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Editorial



I went to see Madness recently - the pop group, not the mental condition, although the two aren't so far apart as you might imagine - and was taken by two things. First, it was heartening to see that despite being three stone heavier (each, not collectively) the band were still as lively and spirited as in the 1980s. Second, the capacity for middle-aged men, when in a crowd, to put on silly hats and make fools of themselves remains undimmed.

The fez was the headgear of choice, in longstanding honour of the band's big hit Night Boat to Cairo. There were fezzes on stage and many, many more in the audience, aided by a handy fez stall knocking them out for a tenner a pop. The wearers duly looked daft and behaved dafter.

I was reminded of this when I saw that the Benenden Village Trust, as part of a bold quest to raise funds, will be holding a special screening of the classic movie Casablanca next month (Saturday 16 November, to be precise - see page 30) in the village hall, with the emphasis on fancy dress.

Now, Casablanca is not only a legendary piece of celluloid but also home to an impressive collection of fezzes, most notably that worn by Sydney Greenstreet as Signor Ferrari. So, if you bought one last time you saw Madness, or you wear one routinely, either in the street or in the bedroom, this is your big moment. Unless, of course, you have a white dinner jacket, a black bow tie and a tub of Brylcreem, in which case you can go full Humphrey Bogart.

It's just the latest in a long line of bizarre village events, and I gather the intention is to feature other classics. I'm hoping for a chance to get my Blues Brothers suit and sunglasses out of the wardrobe, although I may have to have the trousers let out an inch or two.

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

The Benenden Magazine is published monthly as a joint venture by Benenden Parish Council and St George's Parochial Church Council. It is distributed free to all residents of the parish. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers. Responsibility for accuracy of information rests with contributors and advertisers. Neither the publishers nor the editors shall be held responsible for or endorse any opinions, products or services printed in the magazine or directory.

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

Associate Priest: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 rev.ylva@gmail.com

Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 d.collard49@btinternet.com

Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 sue@undaunted.co.uk

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

Please inform the Rector, Associate Priest or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Sunday 6 October 8am Communion 10am All-age 5pm Choral Evensong

Communion

Sunday 13 October 8am BCP Communion 10am Morning Worship Sunday 20 October 8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Saturday 26 October 4pm Connect Four

at Mission Church, Sandhurst

Sunday 27 October 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

Morning Prayer 8am Mondays and Fridays

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Tobin Bird 240027 www.idengreen.org.uk

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The I0am Morning Worship is broadcast on our YouTube channel: search 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

The Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Baptism 15 September Isaac Grigson

Wedding 7 September Katie Masterson and Chris Cleaver

Funerals 18 September Alan Britton Funeral and burial

23 September Phyllis Marshall Cremation and Memorial Service

Church Letter



A day to remember the dear and departed

The year marches on and autumn really feels like it has arrived. The back-to-school things are behind us, either the excitement and emotion of children going to school for the first time, or the resignation of some older children about going back. The university runs and dropping off at halls of residence are done. The harvest services - in our primary schools and parish churches - are done. We are definitely past summer and back into our normal routines.

For the parish churches in Benenden and Sandhurst, and for Revd Ylva and me in particular, there are the last two weddings of the year to conduct in early October. For both of us there is also a two-day Bishops Clergy Residential to attend. And for the Weald Deanery we have a Canterbury Diocese annual 'roadshow' coming up at the end of the month. In October, we also have to keep a special record of church service attendance for an annual 'statistics return' to be submitted early next year. On the personal front, Helen and I have the baptism of our youngest granddaughter to look forward to in October at the Kirk of the Trossachs near Callander. So, having said about 'normal routines', perhaps October isn't so normal after all.

Within 'the Church' there are seasons of the year that are followed, e.g. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter etc, which form the basis of a yearly routine. Obviously, Christmas and Easter are very important in that annual cycle, but for me a very special one is coming up soon is All Souls' Day. The other name for this day, or the service held on that day, is 'the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed'. It is a time set aside to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Whether they have died this year or many years ago doesn't matter; at this service we name, remember, and light a candle in their memory.

The date for All Souls' Day, in the Church Calendar, is 2 November. However, this year this is a Saturday, which I think has the potential for fewer people attending; therefore, our commemoration service will take place at 7.30pm on Sunday 3 November at St. George's. If you would like the name of a loved one read out in this service, please can you email me or Cathy Baker (benendenchurch@gmail.com), our parish administrator, by Sunday 20 October, or add their name to the list in church.

You may remember back in May there was the great idea for a 'National Celebration Day' for loved ones who have died. The Church has been doing it for years! If this has never been part of your normal routine in the year, I would encourage you to come along. We are all gathered for the same reason; we miss a loved one. That is normal for all of us.

Revd David Commander, Rector and Area Dean

Village Calendar

October

Wednesday 2	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Lunch at Tenterden Garden Centre, 12.30pr	n p.13
Friday 4	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. I 3
Friday 4	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 6-8pm	p.28
Saturday 5	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 10-5pm	p.28
Saturday 5	Ladder Toss, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 6	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm	p.28
Tuesday 8	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 8	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 8	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.21
Thursday 10	Benenden Gardening Club, Simon Sutcliffe, Growing Plants for Chelsea,	
	Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 6.30pm	p.27
Saturday 12	Newcomers' Lunch, St George's Church, Benenden, 12noon	p.9
Saturday 12	Golf Game, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 15	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Your Own Words, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. I 3
Saturday 19	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 19	Benenden Bowls Club, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10am	
Saturday 19	Gus Hoyt: Wim Hof Fundamentals Workshop, Iden Green Pavilion, 10am	p. I 7
Saturday 19	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 20	Gus Hoyt: Wim Hof Fundamentals Workshop, Iden Green Pavilion, 10am	p. I 7
Monday 21	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Tuesday 22	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 22	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 22	Merry and Bright, Growing up in Benenden, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. I 3
Tuesday 22	Benenden's Community Shop, AGM, Memorial Hall, 7pm	p.9
Saturday 26	Darts on Quadro 240 Board, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Thursday 31	The Ugly Duckling: The Ballet, Benenden School Theatre, Ipm	p.19
Thursday 31	Craftanoon: All Hallows Eve, Benenden's Community Shop, 2-5pm	p.9

Iden Green Toddler Group

Tuesdays during term time in Iden Green Congregational Church, 9-11.30am

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6pm

Cakes & Chaos: Café and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11am

Parish Council



Summer is drawing to a close and it's time to reflect on what has been achieved with the help of the parish council over the last month or so. The allotment holders have been busy digging a trench and installing a water pipe in readiness for a connection to the mains.

You may have noticed the Kentish flag flying from the new flagpole which has been installed on the green to replace the old one which was suffering from timber decay. The new timber flagpole has been designed so that it can easily be lowered to allow for maintenance and the Kentish flag was raised to draw attention to the fact that it is a new pole.

The developer of the hospital site has made a start by replacing some of the hoarding surrounding the plot.

My thanks must go to the parish councillors and regular volunteers who assisted with the Jazz and Blues, organised by the Iden Green Pavilion Trustees, with a special mention for Georgina Clarke and Peter Ellis, who so professionally provided the sound amplification for the afternoon. The event raised nearly £1,300 for charity, thanks in no small part to the work of Julie and Bill Lewis. Bill also played his rhythm guitar in the jazz band for the event. A man of many talents!

The parish council is currently investigating the provision of some protection for the well at the crossroads in Benenden. Having spent a considerable sum on the refurbishment of the structure, we are hoping to safeguard our asset by the installation of three Victorian-style bollards. There have been many car accidents at these crossroads and the structure is currently vulnerable. In the last year, a car knocked over the litter bin next to it.

And on the subject of bins, there are about 25 salt bins set at various locations in the parish. If one is near you, perhaps you could check the level of the salt in it before winter sets in. You can either order a free refill on the KCC website 'kent.gov.uk' under 'Roads and Travel>Report a Problem, or notify our highways representative Peter Driver, who can be contacted via our website.

Graham Beveridge, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
07593 226462 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org
For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on Facebook

Parish Council Meeting Monday 21 October, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm



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Talking Point



It's time for 'anti-social' media to say something nice

Social media is now the 21st-century version of the untamed wild west. An open plain where online outlaws shoot straight from the hip - poisonous opinion, dangerous misinformation and unsubstantiated claims - without a hoot for the upshot. Sadly, faceless skirmishes in the fake world leave behind real-life victims.

The violence and lawlessness this summer which followed the fatal stabbing of three little girls in Southport was fuelled by racist misinformation spread on social media, claiming, falsely, that the suspect was a Muslim asylum seeker who had arrived illegally on a boat. A few days later, one social media post called for hotels housing migrants to be 'set on fire', with the outcome we all witnessed. While Lucy Connolly, who made the post, pleaded guilty to publishing a social media post intending to stir up racial hatred, the platform on which she posted failed to see a problem with it.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that I'm anti social media. It's just when it's anti-social. There are many instances when social media can be a force for good: networking, promoting businesses and products, raising public awareness, charitable fundraising, finding lost dogs, meeting people and making new friends. This, of course, is not an exhaustive list!

On social media, anyone can be the subject of trolling, and everyone can join a mob. (Trolling, for clarity, is when someone deliberately tries to rile or insult - and it invariably leads to a pile-on.) From minor celebrities to global superstars and female politicians, all have suffered pervasive trolling. You might argue that if you're in the public eye and put yourself in the social media spotlight then to some degree, you should expect it, but should anyone have to suffer its worst excesses? As J K Rowling says: "I've now received so many death threats I could paper the house with them."

But the problem goes much deeper, even at a local level. You only need to look on Nextdoor or our local Facebook groups to see where social media posts about anything - from Jempson's prices to lighting bonfires on someone else's washing day - can spiral into spiteful online slanging matches.

While we wait for the social media behemoths to take some social responsibility (and for the new Online Safety Act in 2025) isn't it time we practised a bit of self-control? Perhaps, before you next pummel the keyboard in rage, take a deep breath. Think about the impact what you say will have on someone else. What would it be like to be on the other end? How would you or your family feel? A pretty good rule of thumb is, 'If I wouldn't say it to someone's face, I won't say it on social media.' And you might remember something Bambi says to Thumper: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

We can make our points truthfully and honestly, but respectfully. Even better, if we direct our passion for free speech online to something more productive, like speaking out for justice, mobilising help for people in need, making new friends or finding the neighbour's cat, then from large to small, social media could actually help to make the world a better place.





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News and Events

Arnold Cole Trust

The Arnold Cole Trust would like to invite applications for its annual disbursements from those clubs and societies within the parish of Benenden in need of funds. Dr Arnold Cole was GP in Benenden from 1930 until his death in 1960, after which his daughter, the late Joan Weston, set up the trust in 1968. The aim of the trust is to apply its income for the 'general benefit for the parish of Benenden with special consideration being given to both the elderly and young'.

All applications in writing please to: The Secretary, Arnold Cole Trust, Scribbins, Benenden, Kent TN17 4DT. Please note applications must be received no later than 31 October.

Benenden Players

Fancy treading the boards or working behind the scenes? We are in the process of planning our next revue on the evening of 4 January (7.30pm) and a matinee on 5 January (2.30pm). It's a time to come and see local talent at its best and its funniest. Adults and children (accompanied by parents, due to chaperoning needs) are welcome. We are not Broadway (yet!) so if you're wavering, come along anyway.

We have some skits planned that need participants so you don't necessarily need to have something in mind, although it's great if you do. Rehearsal time will be tailored to the needs of performers. Don't like the idea of being on stage? No problems. We always need people to help behind the scenes with costumes, props, front of house, manning the bar and generally helping to set out and clear up. All are welcome. We would also be very grateful for any donations towards our raffles during performances. Tickets will be on sale from mid-November. Mark Hollander 07717 207233 markhollander1@googlemail.com Bev Beveridge 07710 164490 bev.bev@hotmail.co.uk

Talking Shop

Calling all youngsters up to the age of 13yrs. We are holding a special 'Craftanoon' from 2pm to 5pm in the café to celebrate All Hallows Eve on 31 October. There will be various activities including decorating biscuits specially made for the occasion. Tickets for the event will be on sale for £1 per child in the shop. This covers the price of the biscuits. There will be 30 tickets for this event and it's first come first served, so don't dilly dally. We look forward to seeing our young ones there.

For the more mature among us, we cordially invite our shareholders to the shop committee AGM to be held in the Memorial Hall on 22 October, beginning at 7pm and to be followed by a little light refreshment.

Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk www.benendens.co.uk

Newcomers' lunch

St George's Church is delighted to invite all newcomers to Benenden to an informal lunch in the church on Saturday 12 October at 12noon until 2pm. You will be offered a light buffet lunch with a glass of wine or soft drink and all newcomers are welcome. If you have moved to this village within the last couple of years, please do come and take this opportunity to meet other new residents and members of this community. We also wish to invite representatives from various village organisations who will be asked to give a very brief outline of their activities.

If you wish to attend please email me directly and I will ensure you have a formal invitation. If, however, you have new neighbours or know of people who have just moved here, do also please let me know and I will ensure they are invited. All the family are welcome.

This is a wonderful village to live in and we hope to be able to welcome you to the lunch and convince you, if you were not already convinced, of course, that your decision to move here was indeed the right one.

Sally-Ann Marks sallymarks100@hotmail.com







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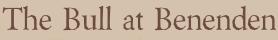
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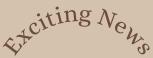


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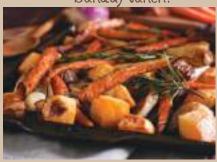


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Merry and Bright

It's unbelievable that we have nearly completed another very enjoyable Merry and Bright year. Our ploughman's at Benenden Bowls Club was a great success - thank you to Beryl for teaching us the game. Our September meeting was cream tea at Hawkhurst Fish Farm and in October Marianne Ball coming to talk to us about growing up in Benenden. This will definitely interest people who have recently moved here, as the village has changed so much since we were young. Everyone is welcome. For more information about our meetings please contact us.

Laraine Penny 241763 Julia Collard 241944

Autumn Village Tidy

Litter picking is a simple action that anyone can do to make an immediate and visible difference to the village, and protect and enhance its appearance. The parish council leads an organised village tidy event every spring and autumn, and the latest one will be on Saturday 9 November, starting at 9am.

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers - many of whom have become regulars and take part every year. As ever, equipment (litter pickers, hi viz jackets, bin bags) will be provided by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and can be collected from outside the village shop. Volunteers can take part for any length of time between 9 and 11am.

Litter collected and bagged should be left at the village hall and equipment returned to the shop by I Iam. Volunteers will receive a voucher for a drink and cake to be used at Benenden's café.

For more information, email clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org Caroline Levett

Support for community groups

Imago provides support to local frontline notfor-profit organisations including registered charities, CICs and community. Our services focus on improving health and wellbeing, tackling loneliness, building social and educational opportunities, and helping people access the right support. Organisations can access bimonthly networking meetings, a newsletter, one-to-one sessions focussing on your organisation's individual needs and training opportunities.

If you are involved with a not-for-profit and would like to know more about how we can help or to join one of our networking meetings, please contact Lysette D'Urso at charitysupport@imago.community www.imago.community

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Ten members had a convivial lunch at the Red Lion in Brede in August, while during the morning of 11 September we visited a member's house in Benenden for coffee. It was a lovely occasion with delicious home-made cakes.

Our speaker on 17 September was a financial advisor, who taught us the best way to keep our wills up to date, make a power of attorney and put savings away to avoid the taxman.

Another visit to Tenterden Garden Centre is planned for 2 October at 12.30pm. Our social afternoon in the Memorial Hall on 4 October will include several trading stalls, when we are invited to sell pre-loved (or otherwise) clothes and articles. Do join us if you would like to find out more about the WI.

Our next meeting is on 15 October in the Memorial Hall at 2pm, when Tess Fitzpatrick will explore the subject 'Your Own Words'.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

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Wim Hof workshop

I'm very excited to be running two Wim Hof Workshops in Iden Green on 19 and 20 October (see my advert opposite). A long time in the making, they feel like a homecoming gig. But what should you expect if you came along?

Well, first of all expect the unexpected! I don't mean I'm going to be surprising you with cheap gimmicks. Instead I mean that everyone is quite amazed at just what it is they experienced, and the illuminations and breakthroughs they've had. As an outline we'll talk about Wim himself and his journey, although this segment is a lot shorter now that he's a household name. Then we'll talk about the science of the breathwork and cold exposure and how they both benefit us on a much deeper level than originally thought. We look at the effects on our neuroplasticity (the positive re-wiring of our brains) and the benefits this brings to everyday tasks.

As Wim says: "Feeling is Understanding!"
No amount of talk will show us the true gifts of a guided breathwork session and extreme cold exposure. So, we very much prioritise the doing elements as well.

During the fully guided breathwork we let ourselves drift away, dissolving the pressures of everyday life. This relaxed 'dreaming while awake' state can also help us suddenly solve problems that have been hanging over us for years, or discover new depths to ourselves. The ice bath itself when it comes around is a huge moment of growth and learning! We can purposefully go into difficult situations, we can stay calm and we do feel great afterwards.

I'm very 'nuts and bolts' and not all 'woo-woo', so it's a fun and interesting day out where you learn how to practice the WHM in a safe environment - and I bring great snacks too!

Gus Hoyt

St George's Social Club

This club is a social space for the young and old. We have a darts team and a couple of snooker teams. Every month we hold a quiz night (see the village calendar on page 4). We hold other activities each month such as skittles, ladder toss, indoor golf, tabletop curling, bingo and the occasional barbecue. We welcome new members and the fee is only £10 a year. You are very welcome to come along to any activity whether you are a member or not. We look forward to seeing you. Find us on the corner opposite Wards, the butchers.

Glenda Marshall 243089 glendajoym@gmail.com

Friends of St George's Quiz

The annual quiz night in aid of the Friends of St George's takes place in the village hall on Friday 22 November. To be sure of a place in the line-up, teams need to be forming and registering soon. Last year 13 teams of eight took part in a tight contest, with the Mulberries just holding off 'Allo 'Allo, closely followed by Cerebella.

Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The format will be similar to previous years with seven rounds of questions and supper served at half time - teams supply their own drink. If you aren't already in a team of eight we can put you in touch with others to form one. The price for the quiz and supper is £18 per head and we will collect the money in advance from team captains. There will also be a raffle.

To take part, or if you have any questions, please contact Deborah Jenkins (deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com). We look forward to welcoming everyone to another fun evening.

Martin Pexton, Chairman, Friends of St George's

Benenden's

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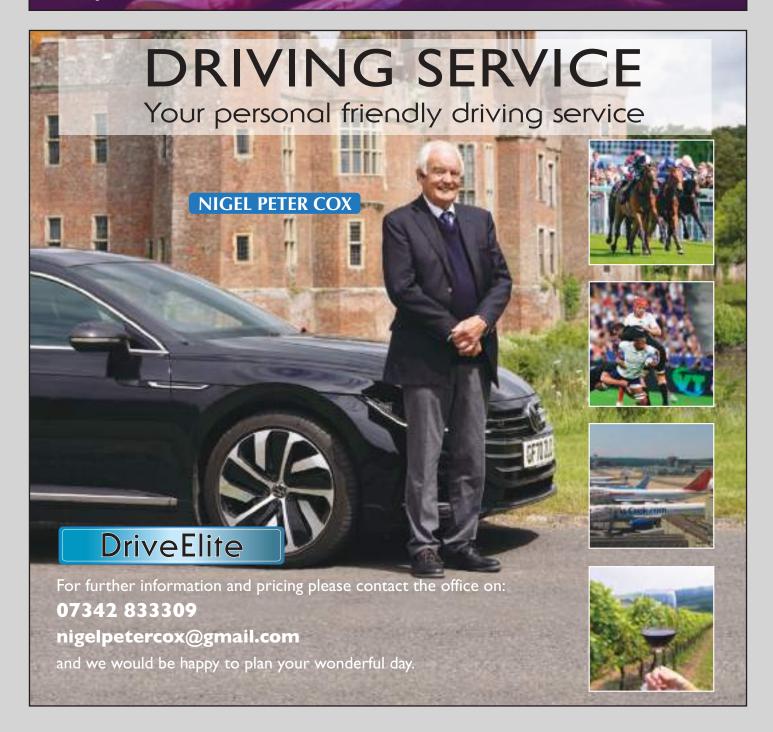


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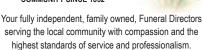


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Chicago Bridge Drive

If there is sufficient interest we are planning a bridge drive in the Mission Church in Sandhurst (Back Road TN18 5JS) on Wednesday 9
October in aid of St Nicholas Church. Arrive by 1.45pm for a 2pm start and play will finish at 4.45pm. There will be tea and delicious cakes, prizes and a raffle. Tables of four, £24. Please bring your own bridge cloth, cards, pencils and bidding boxes if you have them. For further information or to book a table please contact: Anne Tylden-Wright 850281 tyldenwright@gmail.com

Benenden School

As the new academic year gets underway, I would like to congratulate all the students and staff involved in the outstanding A Level and GCSE results achieved during the summer. The results were the school's best for a decade, excluding the Covid-affected years, and stand as wonderful testament to the calibre of teaching and to the curriculum approach here.

Indeed, Benenden's Complete Education model - and specifically in this girls' boarding environment - is very much what appealed to me about the role when I first applied. These exam results provide very clear evidence that this model is highly successful and I am fully committed to ensuring we always deliver an exceptional lived experience for our students across all areas of school life: academic, house, wellbeing plus co-curricular and professional development.

I am excited about immersing myself into Benenden village life, too, which of course involves getting to know many of you, our neighbours. If we haven't already chatted at Benenden's or around the village, I very much look forward to meeting you soon at some of the upcoming village events, or at those we are hosting here at Hemsted Park in the busy run up to Christmas.

Rachel Bailey, Headmistress

Village lunch

We really look forward to welcoming everyone to the village lunch on Tuesday 8 October at 12.30pm in the village hall. New people are always welcome. If you haven't booked and would like to come, please ring me, preferably by Thursday 3 October to allow for shopping. We can give lifts if that helps, so do let us know. Kathleen Brewis 240081

Hospice in the Weald

Our September event was fabulous. Not only was the weather perfect, but so was the duo of Emma Abbate and Julian Perkins. We even received our first review and I want to share some of it:

"Now in its 16th season, is a series of concerts dedicated to the life and work of Richard Beattie Davis, a chartered surveyor by profession, and a musicologist of prodigious gifts. The concerts are organized by his widow, Gillian, to support the vital work of the Hospice in the Weald.

Beattie Davis had a passion for the music of Adolph von Henselt and was honorary president of the International Adolph-Henselt-Gesellschaft so it was fitting that a work by the composer should find its way onto the programme. His canon for piano four hands was in marked contrast to the preceding pieces.

Afterwards, I stood in the garden watching the leaves dancing in the breeze and wondered if they had heard, if only faintly, the grace and charm of 20 fingers on a keyboard.

Kent Courier - Christopher Woodley ©"

We raised £425 for Hospice in the Weald, for which I thank you. This means in 2024 we have raised an incredible £1,206 and heard some unusual and fabulous music from our two events.

With your help, I am determined to reach £20,000 or the age of 90, whichever comes first!

Gillian Davis

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Project 20 20 progress update

It's been a summer of intense activity for the Project 20|20 team. At the beginning of June, we held a public meeting in St George's explaining our plans. This meeting was chaired by the Venerable Andrew Sewell, the Archdeacon of Maidstone. In the middle of June, we also had an information stall at the very windy church fete. At both events it was great to get positive feedback about our plans and respond to questions from local people. Later in June we also met with the Church Building Council (CBC) and other influential stakeholders who asked detailed questions about the technical and architectural aspects of the project.

We and our stakeholders are committed to preserving the architecture and beauty of St George's. Our guiding aim is to leave the visual experience of the church as undisturbed as possible. During the fete we heard from so many visitors about the special memories that the church holds due to significant family events held here over the years. We want to preserve and safeguard those connections for existing and future generations.

At the same time, we want to take advantage of advances in technology around heating, lighting and insulation to reduce our carbon footprint and improve the efficiency of the building. Our driving aim is to make this beautiful building much more accessible, practical and welcoming for the people of Benenden.

Throughout July and August, we continued to liaise with our architects, the diocesan advisory committee and others. At a special parochial church council meeting in August, it was agreed to submit a faculty to the diocese and to submit planning permission to the local authority. We should receive a response later in the autumn. We pray with hope and expectation that our plans will be approved and we can then move forward with the next stage of the project.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Project 20|20, please contact: Peter Brook, Project 20|20 Community Liaison benenden2020project@gmail.com

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Strauss Sonata in E flat major, Op.18

For full details, free mailing, tickets call 01580 883092 or write to A.G. Whitehead, Vinehall School, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5JL geoffreywhitehead@vinehallschool.com

Benenden Pre-School

Talking does not just involve speaking. In addition to words, we use gestures, facial expressions and eye contact to communicate. This month the pre-school staff have been on Makaton training. Makaton is a language programme that uses speech in conjunction with signs and picture symbols to develop children's communication and language skills. Its unique approach is to make language visual and, although we have been using a limited number of Makaton signs in pre-school for years, we now look forward to exploring lots of new vocabulary with the children.

For example, we have learned the signs for a wide range of foods, from milk, fruit and yoghurt to curry and naan bread, which may well make snack time more exploratory. Nursery rhymes such as Baa, Baa, Black Sheep and Hey Diddle Diddle have signs for all their words, which adds an extra dimension to the pleasures of singing and empowers children who may not yet have the ability or confidence to verbalise. We now know the signs for all family members as well as basic question words and common verbs, so will soon be signing in visual sentences.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk



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We have recommenced our regular monthly lunchtime meetings at The Bull, Benenden.

Currently there are vacancies for new members. If you are retired and would welcome friendly, relaxed company at a lunch, with interesting speakers, then please contact the Hon. Secretary on 01580 441201 for more information.



The Laureis Nursery, Brysieden, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent TNo 4JU Phone 01560 240465 www.thelaureisnursery.co.uk

Topical health

Menopause marks a significant transition in a woman's life, often accompanied by various physical and mental symptoms. While hot flashes and night sweats are commonly discussed, the mental challenges, such as mood swings, anxiety, depression, and brain fog, can be equally, if not more, challenging. Here are some tips for managing these mental symptoms effectively:

- Prioritise sleep Quality sleep is crucial for mental health, yet many women experience insomnia during menopause. Support your natural melatonin production by avoiding screen-time for an hour before bed, as well as seeking natural daylight upon waking, for at least 20 minutes. Reduce caffeine intake, and consider herbs to help you sleep. Teas such as chamomile and passiflora are sedating and relax your nervous system.
- Stay physically active Regular exercise is one
 of the most effective ways to combat anxiety,
 depression, and brain fog. Activities like
 walking, yoga, pilates and swimming help
 release endorphins, which boost mood and
 improve mental clarity. Aim for at least 30
 minutes of moderate exercise most days of
 the week.
- Spend time in nature Walking/relaxing in woods (also known as 'forest bathing'), or green areas such as gardens or parks, has been shown to increase serotonin levels, our feel-good hormone and neurotransmitter. It has also been shown to reduce cortisol levels and blood pressure. Aim to spend at least two hours a week doing this, even as small chunks of time across the week, as research has shown this is the ideal length of time for improving mental health.
- Stay connected Social connections play a vital role in mental wellbeing. Sharing experiences with others who are going through similar changes can be particularly comforting and reduce feelings of isolation. Have a look online for support groups locally (e.g. Menopause Café).

Angela Young, Naturopath and Herbalist www.Wildherbology.com

Benenden Hospital

Autumn is my favourite season, with its crisp mornings and the delight of colourful leaves signifying change once more. This time of year also celebrates some annual women's health awareness campaigns and is an important time to look at how we can get involved and champion women's health as a hospital and in our community.

In line with Breast Cancer Awareness month, we're hosting a stand in our hospital atrium again this year for Wear it Pink Day (18 October) to fundraise for the UK's largest breast cancer charity, Breast Cancer Now.

Coordinating our stand are clinical nurse specialist in plastics and cosmetic surgery, Kate Comrie, and our director of clinical services, Ali Turner. We're looking forward to seeing our staff donning their best pink clothing! Over the years, we've seen everything from bright pink socks to fairy lights and feather boas and all with sweet treats involved somewhere along the way. I wonder what this year's event will bring.

Celebrated on the same day is World Menopause Day. This year's theme is centred around menopause hormone therapy. Our female health hub is an easy-to-access tool on our website, which you can use for advice and support on any symptoms, including sexual health.

During the menopause, women's levels of oestrogen decrease, which increases the risk of developing osteoporosis.

World Osteoporosis Day is another October awareness day which is essential to female health.

I hope you make the most of this season, both in health and happiness. Claire Harley, Hospital Director

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Benenden Gardening Club

Simon Sutcliffe will be talking about Growing Plants for Chelsea on Thursday 10 October at the Quinlan Centre (opposite Benenden Hospital). The doors open at 6.30pm and entry is free to members. Guests/visitors are welcome and pay £3. Tea and coffee are available and there will also be a raffle.

Please RSVP to:

Minnie Garnier melissagarnier56@gmail.com

Cat Simoni concert

Cat Simoni, the internationally renowned singer and pianist, will be back at the Catholic Chapel on New Pond Road on Friday 22 November in another amazing concert featuring songs of all sorts. Mulled wine and mince pies, a raffle with great prizes and live music. Doors open at 6.30pm and all are welcome. Further information about tickets will be available in the November edition of this magazine.

Planning Matters

For full details of the Parish Council's comment please see minutes of meetings.

- 23/02523/FULL Uphill, New Pond Road.
 Erection of 22 no. dwellings with associated access works, tree works, landscaping and parking, following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings. Revised details.
- 24/02187/FULL Timber Building And Land Dingleden. Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 24/01131/FULL -(Amendments to approved plans).

More planning matters at: benendenparishcouncil.org

Primary School

It was a joy to be able to once again be united as a school community. We welcomed 39 new children to the school and they have all settled really well. All the children looked so smart in their new uniforms and they have all conducted themselves impeccably, working hard in their classes. The staff and I have been extremely pleased with how quickly the children have adapted to their new classrooms and teaching teams. We have also started the new school year with a full complement of staff and we were delighted to welcome Mrs Wright to the team.

The value of animal therapy is known to have multiple benefits to pupil wellbeing and mental health. We are delighted to have Fudge, a very friendly cockerpoo and our new therapy dog. The children and staff are feeling the benefits already.

At the end of the summer term, we were once again awarded the School Games Gold Mark as a result of our continued dedication to PE and sport. The award celebrates keeping young people active, and we are delighted to have been recognised for our success again.

Please let your family and friends know if they have a child starting school in September 2025 and may be interested to view the school. Tour dates are: 11 and 15 October and 8, 18 and 27 November. Appointments can be made via the school office on 240565 or email office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk.

Lindsay Roberts, Executive Headteacher 240565 office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk

Correction

Some of the village's eagle-eyed plane spotters may have noticed a mistake in the article in the September issue headlined Lest we forget (page 32). What should have been a photograph of a Vickers Wellington was in fact an Avro Lancaster.

Benenden Art Fair



Artistic vision realised as fair signals 'start of something great'

Hello, Benenden readers. You may remember me from an article back in March, explaining plans for the return of Benenden Art Fair this October. Well, we've come a long way since then, and I am delighted to be writing again with everything ready for the fair to take place.

My aim for this year's fair was to bring back everything we loved about Benenden Art Show, with a few differences. We have completely rebranded (you may have seen our green logos around) and worked hard to equip our artists with all the necessary tools to display and advertise their work in the best light possible. Our hope is that this fair is the start of something great and we have big plans for future years.

We now have over 30 exhibitors from Kent and Sussex, and I am so excited for this year's line-up. From painting to printmaking, stitchwork to ceramics, jewellery, stone carving, collage and more, we have a great range of work ready for display and I am confident our artists will strike inspiration among all who visit the fair.

This year there will be an additional evening to view the artist's work, with a private view from 6-8pm on Friday 4 October. We will be hosting a prize-giving around 7pm and there are plenty of refreshments to enjoy. Biddenden Vineyards are kindly supplying their sparkling white and award-winning apple juice, and there is plenty to go around.

Entry to the fair is free to all but we ask that you book tickets for the private view via our website (www.benendenartfair.com/visit-us). The WOW café will be returning on Saturday







and Sunday with a range of hot drinks, treats and light snacks. The fair will be a perfect place to browse local art, share a coffee with friends and explore the beautiful countryside Benenden has to offer.

None of this would be possible without the support of our brilliant partners, who have helped bring this vision to life, so thank you to: Benenden Hospital, Biddenden Vineyards, Jackson's Art, Kingsford Solicitors and Art4Site



for your contributions - we are truly grateful. More information about our partners can also be found on our website.

I hope you are as excited as I am for this year's fair. With so many recognised and emerging artists exhibiting, you are bound to find something you will love. Please help us spread the word and encourage others to support our artists,

as the fair wouldn't be the same without you.

Opening hours:
Friday 4 October, 6-8pm;
Saturday 5 October, 10-5pm;
Sunday 6 October, 10-4pm
Hannah Buchanan, Benenden Art

Fair Director

Hannah@buchananmail.co.uk www.benendenartfair.com

Fig. I Tessa Holmes, Rye Bay #7

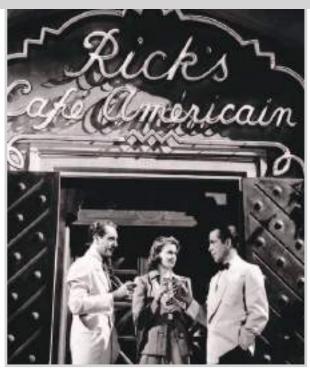
Fig.2 Georgie Watson, January Light Towards the Reserve

Fig.3 Claire Gill, Among the Yellow Blossom

Fig.4 Patrick Wilkins, First Glimmer Version 2

Fig.5 Lorraine Singer, Carved Platter

Classic film launch



Take a seat in Rick's Café and enjoy Casablanca

Benenden Village Trust is planning an evening of entertainment offering a classic film (including supper and pay bar) on Saturday 16 November in the village hall. The inaugural offering is Casablanca, a classic black-and-white thriller come tear-jerker set in World War II Morocco. If successful, the Trust will repeat with other classics.

BVT are fund raising. Our village hall has been going strong since 1976, offering a venue for all types of classes and entertainment, from dance and yoga to panto and badminton; but maintenance is always an issue and this year a replacement heating system has been installed at a cost of £8,000. The hall is a vital part of the village fabric and BVT hope, as winter approaches, that people will turn out to support the hall and party.

Casablanca: easy to enter, but much harder to leave, especially if you're wanted by the Nazis. During the early part of the war, Casablanca was part of Vichy France, a stepping off point for those fleeing war-torn Europe or on the run from the Gestapo. Such a man is resistance leader Victor Laszlo, whose only hope is Rick Blaine, the cynical American owner of nightclub 'Rick's Café Americain'. Rick sticks his neck out for no one,

especially Victor's wife Ilsa, the ex-lover who broke his heart. Ilsa offers herself in exchange for Laszlo's safe passage out of Casablanca. Rick must decide what matters more: personal happiness or supporting a cause that has little to do with him.

The play which inspired Casablanca (Everyone Comes to Rick's) was written in 1940, before the USA became involved in the war. By the time of its release in November 1942, the USA had declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan because of a direct attack on US soil at Pearl Harbor. The film stars Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid and Claude Rains, but notably many of the supporting cast were refugees from Europe.



Those attending the film night will find themselves at tables of ten.They will be able to see the action on a big screen and enjoy a supper of tagine (chicken or vegetarian)

with pita breads, humous and an exotic pudding. Like customers at Rick's, you will be encouraged to buy drinks, gamble (well there is a raffle) and dress the part. A prize will be offered to the best dressed.

The script is packed full of memorable lines: "Here's looking at you kid' and "Play it, Sam, play As Time Goes By". So, "round up the usual suspects" (aka your friends) and come along. Doors open at 6.30pm, with supper served during a break midway through.

Tickets £20, includes supper. Scan the QR code opposite to buy online or go to www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-qjpxvke Nancy Tolhurst

Benenden Village Trust

Classic World War II film featuring:

Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman

Paul Heinreid

Sidney Greenstreet

Conrad Veight

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Peter Lorre

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Cheers! It's time to drink to the Kentish hop revival

Peter Thomas visits a farm that's giving the county's most iconic crop a sustainable and eco-friendly makeover

I'm from these parts, so I've drunk a lot of Kentish beer in my time, and I'm told my family, in the not-too-distant past, were among the throngs to be found in the hop gardens of the county during harvest time.

Even so, it's hard now to imagine the days, before mechanisation and international competition took their toll on the industry, when up to 200,000 East Enders took crowded trains from London Bridge each early autumn to descend upon the county's 70,000 acres of this most iconic and celebrated of British crops. In the early 19th century, Benenden and Cranbrook boasted 1,400 acres between them; now, the whole of Kent is down to around 25 farms and 1,000 acres, with hops lagging well behind local grapes.

At Haffenden Farm, however, the trend is being gently bucked. Ross Hukins, whose family have grown hops here for 120 years and have a local farming history dating back to the 1600s,

is reluctant to describe it as anything like a resurgence for the Kentish hop industry but will cautiously admit that "it's good we're still here" and confess to being heartened by the tenfold increase in the number of British breweries over the last 20 years.

At the moment, though, he's less interested in chatting, more in scanning the weather forecasts for a favourable one that will raise hopes of a straightforward and fruitful harvest beginning today.

My intrepid photographer and I are hurried on to the back of a trailer towed behind an 'antique' red Massey Ferguson I35 tractor. "You could buy a new one but it would cost you a fortune and would do the same job," shrugs Tom Upton, the hop garden manager, who learned his trade on the estate in Peasmarsh belonging to Paul McCartney, and now brings his great passion to Hukins Hops.

What we're doing today in the jungle heat of Biddenden's outer fringes - is picking a heritage variety of hop using heritage machinery and old-fashioned hard graft.

Over the hearty thrum of the tractor, a man in a crow's nest can be heard sharpening the blade

Local Enterprise



of a simple 'brush hook', that he wields around head height, slicing the 18ft-high bines from the top wires so that they can be raked down into the trailer, to continue their welcome journey from farm to glass.

He stops briefly to glug

arrived on the scene, along with a growing taste for lager. Not that the business was ever easy.

During the 1980s and 90s, Ross's father Peter slowly shut down parts of the business that weren't working - but kept the hops.

Ross was working in London property but, "I wanted to be like my dad, run my own business. I thought about a brewery and by the time I was 30 I knew the opportunity was there right.

wanted to be like my dad, run my own business. I thought about a brewery and by the time I was 30 I knew the opportunity was there, right under my nose: micro-breweries were opening every week and we had a hop farm."

The hops had their little thorns in him, and

The hops had their little thorns in him, and the fascination remains for the man, now 40 and with two young children, whose Benenden roots are as strong as his commitment to the business. His parents were married in the village, his mum

grew up here and her mum and dad part of a Goudhurst hop-growing family are buried at St George's, where David Commander married Ross and his wife Iggy.

It's partly his love of the locale that drives his efforts

to make Haffenden Farm a sustainable concern, although it's also part of a business plan with its feet on the ground. Hukins Hops isn't just about supplying exotic and traditional hops to breweries across the globe; it runs tours and tastings and also sells hop garlands that adorn all the smartest rural weddings, country kitchens and Kentish alehouses; and it's only one part of what he calls a "conservation project".

"Every year, we're sinking into our grass fields, wildflower meadows and woodland more carbon than we use to grow and pick the hops," explains Ross, "so we can say honestly that the business is carbon negative or carbon sinking, with sustainable irrigation from harvested winter rainwater, and cover cropping in the hops, which means fewer pesticides.

"Yes, we find there are ethical brewers who are really interested in climate change, but there are also legal requirements, so if any

from a plastic bottle of water, and I find myself wondering if there's such a condition as 'hopman's shoulder', and why he's in long sleeves and trousers,

before it's explained to me that the bines boast tiny 'thorns' that will wreak havoc on the skin of anybody favouring t-shirts and shorts. Our man shears on, part of an experienced team of Romanians who have seen and done it all before.

Tom casts a satisfied eye over the trailer load of Fuggles. "Brenchley's gift to the world," he announces. "Found in Horsmonden and propagated in Brenchley. It accounted for about 75 per cent of the English acreage at one time."

He'll be hoping to pick at least two of the farm's 42 acres every day for the next month, 5am to 10pm, all by hand. "We use a chap in a crow's nest so we don't pull the wirework too hard," he explains. "There are dwarf hops that can be picked entirely by machine but nothing for tall hops, not in this country. Maybe in the US, but again, it would cost a fortune."

The economics of commercial hop growing are challenging, more so since 'foreign' varieties

brewery can buy its hops from a carbon-negative firm, it's well on the way.

"All this is only going to go in one direction and if anything our credentials will get stronger."

In a neat piece of symmetry, the old oast house, circa 1945, was replaced by investment in a new £1.4m 'shed' and now operates as McCann's Brewery and tap room, an independent operation whose beers are a glorious showcase for Hukins hops.



Which brings into sharp relief why the harvest season just beginning is so important.

"Hops like wet and humid weather with no droughts," Ross explains. "Sadly, although conditions for grapes are improving because of climate change, for hops we're losing what we need, so we need to plant ones that are drought-tolerant and heat-tolerant, as well as having the high-intensity fruit flavours for craft beers, ones like Ernest, Cascade and Bullion."



Ross oversees the operation, but he has stalwart David Deacon to ensure it runs like. well, like a welloiled machine. David, like several generations of Deacons before him, has worked in the hop business forever, following a five-year apprenticeship in agricultural engineering with Drake

and Fletcher. "Hops are in your blood," he says, with a proud look at the handsome machinery that will deal with those currently beginning their passage through the labyrinth of conveyor belts and drying floors.

"Some of this goes back to 1959," he says, his enthusiasm for the industry as fervent as ever, his taste for the end product less so. "I'd rather have a glass of wine," he says frankly, "but I love the hops and the machinery. They hang me up on

a coat hanger for the rest of the year and bring me down for the harvest."

"I'm optimistic," says Ross, "but it only takes one hour of a weather event to change any plant's season, from a rose in the garden to a hop plant, so you have to roll with the punches."

David has trundled off to oil things; John the tractor driver and Tom are heading back to the fields; in a few weeks, the garden will be bare, ready for a winter of dormancy before the

18ft of growth starts all over again.

Meanwhile the beer drinkers of Kent are able enjoy the fruits of an historic business that is rising to the challenges of a changing world. We may not be at the heart of the process, but at least we can raise a glass to it.

www.hukins-hops.co.uk Photographs: Amelia Thomas

In Your Garden



Autumn thoughts: sweet peas and creative containers

I had my first bout of sweet pea 'envy' earlier this summer when a friend of mine was cutting bucketfuls of them in June and mine were looking frail. I have

decided this is most certainly down to a spring sow, rather than an autumn one. With a sixmonth head start they develop a strong root system to sustain more vigorous growth, hence the strong straight stems which we all like and love not to mention an abundance of flowers.

If you do not have the capabilities for an autumn sow then I would buy the plants in.

Keeping them in an unheated place - greenhouse bench or otherwise - and away from excessive wet (so not outdoors) will ensure success. If sown between early October and into November you will get slow but steady germination and slow(ish) top growth - if the plants grow too quickly they are too warm, so I would move them.

Look out, too, for mice who will eat the seed and small seedlings, and I have also lost plants to slugs before, but if you can mitigate the damage then not much else will deter the plants from growing. They will withstand down to -5C but try not to overdo the frozen conditions, otherwise you may lose the top growth, although this wouldn't be disastrous as a little warmth should allow them to regrow.

Pinching out is an absolute necessity to prevent yards of trailing, tangling leaves, so keep pinching out the main stem to 3-4 sets of leaves below and they will be strong and sturdy for planting out in the spring. I tend to wait until I see weed seedlings appear then plant out, otherwise the cold and wet

combined makes for very slow growth. Don't forget to harden off your plants too - leave a week or so to do this, i.e. out in their pots during the day and back in under cover at night. All this seems a lot to consider but it is not rocket science and your reward is bunches of the best-smelling flowers in the garden from June onwards.

I get a lot of joy from planting my containers in the autumn. They don't have to last as long as summer containers, so I can understand it seems a bit indulgent when Christmas arrangements are beckoning in December, but having some freshly planted pots near to a doorway is a pleasant seasonal transition.

Plant choices have a different effect at this time of year, when the light levels are lower

and gentler. Using foliage is a must: grasses such as festuca or miscanthus, evergreen shrubs or coleus would work, and conifers are good too. For colour, try rusty chrysanthemums, yellow coreopsis and erigerons or small salvias and penstemons will last well. Gentians are a vivid blue and of course, cyclamen.

If you are in the mood, then go tall. Try a blue salvia,

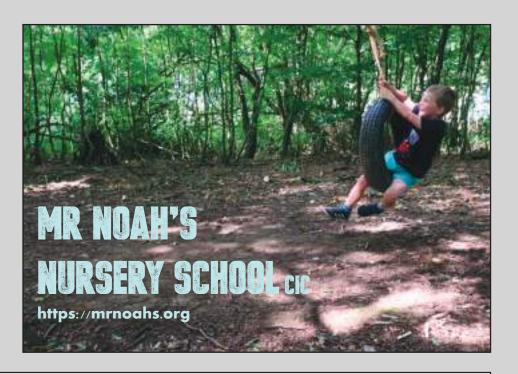
a rudbeckia or a dahlia with some tall grasses if you have the space. You may find it easier to put a large specimen in a pot of its own and then group the pots together for a display.

Using tender plants could limit you to early frosts - like some salvias - but in our current climate, frosts do not tend to arrive until late November (if at all) so by then we are into countdown-to-Christmas mode for our pot displays. Whatever combination you choose, enjoy getting creative with your garden this October.

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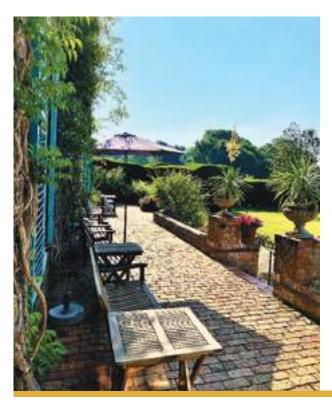








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Above: Engaging activities: Jazz and Blues at the Iden Green Pavilion; Benenden Village Trust mark with a tree the 100th anniversary of Lord Rothermere's bequest to the village; Standen Fruit Farm Apple Day; charity fundraising at Benenden Hospital; Merry and Bright at the Bowls Club; David Sarton talking to Benenden Gardening Club; Fudge, the primary school's therapy cockapoo Front cover: The bounty of autumn harvest. Photograph: Amelia Thomas