Generally, as we age the brain will start to naturally lose volume and functional connectivity – basically that different brain regions start having communication issues. This understandably starts to affect memory function, attention and decision making as well as our speed of information processing. This is all a normal part of aging. The crux though is that the rate of when this happens is not fixed and we can delay this natural onset. A recent study looked at brain samples to determine their age, based on their connectivity patterns. These findings were then measured against samples taken after a year of resistance training. There were three groups – heavy and moderate resistance training, and a control non-exercise group. The findings indicated a correlation of slower aging brains where the benefits lasted a full year after the training

experiment. Interestingly the brain changes were not limited to one brain region, rather its effects were noticed across other brain networks suggesting an exercise impact on global brain mechanisms and not just local regions. The heavy training group showed the greatest increased connectivity in the prefrontal cortex – the area most responsible for attention, memory and decision making.

The reason for this is because during exercise our bodies increase the release of BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), a protein that supports neuron survival, growth and the formation of new neural connections. Equate this in gardening terms, to a particularly beneficial plant growth compost! BDNF is most active in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex – areas most susceptible to age related decline. Research indicates that higher levels of BDNF are associated with slower cognitive aging, better memory function and focus.

Resistance training also increases a hormone called IGF-1. This travels from the muscles to the brain, supporting neuronal survival and reducing inflammation associated with cognitive decline. A 2023 meta-analysis indicated that IGF-1 levels in middle age to older adults had a supporting role as a neuroprotective tool. The good news in the recent 2026 study is that moderate training was as beneficial as heavy training.

Even if you start modestly by adding small weights to current Pilates and yoga routines, you'll still get those ground up benefits from strengthening your legs! Go on, give it a try – just like the summer sunshine!

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AN EXTRACT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES March 2026

(Full Minutes can be found at www.ightham.org or by emailing the Clerk)

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR - Cllr Rayner

reported that he had received a letter from the Planning Inspectorate to say that an Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to determine the Order for the diversion of footpath MR614. The start date for the above Order is 26 March 2026. Cllr Rayner has received a number of complaints about bus service 222 being a single decker as it is overcrowded, raising safety concerns. The bus company has confirmed that the double decker was taken off due to foliage on the bus routes but landowners have been contacted and arrangements are in hand for cutting back so the double decker

can be reinstated.

Cllr Rayner reported temporary road closures in Common Road on 7-10 April and 18-20 May. Cllr Rayner has been sent KCC correspondence regarding the mega-flectas on A25 which have been deemed to be safe. Cllr Rayner has a document on the cutting criteria for overhanging foliage and will pass it to the Clerk to circulate to KALC members.

Local Government Reorganisation continues and is out for public consultation. There are 5 options. Cllrs Rayner's view is that a single unitary authority will be the best in terms of cost although acknowledged that some would see a democratic deficiency in this option. A question was raised about the transfer of assets in advance of the Ministers decision. Cllr Rayner said that a lot of assets were being disposed of now as once the Minister makes a decision, assets over £100k cannot be disposed of. Invicta House is currently up for sale under Reform and is likely to be converted to flats. Sessions House may be sold or retained for a Kent Authority. Cllr Rayner estimated that Council taxes will rise by 40% to cover debts; £2bn of Kent debt needs to be paid off and refinanced.

Cllr Holden asked about the Local

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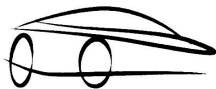
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Plan and recent statement that SE Water are unable to service the housing numbers; he suggested writing to TMBC to say that we weren't supportive of development in the light of the SE Water statement and highlight that parts of Ightham had been without water in early 2026.

The Clerk reported an ongoing leak on Bates Hill where SE Water and Southern Water are denying responsibility.

HIGHWAYS & PROW MATTERS:

HIP update – Reduction of speed limits around Ightham Common: survey – The Clerk reported that approx. 320 surveys had been hand delivered to houses in Ightham Common/Ivy Hatch. So far we have received 102 responses with 76 agreeing with the proposals, 8 disagreeing and 18 partly agreeing. The deadline is 31st March. We have also been made aware that a parishioner has written to Tom Tugendhat suggesting that a logical and cost-effective approach to reducing speeds on rural roads would be an amendment to Article 124 Highway Code to include roads with no white central lines within the 30mph speed limit. Brown church sign for St Peter's request: info sent to St Peters. Refreshing of white lines around Ivy Hatch and The Street requested: The Clerk has received confirmation today that the works have been scheduled. Update on the removal of the triangle at Back Lane: awaiting costs. Mega

flectas on the A25/ Common Road: KCC checked and deemed them safe. It was agreed that we should pass info to Velocity to look at as we think they are unsafe. Ongoing leak Bates Hill: Clerk to write to Tom Tugendhat to assist. HGV's through village: The Clerk reported that the HGV's were increasing through the village throughout the night. Clerk to get further information and ask Mike Taylor what the guidelines are. Equestrian signage: request on Back Lane and Common Road near to the footpaths. Request to revisit Velocity proposal for The Street: it was decided the proposals would not improve safety for pedestrians and there is a concern about the road being narrowed by the Forge. Update Old Lane: The first stage of clearing has been carried out by KCC; the Clerk was asked to arrange a site meeting with KCC and Cllr Emmett to discuss the next steps.

Mirrors: have now been installed on A227 but need adjusting.

Litter: Cllr Mitchem reported that she has been in contact with Borough Cllr Taylor to follow up on TMBC litter picking. The street scene budget is £1.4m but we are not getting our share of litter picking. TMBC have said that clearing the verges requires road closures; however Mike Taylor has said that TMBC know this so should schedule the closures in advance.



Road closures: SGN -Temporary Road Closure - Common Road, Ightham 7th-10th April 2026; South-East Water - Temporary Road Closure Common Road, Ightham 18th - 20th May 2026

MATTERS ARISING

Recreation Ground: Southern Water drain –The Clerk met with contractors who have carried out initial work to remove blockages and tree roots. A further visit needs to be scheduled to repair the pipework which will require an overnight closure of A25 where the main manhole cover is. Tree work: scheduled for Easter holidays. Play Park repairs: due 20 March 2026. Car park repairs – quote for £550 to repair the potholes – approved. The Clerk will schedule a date. New sign at the Recreation Ground: this has been installed but needs to be made higher.

Village Fete /Community Picnic July 2026: Arrangements - marquees and a band have been booked plus a bouncy castle. Cllr Willingham to book 4 toilets and a generator. Clerk to book bins and organise a TENS licence for 500. Confirmation of budget £1,600. Noticeboards: Replacement board at The Harrow – the wooden board is rotten. Cllr Emmett to ask the owner whether he would be happy if we install a powder coated noticeboard as a replacement.

Annual Parish Meeting: Arrangements – it was decided to defer the annual

meeting to September when there would be an update on LGR and the Local Plan.



The planning portal was out of action so decisions were deferred until it is up and running.

The meeting closed at 10.13pm

HUNNYPOT 100 Spring Bank Holiday 2026

Saturday 23rd to Monday 25th May
The Long Distance Walkers Association 100 mile walk to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of “Winnie the Pooh”. It’s a circular continuous 48 hr route from Meopham. The average age is likely to be 55+ and they know not to disturb residents. If you do see them, please encourage especially two 84 year olds who have entered. Some village halls have been hired for refreshments and rest so you may see activity at unusual hours. The event is estimated to bring £400,000 of economic impact to the area. For more information see ldwa.org.uk/2026hundred.

Borough Green and Wrotham u3a

Just a reminder that Borough Green and Wrotham u3a monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 2 pm in Borough Green Village Hall, with tea, coffee and biscuits. Parking/disabled access available.

At our meeting on Monday 11th May we welcome back Ross Newham, who last year gave us a very interesting talk on the East Malling Research Station. This time his talk is on 'Moths - from much maligned pests to saviours of the planet - perhaps...!' Ross will provide the audience with a fascinating, yet light-hearted look at moths, dispelling

the myths and singing in praise of the fantastic contributions that these unlikely heroes can and do offer us all!



We look forward to welcoming existing and new members, and guests (£5). Parking is free for Village Hall users, so please remember to register your car in the Village Hall lobby when you arrive.

For further information, or to join your local u3a, please contact: info@bgwu3a.org.uk or visit our website <https://bgw.u3asite.uk>



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This is an outdoor production, so bring your own chairs or blankets, and perhaps an extra layer if it gets chilly! The show lasts about 1 hour 20 mins without an interval.

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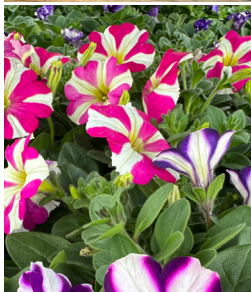
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9.30 - 11.45am

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FROM THE WI SCRAPBOOK P. 35

A transcription of pages from the Women's Institute scrapbook held in the Parish Archive. Spelling and punctuation is as originally written.

Cobblers or Snobs

Village "Snobs". __

Extract from C. E. Weeks' Journal¹ __

"Jack Johnson, the boot repairer, operated the local roadcasting station - all that was necessary to hear the latest news was to go over to the Chequers Inn. Mr. Johnson had the advantage of a good look-out station, as sitting in his glass-fronted bootshop which projected out in front of his house, he could observe all comers up and down the street . . . He was witty and cheerful, a good whistler, and fond of flowers, of which he kept a good display at all times."

Jack Johnson² had Mr Sam Cripps³ present house and Shop, opposite the Chequers Inn. He cut hair – 2d – between his cobbling. Boys stood or sat on a stool with a wrap taken from a peg around them.

The village snob is now Mr. Sidney Heep, a clever repairer of boots and shoes. He is also interested in bird watching and has a talent for fashioning naturalistic forms, chiefly birds, from odds and ends of wood.

Notes Kept by a Local Magistrate.

~

1820. Complaint by Harriet Canner⁴ of Ightham wife of William Canner⁵ of Ightham, labourer, that her husband has threatened to "stab her liver out" with a knife.

1825. Warrant to arrest Sarah Vaughan and Elizabeth French, paupers of Ightham, for riotous conduct and resisting the lawful commands of the Master of the Workhouse.

1826. Complaint of Elizth Terry of Ightham that she was assaulted by William Nash⁶ and William Price, of Ightham, by their pushing her into a pond adjoining the high road near Crown Point.

¹ 1870 - 1954. A family of police constables

² Several Johnsons were cobblers.

³ Samuel John Cripps buried 21.9.1889? Pos. ancestor of Emma Cripps and Phyllis Warren killed by V1 bomb Aug 1944.

⁴ Died Sep 1822 aged 35.

⁵ Died Aug 1848 aged 73.

⁶ Died Apr 1839 aged 34.

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E: ighthamvillagehall@gmail.com

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OUR SPEAKER IS EVERETT LEEDS

TUESDAY, 26TH MAY 2026

At

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DIRECTORY

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Rector	Parish in Vacancy	
Church Warden	Naomi Webster	T: 07421 832919. E: churchwardens@ighthamchurch.org.uk
Parish Office (Mon/Tue/Thur/Fri 9am-1pm)	Administrator	T: 07940 547310 E: admin@ighthamchurch.org.uk
Licensed Lay Minister	John Webster	T: 884819
Lay Readers	Michelle Lawson	T: 01634 240598
	Bryan Harris (honorary)	T: 07733 228048
Hon. Treas/Gift Aid Sec.	Max Robinson	T: 885966
Safeguarding Officer	Finley Lawson	T: 01634 240598
PCC Secretary	Sarah Reid	E: pccsecretary@ighthamchurch.org.uk
Church Flowers	Judy Debenham	T: 882640
St Peter's Choir & Music	Carol Kennedy	T: 884764
Bell Ringing	Judith Robinson	T: 0788 0507066
Coffee Shop	Jenny Webster	T: 884819
Men's Breakfast	John Webster	T: 884819
Oasis	Bridget Kelsey	M: 07789 692967 E: oasis@ighthamchurch.org.uk
Parent & Toddlers	Kirsty Mitcham	T: 885072
Prayer Group	John Webster	T: 884819

Ightham Magazine

Editorial	Penny Cracknell	T:07811 066253
Advertising	E: stpetersadverts@btinternet.com	
Subscriptions/Distribution	E: magazine@ighthamchurch.org.uk	

Community Groups & Events

Autism Parents Support Soc.	Claudia Goodman	T: 07773 599543
Ightham Club	Mark Brenta	T: 882104
Ightham Gardeners' Club	Pippa Coulthard	T:883041.
	Dee Samways	T: 07799 002 129
Ightham School	Sue Earl, Headteacher	T: 882405
Ightham Village Hall	E: ighthamvillagehall@gmail.com	
Ightham Scouts Group	E: enquiries@ighthamscouts.org	
Beavers, Cubs, Explorers & Scouts		
Ightham WI	Helen Johnson	
	E: happyflowersgs@live.co.uk	
PCSO	PC Dylan McElligott	T: 101 (non emergencies)

Sports

Badminton Club	Nick Dennis	T: 882078
Cricket Club	Geoff Preston	T: 01474 812594
	Tom Bentall	T: 07712 566772
Football Club	Martyn Reardon	T: 07725 896 886
Tennis Club	Max Robinson	T: 885966

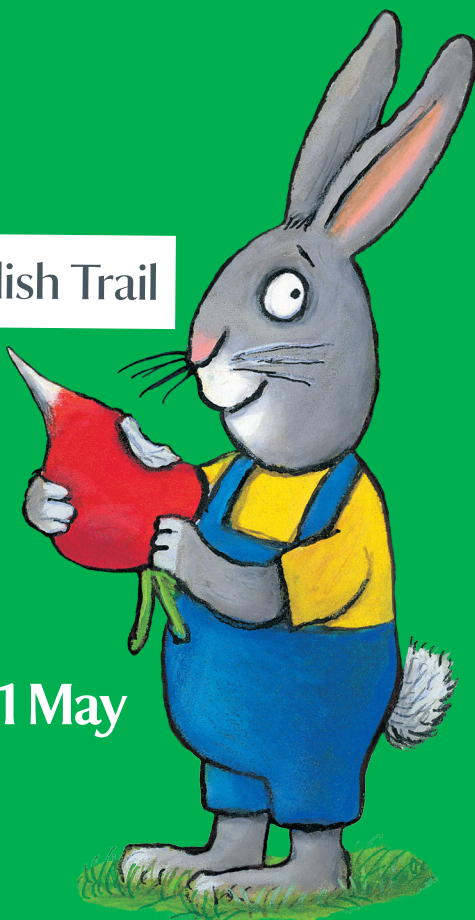


National
Trust

Ruby Plants a Radish Trail

at Ightham Mote

Mon 11 to Sun 31 May
10am-5pm



Immerse yourself in the story of a rabbit called Ruby, who loves radishes. Follow the trail around the garden and discover Ruby's journey to grow her very own radishes.

Free trail; normal admission to Ightham Mote applies.

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