

## LEN VALLEY ACTIVE RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER – July 2025

ISSUE 178

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### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It was nice to see so many members at our meeting in June. It's not only about coming along and listening to the speaker of the day but it is also very much about getting together with friends for a bit of a chat and a cup of tea or coffee. Thank you very much to all who help to provide us with our refreshments. We are looking at ways next year where we may be able to have slightly less speakers and do something different. Suggestions are always welcome.

### PAST EVENTS

#### Exbury Gardens, Hampshire

Well, what a day to have this trip with the sun belting down and approximately 34°. It turned out to be a very good trip. The coach was nice and cool with the air-conditioning working very well, it was the most enjoyable and comfortable ride to a destination.

We had a comfort break for 30 minutes at Cobham services and then onto the gardens.

On arrival we were all handed a ticket for the gardens and the steam train ride. I think most of us did the train ride first as it gave you an idea of the layout of the 200 acre gardens. The gardens themselves were created by Lionel de Rothschild and they boast collections of rhododendrons, azaleas, and camellias creating beautiful displays. There are also many many trees which was most enjoyable because of the shade where we could cool down a bit. It reminded you a bit of an Arboretum with all the different colour leaves.

On the whole I think that those of us who did the trip thoroughly enjoyed it. I must say thank you to the driver we had, she was very capable "good old Rachel", she could certainly handle the coach.



John and Margie.

#### Eastbourne Trip 3<sup>rd</sup> July

For those of you that went on our coach trip to Eastbourne I hope you enjoyed the day and thanks for your support.

Sometimes there are days in your life that you can look back on and say, "that was simply a nice day". The sun was shining, the company was good, the time past pleasantly, but even so the enjoyment of the day seemed to be over before you realised it. Our trip to Eastbourne was one of those "nice" days.

We left Lenham at about 9.00am and after picking up our last few passengers in Harrietsham we set off for the coast and Eastbourne. Kevin, our Carrs coach driver, drove us expertly through the narrow country roads, passing through small towns and villages with these old and charming buildings that help to give the southeast a reputation for being an area of natural beauty. On reaching our drop off point close to the entrance to Eastbourne Pier, it was decided that we would return to Lenham at 4.15pm. This gave everyone about five hours free time at the sea side so with an air of anticipation we all set off to enjoy our day and perhaps recall memories of days gone by spent with family and friends.



The first port of call for many were the public toilets where we found out that it cost £1 to pee. This seemed rather expensive and there were one or two cries of disgust and exclamations of “I’m not paying that”. Luckily two lady volunteers, dressed in dark blue, were passing and their job was to help visitors with information. They told us we would need to take advantage of any cafes or pubs we visited but there was a toilet at the end of the pier where you could pee for free. Meanwhile, one of our ladies reminded us we used to pay one penny back in the day and now that penny was likely worth one pound anyway.

A few of us then made our way along the pier to The Victorian Tea Rooms and a refreshing cup of tea or coffee and not surprisingly met many more of our fellow passengers with the same idea. Plus of course the free W.C. There are two impressive chandeliers in the tea rooms which seem to lend to them being called “Victorian” and if nothing else it does add to the appearance of age as the pier was first opened to the public in 1872. On leaving the café we continued our walk to the end of the pier. Walking back and looking towards the pebble beach gave a picturesque view of this seaside town and although the sea looked calm and inviting washing gently up onto the pebbles it did not have many swimmers taking advantage of the sunshine.



Leaving the pier we continued our walk along the promenade and became aware of the danger of the seagulls flying above. A couple from our coach party were sitting at a table by one of the several ice cream kiosks found dotted along the way, enjoying their ice creams, when a seagull swooped down and tried to grab the lolly from the hand that was holding it. It failed but unfortunately caused Peter’s glasses to fall to the ground.

You may have seen on the Southern News recently that the colourful gardens along the sea front have been replaced by a drought tolerant type of landscape. They do not look as spectacular just now as what was there, but I am sure, given time they will bring their own different beauty and outlook to the area judging by the plants pictured and being used.

Our next stop was for lunch and as we continued along the promenade we were lucky as we met Kevin our driver and he pointed us in the direction of a very good little fish and chip shop called Pelican Fish and Chips. It was spotlessly clean, the staff were friendly and the fish and chips excellent.

Lunch enjoyed we set off back along the promenade towards the pier and our pickup point. However, there was one last treat to come. An ice cream, but not just an ice cream, a Mister Whippy ice cream. Remembering the earlier seagull episode we found a bench shaded by a large bush and ate our treats without a ravenous seagull in sight. Soon it would be time to head back home but there was still a little time to



gently stroll along the sea front and people watch and also take in the sights and sounds of what had been a “nice day”. One of the mysteries of the day is where did everyone go? We met one or two of our party who were enjoying their trip but where were the remainder?



It just leaves me to say thank you Barbara, from all of us on the coach for putting the trip together and also to Kevin for getting us there and back safely.

Phil Gooda

Hopefully we will shortly have other trips on offer. We are looking at Brooklands for later this year and possibly another Picnic in the Park, so watch this space. Given the parking situation in many venues that we visit please consider "car sharing" where possible. This could also allow members to take advantage of our trips if they are unable to drive themselves.

Talking about days out – it is important that those of you on the trips have emergency numbers and medication information on you in case of emergency. We also want to update the mobile phone details that we have so that we can contact members if necessary whilst out on a trip or a holiday so if you have a mobile phone number please email it to Chris Godden so that we have up to date information – [rrgodden@btinternet.com](mailto:rrgodden@btinternet.com)

## FUTURE EVENTS

We now have our lunch to look forward to at the Wagon and Horses near Charing on the 16<sup>th</sup> July and the next meeting is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July when our speaker is Lucy Allen who will be talking to us about the "ups and Downs of a Stuntwoman."

BeARA are organising a trip to Denbies Vineyard in Surrey. This trip is on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025 and costs £45 per person (excluding lunch). The coach will leave from Tesco's bus stop at Grove Green. The pick up time will be confirmed nearer the time. You can park in the bottom end of Tesco's car park.

The trip comprises an Outdoor Vineyard Tour by Land Train and an Indoor Wine Tasting Experience. On the estate there is also an Art Gallery, a Wine/Gift Shop, Cafe, Village Green Farm Shop and 7 miles of Public Footpaths. If you would like to book (places are limited) on this trip please contact Graham Moorcraft - email [graham.morecraft@beara.org.uk](mailto:graham.morecraft@beara.org.uk). to confirm and when making payment via BACS please include the reference "Wine" plus your surname.

## LenARA Christmas Lunch

We are taking names and menu orders for the Christmas Lunch at Ledian Gardens Restaurant on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 so if you want to go please put your names down, places are limited. The cost is £38 for a three course festive menu and there will be music and dancing.

Our weekly activities are continuing as normal, the exception at the moment being the Pétanque. If anyone is interested in taking it on as the Activities Leader let us know. It is a shame not to use the court after all the work we put in to install it.

If you are interested in joining the Committee please let us know. We are still looking for someone to help arrange our speakers for 2026. We also need someone to arrange the Pub Lunches so if you would like to help again let us know. It would be nice for a group of four to go out and source the venues for the pub lunches, book them and then come to the meetings to collect the money and take the details of the menu. You don't need to be a committee member to do this job. We want to continue putting on a varied and interesting programme of events.

## Our weekly events –

Short Mat Bowls	Tuesday	2.00pm to 4.00pm	£4 per session	Phil Gooda 01622 851217
Zumba	Wednesday	9.30am to 10.30am	£7 per session	Barbara Kyprianou 01622 850468
Line Dancing	Wednesday	7.30pm to 9.00pm	£4.50 per session	Ann Rolfe 01622 859725
Pétanque – weather permitting	Thursday	10.00am to 12.00pm	£3.00 per session	John Edwards 01622 858439

## JULY

9 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Ten Pin Bowling in Ashford	11.00am	£7.50 for two games	Pat Highsted 01622 743658
Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025	The Ups and Downs of a Stunt Woman – Lucy Allen	2.00pm	Lenham Community Centre	

## **AUGUST**

13 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Ten Pin Bowling	11.00am	£7.50 for two games	Pat Highsted 01622 743658
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Games Afternoon	2.00pm	Lenham Community Centre	

## **SEPTEMBER**

10 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Ten Pin Bowling	11.00am	£7.50 for two games	Pat Highsted 01622 743658
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Jasmine Gardener sings “Songs from the 60’s Divas”	2.00pm	Lenham Community Centre	

Best wishes to all our members and hoping you will be able to attend as many of our meetings, trips and functions as possible.

Roger

