

MEET YOUR MP Helen Grant

Helen Grant, MP for Maidstone and the Weald, holds regular surgeries around the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you, please e-mail Helen at helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk or telephone 020 7219 7107.

www.helengrant.org

Produced by Helen Grant MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA



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Editorial



Continuity and tradition are threads that run comfortingly through the tapestry of village life, but of late it seems the modern world has been doing its utmost to change the fabric of Benenden. Sometimes it feels as though we live in a period of unprecedented upheaval, until we look back and realise that world wars and industrial revolutions have in the past turned society on its head equally as turbulently as population growth and borough councils.

I wasn't born when Peter Ward began his career in our butcher's shop in the 1930s, but I can imagine there were people even then grumbling about the changing face of Benenden's streets, lamenting the decline of the horse and cart. Mr Ward recently passed away at the age of 95 (see page 19) after many years of loyal service, but he leaves us at a time when the publication of the Neighbourhood Development Plan has crystallised the latest rural revolution. There will be more people and more houses both here and around the country between now and 2030, and there's no point fighting that fact; what we need to do now is to work together to make sure we get the right houses in the right places. The recent meeting to unveil the first draft of the NDP attracted a reassuringly large crowd and drew such a positive reaction that there is every hope we can engineer the future of the village in a constructive and sustainable way. Well done to all involved.

Meanwhile there is another changing of the guard going on, at the primary school, where headteacher Gill Knox retires this month (see page 29) after six years at the helm. My own daughter, for one, will testify to the good work Gill has done in that time, and she leaves her post content in the knowledge that she has overseen the start of the construction of what promises to be a wonderful new building for the children and teachers to enjoy.

Benenden may never look the same, but then history suggests it never has.

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 maisonsicheluk@tlclaridge.co.uk Churchwarden: Julia Collard 241944 Julia.collard@btinternet.com www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

Please inform the Rector or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill or would like a visit or home communion.

Sunday 7 April 8am Communion 10am All-age Communion 5pm Wealden Choral

and Sunday School Evensong

Palm Sunday 14 April 8am 1662 Communion 10am Morning Worship 5pm Evening Prayer

followed by breakfast at Mission Church

Monday 15 April 7.30pm Reflective Service

Tuesday 16 April 7.30pm Reflective Service

Wednesday 17 April 7.30pm Reflective Service

Maundy Thursday 18 April 7.30pm Communion

Good Friday 19 April 10am An Hour at the Cross

Holy Saturday 20 April 7.30pm Reflective Service

Easter Sunday 21 April 5.30am Sunrise Service, at St Nicholas Church, Sandhurst followed by breakfast

8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 28 April 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

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Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Funeral 4 March Peter Ward Funeral Tunbridge Wells Crematorium

Rector's Letter



Death, taxes and the certainties of Easter

We all know what are said to be the only two certainties in life. Jesus mentioned one of them quite often, the dreaded taxes, and spoke about the other quite a bit, too, before experiencing a painful death himself. But what about the uncertainties? It strikes me that at the moment, every time we switch on the news, we are confronted with an absolutely huge uncertainty ... dare I mention the B-word? Brexit. I have absolutely no idea what the situation is going to be with Brexit or Parliament or Europe this month, or even this week. The uncertainties of life generally have a habit of making us worry: "What if I get passed over for that promotion, what am I going to do?", or "What if I get sick, what am I going to do?"

As human beings we seem to need a healthy balance between certainty in our life - the normal, routine stuff - and a bit of uncertainty to make life interesting and slightly unpredictable, so that we don't get bored by a constant routine. If everything in our lives is predictable, we often feel like we're stuck in a rut; but if everything is uncertain then we are anxious about the future.

So, with this huge political and economic uncertainty hanging over us, how about I try and balance it with a bit of certainty? Here's three certainties: on Palm Sunday we will be celebrating and remembering once again Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the week before he was finally arrested; on Good Friday we will gather and remember his death on the cross; and on Easter Sunday we will be gathering once again, but this time to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. For me - as a Christian, as a priest - the resurrection, though I may not fully understand it, is up there in terms of its certainty along with "death and taxes". It is at the heart of my faith. I hope that you will be able to join us as we celebrate once again this incredible event.

You will see from the calendar of events on the opposite page that there is a lot going on between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday (plus a similar number of services in Sandhurst). If you can't make any other services, please come and join us for the biggest celebration of the Church year: Easter Sunday. If you can't wait until 8am or 10am, there is always the Sunrise Service - 5.30am at St Nicholas. Sandhurst.

Speaking of the Sunrise service reminds me of another certainty: there will be bacon sarnies served immediately after it. Come along and enjoy one. And there's one more certainty I can tell you about: the week after Easter I'll be metaphorically "lying down in a darkened room" having a rest.

I wish you all a joyful Easter.

Revd David Commander, Rector

Village Calendar

April Saturday 6 Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon Saturday 6 Grierson Galleries Art Show, Benenden Village Hall, 10-5pm **p.8** Music Quiz 1960s to present day, St George's Club, 8.30pm Saturday 6 Sunday 7 Grierson Galleries Art Show, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm **8.**q Sunday 7 Cherry Ingram Garden Open, The Grange, Benenden, I-4pm p.27 Monday 8 Friends of St George's, AGM with Guest Speaker, St George's Church, 7pm p.23 Saturday 13 Benenden Bowls Club, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10-12noon Monday 15 Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7pm Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm p.27 Tuesday 16 Tuesday 16 Iden Green and Benenden WI, Travels in Namibia, Memorial Hall, 2pm p.21 Friday 19 Easter Draw, St George's Club, 8pm Skittles, St George's Club, 8.30pm Saturday 20 Tuesday 23 Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm Friday 26 St George's Club AGM, St George's Club, 8.30pm Saturday 27 Spring Village Clean, Benenden's Shop and Iden Green Pavilion, 9.30am p.5 Spring Celebration Barn Dance, Benenden Village Hall, 7pm p.9 Saturday 27

Iden Green and Benenden WI, Members visit to Pashley Manor

p.21

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Tuesday 30

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6.30pm

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11.15am

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 6 April for Domestic Waste

Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-9.20am and Iden Green, crossroads, 9.40-11am

Saturday 20 April for Garden/Compostable Waste

Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-9.20am and Iden Green, crossroads, 9.40-11am

Parish Council



Firstly the Parish Council would like to thank everyone who turned up on 23 February to attend our presentation of the 'rough draft' of our Neighbourhood Development Plan. It was great to see such a good turnout on what was a beautiful sunny day. The feedback we received was generally positive, and we are currently pulling the draft into a more user-friendly format, while collecting and collating the feedback received during this informal consultation period. Meanwhile the process for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report has begun. The SEA will assist us in understanding the environmental impacts of our proposals and tailor our plan's content accordingly. This can help to hone and improve our plan's policies and objectives and ensures that our plan promotes sustainable development. This process is carried out over a statutory five-week consultation period.

The formal process of co-option for our two vacancies on the Parish Council came to an end at the beginning of March, and as a result of that process we are very happy to welcome Peta Grant as our new member. Peta has been working incredibly hard on the Design and Built Environment chapter of our NDP, and we are looking forward to her bringing her knowledge of local and national planning policies to assist us in our recommendations on planning applications submitted within our parish.

We will be advertising for applicants for the remaining vacancy on our council over the next couple of months, so if you feel you have a particular skill that would help us to carry out our duties more effectively, then please do email or write to our clerk expressing your interest.

Finally, with spring having arrived early this year, our thoughts have turned to the next village clean-up. This will be held on Saturday 27 April and all volunteers will be warmly welcomed outside the shop and the Iden Green pavilion as usual, and given the much sought-after voucher for a thank-you drink and cake at the village shop as a reward for their efforts.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair 01580 240364 nic.jthomas@btinternet.com

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org
For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on facebook

Parish Council Meeting Monday 15 April 2019, Memorial Hall, 7pm



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Just a Thought



Boxes of pleasure and frustration

We are heading for a big family celebration, so Richard and I thought we would look out a few photographs - a few! A large number of albums, boxes, pockets and singles were extracted from different shelves, drawers and cupboards. Then my husband became even more enthusiastic, delving under the eaves and into the attic (remember the attic?) and produced dozens of small, yellow boxes of slides. These were followed by a box of black and white prints from the days when he was keen on printing his own. Then one container provided a dizzying number of colour prints and I remembered it had become the fashion whilst we were living in Malaysia. Children playing, swimming and sailing, as well as the myriad of tropical flowers, make excellent subjects. Next were all the wildlife photos from numerous African safaris; some good close-ups of leopards and lions but many more providing the challenge of spot the antelope or warthog among the tall grass or thick bush. Finally, there are the mountains in which we have climbed, walked and camped.

Many photos recorded special occasions: holidays, weddings, new babies, friends, parties, and this is where frustration sets in. The face you cannot put a name to; the place you don't specifically recognise; and most challenging of all the date or even the year. You see, I was never very good at remembering to put a note on the back or on the album or on the box. I knew all the details at the time! This means it is now necessary to employ a variety of strategies to find the answers. Was my hair long or short? What is everyone wearing? How old are the children? Does the background help at all? Narrow down the country and we may be getting somewhere. How grey am I?

I have a large, old and battered suitcase under the stairs, which contains photographs that my parents left behind. I have tried a couple of times to do some sorting but there are so many faces I do not recognise. A few are labelled, however too many are not, and since my mother was into amateur dramatics some may not be real people at all! So many wonderful landscapes that were probably Wales or Scotland but could be Yorkshire. My husband has a similar problem multiplied by the fact that he has a large number of Welsh relatives, so family groups abound. The photos go back to the early 20th century. There are several dog-collars, but since his grandfather was one of nine siblings, several of whom were ordained, that doesn't help much. It is fascinating to see the old pictures, the proud and stern faces, the clothes of the day, and I am sorry that these people will disappear as there is no-one left to recognise them.

However I am in no position to complain. We have loved the recollections prompted by our photos and I will label as many as I can!

Sue Fisher



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The Villages

News and Events

Village Hall highlights

Our highlight for April is the welcomed return of Annie Watsham and Grahame Grant from Grierson Galleries, with their second Benenden Art Show. It's taking place over the weekend of the 6 and 7 April and promises a phenomenal line-up of artists showcasing their beautiful glassware, jewellery, ceramics, oils, watercolours and lino-cut to name but a few. Entry is free and refreshments are available.

Did you know you can keep abreast of all things hall related on various social media platforms, as well as on our website? If you can't wait a whole month for the village magazine to plop onto your doormat, why not take a peek at them?

A lot of you already know that we are on Facebook (@benendenvillagehall) and Instagram (benenden village hall), but we are also on Nextdoor, Twitter and Google Business. Some 14% of Benenden residents have already signed up to Nextdoor (www.nextdoor.co.uk), the private social network for you, your neighbours and community. Think of it as a place to go for virtual clothesline chats.

The hall has 653 people following us on Twitter (@Benenden Hall) including to my utter delight the wonderful Monty Roberts. Oh, to get Monty in for a lecture on natural horsemanship! I'm also trying to get Bruno Mars to do a gig at the hall, but so far, he hasn't responded. I will keep trying.

I hope you all have a wonderful Easter. I'm off to Legoland for my son's sixth birthday, and I'm very excited to be staying in the Legoland Hotel in a Knights-themed room. Trying to keep it secret from my son is very difficult! Until next month.

For further information on events and classes check out either our Facebook page @benendenvillagehall or go to: www.benendenvillagehall.org Lorraine Jones 243123

enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org



Speedwatch update

The Benenden Speedwatch group has started monitoring traffic again at approved sites in both Iden Green and Benenden and the statistics sadly confirm the frequency of speeding traffic.

Despite the weather it's been a great effort from our volunteers, however our Kent Police Speedwatch coordinator advises we need at least six months data before Kent County Council will respond or get involved. To achieve that we need more volunteers, so if you can spare a couple of hours a week to monitor traffic with colleagues, to register for duty, please contact:

Gregg Stapley 07756 084446 gregg1.Stapley@hotmail.co.uk

Woodcock Inn opens

Good news. The Woodcock Inn has now re-opened with Lyndora Goodger the proud new owner. Lyndora is CEO & MD of Lyndoras, a company that provides personnel and services to the hospitality market.

With over 25 years' experience and three previous pubs, Lyndora has now decided to take on a new project closer to home. She says she has brought a hint of Mayfair to the 17th-century inn but is keeping it as a traditional village pub, including a restaurant that opens Easter weekend. Ruth Clark 9

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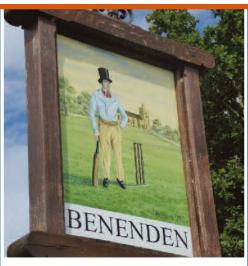
On the 31st March 2004 at 2pm we took ownership of The Bull at Benenden. We arrived with a 5 year old, a 1 year old and bags of enthusiasm. Roll on 15 years and the 5 year old is now 21, the 1 year old 16 and there's an extra one who's now 12! As for the enthusiasm, we still have sack loads of it!

In 15 years we have seen many things change, some good, some bad, some sad and some happy. We have welcomed many new customers and opened our doors 365 days of the year, only closing on Christmas night. We are extremely proud to still be here supporting Benenden and its incredible community.

We would like to thank you all for your support, encouragement and patronage. Without Bull customers and our marvellous team over the years, we know we never could have achieved what we have to date.

Cheers everyone, see you at the bar!

A warm welcome awaits!









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The BVT is a charity established a year ago as the successor to the Harmsworth Memorial Trust; as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), its Trustees are elected by its members.

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Benenden Village Trust news

We are delighted that work on the exciting new children's play area on the Benenden recreation field has been commissioned, with £40,000 out of the total cost of £66,000 being shared between the Parish Council and the Trust. Fundraising by Benenden Play has begun, with encouraging results from sponsors and donors. We hope that residents, whether they have children or not, will be prepared to make a generous contribution. Details of how to do so can be found on page 15 in this magazine and on our website.

On Monday 3 June the Trust will hold its first election of trustees. When we took over from the Harmsworth Memorial Trust a year ago we were keen that as wide a range as possible of residents would feel ownership of this valuable asset, so we urge you to become a member. Our page in the March magazine raised a good deal of interest and we have had several applications already.

Anyone over 18 who is a resident of the parish can join, as can representatives of local businesses. It's free as long as you are content to communicate by email. Our new website, www.benendenvillagetrust.org, gives full details about membership and how to apply, including an online application form.

On a more mundane level, we are discussing with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council small moves for the recreation ground litter bins, with the aim to move the playground bin to the new play area, and move the one close to the village hall entrance doors, well used by dog-owners, just slightly further away.

David Harmsworth, Chair

Cakes & Chaos



Drop-in Cafe & Toddler Group

St George's Church, Benenden Every Friday during term time, 9-11.15am



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For more information please call Revd David or Helen Commander 01580 240658 or email revdavidcommander@gmail.com or helenjcommander@gmail.com



Name-the-wine competition

As previously reported, Graham Latter has a five-acre vineyard in Dingleden, planted with Bacchus, a white grape that produces a wine similar to New Zealand's Sauvignon Blanc. Graham has sold all his grapes since establishing the vineyard in 2011, but in 2018 he held back a small amount and contracted Owen Elias (four time UK Vineyard Association Winemaker of the Year) to produce his own wine for the first time.

The wine has a clean, floral, nettley nose with hints of apple and pear. Its crisp English acidity is beautifully balanced against the sweetness and body of the fruit. Graham does not have a name for the wine and would like readers of this magazine to suggest one. The person submitting the best entry will receive 12 bottles of his first vintage and may even see their wine name used on the label.

Please send your entries to: G.latter@yahoo.co.uk

Can you help us pay for play?

Plans for a new children's play area for the village are moving towards fruition - now all that's needed is cash. Here Athena Cripps of Play Benenden explains.

Play Benenden, on behalf of the Benenden Village Trust (BVT), are delighted to have confirmed a design for our long-awaited new playground. The finished article will have a rural theme and a wooden/natural look to best suit our village location; we have included areas for pre-school and younger children, an area suitable for older children and plenty of rubber flooring to make it more accessible and usable throughout the year.

Plans are available to view on the Play Benenden Facebook page, as well as on posters around the village, and a date has tentatively been confirmed for a June installation, but this is fundraising dependent.

Donations We are so pleased to have received large donations from Benenden Parish Council and the BVT, which has given us an incredibly solid start. We are similarly



who are currently building our new village primary school but also helping us with site preparation, security during installation and palisade fencing to enclose the completed playground. This has made an enormous difference to the overall scheme and has allowed us to progress faster.

We need you! We have made a fantastic start, but we now need your help to raise the remaining funds. Our target currently stands at £26,000 and we appreciate every donation that helps us towards the goal.

Donations are welcome from individuals and businesses alike and everyone has the opportunity to be a sponsor. Will your child or grandchild use the Benenden playground?





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Completed application forms to be submitted by **Friday 12 April 2019**





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Neighbourhood Development Plan

The day the NDP went public

Over 140 people packed into the village hall last month for a meeting that presented to the public the first draft of our Neighbourhood Development Plan. On 23 Saturday February, Nicola Thomas, chair of the Parish Council, Tom Dawlings, Borough Councillor, and Paul Tolhurst, chair of the NDP Steering Group, took about an hour to present the plan, before asking for questions from the audience and then offering people the chance to view stands from each of the five working groups.

The presentation was a step-by-step guide to the results of the huge volume of work undertaken by around 25 volunteers on behalf of the parish. First, it described the approach to target setting by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, then the Benenden NDP response, which succeeded in getting TWBC to reduce their demand from a minimum of 218 additional homes to a target of "around 100". It also set out the key national and borough policies that govern neighbourhood planning. As a reminder:

- The plan must be deliverable all proposed sites must be economically viable
- Brownfield sites are preferred, outside the AONB where possible
- Sites should have amenities or amenities can be created
- Building density should increase the average density of the location, with 30 dwellings per hectare being the base in rural areas

The speakers highlighted the balance needed between village aspirations for a number of small scattered sites, our requirement for affordable houses, and the ambition to generate developer contributions to improve village infrastructure. These last requirements can only currently be secured with sites of ten or more dwellings.

Having set out conflicting priorities and pressures, the presentation explained the proposed sites, numbers of houses and resulting density. Benenden's NDP accepts existing

planning consents and proposes development on four sites, three of which are brownfield and one greenfield for almshouses. This will provide between 85 and 95 additional new dwellings, including in total around 45 affordable houses. In addition to the planned development, the NDP proposed a 'windfall site' policy allowing small scattered sites of up to four homes to be proposed during the plan life.

Proposed Sites:

- 'Uphill' just off of New Pond Road Benenden (LS16)
- 'Feoffee' just off Walkhurst Road Benenden (site 277)
- 'Hospital South' off Goddards Green Road East End (site 424)
- 'Hospital North' off Goddards Green Road East End (LS40)

While there is no doubt some residents will be unhappy with the plan, the response of those who attended the launch was very positive. The clarity and logic of the presentation was praised and many voiced support both for the selected sites and for the idea of reserving around 20% of our target for small, scattered developments.

A copy of the draft plan has been circulated to interested organisations and is available on our website.

This first phase of consultation closes on Saturday 6 April. We need your feedback (things to change and importantly things to keep) by this date so that the plan can be altered or updated before the first formal consultation, which is likely to begin in early summer. Write to benenden.n.p@btinternet.com, or post your comments in the box at the community shop Paul Tolhurst, Chair NDP Steering Committee



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A life well lived

Peter Ward, who died on 3 February aged 95, will be very much missed by his family, friends and his many customers. He would have hated being called a village institution, but there's no doubt he earned the accolade.



Peter grew up in Frittenden where his father ran a successful butcher, although he never worked with his father which was his one regret. Instead, he was sent off to learn the trade with Mr Reynolds, the original Benenden butcher. Peter was called up during World War II and served in the RAF, in Manchester, Blackpool and latterly in Singapore, until the end of the war. He eventually returned to work in the village and it was during this time that he met Hawkhurst girl Betty at a local dance and was immediately smitten. "He wasn't a very good dancer, but he was very persistent," smiles Betty. They married a year later in 1951 and they went on to have three sons: Trevor, Andrew and Martin; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren (with two more on the way as we go to press).

After they married, the couple worked for Mr Reynolds for several years. At the time Betty also ran the Nat West agency from the shop. On Mr Reynolds' retirement in 1969, Peter and Betty were able to buy the business and move into the house that it occupies. Andrew and Martin joined when they left school.

For many years, Peter would visit the Maidstone cattle market on a Monday and come

back with at least two cows, two pigs and several sheep which were slaughtered on site. Many butchers ran small abattoir alongside their shop which local farmers liked as it reduced the stress of travelling long distances for This animals. changed in the 1990s when the Government changed the regulations governing abattoirs and Ward family decided to close theirs.

"Peter loved living here," says Betty. "When we came there was a real buzz with a post office, two banks, two village shops, a sweet shop, a chemist, four pubs and St George's Club in Benenden and Iden Green. Peter knew everyone."

Peter loved his sport, particularly horse racing and football. The shop's Grand National sweepstake is an highlight annual with customers vying to pick the winning horse. He was great with commentator Brian Moore, who was born in Benenden, both were lifelong supporters of Gillingham F.C. As Brian was club director for seven years, Peter could be sure of a good seat.

"We have seen a lot of changes over the years as shops and pubs have closed in this village - it's such a shame," adds Betty. "But we are still going strong I'm glad to say. As butchers have closed one by one in the surrounding villages, we have seen an increase in customers who like using a

traditional butcher travelling here from far and wide - even from as far as Chatham."

The Ward family has faced challenging times over the years too. After suffering with kidney failure for several years, Andrew received a kidney from Martin in 1992 at Guy's Hospital which transformed his health. "It was a major operation for both of them at the time," says Betty. Coincidentally, Peter and Jane Ellis were both working in the Renal Unit at Guy's at the time and today live just a short stroll from the shop.

It's not surprising that life on Benenden's notorious cross road has had its dangerous moments.

While Peter escaped unscathed, Betty has had three narrow escapes when cars have ploughed into the building. On one occasion she was in the shop and a car came through the front window and on another she was sitting in her armchair in her front room when a car pushed her and the chair across the room. "I wasn't hurt luckily, but the police think that someone out there is trying to get me," she jokes.

P.F. Ward & Sons celebrates its milestone 50th anniversary this year and Betty and her sons will continue to run the business serving its loyal customers. They want to thank everyone who have been so kind since Peter died. Says Betty: "David Commander provided really sensitive support and conducted a lovely service. We have been truly overwhelmed by all the cards and warm wishes that have come pouring into the shop. Thank you. It means a lot to us."

Ruth Clark



Professor Wrong, renal specialist, with Betty, Andrew and Martin after his operation

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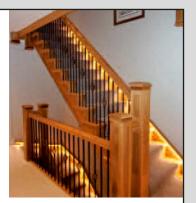
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Wealden Choral Evensong

Sunday 7 April, St George's Church, 5pm
Evensong dates back to the time of the
Reformation, and combines the old monastic
Offices of Vespers and Compline. The liturgy
(a fixed set of words and ceremonial features)
that the Church uses to this day was laid out in
Archbishop Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer,
first published in 1549. Cranmer created the
liturgy of Evensong with the general public
in mind, motivated by the fact that it would
condense more services than people could be
expected to attend into one short service.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, great composers like William Byrd and Thomas Tallis began to develop exquisite choral music specifically for this new service, since then composers have continued to add great music to the repertoire of Evensong.

Cranmer's Evensong starts with the chanting of the Old Testament Psalms. Their mantra-like repetition often helps create a peaceful atmosphere, but one that is soon interrupted by the exuberant burst of the 'Magnificat' - the song of a young woman, Mary, rejoicing at the prospect of the birth of her child, Jesus - and then made solemn by the New Testament's 'Nunc Dimittis' - the song of an old man, Simeon, gently facing his death, eye-to-eye, now his life has been fulfilled by meeting Jesus. A major aspect of the genius of the service is the balance between female and male, young and old, and Old and New Testament in these 'Canticles'. An anthem follows that fits the mood of the day, and the service finishes after a second hymn. Afterwards the church resonates with the playing of the organ, sending us out into the night.

St George's Church, Benenden sings Choral Evensong on the first Sunday of each month. On Sunday 7 April singers from many local parish churches will combine for a Wealden Choral Evensong, starting at 5pm.

For more information about attending or singing please contact:

Charlotte O'Neill 753817 charlotteoneill@me.com





Iden Green and Benenden WI

Members enjoyed a pleasant social and craft afternoon on 8 March when they bought along a number of very interesting items which stimulated a great deal of animated discussion. Combined with tea and cake, it all provided a welcome treat on a chilly afternoon.

At our last monthly meeting we enjoyed listening to Mrs Farmer talking about Red, Black and White Work. This transpired to be a fascinating insight into the history of detailed and delicate embroidery which was stitched onto white or unbleached fabric.

Jackie Liffen WI@daisystar.co.uk



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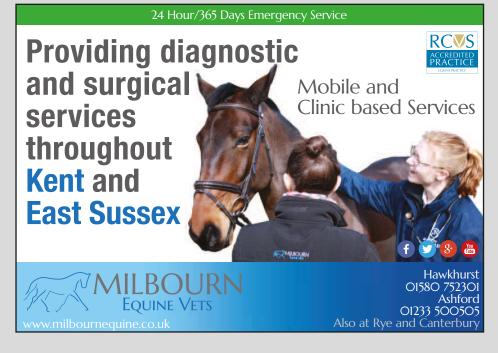
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See above for contact information and feel free to contact for more details, quotes and prices. Often same day responses via email.







The Friends of St George's Church Annual General Meeting

Monday 8 April 2018 in St George's Church

7pm ~ AGM

- · Reports on activities and funds raised in 2018
 - Election of Officers
 - Any other business

Your thoughts and ideas will be most welcome.

7.15pm ~ Refreshments

7.45pm ~ Guest Speaker: Charles Trollope

'The Birds of Rye Harbour'

An illustrated presentation by our own ornithological expert describing the varied and unique habitats in one of the most important conservation sites in Britain.

Everyone Welcome

The Friends of St George's AGM with guest speaker

This magazine's resident ornithological expert Charles Trollope will be guest speaker at the annual general meeting of the Friends of St George's Church, offering an insight into the Birds of Rye Harbour to conclude the evening.

Proceedings begin at 7pm in the church on Monday 8 April, to include a full report on activities and funds raised in 2018, as well as the election of officers. Refreshments at 7.15pm will be followed by Charles's illustrated presentation describing the varied and unique habitats in one of the most important conservation sites in Britain.

Rye Harbour nature reserve is one of the most diverse in the country, with at least six very different habitats. Part of the reserve, Castle Farm, was re-flooded a few years ago to create coastal grazing, salt marsh and saline lagoons. The coastline and its shingle dunes provide a major habitat, and further inland there are freshwater gravel pits, farmland and reedbeds

Charles's talk will explore each of these habitats through the changing seasons and the birds that might be encountered. If you have never visited before then this is sure to whet your appetite. All are welcome.

Clive Turner, Membership Secretary



St George's Church electoral roll

A new electoral roll is to be prepared this year. This is done every six years. All former members of the old roll must make a fresh application for inclusion in the new roll. In addition new applicants are invited to apply.

The roll is the basic list in every parish of all those entitled to vote on elections within the Church of England. You have to be 16 years of age or more and you must reside in the parish or be a regular worshipper at St George's.

If you wish to be included please contact David Collard, Electoral Roll Officer, at 7 Fuggles Court, Benenden TN17 4EF or contact him on 01580 241944 or email him at julia.collard@btinternet.com for information. New applicants can find the necessary forms at the rear of the church.Applications must be received by Sunday 7 April.

David Collard, Electoral Roll Officer



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MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

CROSSWORD Noll (Tricky)

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Across

- Ruin hairstyle (4)
- Awkwardly use minor in Frenchman's address (8)
- 9 Dissenter gets a bit twitchy in this place (7)
- 10 Condescend design without sibilant (5)
- 11 Nazi makes article a chasm (5)
- 12 The Raven was his attempt, one supposes (6)
- 14 Copper heads south-eastwards following charge, allegedly (6)
- **16** He's superseded by having unmanned weapons (6)
- 19 Sensed by simian sagacity? (2,4) 21 7 Down after a low score and with blue eyes (5)
- 24 The entire orchestra plays part of Little Richard hit? (5)
- 25 Commit pure wit, eventually, to paper (5,2)
- **26** Desperately desiring a seat close to the action (8)
- **27** Cut a long story short (4)

Down

- Great changes have Paul upset (8)
- Tidy, messy and right filthy (5)
- 4 Take over, remain and hold attention (6)
- Face over, Ternam and floor attention (6)
 Rough grass on the southern boundary? (5)
 Life-saving "pen" and lightweight witticism (7)
 Noxious class division (4)
- 8 Sits as still as can be (6)
- 13 Deadly asp? Kent, I suppose, may find one here (5,3)
- **15** Salad garnish ruined on court (7)
- 17 Dark and dishonest (6)
- **18** Sounds like he was knocked to the ground; his fault (6)
- 20 Terrible Elvis covers (5)
- **22** Make good by noon (5)
- 23 One way or another, it's doing porridge (4)

CODEWORD Noll (Easy)

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Each number represents a letter. Break the code and
complete the grid Three letters have been given to help you

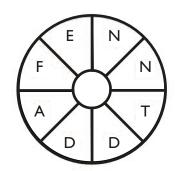
Q

STEP CHANGE



Change the word at the foot of the ladder into the word at the top by altering only one letter at a time.

NINE FROM EIGHT



Find the missing letter at the centre of the wheel to create a nine-letter word. **CLUE: Sounds** like they may protect insects!



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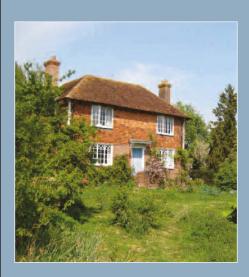
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Hospice in the Weald

By the time you read this we shall have had the Cranbrook Choral Society Concert in St George's church. I do hope that those who went enjoyed the singing. Many thanks to all who helped organise this concert which was in aid of Hospice in the Weald and Friends of St George's.

Our events for this year are:

- Saturday 30 March, 7.30pm Wine Tasting in St Mildred's Church Hall, led by Tracy Claridge. Entry by ticket only at £25 to include a two course meal.
- Saturday 27 April concert by Invicta Wind Orchestra at Tenterden Methodist Church. More details to follow.
- Saturday 18 May, 7pm Canterbury
 Choristers Concert in St George's Church,
 Benenden. Tickets are £15, to include light refreshments.
- Saturday I and Sunday 2 June and Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 June, II-5pm - Open Studios and Gardens at Charlotte Molesworth's house on the Green in Benenden.
- Friday 16 August Open Gardens and music in Biddenden. More details to follow.
- Saturday 2 November, 10-12noon Christmas card sale and coffee morning in St George's Church, Benenden.

We do hope to see you at some of these events. We shall provide more information nearer the time.

Thank you for your support.

Please do contact me for further details: Jenny Stevens, Hospice in the Weald Friends Co-ordinator for Benenden and Sandhurst 07720 006244 jenny.tenterden@gmail.com

Classical for charity

Saturday 27 July, 3pm

Piano recital and garden party in Sandhurst in aid of Hospice in the Weald. Daniel Grimwood will be performing music by Dvorak as well as a variety of Russian works. Tickets from:

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Benenden Pre-School news

This year's Theme Week at the Pre-School was all about baking and the children had a great time making bread and cupcakes. They particularly liked adding the icing and sprinkles at the end - I doubt the parents were given much chance to share their creations!

Also, the Pre-School would like to thank everyone who donated to the Hygiene Bank in March. The products will be greatly received by people who need them locally.

To find out more about Benenden Pre-School, please email:

supervisor@benendenpre-school.co.uk

Village lunch

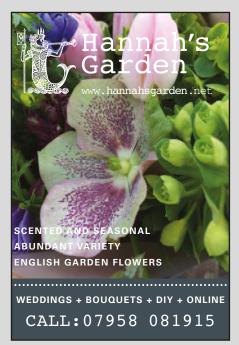
Tuesday 16 April, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

Our village lunch is open to all ages and everyone who would like to come is very welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Minnie Garnier on 240506.

Cost of the lunch is £5.

If you enjoy cooking and would like to join the band of volunteers we would love to hear from you. Please call Sheila on 240838.







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Leaving school with ambitions fulfilled

When Gill Knox arrived in Benenden six years ago as the new head of our primary school, her familiarity with the place extended little beyond its 'chocolate box' charms. Admittedly she was only commuting in from Hawkhurst, but what she saw was simply "an idyllic Kent village with children playing on the green and the church bells in the background". And, of course, the school - that loveable 19th-century relic with its scattered collection of ancient ancillary sites - which was where reality began to bite.

"Initially you think the old building is very quaint," she recalls, "but on a daily basis I found myself thinking 'this is ridiculous'. After a while you came to accept it, but it was like an Outward Bound course trying to get from one place to another when the bell went, clambering over stuff and people to make a cup of tea.

"Funnily enough the children never minded all the walking around between sites and it's good for them in a way - they get to know the village really well, they get to be very traffic savvy - but the one thing I do regret is that I won't be there on day one, when they go in to the new school and see exactly what they've got, because it'll be a sea change from what they've been used to."

In a nutshell, Gill sums up the satisfaction she will take with her when she vacates the post of

headteacher on 5 April, making way for new executive head Lindsay Roberts. The next school year will begin in the new building, and that's an achievement in which Gill takes enormous pride.

"When I took the job my two ambitions were to get the school to 'good' from an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' and to secure the new school, and I think both of those ambitions have been fulfilled," she smiles. "It's going to be so lovely and we'll have five times the amount of space, so it will seem crazy, but I feel I'll be leaving the school in a better way than I found it, and that's a lovely way to go."

After 32 years as a teacher, 15 of them as head, Gill will bow out at the age of 62, having grown up in Chislehurst, attended Prendergast Grammar School in Lewisham and progressed via a BEd to a first job teaching History and English at a high school in Sittingbourne. After a hiatus to raise a son and daughter, she slotted back neatly into primary education and arrived in Benenden from Hastings.

Having sat through building meetings "where I felt I didn't even know what language people were speaking", she has reached her comfort zone - "I've chosen all the flooring, carpets, paints and colours" - has signed the exposed girder that will be visible in perpetuity and can leave with happy memories of "all the things that make you feel pride in the school, projects in the community, the residential visits, the trips where you see children in a slightly different light".

Not least, she will treasure her time with her Church of England Primary School ally, our local rector. "David Commander started at the same time as me," she explains. "We were the new kids on the block - and that's been a really positive relationship. He's a super guy and has done so much for the children."

Gill will soon head off on her travels to New England in the fall, to Wimbledon fortnight for the first time in 30 years, and to all the other "events that are immovable and don't fall in any school holiday". Her six years with us have been a pleasure for parents and children alike and we wish her well for the future.

Peter Thomas





SAINT RONAN'S SCHOOL

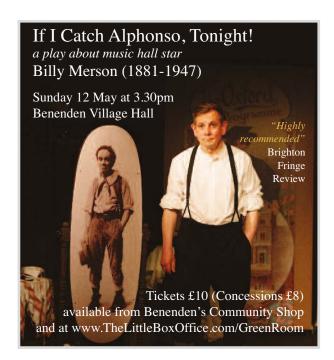
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The Spaniard that came to Benenden

Sunday 12 May, Benenden Village Hall, 3.30pm Ever keen to extend Benenden's reach into the world of culture, the good folk at the village hall break new ground next month with the arrival of a show, fresh from the Brighton Fringe festival, that promises to plunge us all back into the world of music hall, global conflict and comedy.

If I Catch Alphonso, Tonight! is a play based on the life of Billy Merson, a Nottingham born music hall star whose career began as a circus clown and acrobat at the turn of the 20th century before he embraced the changing face of popular entertainment to become a star of stage and silver screen, wowing the West End and sharing credits with the likes of Charlie Chaplin. While some of his contemporaries have reputations that linger, Merson has largely slipped from the public eye, despite having achieved substantial fame with songs such as The Spaniard That Blighted My Life, telling the tale of a man whose girlfriend was stolen by a toreador on a trip to the bullring.

Containing hints of operatic spoof, panto and madcap revue, set against the backdrop of two









world wars, 'Alphonso' tells the fascinating tale of the troubled existence of a born entertainer, brought to life by Miles Jenner - who has previously played such diverse roles as Alan Turing, Noel Coward, Thomas Becket and Richard III, and whose other claim to fame is as MD of the exalted Harvey's brewery in Lewes - with piano accompaniment by Roger Roser.

Expect extracts from 16 of Merson's offbeat songs, tinged with the colour and vibrancy of a turbulent age.

www.alphonso.info















oday's refugee crisis is as challenging now as it was in 1945 when the charity was launched.

Our target is £5,000 so Christian Aid can continue its vital work helping people around the world survive and feed their families.

So please give generously when the appeal envelopes are posted through your letterboxes by our collectors, wearing their official badges, from 12 May.

Tracy Claridge, local Christian Aid Organiser 240454 Christianaid@tlclaridge.co.uk

Talking Shop

Now spring is well and truly here and we are hopefully turning our backs on winter chills, our enthusiastic shop managers are planning to create some competitions for the children as we approach Easter. The word is that it will be colouring competitions for the younger ones and word searches for the older ones.

There will, of course, be on sale the rather special hot cross buns which were such a hit last year. They come from what used to be Chaney's in Cranbrook (there for over 50 years) but is now Cranbrook Bakery. It is owned by the Gaertner family who originally hailed from South Africa. Kim and Bryn took it over last October and have continued to make all the products on the premises in the bakery at the back of the shop, while planning to restore the building to its former glory. Their bakery products have maintained their popularity in our shop - rightfully so.

Finally, a gentle nudge to remind our wonderful customers that you can now enjoy a glass of wine (red or white) or a local beer with your food in the café between the hours of noon and 2pm from Monday to Saturday and I lam and I pm on Sunday. The conviviality in the café is delightful anyway but a glass of something extra can only enhance the whole experience. Bev Beveridge

News from Benenden School

It has been a particularly busy few weeks since my last column. As you may have read in the national media, unfortunately our fundraising ball - to raise money for a new school hall and music school - came to an abrupt end when a section of the ceiling in The Savoy's ballroom collapsed. Although our guests were understandably shocked by the incident, fortunately nobody was hurt.

The warm wishes and support we have received from the community since this unfortunate episode have been overwhelming and we are very grateful to everybody who has been in touch. On the positive side, preparatory work on the project continues, and at the time of writing demolition is due to begin within days.

The morning after the ball, I was in Aldershot, cheering on our girls at the National Schools Lacrosse Championship. Across four days of competition, our players performed brilliantly across all age groups and we came back as national runners-up twice over.

Our Chapel Choir have just completed recording their second commercial CD, featuring contemporary Christmas Carols by Bob Chilcott, Sarah Quartel and David Bednall. This follows the success of our debut CD in 2016, of David Bednall's Stabat Mater.

We will soon be sharing with the Benenden community details of our Arts Festival. This year we have moved it to June and it promises to be bigger and better than ever. We do hope that villagers will join us for some of the events.

Finally, we recently had our Independent Schools Inspectorate full inspection. This was expected, as inspections occur on a cyclical basis, and I am delighted to say that we were declared Excellent - the highest rating available - which was a wonderful endorsement of everybody's hard work.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

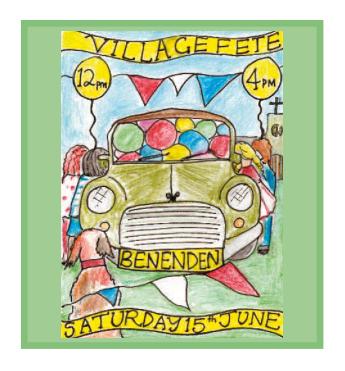
Our Fete needs you!

Saturday 15 June, The Green, 12noon-4pm

The success of our village fete depends on the many wonderful volunteers who get involved running the stands and activities. Last year we raised £10,000, but we do need more help in the run up to, and on, the day to achieve this. So, if you fancy making cakes, donating bric-abrac, tools, jewellery and books and your time helping on a stall, then please get in touch with Tracy or Joy (details below) now.

Deborah Jenkins, our bookworm, is already collecting books for a stall which is a significant fund-raiser, so please contact her if you have items to donate and/or you would like to help her on the day. Please leave your books in the church entrance (on the right-hand side) for collection. It's important that they are in good, sellable, condition. Any books remaining after the fete are taken to Catching Lives Books in Canterbury, a charity bookshop and officially 'Kent's Best'. Nothing goes to waste and we are very grateful for all your support.

Tracy Claridge 240454 tlclaridge@tlclaridge.co.uk Joy Rowlands 07872 467921 joyrowlands824@yahoo.com



Calling all donors and helpers

Saturday 15 June, The Green, 12noon-4pm

We are starting to organise our famous bric-a-brac stall for the village fete, so if you can help in any capacity or give us some time on Friday 14 June and/or Saturday 15 June, we would love to hear from you.

Now is the time to start turning out your cupboards and attics: all unwanted items and donations can be taken to the Rectory garden, as last year, from Tuesday 7 May. We hope once again to raise a hefty sum for the church and hope that you will join us.

Maggy Hoyt 240700

DEFENDANT

NINE FROM EIGHT

HAWK, HANK, DANK, DANE, DONE, DOVE

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Down: I Upheaval, 2 Dirty, 4 Occupy, 5 Sedge, 6 Epigram, 7 Rank, 8 Stasis, 13 Snake pit, 15 Crouton, 17 Unfair, 18 Flawed, 20 Veils, 22 Amend, 23 Stir

Across: I Undo, 3 Monsieur, 9 Heretic, 10 Deign, 11 Abyss, 12 Poetry, 14 Accuse, 16 Gunman, 19 No evil, 21 Frank, 24 Tutti, 25 Write up, 26 Ringside, 27 Edit

CROSSWORD No II
MINDBENENDERS Answers



Climate change spells good news and bad news for Kentish wines

Tracy Claridge investigates the effects of global warming on a booming business

The resurgence of southern English winemaking has sparked more and more interest among French Champagne producers. Taittinger has bought 60 hectares of farmland near Chilham, this side of Canterbury and Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger reckons his investments will increase to €10 million over the next decade - 20 hectares are already planted, and this may increase to 40.

The first harvest will take place this year - the wines will not be available for sale until 2023/24 - and they hope to produce about 250,000 bottles of English sparkling wine per annum. The aim is for vintages to

be top quality and to be baptized Evremond, after the 17th-century French moralist and libertine critic Charles de Saint-Evremond.

There are many factors to explain the English wine renaissance, but chief among them is climate change. "In the Middle Ages, an episode of global warming helped develop wine culture around monasteries in the south of England," explained Jean-Marc Touzard, a researcher at the French National Institute for Agricultural Research. Today the same causes are producing the same effects. "The vines are moving back up north. New regions will be able to participate in wine cultivation, whether it's in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland or Russia," predicts Touzard.

Simultaneously the French climate is going awry. Winters are milder, the vines are maturing earlier. There is a growing risk of rain and hail that can endanger the vines. "This year (2018) in Champagne we lost about 30% of our harvest due to having to sort out rotten grapes during the harvest," said Pierre-Emmanuel.

The wine industry of Great Britain is growing quickly. Latest figures detail a record-breaking harvest from last year, a doubling in sales

both here and abroad and more land under vine than ever before. Further substantial growth is also predicted over the next two decades.

Last year a record-breaking 15.6 million bottles were produced, 130% higher than the previous year's crop in 2017 and far exceeding the previous record of 6.3m bottles in 2014.

A further two million vines are set to be planted this year, confirming the UK wine industry as one of the fastest-growing agricultural sectors in the UK, and with approximately 70,000 acres of land in the UK that may be suitable for wine production,

Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger, President of Champagne Taittinger, breaks first ground at Domaine Evremond in Kent, May 2017

there remain opportunities for further expansion. Industry predictions are that at the current rate of growth, Great Britain will be heading for 40m annual bottle production in the next 20 years.

This bodes well for the rural economy, as vineyard numbers grow and with it their workforce. Currently 2,000 people are employed within the industry, from vineyard workers to winemakers, administrative support and cellar door staff. Over the next 20 years, wine will create between 20,000 and 30,000 new jobs, showing not only the many future opportunities for labour creation and skills development in this sector but also providing a sizeable boost to the economy.

Sales of English and Welsh wines doubled last year, as did exports, the biggest markets being USA and Scandinavia, which together receive 65% of total exports. WineGB expects that exports may account for 30-40% of the total wine produced in Great Britain by 2040, yielding a potential value of some £350m per annum.

Helping to drive growth is wine tourism, with a thriving scene in England and Wales offering an experience once reserved for trips overseas. Whilst most visitors are currently UK-based (some 86%), there are many opportunities to attract more inbound visits through export activity in key markets. Drawing on the experience of other established wine regions, by 2040 wine tourism in the UK could generate an additional revenue alone of £658m per annum.

Geologist and viticulture expert Professor Richard Selly, who worked as a consultant at the UK's largest vineyard, Denbies in Sussex, claims that if temperatures continue to rise, within a generation or so, thought will have to be given to replacing the current vines with varieties better suited for a warmer climate. In his opinion, in 2080 Chardonnay will mostly be grown in northern England, the Welsh mountains and

Scotland, Merlot in much of the rest of the country, with the south coast of England only fit for raisins!

In the view of Trevor Baker of the Guardian, anyone who thinks that climate change will provide a simple good news story for English wine-lovers may be deluding themselves. All that climate change really promises is, like Brexit, chaos and instability, which are not conditions that are beneficial for grapes or any other crop, or human beings!





to do the weeding/the dog trampled on the grasses and any other excuses we may mutter in our defence for letting things get a little out of hand.

I am not going to rush into dos and don'ts here about when you should be trimming the hedges (although the general rule is deciduous in winter, evergreens in spring); how you should look after your lawn (it's a personal thing - I, for one, like moss and daisies); paths will need a good sweep with a stiff brush quite regularly, or using the less-favoured leafblower (if you have an awful lot of paths for example); but edges - well, here I must pause.

Edges score very highly in my maintenance book - it immediately lifts the garden, makes it look crisp and well cared for and is so easy to do, not to mention one of the more pleasurable tasks. As you move along, shears in hand, you can make a mental note of what needs doing in each section as you pass. It is one of the lovely, quieter chores to do in the garden and the rewards are great, too, as it looks really neat when done. And use a sharp pair of long-handled shears which are at a comfortable height for you. I find these give a better cut than anything mechanical.

Mowing the lawn can seem a tireless task when it needs doing every single week; if that is the case for you then perhaps it is because there are too many awkward corners to navigate. Or too many tree stumps or clumps of bulbs. It could be worth taking an overview to see if maintenance can be made easier by adjusting the shape of a border (or even taking one out). I also find it useful to tip the clippings into a wheelbarrow as I go, making trips to the compost heap a little easier unless you have a large garden, in which case you may be lucky enough to have a ride-on mower, rendering mowing almost effortless! I also tend to mow first, then edge after. It seems to give a cleaner look.

If you can find a way to fit these four tasks into your routine then you will have the main areas covered and the garden will always appear well looked after. Maintenance lecture over with, I will resort to writing about plants next month. Enjoy your garden in this loveliest time of the year, early spring.

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Above: The great outdoors: Primary School children relishing Forest School within the grounds of Benenden School; Caroline Kennedy's outdoor workout class on The Glebe; Lyndora Goodger prepares the Woodcock Inn for re-opening Front cover: Cherry blossom in spring. Photograph: Amelia Thomas