

# Benenden Magazine

February  
2017





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# Editorial



A village such as ours is rarely short of a lively debate, or even a full-blown ruckus, and in this magazine we attempt every month to get to the heart of the grievances of our readers. Often the topics for discussion concern how we, in our tiny corner of the High Weald, are being let down by the forces of darkness in the far-off council offices of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells, but there are times when the buck stops very firmly within the Parish boundary.

This month we delve into the prickly issue of speeding in the village and the efforts being made to calm traffic before it does its worst. We're understandably tempted to blame the KCC for inflicting dangerously high speed limits on us, or the Kent constabulary for failing to police the problem with due vigour, but the boys in blue tell a rather different story.

Organise a Speedwatch programme to catch the reprehensible out-of-town boy racers careering through Benenden, they say, and what you'll actually find is that the large bulk of the offenders are villagers themselves, breaking the rules designed to protect us all from automotive anarchy.

It seems that if we want a village we can all feel safe in, the solution is in our own hands (or at our own right feet). Sometimes no amount of berating the system will achieve half as much as changing from within.

Road safety, like charity, appears to begin at home. How many other village issues could we solve with a little bit of self-awareness and a smidgin of community spirit?

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

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# Church Calendar

## St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 david@dc-uk.co.uk (day off: Thursday)

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 TLClaridge@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 5 February	8am Communion	10am All-age Eucharist	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 12 February	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 19 February	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Sunday 26 February	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Praise Service at Mission Church
Wednesday 1 March			8pm Ash Wednesday Service with Communion

## Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 david@dc-uk.co.uk (day off: Thursday)

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

## Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Rev Peter Michell 240642 www.idengreen.org.uk

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

## The Roman Catholic Chapel

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

## From the Parish Registers

Baptisms 8 January Beatrix and Noah Plewes

Funeral 20 January James Munro-Faure Funeral

# Rector's Letter



## Variety's the very spice of life ...

Or so the saying goes, "...that gives it all its flavour". The lot of a parish priest is nothing if not varied, and having lived it here now for over three years, I can report that it is indeed full of many flavours: from joyous to distressing; from wonderful to frustrating; from challenging to routine. What is it that gives the life of a parish priest so much flavour? You all do!

From Messy Church to Sung Eucharists. From Primary School assemblies to All Souls Day services. From ice clearing and gritting outside of church to preparing couples for marriage. From writing something every month for the village magazine to baptisms and weddings and funerals - both meeting with families to discuss them and conducting the services.

From lunches and socials to hospital and home visits. From working in the café in Benenden's every Wednesday and meeting people there, to attending Safeguarding training to be aware of potential abuse of vulnerable people. From toddler groups, eating cake, playing with toddlers and drinking coffee, to Choral Evensong.

From Parish, Benefice, Deanery and Diocesan meetings to new Praise services. Not forgetting the weekly services and sermons; or the annual dressing up as a shepherd, or wise man, or innkeeper! From putting too much regular stuff in the diary and dates three years hence, to having to deal immediately with the unexpected. From Christmas Day lunches to Trustee meetings that I didn't know I'd be a trustee of when I signed up.

The life of a parish priest is truly full of variety and flavour. All of it is about relationships with people. All of it is such a privilege.

One of the big challenges in all of this variety, is staying in touch with God through all the things that I want to do and all the things that are expected of a parish priest. All the priests in Canterbury Diocese were reminded of this recently by our Bishop: that if we lose that connection, we are of no use as a priest to anyone.

His timely reminder was that the words of the Ordinal (the service book used for ordination services) ask of a priest: "That you are fully determined, by the grace of God, to devote yourself wholly to his service, so that as you daily follow the rule and teaching of our Lord and grow into his likeness, God may sanctify the lives of all with whom you have to do." Serious stuff.

If there are occasions when you do not see me around the village or at different events, please be aware that there are times when I need to "go up the mountain and pray" - to stay in touch with God, so that I can continue to serve the parish as priest in all its rich variety.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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# Just a Thought!



## Connecting

The grandparents are leaving after staying over for Christmas and the little grandchild demands, "Nana no go home". His mother explains Nana has to go to her own house. "I go to Nana's house", is the answer! Whether Nana's house is in the same town or the other side of the country, separation is necessary.

In two different households families squeeze themselves on to the sofa or shuffle up on the floor so that all may be seen. They are in countries far apart but Skype magically ties them together by sight and sound. It is not perfect and the children get up and disappear after a while or dominate completely but the connection is made and it feels good.

It is morning and the postman has arrived. A lonely old man hears the clatter, and on the mat a letter with chatter and news. Here is something tangible to bridge the gap and something to be held and revisited many times. Down the road an old lady answers the concerned enquiry of a visitor, "Oh but I am never alone. God is always with me, do you not feel the same?" Would that that were enough for everyone.

In another country two starving families huddle together at the edge of a cold, dark, shattered building. They have a few belongings wrapped in a cloth bundle and one mother is carrying a small baby. A fearful father is holding the hands of two of his surviving children. They hesitate. There is a separation of 500 metres between them and the relief workers offering food, warmth and relative safety. But will the ceasefire allow the connection?

Time zones are strange. Does the fact that family and friends in New Zealand have already experienced what we have yet to come, lessen the separation between us or increase it? At least at New Year, firework displays on TV seem almost continuous, somehow connecting us all together. But the arrival of the New Year did not help the two men who froze to death as they huddled in an alley out of the bitter wind - together but homeless - separated from love, care, comfort or compassion.

Inevitably the airport was the centre of the business of separation and connection. The Arrivals hall was crowded with family members, business partners, religious delegations, lovers, friends and taxi drivers. The atmosphere was one of expectation, relief, joy, apprehension, happiness and curiosity. However, one young boy stood bewildered and alone with his bag beside him - surely he had been promised that someone would meet him at the beginning of his new life.

The phone rings then Nana's catch-up chat with her daughter is interrupted by a little voice: "Look Nana, I've been drawing my hand." His mother explains that he is waving his drawing at the phone. Distance and separation will be overcome!

Sue Fisher

# Village Calendar

## February

Thursday 2	Planning Committee Meeting, Benenden Village Hall, 8.30am	
Thursday 2	Pinocchio, Benenden Players Panto First Night, Benenden Village Hall	p.9
Friday 3	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Thursday 9	Benenden Women's Club, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Saturday 11	Mr and Mrs Evening, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 19	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.11
Monday 20	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 21	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.11
Saturday 25	Darts Knockout, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 28	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	

## March

Friday 3	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Monday 20	Friends of St George's, AGM with John Bailey talk, St George's Church, 7pm	p.9

## Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Mondays at Benenden Village Hall, 7-9pm

## Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

## Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11.30am

## Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 11 February, Domestic Waste, Benenden, Cherryfields, 8-11am

Saturday 25 February, Garden Waste/Compostable Waste, Benenden, Cherryfields, 8-11am

# Parish Council



There is an increasing emphasis on “localism” in England. This means more activities being devolved downwards from counties and boroughs and ending up on the plates of our parish councils. This is particularly so in the field of planning.

There used to be a high-level, long-term plan developed by the regions. However the regions in England have now been abolished. The Statutory Planning Authority for us is Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, but TWBC’s long-term local plan is out of date and therefore unacceptable to the Government. The last local plan was adopted in 2006 and took ten years to produce. This time the Borough will try to push it through in two years.

One of the first steps in this is the call to identify sites which could be available for new homes. We have already identified some sites in the parish. It is however an ongoing process and the Call for Sites will be reopened at the end of this month. We now have more to add.

At the same time we are encouraged to update and upgrade our Parish Plan, issued in February 2015, to a more detailed Neighbourhood Plan. With a consultant advising us, work has started on this. It does however involve a lot of work locally. It is a Parish Council document but we do need wider local input and it does have to reflect the views of parishioners. There will be several public meetings and workshops open to all.

Building on the Parish Plan, we will firstly be identifying vision and objectives for the new Plan, which will run to 2035. There will then be facilitated workshops on housing, design statements, transport, economic development, community facilities and environment and open spaces. A draft plan has then to be issued for a six-week public consultation, which will be followed by a local referendum. It will finally be examined by the Planning Inspectorate before being adopted by the Parish and Borough councils. We do have to work closely with the Borough on this as it has to be in line with its emerging local plan.

This really will determine the future for our village and there’s a lot of work ahead of us. If you can help, please contact me. Progress will be reported in this magazine. So watch this space.

Peter Davies, BPC Chairman

01580 240723 [chairbenendenpc@gmail.com](mailto:chairbenendenpc@gmail.com)

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk

01580 240371 [clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org)

For more information see our website [www.benendenparishcouncil.org](http://www.benendenparishcouncil.org) or find us on facebook

## Parish Council Meeting

Monday 20 February 2016, Iden Green Pavilion,  
7.30pm

## Planning Committee Meeting

Thursday 2 February 2016, Benenden Village  
Hall, 8.30am

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# News and Events

## Benenden Players: Pinocchio with a twist - latest news

It was one of the last Sunday rehearsals, and while trying to work out which of Trump's latest antics we could actually build into the show, I thought it would be interesting to catch up with one of our longest-serving panto members.

Catharina Moes came over to the UK from Holland, on a one-year visa, but liked it so much she stayed for good. After a long career in nursing she retired from her job as a night sister at Benenden Hospital in January 1993.

She was active in amateur dramatics back in Holland, acting in several classic Dutch dramas, but English panto was a real surprise. Cyril Cooling, then Hospital Director, bumped into her at the bus stop just after her retirement and talked her into it.

"Well, I didn't really have much choice" Catharina told me, "I was strong-armed into it."

Bev Beveridge has a very similar approach to recruitment these days!

Life in The Players has changed over the years, with more members enabling a wider variety of shows and more children bringing a great sense of fun. Catharina has always loved dressing up, but it's really the family atmosphere that keeps her coming: "Everyone pulls together and looks out for each other. I like the way we all just muck in, making tea, practising lines, singing, or painting the fabulous sets."

She has only ever missed one production, and quite honestly it wouldn't feel like proper panto without her. We all hope you enjoy the show, and we particularly hope Catharina will continue to play a crucial role for another 25 years.

Nancy Tolhurst 07711 139218  
nancy.tolhurst@btinternet.com



## The 21st Annual General Meeting of The Friends of St George's Church

Monday 20 March, St George's Church, 7pm

Following the business part of the evening refreshments will be served and at 8pm John Bailey, architect to St George's, will give an illustrated presentation entitled "A 19th Century vision for St George's Church, Benenden". Everyone is welcome.

## Benenden Pre-School News

Our pre-schoolers have started the new year in fine fettle, and are raring to learn and discover. This term they will be creating a display about the village, and everything and everyone that makes up our community, from the butcher's and the church to the village shop and the primary school.

As well as continuing with the ever-popular Chinese lessons, the children will also be exploring diversity, focusing on what makes us different from each other - firstly concentrating on our eyes.

[www.benendenpreschool.co.uk](http://www.benendenpreschool.co.uk)

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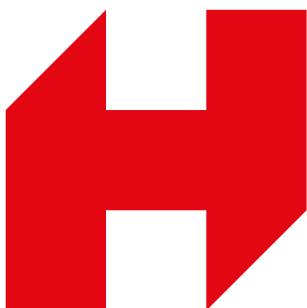
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## Christmas Day Village Lunch

It gives me great pleasure to report that we had a great time together in the Memorial Hall.

Tracy Claridge and Lesley Attwood had decorated the hall the day before, even providing a comfy sofa. Ten people had signed up for lunch, and others were invited to just drop in during the afternoon.

Helen Commander cooked the Ward's turkey roll, Mike Lycett the perfect roast potatoes à la goose fat, and Grant Matthews the crunchy vegetables, followed by Christmas pudding and cheese. The Benenden luncheon club made a very generous donation towards the event, and many people donated food and drink. Barbara Royle won the star-baker prize for her sausage rolls.

Any leftovers went to Catching Lives in Canterbury, as well as a £55 donation, which was gratefully received. We all had a great time; conversation, as well as alcohol, flowed freely; the Queen delivered her speech, via radio. People dropped in, usually walking the dog. Penguin racing and campanology were the highlights of the day. It was a truly great success.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this excellent day, which I am more than happy to organise again this year. If you'd like to get involved in any way for the next one, we'd love to hear from you - nearer the time.

All the best for 2017.

Tracy Claridge 240454

## Village Lunch

Tuesday 21 February, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

All welcome - £4 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. Please contact Sheila on 01580 240838 if you haven't put your name down or if you need a lift. We look forward to seeing you.



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Revd David Commander, Rector  
01580 240658 david@dc-uk.co.uk

## Anaerobic Digester

Kent County Council has approved plans for an anaerobic digester at Forest Farm in Benenden. The Planning Applications Committee voted unanimously in favour of the application with just one abstention. They imposed an additional restriction to prevent heavy goods vehicles being used to bring any additional feed material for the digester to the farm.

## Cranbrook and District Probus Club (CDPC)

Did you know that Benenden is within the area covered by CDPC, a club which exists to provide a regular meeting point for retired professional and businessmen? We meet on the second Monday of every month at The Bull, Benenden around noon for a chat over a drink, followed by a lunch, which concludes with a short talk. Occasional outings are also arranged. If you are interested in joining other local men at these relaxed social occasions, please contact:  
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## Citizens Advice

Last autumn, Benenden Parish Council agreed to make a grant of £100 to the local Citizens Advice organisation, while expressing sadness that they had felt it necessary to end the regular advice sessions in the village from their mobile van.

They have now asked us to circulate the following information which includes details of their continuing service within the parish:

“Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells and District is an independent local charity affiliated to the national Citizens Advice network. Our core purpose is broad - to provide free advice to anyone who needs it to help solve their problems. The commonest topics include benefits, debt, housing, employment, and relationship problems but there are many others, and we welcome all enquiries. Advice is delivered by volunteers, most of whom work with us one day a week. They are highly trained and have access to robust and up-to-date information on all the topics they deal with.

“Citizens Advice is available to the whole community, but we are particularly keen to support those who may, for a variety of reasons, find it more difficult to access our services. Such reasons include physical infirmity, isolation, poor transport services and mental health problems.

“In a large national survey of recent Citizens Advice clients, over 80% reported that our advice had improved their mental well-being, and nearly half said their physical health had improved as a result of our help. Two-thirds said that Citizens Advice had helped to solve the problem they presented with, and 94% would recommend us to others. In Tunbridge Wells Borough, we support more than 4,000 individuals every year.

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- The national Citizens Advice website ([www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)) contains a wealth of information. If you are on the internet and prefer to read up about things, this is a good place to start.
- You can visit one of our drop-in centres. These are in Cranbrook Library and the Tunbridge Wells Gateway, and both are open five days a week. There is no need to make an appointment.
- You can call us on 01892 533880 in Tunbridge Wells, or 01580 714936 in Cranbrook. At present, calls normally go to voicemail and we aim to respond to messages within 48 hours.
- You can email us at [advice@cranbrook.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:advice@cranbrook.cabnet.org.uk) or [advice@twcab.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:advice@twcab.cabnet.org.uk)
- If you would like a face-to-face meeting but cannot easily leave Benenden, we offer two further options. First, you can take advantage of our Adviser with Wheels service through which we can arrange for an adviser to meet you at St George's Church in Benenden. To access this service, call 01892 617256. Secondly, if you are unable to leave your home, we offer a home visiting service. You can access this by calling us on 01892 516335.”

## Benenden History

# Who built Benenden's Hall Houses?

You don't have to look far to see that Benenden boasts a considerable number of medieval timber-framed houses. Indeed, according to English Heritage, we are in the top five out of 60 Kentish parishes for the number still standing. And it's not just the quantity, but the size and quality that distinguish ours - particularly the iconic Wealden Hall House of which there are still a dozen within the parish boundary.

So what was going on here in the late 15th century that led to such a boom, and for whom exactly were they being built? It's a question of considerable debate among historians and owners.

My grandfather AR Barker, who bought Watermill House in 1930 and spent three decades researching and restoring it, always said it was a "yeoman farmer's house". The dictionary definition of a yeoman is "a farmer who cultivates his own land - one of a class of lesser freeholders below the gentry".

So I had assumed that, following the Black Death (which by 1360 had killed an estimated 20% of the population of England), the Lord of the Manor was so desperately short of indentured men or serfs to farm his land he began to grant some their freedom and give or sell them land in return for produce.

This would have produced the yeomen who, by the late 1400s, might have acquired enough wealth to build their own homes. The image of this ruddy yeoman farmer tilling the soil and bringing calves and lambs into the great hall to huddle round the open fire while his wife served thick vegetable pottage was a powerful one.

Unfortunately, the more I studied the history of the period, the less likely seemed this scenario. To start with, Benenden did not have one large manorial lord; the land hereabouts was divided

between a number of 'absentee' land-owners (including the Church), and four or five prosperous local families including the Guldefords, the Sharpes, the Glovers, and the Patendens.

Secondly, it didn't need the Black Death to create freemen. They were already relatively free under the local medieval peasant tenure in Kent known as gavelkind. This enabled people to own and dispose of land at will - albeit still owing rent and some obligations to a landlord.

And it does seem remarkable that more than a dozen yeomen in Benenden, all having acquired land after 1360, somehow had enough surplus cash to embark on expensive building projects. And all between 1450 and 1500 when most of our Wealden halls were built.





It's true this area was reasonably prosperous even before the wool and cloth trade brought real wealth during the 16th century, but the heavy clay soils were not best suited for arable crops. Historian Peter Branden argues that, throughout the 1400s, farmers would also have derived their incomes from various crafts including textiles, glass and iron. So our yeoman many not have been primarily a farmer.

An alternative theory, from Sarah Pearson, is that, since a feature of gavelkind was 'partible' inheritance (as opposed to primogeniture), estates of freemen would be divided between all surviving sons. The relatively large Wealden Hall House might, therefore, have accommodated various branches of the same family - rather than one family and their servants.

Our own local historian Ernie Pollard has another suggestion. He believes that many of Benenden's hall houses, especially the finer examples which have survived, were built by a relatively few rich families, rather than independently by 'middling' men each with their own lands.

This might explain the availability of capital for construction, but rather detracts from the romantic notion of our newly prosperous yeoman seeking to move up in society by commissioning his own home. An early example of the rise of the middle classes perhaps.

Later I'll look at the construction of Wealden Hall Houses and the lifestyle of their inhabitants.

Kent Barker



opposite clockwise:  
The Paper Mill;  
Pympe Manor;  
Medieval Farming

above clockwise:  
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Living Museum);  
Dingleden House;  
Watermill House;  
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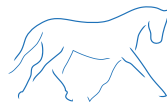
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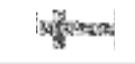
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## Talking Shop

### FLOWERS WITH A MESSAGE

February is already upon us and with it Valentine's Day, heralding the need for all potential admirers to prove their devotion. Benenden's will have bubbly and chocolates, of course, but also flowers produced in the village by Hannah's Garden.

Maybe this is the year to forget the mass-produced imported blooms from the supermarket and order something rather more charming. Hannah Miles-Watson, a trained garden designer and cottage garden flower grower, can offer beautiful seasonal tulips, ranunculus, stocks and anemones, among others.

Hannah, who moved with her family to Benenden nine years ago, conveys two useful tips for longer-lasting cut flowers from the garden; harvest them early morning or late evening when they contain most moisture, and before putting them in a vase, submerge them in water up to the neck for several hours. Sachets of plant food provided with mass produced blooms are quite unnecessary if these simple tips are followed.

### NEW TV SCREEN

If you've noticed the TV screen in Benenden's and wondered why it's there, well, it's not for television programmes because, happily, we have no TV licence. And don't even think about YouTube.

Showing, at the moment, is a small selection of photos from the visit of the Countess of Wessex which, interesting as they may be, after two months are beginning to pale.

It has been suggested that we have a selection of photographs taken by villagers, spooling through on a daily basis. Regular customers would be interested to see them and visitors to the village might get an idea of what's in the area at various times of the year.

We'd like you to come up with a selection of photographs showing the landscape within a radius of 25 miles or so of the village. If there

are people in them - for example, the village fete, Morris at The Bull or Tenterden Folk Day - that's fine, but we don't want portraits and definitely no selfies! Pictures of young children should have permission of a parent or guardian.

High resolution JPG format is preferable and, for now, we'd like to limit each person's contribution to no more than ten photographs.

From the ones we receive we'll select the best and have them spooling on the screen. To start us off, it would be appropriate for the photos to be of winter or springtime themes.

Please email your pictures - one at a time if necessary - in maximum resolution to [photos@benendens.co.uk](mailto:photos@benendens.co.uk)

Bev Beveridge

## Benenden Bonfire Society

The committee is pleased to announce that after all disbursements for the 2016 event, the following funds will be distributed:

- 20% i.e. £2,090.88 Benenden Bonfire Society.
- 40% i.e. £4,181.76 Benenden Scout Group.
- 40% i.e. £4,181.76 available for application by Youth Groups as described in the January 2017 Benenden Magazine.

Initial application forms are available from Benenden's Community Shop and successful applicants will need to submit final bids for funds by 1 March 2017.

Grant Matthews

Benenden Bonfire Society Committee

## Reporting Problems

Highways issues, including potholes, road signs, manhole and drain covers, kerbs, footpaths, flooding should be reported by individuals to Kent County Council by calling 03000 418181 or online using the following link: <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KHSFaultsGIS.Web.Sites.Public/>, which can also be accessed from the Parish website.

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## News from Benenden School

Happy New Year to you all and I hope you had a restful break.

School got underway for the year on 3 January and the girls knuckled down straight away, particularly the Upper Fifth and Six One who had the challenge of their Mock exams starting in the first week back!

I was pleased at how successful our overseas trips were over the Christmas holidays, with our Model United Nations contingent visiting Athens (where we represented the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - far from an easy feat!) and a group enjoying skiing in Colorado. A proud moment for me was receiving an effusive email from one of the ski instructors praising the wonderful attitude and behaviour of the Benenden girls he instructed for the week. I would, of course, have expected nothing less!

At the time of writing we are looking forward to welcoming students from Miss Porter's School, an independent school in Connecticut with which we have formed a strong relationship. They will be spending eight days with us, and the programme involves attending some of our lessons, local sightseeing and visiting local community organisations, including the Grange, the Swattenden Centre and Benenden's. On the subject of Benenden's, it's hard to believe that a year has passed already since the shop opened - what a truly superb facility this is and all of us in the village are incredibly lucky to have it.

Other highlights in the coming weeks include Science Week, the Chapel Choir performing at Westminster Abbey, the annual Ballet Show and the National Schools Lacrosse Tournament, at which we have high hopes after our Senior team reached the quarter-finals last year and the U15B team won their category. Fingers crossed!

Samantha Price, Headmistress

## Letter to the Editor

Please write to the Editor,  
c/o Community Office, Benenden Village Hall,  
Benenden TN17 4DY or email  
benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com

### HOUSES: NO LEANING LEFT OR RIGHT

Sir,

In recent months I've greatly enjoyed opening the revamped Benenden Magazine, but was disappointed by the tone of the January editorial, which speaks of the hope that the housing debate "will be conducted with tolerance and consideration for the views and perspectives of others", while itself being characterized, in my view, by a mild but undeniable degree of bias.

Having been informed of TWBC's "call for sites" initiative, the reader is told (with no supporting evidence) that "for those who cherish the village as it is, the very idea of such change will be an anathema".

This is an imagined and emotive response, designed, it seems to me, to contrast with what the editor sees in the following sentence as the level-headed common sense of the pro-housing lobby. In the course of my own daily contact with a wide variety of people who live in and around the village, I've yet to encounter the view that equates 'change' in an unqualified way with 'anathema'. There are those who have reservations, certainly - reservations based on balanced reflection, and which may or may not be fair; but unreflecting, vehement dislike? - no, not once.

One expects the Telegraph's editor to lean broadly to the right, and the Guardian's broadly to the left; but one doesn't expect the editorial of the Benenden Magazine to lean one way or the other, as it clearly does in this case. I agree that the debate must be conducted with tolerance and consideration, but I'm not sure that this editorial entirely complies with those laudable recommendations.

Yours,  
Clive Illman  
Iden Green



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### ROAST DUCK LEG WITH PLUM SAUCE

Serves 4

#### FOR DUCK LEGS

- 4 duck legs
- 1.5tsp 5 spice powder
- 1 bunch of rosemary sprigs
- 4 fat garlic cloves

#### FOR PLUM SAUCE

- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1tbsp olive oil
- 250g dark red plums, halved, stoned and cut into small wedges
- 50g demerara sugar
- 50ml red wine
- 300ml beef stock
- 1 star anise

#### METHOD

- Heat oven to 190C, 170Fan, Gas mark 5.
- Put duck legs in one layer in a roasting tin on a bed of rosemary sprigs and unpeeled garlic cloves. Sprinkle with salt and 5 spice powder.
- Roast for 1 hour.
- Meanwhile fry shallot in the oil for 5min or until softened but not coloured.
- Add the plums and sugar, stirring for a few minutes, until sugar has dissolved.
- Add red wine, beef stock and star anise, then simmer for about 15min, stirring occasionally, until softened and slightly thickened.
- Keep the sauce warm or leave at room temperature for up to a day before re-heating to serve.
- When duck legs are cooked, pour off the excess duck fat from the roasting tin. Do save for cooking delicious roast potatoes another day.
- Any further residue left in the roasting tin add into the sauce. Check sauce for seasoning.
- Serve the duck legs with the roast garlic cloves alongside and the warm sauce.

Jane Drysdale 291027

[drysdale@bishopsdaleoast.co.uk](mailto:drysdale@bishopsdaleoast.co.uk)



## THE LONELY PARTRIDGE

by Mary Kellett

Have you seen my friend Betty  
I thought she was with me  
I turned around and she had gone  
Where ever can she be?

We chummed up seven weeks ago  
And ever since that day  
We have become inseparable  
In every sort of way

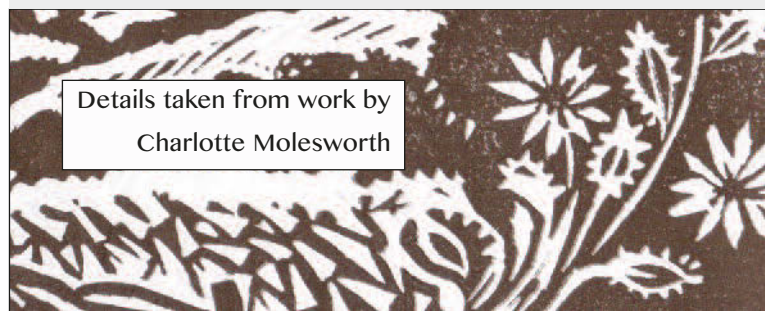
We go for walks together  
Always side by side  
Of course when tractors come along  
We dash away and hide

We peck about for insects,  
Beetles are the best  
And when we're full  
We stand about and have a little rest

She has redder legs than me  
But I can run much faster  
She'd rush past thistles, dodge the nettles  
But I would always pass her

We once got in a garden  
Oh my, that was a treat.  
Lovely flower beds, velvet lawns  
And we perched upon a seat

I've never had a friend before  
I've always been alone  
So if you do see Betty,  
Please ask her to come home.



Details taken from work by  
Charlotte Molesworth

# The Village Debates

## How do we put the brakes on the speedsters?

From my window on Mounts Hill, I have a perfect view of one of the great British motoring anomalies, namely that a car driver who is restricted by law to 70mph on a pristine five-lane motorway can travel with impunity at just 10mph less on a potholed country road lined with houses that sit over a blind brow on a blind bend on the approach to a tricky right-hander.

From my other regular vantage point, in the window of the community café, I can witness another unsatisfactory state of affairs, namely the impatient white van drivers, angst-ridden mums on the school run and behind-times commuters, who presumably love their own children and parents very much but feel entitled to hurtle through busy crossroads and past a school at speeds that endanger other people's.

I'm not alone in being alarmed and bemused by these scenes. Villagers have in the past set up Speedwatch observation points that have caught errant motorists red-handed, yet which, because of their ineffectual standing in the eyes of the law, seem to have made little impact on the problem.

So, what's the solution? Is a solution even required? Should speed limits be set at local level after local consultation? Do we need a sane speed limit across the parish? A 20mph limit in the heart of the village? Or should we leave well enough alone?

Here we canvass village opinion.

Peter Thomas



## TOO BUSY TO BE BOTHERED

A few years ago a lady in Iden Green wrote to me (in my capacity as founder of the sadly defunct social hub known as The Forum) saying that her cat had recently come off badly in an encounter with a vehicle.

"What can be done?" she asked, assuring me of her willingness to play a part in bringing the speedsters to heel.

I made some vague noises about the possibility of the village getting involved with the police's Speedwatch initiative, and Lo, I was thenceforth "the Speedwatch organizer".

Having canvassed most households in Iden Green with regard to the Forum project, I knew that the burning issue in the minds of 95% of residents was traffic. Specifically, how fast it moved through the village. Good, I thought - a ready volunteer pool.

The first person to turn me down was the lady who'd told me how willing she was. Most of the village, it turned out, felt the same: very concerned, but, er, a bit busy ... sorry ...

But not everyone, of course.

The kit - some hi-viz jackets and a motion-sensitive speed indicator - was shared with Sissinghurst and was easy to use. The commitment required was not onerous and the process was simple, although fiddly at first: jot down details of cars travelling at over 30mph and send as many records to the police as possible. They would then cross-reference the results with those from other villages, and repeat offenders would receive a letter, then a visit from a boy or girl in blue.

The results have been positive, but drivers quickly revert to type, suggesting the campaign needs to be pursued doggedly. The police have been very supportive and v-signs from disgusted drivers minimal.

Clive Illman, former Speedwatch organiser

## LOOKING TO EUROPE FOR ANSWERS

Many villages have, in recent years, seen the imposition of 20mph speed limit signs, often accompanied by “sleeping policemen” - a suggestion that has been made for Benenden. Evidence suggests, however, that after an initial fall in average speeds, there follows a steady increase until, as Islington discovered, the average speed falls from 28mph to just 27mph.

According to (appropriately enough) [confused.com](http://confused.com), the government admits that (often distracting and unattractive) road signage has doubled over the last 20 years. Does anyone actually believe that someone who ignores one restriction sign is going to respond to a second or even a third?

This is not, however, a counsel of despair; there are other ways of helping reduce the speeds at which people drive through the village. Some time ago, police advised against double yellow lines here, their argument being that parked cars act as a means of narrowing the space available to negotiate The Street.

The UK Transport Research Laboratory carried out a four-year study, which showed that “psychological traffic calming” encouraged reductions in speed of up to 4mph. One of their tests, in Norfolk, found speeds falling by up to 8mph.

In 2005, a town in the Netherlands got people to drive more slowly by removing white lines, disrupting drivers’ sight lines with trees and shrubs and making roads appear narrower, rutted or even damaged.

Perhaps we shouldn’t worry so much about those potholes after all!

Russell Cruse, Parish Councillor

## LOCAL PROBLEM WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

The Parish Plan concluded that 40mph should be the maximum speed throughout the Parish; there should be a 30mph limit by the Hospital, in the centre of Benenden and in Iden Green, with a 20mph limit around the Green. That is the objective. Implementation, however, is proving more difficult as the Parish Council

have encountered the bureaucracy that is Kent Highways.

Helen Grant’s involvement together with that of County Councillor Seán Holden began with the belief that the police were abandoning the enforcement of designated speed limits in rural areas, in turn causing frustration to the various Speedwatch teams as they sought to monitor and control speeding in their areas.

The Police Community Safety Units (CSU) in Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone now periodically allocate an officer to be with the Speedwatch teams so on those occasions speeding motorists will receive a ticket and not just a cautionary letter. The police report, however, that sometimes everyone stopped for speeding lives locally. So perhaps we need to create more understanding that we should not speed.

The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership is responsible for mobile and fixed speed enforcement cameras. Mobile units have tended to visit the same roads, in the same places at the same times - a programme that becomes familiar to regular road users. A less predictable programme is now in place.

For fixed cameras, the Safety Partnership had a policy of installing cameras only after at least two accidents where people have been Killed or Seriously Injured (referred to as KSIs). Kent Police, however, now accept that an assessment of “threat and risk”, including speeding evidence provided by Speedwatch teams, is a more appropriate determinant than KSIs.

Our concerns about Rural Speeding are shared by Matthew Scott, the Police and Crime Commissioner elected in May 2016, and are echoed by County and Borough Councillors from rural wards throughout Kent. There is no simple solution - it is partly about enforcement (but this is never going to be the police’s top priority) and partly about encouraging a change in behaviour.

Tom Dawlings,

Borough Councillor for Benenden & Cranbrook  
continued overleaf/

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## Nick the quick

Residents contact me, as their county councillor, more about speeding than anything else. Because of that I've led, with our MP Helen Grant and Borough Councillor Tom Dawlings a successful campaign to bring speeding enforcement back to local roads where local people said it had been abandoned. We've slowly won practical police support for the Speedwatch volunteers who were increasingly wondering why they gave their time when nothing was done with their data.

The campaign began two years ago when I called a meeting between the police and elected representatives of the Cranbrook County Council Division (which includes Benenden, Sissinghurst, Sandhurst, Hawkhurst, Frittenden and Cranbrook), residents and Speedwatch volunteers to see what could be done. The former Police Commissioner Ann Barnes was obstructive until I asked Helen to join and a meeting was finally held at Police HQ in February 2015.

Afterwards a working group, chaired by Helen, was set up and has made good progress. The police agreed to take Speedwatch volunteers' information seriously and began to support them with officers with speed cameras. Speeding is now a higher police priority. They are responding well to public concern.

The new Police Commissioner, Matthew Scott, is supportive and has joined with us and Tunbridge Wells MP, Greg Clark, to get new

thinking from the speed camera partnership to complement the work of the Speedwatch volunteers. The idea is to get in mobile or fixed cameras before, rather than after, 2.5 people are killed.

The officials say that areas with high casualties must always get priority but do see our point about anticipating rather than reacting. It's good to see how the police have reacted to the residents for whom they work and good to see their elected representatives at Parish, Borough, County and Parliamentary levels campaigning together to make things better for the people for whom they also work.

Seán Holden

County Councillor for Benenden

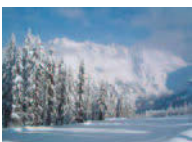
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## Wine Column

### “Terroir of the Drinker”

Much is made of the terroir of wine. This famous French wine term, for which there is no immediate translation into English, approximately refers to any geographical influence upon the grapes and therefore the wine.

Most commonly terroir is associated with the soil, however in actuality it refers to a much broader cross-section of influences such as a topography, aspect, climate and even the ambient yeasts present in the vineyard.

As the terroir of each vineyard is unique, the very best winemakers seek to produce bottles that reflect the distinct contextual origin, thus making for an interesting noteworthy wine. There is no doubt that the terroir of a vineyard adds something distinctive to the wine which is in many respects as important as the wine varietal and even the winemaker's craft. However within the field of wine appreciation I believe too much attention is placed upon the terroir and not enough on an equally, if not more, influential context: the context of the drinker.

If I may coin a phrase then it would be the “terroir of the drinker”, and this would refer to any contextual influence upon the palate of the consumer. I'm not proposing an especially scientific concept, nor a complicated one, in fact it is a rather simple hypothesis that our appreciation of a glass of wine is as much influenced by our personal situation as it is by the vineyards.

The terroir of the drinker is as diverse as a terroir of the vines. One's enjoyment and assessment of a bottle of wine will be subject to a wide range of factors. These could include how tired one is, who we are drinking with, the occasion, the mood and, just like the vines, even the weather.

How often have we tried the most amazing wine on holiday as we sat eating alfresco overlooking the Greek harbour, only to find on

returning home, with the suitcase packed with bottles of this wonderful nectar, that the wine tastes quite different on a damp November evening in Benenden.

The terroir of the drinker might also include the food you are eating and even the glass of wine you drank immediately before the current one in your hand. For example, try a glass of Burgundy immediately after a ripe Barossa Shiraz and you will find the experience quite different from the very same glass of Burgundy being consumed with a lovely piece of roast beef alongside your favourite friends.

This can be especially true at formal tastings, when one may drink seven or eight extremely fine wines alongside one another. However the proximity of comparison inevitably tends to pick out winners and losers from those wines when in reality they are all, in isolation, wonderful bottles.

Memorable meals, happy occasions and fabulous weddings, or perhaps the simple contentedness of sitting by the fire on a winter's night, can all have a profound impact on the way we perceive and enjoy a glass of wine.

So I would argue that when appreciating wine, while we cannot overlook the winemaker, the varietal or the terroir, one of the most important factors is our context as the drinker. Surely the cheapest and most satisfying way to add value to our glass is to ensure the best possible terroir for ourselves as the consumer.

Alfred Nicol, Housemaster, Benenden School



Illustration: Kate Rundell

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## Bird Notes

When I think back over 2016, I generally think it was a pretty good summer but it appears it was not so for birds. The cool temperatures during April and May delayed nesting attempts and reduced clutch size significantly, and the very wet conditions in June washed out quite a few more.

The temperatures particularly affected the tits, resulting in Blue Tit clutch sizes being down by over 5% and fledglings produced down 12%. Unfortunately tits are single brooded and were unable to take advantage of the Indian summer to recess the balance.

The late rains in June reduced egg survival rates for water birds that nest on river banks, such as Reed Warbler (down 15.4%). For Coot and Moorhen that nest virtually at water level it was even more serious, with egg survival rates down 35.1% and 37.2% respectively.

Climate change has significantly brought forward first egg-laying dates over the last few years but 2016 was a year when we returned to figures of 50 years ago. In fact the Barn Owl recorded a figure that was 25 days later than the five-year average and the latest recorded since records began in 1939! Two species however bucked the trend, with Sand Martin laying seven days earlier than average and fledgling success up by 9%. This species is one of the long-distance migrants to arrive early and may have got the first brood away before the June drenching.

The other species was the Redstart, whose egg laying was very much on the five-year average, with fledgling success up a very good 14%. Redstarts breed in the wetter, westerly, areas of the country and perhaps coped with the June conditions better than most.

A couple of months ago I updated readers on the Beijing Cuckoo project, where the Cuckoos had made long flights over the Indian Ocean and settled in Somalia. I wondered if they would join their European cousins in Angola and the Congo. In fact they have continued down the east coast of Africa and are wintering in Tanzania and northern Mozambique.



top: Desert Wheatear;

*Oenanthe deserti*;

above: Yellow-browed Warbler;

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

Illustrations: Stephen Message

[www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk](http://www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk)

I ventured to Devon for Christmas and enjoyed a good coastal walk in the Thurlestone area, which was hosting a very rare Desert Wheatear. The bird had been there for six weeks and despite high winds from storm Barbara it was still there. This species breeds in the Sahara and migrates to the Mediterranean coast for the winter, therefore the UK is a long way from its normal wintering grounds; however about four or five turn up on our coast most years with numbers slightly on the increase.

What was more exciting was finding a Yellow-browed Warbler in the village where I was staying. Although this is not as rare as the Desert Wheatear, it is very fulfilling self-finding one's own rarity!

I came across it whilst looking for wintering Chiffchaffs at the local sewage works. It was a real "hotspot" for birds, with plenty of insects about; I saw this little bird behaving like a Goldcrest and was thrilled to see that on closer scrutiny it was something far more scarce.

Charles Trollope 240821 [cetetal@btinternet.com](mailto:cetetal@btinternet.com)



## Local Enterprise ... Enterprising Locals

MARK BARRON-REID

It's a long way from Barking to Benenden, in every imaginable sense, and when a young Mark Reid was grafting for a living at the Ford plant in nearby Dagenham, it's fair to say that a career as a country publican in deepest rural Kent was far from his mind.

"The dream round there was a job for life and a semi-detached in Upminster," explains the 58-year-old who luckily for us has ended up as guv'nor of The Bull. "The nearly-new Ford and the holiday in Tenerife for two weeks every summer, clock in at 7.30 and clock off at 4.15, it suits a lot of people and it was what I imagined I'd end up with. "But factory life drove me mad and I knew it was time to move on!"

Having veered off what his old schoolmate Billy Bragg once called "a path from cradle to grave", the unsettled Essex boy looked for a new direction. He'd already moved from Barking to Ilford Road - "which was like going from Beirut to something a little bit better, like the West Bank!" - but the next step was rather bolder.

He took up plumbing and building with his two brothers - picking up skills that would serve a cash-strapped publican well - then in 1987 got wind of a boarded-up pub near Staplehurst that had potential but not much else.

By the time Mark left the Knoxbridge eight years later it had three football teams and was the spiritual home of the Cranbrook Pigeon Fanciers. He repeated the process at the Kent Cricketer in Hawkhurst - a venue he would later return to as The Black Pig - which was where he met a forthright redhead named Lucy Barron, and Benenden pub history was forged.

Via the transformed Seven Stars at Robertsbridge and another stint in the building trade, Mark was driving through Benenden one day on his way to price up a job and stopped in at The Bull for lunch. Chatting with the landlord, Norman Pitt, he admired the old place and ventured that if ever Norman were minded to sell, he might be interested.

"It's easy to say you're going to buy something if you think somebody's not going to sell it," says our man, recalling the shock he received when he got home and was informed by Lucy that Norman had taken him at his word and they were going to view the place at nine o'clock the next morning.

"We stood in the lobby, agreed a price and shook hands there and then," he says. "In six weeks we were in. We exchanged at 12 o'clock and I went straight behind the bar and started serving - and I haven't stopped for 13 years."

If acquiring a double-barrelled name and a Barbour and moving to Benenden was a culture shock for Mr Barron-Reid, at least he had had some training in the ways of the country.

"When I was a boy in Ilford Lane we had air rifles, ferrets and a fox terrier and I was brought up catching rabbits on the railway embankments," he remembers. "At the Knoxbridge I'd take my shotgun and shoot the rabbits that used to dig up our football pitches, then I'd pick half a bucket of button mushrooms off the fields and have a casserole for supper."

“These days my brother Robbie, who still lives in Barking, comes to shoot down here, and we serve a nice game pie in the pub, so perhaps it’s not that different from where I grew up!”

It may be a stretch to claim that the outer reaches of the District Line resemble the High Weald AONB, but reminders of Mark’s misspent youth aren’t hard to spot in The Bull. Sit at the bar for a pint of his immaculate Harvey’s Best bitter and you’ll glimpse the infamous White Hart Lane sign that recalls how he brought shame on his family by abandoning the football team of his youth.

Where once he’d have been on the tube from Barking to East Ham to Upton Park and West Ham United, all of a sudden a chance encounter with a Tottenham Hotspur legend changed the course of his sporting life.

“I met Jimmy Greaves,” he explains. “He was the top striker in Division One and had scored for Spurs on the Saturday, then he got up on the Sunday morning to referee a charity match. He sat chatting to us kids for ages and I was sold.”

Lucy pops into the bar to wonder why Mark’s sitting round talking about football when the fire hasn’t been lit and there are customers on their way. It’s a good question, but there are still matters to discuss.

In a straitened economic climate that saw their pub-restaurant the Kitty Fisher leak money until finally it gave up and became their house, why be a publican? Mark has dabbled in music management and many other trades, but in Benenden, “at the heart of the village” as the sign says, he has plainly found his true calling.

“When I got here most of the old boys spoke with a proper Kentish accent, the bar was five deep on a Friday night, people came out at nine and you’d have trouble kicking them out at 11.30,” he recalls. “Those days are gone but we do nicely here, because we work very hard. It helps that our clientele are a nice, sociable mix and if you run the pub the way we do, it tends to govern itself.

“All three of our kids have gone to Benenden Primary and we try to support as much as we can locally because we’re part of the community, and that’s the way it should be.”

With luxury letting rooms on the way and Mr Barron-Reid’s matchless Sunday carvery thriving, The Bull looks a picture of health and its guv’nor, after three decades in the game, is still going strong, a world away from Barking. “I’ve met loads and loads of interesting people,” he laughs, “from the upper echelons down to the unemployable, and they’ve all got their qualities - I’m a publican and it’s not my job to judge. You have to find the better parts of people, especially at 11 o’clock at night.

“As for Benenden, a village has to move on, but people move to the village for a reason and some of them forget why they moved here. It’s important for us all to remember that.”

Peter Thomas



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# Foot Notes

## Bedgebury

Distance: 6¼ miles



When footpaths are muddy at this time of year why not explore the routes around Bedgebury, the paths here are mainly hardcore and are easy walking with no stiles, there is a café at the Visitor

Centre for a refreshment break and also toilets. Dogs are not allowed in the café but there are covered outdoor sitting areas where you can sit with your dog and have a drink.

- 1) Park in the parking area at the end of Park Lane near the road barrier, the car park is busy between 8.30-10am on weekdays as many parents choose to drop the kids at school then walk the dog here.
- 2) Follow the track downhill on the road past the barrier, at the bottom of the hill the road forks take the right-hand fork passing in front of Louisa Lodge cottages.
- 3) Take the first path on the left passing through a traffic barrier, follow this path for 2 miles passing Louisa Lake, ignoring all paths branching off to the left and right.
- 4) The path ends at a T junction, turn right, and follow the track for ¼ mile where there is a ruined hut which was once a picnic area but is now fenced off. The hut is a protected bat roost and on summer evenings the bats can be seen at dusk as they emerge. Turn left on the path here uphill past the BT antenna, ignoring the two paths on the right.
- 5) Just past the antenna the path turns right and goes downhill, follow this down to the next crossroads, go slightly left and straight ahead, marked as Visitor Centre Pedestrian route.
- 6) Pass through the Go Ape play area and veer left at the Go Ape kiosk and follow the path down into the Pinetum. Above the Visitor Centre a path on the left will take you down to the café, you will then need to return to this spot.
- 7) Turn right going uphill on a narrow stone path, at the Gruffalo statue follow the grassy track downhill following the edge of the trees, pass through the five-bar gate and turn left on a broad track. Follow the track downhill and around a hairpin bend where a route into the Pinetum goes ahead. Follow the track uphill.
- 8) At the next junction turn left following a hedge that marks the edge of the pinetum, after ¼ mile turn right on a path that goes uphill into the forest. The path leads to a staggered crossroads, go slightly right, and carry on ahead.
- 9) After ½ mile at the next junction turn left, this is the same path you came down in step 3), pass through the traffic barrier and turn right. Follow the path back to the car park once again passing Louisa Lodge cottages.



above: Bedgebury Visitor Centre

Jim Hyde, Parish Footpath Co-ordinator

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## Farming Forum - Vivien's Dynamic Ram

Ask about her prize-winning pedigree Charollais sheep, and Vivien Miles proudly shows you an old photograph of their sire, the curiously named ram Rother Valley Dynamic. But given that she sold him for 4,000 guineas in 2005, how can he be father to the 45 lambs that were born on her Benenden farm this Christmas?

"Well, in 2003 as a ram lamb he went to the Artificial Insemination Centre in Malvern, where enough semen was collected to keep going for years," she says. This year all the lambs were conceived

*continued overleaf/*

from top: Vivien with a French Charollais lamb;  
Rother Valley Dynamic, Champion French Charollais, at  
Edenbridge and Oxted Show, 2014; his off-spring born  
in Benenden, 2016





through artificial insemination which, although expensive, has provided a 100% success rate this time.”

Vivien’s first love was horses but she started shepherding at Pympe Manor in the 1990s. “After Pat Thoburn moved out of sheep I kept 35 of her 150 Charollais, eventually building my flock up to 150 ewes and selling around 35 rams each year to commercial sheep farmers.”

With careful selection and breeding she produced Rother Valley Dynamic.

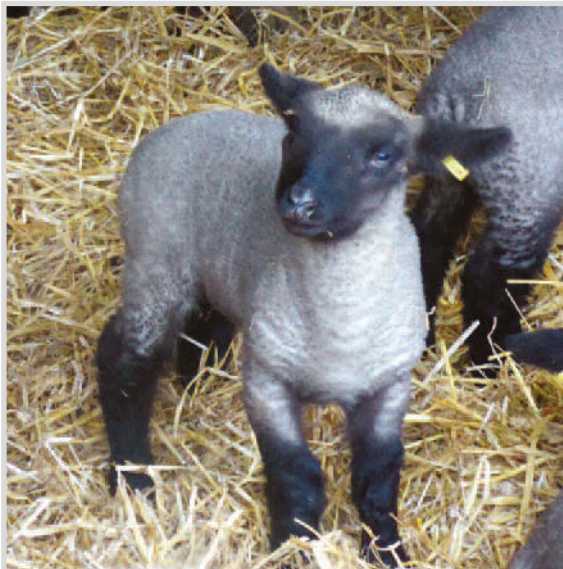
Today she doesn’t just keep the French Charollais. She also has a dozen Hampshire Down ewes which produced 18 lambs in December, sired by Apollo the ram.

“It’s no longer a commercial enterprise but I don’t want to give up,” she says. “I’d miss meeting all my friends at shows - I still go to eight or so a year and still win prizes. Though winning isn’t really what it’s about - I do it because I love sheep.”

Vivien is now semi-retired and the sheep farming business just about breaks even. But she’s busy judging, lecturing and giving demonstrations to young farmers. It all makes the long sleepless nights lambing over Christmas worthwhile.

“Well, what else would I be doing?” she asks. “Cleaning the kitchen?”

Kent Barker



from top: Hampshire Down ram, Apollo;  
Hampshire Downs sired by Apollo



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Tel: 01580 279808

## London Marathon 2017

Step out for sight loss and make a difference to the lives of visually impaired people in your local area.

Benenden is part of 1000 KABs still sign up to the 2017 London Marathon 2017. Contact us today to register your support for good and make a difference.

Find out more about:  
[kabar.org.uk](http://kabar.org.uk)

Supporting sight impaired people to live independent lives  
KAB Kent Association for the Blind

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Above: Pinocchio, the village pantomime, in rehearsal with dedication and hard work from so many on and off the stage.

Photographs: Steve Boorman

Front cover: Vivien Miles with a Hampshire Down lamb. Photograph: Kent Barker