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Magazine
March 2019





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Editorial



Planning for the future

Given the amount of space in the past few editions of the Magazine devoted to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, this issue is a relatively NDP-free zone (except for page 23). This is partly due to timing. The first draft of the Plan was due to be considered by the Parish Council on the 18 February. However the Council decided not to make it public until the Village Meeting on 23 February - after we had gone to press. The NDP chose not to provide an embargoed copy, so we are unable to offer any preview of the results of the two-year deliberations.

However, by the time you are reading this the plan should be available on the Parish Council website and, even though it is understood to run to around 100 pages, it will clearly merit thorough study and careful consideration by everyone. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the future of the village for generations to come could be determined by the decisions we make over the next nine months leading up to, and including, the final referendum to endorse the plan.

It is clear what's at stake. You only have to look at what has already happened in Sissinghurst and to hear the rumours about what might be about to happen in Sandhurst to see the importance of having a plan in place that states clearly the scale and type of future development type we want for our village. Planning decisions may still be taken out of our hands at borough or central government level. But at least, thanks to the enormous hard work of the NDP team, we should have an agreed framework upon which those decisions are based.

Kent Barker, 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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Village Calendar

March

Friday 1	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 2	Pavilion Quiz Night, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Saturday 2	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.30pm	
Sunday 3	Cornelis Taekema, Organ Recital, St George's Church, 6pm	p.9
Thursday 7	Iden Green Pavilion Trust AGM, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Friday 8	Iden Green and Benenden WI, A Social Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 10-12noon	p.25
Saturday 9	Darts London Fives, St George's Club, 8.30pm	
Saturday 16	Chinese Supper Night, St George's Club, 8pm	
Sunday 17	Messy Church, Memorial Hall, 4-6pm	p.15
Monday 18	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Tuesday 19	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.15
Tuesday 19	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Red, Black and White Work, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.25
Saturday 23	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10-12noon	p.25
Saturday 23	Cribbage Tournament, St George's Club, 8pm	
Tuesday 26	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	
Friday 29	Ridgeback Wines of the Western Cape, Benenden School Café, 7pm	p.33
Saturday 30	Mr and Mrs Evening, St George's Club, 8.30pm	

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Benenden Bowls Club

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

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 9 March for Domestic Waste

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

Saturday 23 March for Garden/Compostable Waste

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

Parish Council



After four months of being a member of the parish council I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those whom I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting. My wife Theresa and I moved to Iden Green just over six years ago from Platt near Borough Green where we both grew up. It's fair to say that we both really love it here and have found Benenden to be a beautiful and most welcoming place to live. We made the move here after I took early retirement from BT and realised that we no longer needed to be within a short commuting distance of London and manageable cycling distance of Sevenoaks. This gave us the opportunity to be closer to our son and his family in Horsmonden. Our daughter and her family recently moved to Goudhurst. So we are close to both our children - but not too close!

If there has to be a slight downside of living here then I would say that we have been surprised by the amount of traffic speeding through the village and it is good news that Gregg Stapley has resurrected the Speedwatch Group which hopefully will help to ameliorate this problem. The group has now received training from Kent Police and once the roadside sites have been reassessed then we can get out and begin operations. By then hopefully the weather will have taken a turn for the better and what finer way to spend a couple of hours than standing out in the fresh air with the sun beating down, listening to the birds singing, chatting to one's neighbours while at the same time logging any speeding motorists. OK maybe throw in a cup of tea as well!

If this sounds worthwhile to you I'm sure Gregg would welcome a few more volunteers. We are also hoping to include East End in our list of Speedwatch sites and we could certainly do with a few more volunteers from that side of the village.

However, speeding aside, Benenden is undoubtedly a great place to live. I have been very impressed by the sense of community here and the willingness of so many people to volunteer their time to help make the parish a better place to live, whether that is by helping in the shop, working on the Neighbourhood Plan, writing, producing and performing in the pantomime or picking up litter in the biannual village clean up. Long may it continue!

Peter Driver, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org

For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on facebook

Parish Council Meeting

Monday 18 March 2019,
Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 maisonsicheluk@tlclaridge.co.uk

Churchwarden: Julia Collard 241944 Julia.collard@btinternet.com

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 3 March	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion and Sunday School	5pm Choral Evensong 6pm Organ Recital
Wednesday 6 March			7.30pm Ash Wednesday Service
Sunday 10 March	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 17 March	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist 3pm Benenden Girls' School Confirmation	4pm Messy Church in the Memorial Hall
Sunday 24 March	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 31 March	8am Communion	10am Mothering Sunday Service	

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

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Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Wedding 2 February Catharine Denning and Scott Watkins

Funeral 16 February Sally Moore Interment

Rector's Letter



Testing times

As 'Church', we run two toddler groups - one in each parish. One on a Wednesday at the Mission Church, Sandhurst; the other on a Friday at St George's Church, Benenden. It is great to be involved with them; and it's a real privilege to watch small human beings develop. Some are little babies, literally just a few days old, completely vulnerable, totally reliant upon another human being for absolutely everything they need in life. Over the months and years they grow and develop. We see them taking very tentative steps. We hear them trying to make themselves understood. We watch them learning the skill of sharing; and of knowing when to say 'please' and 'thank you'. We watch them develop into independent little people, who certainly have their own minds and opinions on things; who are then not shy to move around the whole church with pushchairs, scuttle-bugs, cars and scooters.

We also know, from our own experience, that these little people can be incredibly testing at times. They somehow learn to be able to push the limits; they test the boundaries that we try to set. Somehow they are extremely good at it. It can be frustrating, annoying, maddening, infuriating, challenging, irritating, upsetting and tiring. But remember, at the end of the day, they are your beautiful little creation. And they do tend to grow out of these things - it may take time, but generally they stop doing most of things that test us. So whilst they might push you to the limit, remember they are actually a wonderful gift. Enjoy them; love them; treasure them. Life is precious and life is to be enjoyed. And these all-important first five years will pass very quickly even if it might not feel it right now whilst you're in the middle of it. Remember that they are living this stage of their life for the very first time; and they need help doing it.

For some, it can also be the same with loved ones as they move towards the end of this life. Dementia seems to be an ever growing problem for our society. It is a horrible disease that can rob a person of their quality of life long before they pass away. For family it can also be an incredibly testing time; it also can be frustrating, annoying, upsetting, tiring etc. Our loved ones, whatever their age, whatever their physical or mental capabilities, are going through this stage of their life for the first time themselves. They too might need a little bit of support and love to help them get through it. So whilst it might be testing right now, please try and enjoy their life, and love them, and treasure them too. They are not deliberately pushing the limits like a toddler does! Let's try and learn to love and value all stages of life. Remember also that we test God all the time, and he is always patient with us.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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Just a Thought



A lottery

I have recently had a small but complicated medical procedure on my hand. I couldn't do much for the first week afterwards, and couldn't drive for three. So I listened to a fair amount of radio and it set me thinking - about lotteries.

The BBC correspondent, Orla Guerin, sends yet another report from the Middle East - she is in a hospital and a teenager has been brought in with his hand almost blown off. What was his story? Maybe he had been searching around in the ruins of a blasted building, looking for anything that might be useful; firewood, containers, food even. There hadn't been planes or bombs or sniper fire for a whole day so he was out with a friend and spotted something under a piece of concrete. Together they tried to move it but then came the explosion! Eventually he is carried in an old pick-up to the battered hospital, which is very overcrowded and noisy. Some people are clamouring for attention, many others stand in long queues anxious, stunned, hollow-eyed, resigned. Exhausted and weary doctors are forced to make decisions over the allocation of the precious, dwindling supplies of bandages, painkillers and antibiotics. The young teenager had been training to be a mechanic before all the trouble with the rebels blew up. What is his future now? Should he live he cannot even support his widowed mother and his three siblings - not with only one hand. Not with little nourishing food, no physiotherapy or retraining. This uncertainty is what lies ahead, but right now he is fighting to survive - on a mat on the floor of what is left of a hospital. His mother doesn't even know where he is yet.

It had all happened so quickly! The young art student had been riding to college on her bike with new-found enthusiasm and resolution to be fit and healthy. Then a car jumped the lights. The van next to her swerved and she crashed to the ground throwing out her hands to save herself. Somewhere in the melee one hand was crushed. Paramedics are soon on the scene. She is checked, wrapped warmly and her hand encased protectively. An ambulance arrives to take her straight to hospital. The hospital is busy, but clean and calm. She is handed over to nurses who comfort her and find out her contacts. She is sent on to be assessed and before long there is a skilled surgeon and arrangements made for operating, with sedation, anaesthetic, dressings and antibiotics all lined up. Her future? The surgeon reassures her that the damage can be repaired. She will be out of action for some time but with physiotherapy and perseverance she will be able to resume her course and follow her dream.

The accident of birth enters one into the survival lottery. Some odds can be improved a little by the participant, but providing much better odds overall needs a sea change.

Sue Fisher



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News and Events

Benenden Village Trust news

For nearly 100 years, you, the people of Benenden and Iden Green, have been responsible for electing trustees to manage some major village assets - the recreation fields in Benenden and Iden Green, the Village Hall, and St George's Hall.

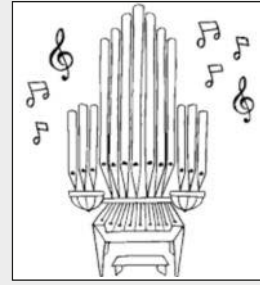
Until last March, the trustee was the elected Parish Council. In April 2018, the responsibility was transferred by the council to a new independent charity, and the Harmsworth Memorial Trust changed into a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation, the Benenden Village Trust.

This is a whole Village Trust with the capability to benefit all residents. To do that, the Trust does need the backing of as many villagers as possible and trustees who have a relevant spread of expertise. The initial trustees must all stand down in June and an election must be held.

Please take up membership! Details will be widely advertised, starting with this month's Magazine.

I am delighted to say that the trustees have now authorised the purchase of equipment for the new children's play area on the Benenden recreation field and it is hoped this should be opening within a matter of months. The committee who have been working on plans (see Facebook @playbenenden) have done a great job of refining the designs and getting tenders and the costs will be substantially lower than earlier estimates. The Trust and the Parish Council have pledged about two thirds of the cost, and we are confident that the remaining money can be raised from other grants and from gifts and fund-raising - already green tokens in the Waitrose Community Fund in Hawkhurst have contributed £230. Please look out for further updates.

David Harmsworth, Chair



Cornelis Taekema

ORGAN RECITAL

Sunday 3 March 2019

St George's Church, Benenden

6pm

following Choral Evensong at 5pm

St George's Church electoral roll

A new electoral roll is to be prepared this year. This is done every 6 years. All former members of the old roll must make a fresh application for inclusion in the new roll. In addition new applicants are invited to apply.

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

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

David Collard, Electoral Roll Officer

Woodcock to re-open

Interior work and garden landscaping continue apace at the Woodcock Inn at Iden Green. Plans are understood to include a grand re-opening in the middle of March.

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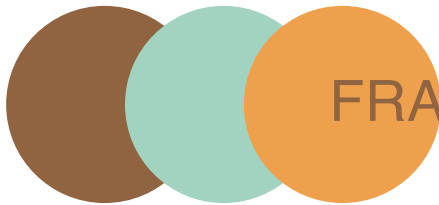
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FIRST AGM MONDAY 3 JUNE 8PM

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

If you have a business here but live outside the parish you can nominate one person to be a member.

* Communications will be by email. For postal communications, there's a small fee of £5 a year to cover administrative costs.



Photo credit: Ben Duffy/Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge

Safe arrival for 'our' Atlantic rower: Benenden parents greet daughter in Antigua

Former Benenden resident Alison 'Ali' Wannell, has successfully completed the amazing feat of rowing the Atlantic. And her mother, Gilly Walton who has lived in the village since 2001, was in Antigua at the beginning of February to see her arrive. The four person crew, 'Heads together and Row', left the Canary Islands on 12 December to embark on the epic 3,000 mile voyage. They were sponsored by the Henley Business School as part of research project into individual and team resilience.

A spokesman for Henley said: "During the seven week voyage they carried all of their food and equipment on board, and celebrated Christmas and New Year on the waves. They've had wildlife encounters, technical failures, spent a day on the para-anchor due to bad weather, seen the super moon and even enjoyed the occasional swim - while cleaning barnacles off the boat's bottom."

The team rowed in pairs in two-hour shifts around the clock, in a 29 foot by 6 foot 'Pure' ocean rowing boat. They were raising awareness

and money for mental health as one of the boats in the Talisker Atlantic Challenge.

Safely back on shore, Ali said, "It's still sinking in what we achieved but I can say we are among the few privileged to experience what we did; wildlife up close in their natural habitat, clear starry nights and the super-moon, as well of course the Atlantic as it went from flat calm to eight metre waves, some of which insisted on joining us in the boat! It was tough both mentally and physically and we had several technical challenges along the way but we were a strong crew together and I'm proud of what we overcame."

Ali who is 40, took up rowing at university and has competed on and off since, including Heads of the River races and as an entrant in Henley Women's Regatta. Asked if she would contemplate repeating the adventure, Ali told the Benenden Magazine: "It feels that once is enough to row an ocean!"

KB

Gilly Walton who has lived in Benenden for 18 years sent this dispatch following their arrival in Antigua:

1 February 2019. "We're coming in"

A text from our rowers told us they were nearly there. With alarms set for 03.30 family and friends made their way down to Nelson's Dockyard from various areas on Antigua to welcome in 'Heads Together and Row' after their 50 days at sea. We were given a short briefing from the race director on how the rowers would feel and what would happen when they came ashore.

As dawn was breaking, we could just make out in the distance their amazing little rowing boat as it turned into English Harbour and crossed the finish line. They lit their flares and huge shouts and cheers rang out from all of us all on the dockside, along with tears of joy and immense pride in the challenge they had all overcome.

As they slowly rowed towards us I was concerned that they would be physically exhausted and overwhelmed at suddenly seeing such a large noisy crowd of people to greet them after being

on their own for over seven weeks, but none of it. The adrenaline had kicked in and all four looked amazing, laughing and cracking jokes. It was a happy boat.

At the dockside Toby, Jeremy, Justin and Ali held up the 'We Rowed the Atlantic' banner and were sprayed in Champagne! It was an incredibly emotional and happy time.

Ali was first off the boat, helped by her Dad and brother, and I got the first hug. All four were very wobbly as they stepped ashore. Media interviews followed and then the four sat down - on cushions - to a cooked breakfast and a celebratory beer. We left them alone at this stage, so they could take it all in, while we went along the path and had bacon sandwiches and tried to take in too what had just happened.

The team were soon told that they had set a new record for a mixed four to row across the Atlantic in a 'Pure' ocean rowing boat. Fantastic news. Knowing my daughter was in an older and more stable boat than most of the other craft, I had felt very confident throughout the

voyage. They were a strong team and had attended all the relative RYA courses prior to the row - navigation, first aid at sea, VHF radio course and sea survival.

All the crews had to complete 96 hours on the water, day and night, before setting off from La Gomera. Despite this, nothing could prepare them for the big seas - or a possible capsized. Something that, luckily, didn't happen!



Photo credit: Ben Duffy/Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge



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Village Hall highlights

The stage extension has been taken down, the props and background put away, and the euphony of music and sounds from this years' Players pantomime a fading (but never forgotten) memory, you may assume that the hall will now be quiet. But oh no, it isn't!

During March the hall is bursting at the seams with clubs, classes, private parties and even a charity ball thrown into the mix.

There is another Weald Power Yoga workshop taking place on Sunday 3 March. The last one was sold out very quickly so don't delay in booking a place if you're interested. This one is focussing on 'Happy Hips and Healthy Hamstrings'. Whether you sit at a desk for much of the week or like to run/walk/cycle, then chances are you could do with flexibility in this area of lower body. For further information contact Ruth at ruth@wealdpoweryoga.com or check out www.wealdpoweryoga.com/events-1/

On Sunday 10 March the South East Road Race League (S.E.R.R.L.) are using the hall as their Headquarters for a British Cycling road race event. Please be aware that there could be many cyclists on our roads throughout the day.

If you are looking for a venue for holding a club or class, there is a rare opportunity for a regular slot each Wednesday from mid-July. These slots don't come along very often so don't miss out. Our rates start from as little as £10 per hour and includes complimentary social media advertising and a mention in this magazine. If you're interested get in touch.

For further information on events and classes check out either our Facebook page [@benendenvillagehall](https://www.facebook.com/benendenvillagehall) or go to: www.benendenvillagehall.org
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Benenden Pre-School news

It has been a busy term at Benenden Pre-School as the children continued to enjoy the Puss in Boots theme. There have been lots of stories and activities to help them immerse themselves into the tale. They also celebrated the Chinese New Year for a full week in February. The arts and craft corner has been very busy with the creation of Chinese paper lanterns and paper plate dragons. The children have also been expanding their vocab with a few Chinese words!

I hope everyone enjoyed their half term break and we look forward to seeing what the Pre-School staff have prepared for next term!

To find out more about Benenden Pre-School, please email:
supervisor@benendenpre-school.co.uk

Village lunch

Tuesday 19 March, Benenden Village Hall,
12.30pm

Our village lunch is open to all ages and everyone who would like to come is very welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Sheila on 240838. Cost of the lunch is £5.

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



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Iden Green, as Paul O'Donovan would have known it in the 1950s with the Royal Oak on left and 'BonBon' store on right

Name Dropping or Memory Hopping?

Former resident Paul O'Donovan recalls Benenden and Iden Green in the early 1950s

I was born in Hawkhurst at some ungodly hour on 5 October 1949 at the Little Fowler's nursing home. My parents lived at Diprose, nothing more than a row of cottages with no electricity and one cold tap. It was next to General Newman's farm along Foxholes Road and I always remember harvest time in the cornfields behind the cottages when my parents and grandparents helped the General stoking the sheaves. Colonel Reid had a cottage further up the lane. In the 1950s the area was populated with ranking Army and Airforce personnel.

Leaving the somewhat spartan amenities of Diprose around 1953 we moved to 6 Oakfields, an Airey house*, in Iden Green. If I remember correctly Nurse Day drove us over as we had no transport other than bikes but I don't recall how the furniture, Tilly lamp and Bakelite radio with rechargeable accumulator made the passage. We now had electrical current that made bulbs glow at night, produced hot water and allowed us to 'Listen with Mother' on a radio connected by a wire. Couldn't get much better in 1954! Unfortunately for mother, the washing still had to be done outside in a copper tub above a fire in the shed and squeezed through a mangle.

After the war father took up teaching and by the early 1950s was a master at Benenden Village School, becoming head after the death of headmaster Cleary. The school was divided up into four classes, Miss Nancy Brooks (infants), Mrs Leggett (2nd class), Mrs Rose Boxhall (3rd class) and the top class was the head's domain. The caretaker was none other than the 'Mayor' of Benenden, Henry (Pop) Horton and our dinner lady was Daphne Moore who in later years pulled pints for me in The Bull.

Living in Iden Green made it easier for Dad and me to 'commute' to school on bicycle despite having to traverse Hilly Fields. I sat on a cushion draped over the crossbar, as we

passed Lord Keyes's country home, Benenden Place. His daughter, Virginia, was my age and we would sometimes be allowed to play together in the little white gate house, under the watchful eye of her German nanny who would think nothing of spanking poor Virginia should she be unruly. I remember the Welbys who lived down Woodside, that little drive before the mansion, and who drove a posh silver Bentley.

Back to Oakfields and I remember some of the kids on the block: Christopher Head, Gary Woolard, Linda Coley, Brenda Dowzell, Mervyn Pollard, Deidre Hadaway, and of course Mrs Clarke and Mrs Pett who ran the sweetshop in Benenden. The Hogbens had the village shop which I recently perceived to be in need of renovation and habitation!

I generally come back once or twice a year, parking up at St George's church, where my grandparents, Daniel and Isabell O'Donovan, are buried and walking down the busy New Pond Road dodging 'Chelsea tractors' that use the village as a racetrack on their daily commute. In the 1950s we would play on this road that was frequented only by Turk's Transport, the occasional bus and the AA man on his yellow motorbike complete with sidecar. Practically nobody on Oakfields had a car and we certainly didn't until Dad got a headship in far off Aylesham, near Canterbury. He drove over on Monday, and returned on Friday with a few Dandys, Beanos and Toppers donated by his host's son. Great days!

My grandparents lived in 'Hillcrest' at the top of Mounts Hill in Benenden just up the road from Frank Cheeseman's garage. Grandfather was an ex-Metropolitan police Chief Inspector and was village spokesperson at the time of the Coronation. Queen Elizabeth visited Benenden around that time, and he was presented to her at a big do on the village green. Talking of the Coronation, if anybody cares to inspect the village school wall next to the staired entrance you will find, at head height, rusty old nails hammered into the pointing. On these my father hung plaques of heraldry and suchlike in commemoration of the crowning.

* (Sir Edwin) Airey prefabricated houses, built after WWII with a frame of concrete columns reinforced with tubing recycled from military trucks' tilt frames. They were clad with distinctive shiplap style concrete panels.

Visit of Queen Elizabeth, mother of the present Queen, to Benenden 1950. Paul's grandfather (next to Queen), uncle Patrick (ex-RAF far left), and father and mother (holding him) are also in the picture



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Panto Legend or Legendary Panto?

David and I were in the village hall for the Friday performance of 'The Legend of King Arthur' and I was concerned I wouldn't have enough to write about. But it was the opposite - what to leave out?

A nice touch is the welcome at the hall. It's lovely to be guided to our seats by a cast member - in our case the young Guin (Laura Pengelly).

Sir Bragalot (Peter Ellis) had the unenviable task of warming up the crowd ... he soon realised that the 'hecklers' were in ... but handled it all in his usual calm and professional manner!

First impressions? Well, the scenery was outstanding. The costumes added to the overall colourful scenes throughout the performance - including the three witches straight out of Macbeth (Debbie Katis, Tilly Milnes and Bonny Sullivan as the ditsy Ditsa forever asking "when will we three meet again?").

The couturiers who dressed Nelly and Nora (Ian Aldridge and Ian Malaugh) would give Victoria Beckham or Vivienne Westwood a run for their money. The 'man of the match' re costumes though would have to go to the parrot (Seth Williams). It was inspired and his cheeky interruptions throughout had us in stitches.

It's hard to pick out individuals and I am sorry there's not space to name everybody in such a superb production but I have to mention one or two more.

Sir Bragalot might not have appreciated the skills of his court jesters - but we certainly did! The music, singing and dancing were extremely enjoyable and there was a lot of smiling on stage ... good to see. Young Arthur (Joe Tyler) and Guin were amazingly confident and did so well singing their solos and duet.

The grown-up Guin (Louise Clarke) must be applauded for keeping her composure when adult Arthur (Garry Croucher) was in full flow. He was hilarious.

The younger cast members showed a real maturity in their stage presence - they spoke clearly and had fully embraced their characters. The Goblins were artful and mischievous and the exasperation of The Page (Lucy Freeman) was heartfelt. As for the old crone (Joy Rowlands), I really hope she sees a doctor soon to get that digestive problem sorted!

The children who came up on stage to help Sir Bragalot, did look slightly bemused. I felt that the cast members might have spread themselves a little more amongst them as the children didn't have any words to follow, although they did have beautiful shiny crowns to wear. Maybe the lollipop at the end made up for it.

David and I agreed this was by far the best pantomime that we have been to since being here.

So many more cast members seemed to have learned

their lines (the younger members always do). Most pantomimes can get away with a bit of ad libbing due to words that disappear into the ether ... but too much can become a distraction.

Congratulations everyone on a really excellent production!
Helen Commander





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Neighbourhood Development Plan

Planning for publication

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group have spent late January and early February working to finalise the first draft plan in time for its publication. The plan covers the five main areas of activity for the NDP and although we have been sharing progress of each group at Steering Group meetings, with the Parish Council and within the pages of this magazine, we're now at the point where we're going through the text with a fine-tooth comb to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Most village discussion so far has concerned the central issue of how many new dwellings will be built and where, but the NDP is a much wider piece of work. In addition to Housing Supply, our areas of activity are: Landscape & Environment; Housing Design; Business & Economy and Transport & Infrastructure. For example, the Landscape & Environment chapter sets out proposals for important green spaces and views that should be protected. If we receive a 'yes' vote in the eventual referendum, these policies will have a major influence on planning decisions for many years to come. As you read the first draft, please make sure that you review all the chapters and consider how they may impact on Benenden.

The plan will contain context and explanation on each of the main subjects covered, leading to proposed policies and projects:

- Policies are requirements to ensure good design and enhance parish amenities or services; they must be considered by landowners or developers when they create their planning applications.
- Projects are specific proposals and activities that could be funded by 'Section 106' contributions required of developers. They may be delivered in partnership with other organisations, such as Kent County Council or Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Each chapter of the plan contains policies

The Friends of St George's Church Annual General Meeting

**Monday 8 April 2018
in St George's Church**

7pm ~ AGM

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

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7.15pm ~ Refreshments

7.45pm ~ Guest Speaker: Charles Trollope **'The Birds of Rye Harbour'**

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and/or projects that support community needs arising from future development. Our most recent Steering Group meeting focussed on making sure all our policies and projects were aligned and complemented each other, identifying gaps or overlaps in our plan.

Following our February meeting we are concluding the final drafting as I write this piece and by the time you read this, we will have presented it to the village. In its final version the plan will run to over 100 pages, although of course it includes maps, photographs and charts so it is not too onerous to read.

This will be the start of around eight months of consultation, prior to the parish referendum, giving stakeholders time to read the document in full and provide considered feedback on those aspects they support and those they would wish to see altered.

Paul Tolhurst, Chair NDP Steering Committee



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News from Benenden School

We are now firmly into exam season, with girls in the upper years sitting mocks and working towards their summer exams. However, there is more to school life than exams and we have been enjoying a series of noteworthy events.

The girls ran a Cultures Week, in which we celebrated and learnt about different societies through activities including a food fair and a cultural dress day. We celebrated cultures again for Chinese New Year with an event featuring delicious cuisine and, of course, a dragon dance.

We were delighted to host Year 11 students from our partner school, The John Wallis Church of England Academy in Ashford. It was a mentoring session with some of our Sixth Formers offering their counterparts advice on revision techniques and shared their experiences of sitting GCSEs last year.

Our Sixth Form have also been busy launching their own businesses as part of our annual Enterprise Challenge. Groups raise money by using the skills they have learned over recent weeks, including branding, advertising, business planning, website design and budgeting. It will be fascinating to see which team is the eventual winner.

We celebrated our netballers reaching the national schools finals for the first time in a decade, and our Model United Nations team returned from a conference in Yale with a coveted award. We are looking forward to the National Lacrosse Finals at the start of March, in which we traditionally fare well.

Having been Head at Benenden for five years, I am embarrassed to say that I had never been to a Benenden Panto before this year. What a treat I've been missing. To say I was impressed would be an understatement: the script, cast, costumes, sets and overall production were fantastic and far exceeded expectations for a village production. What wonderful talent we have here in Benenden and my great thanks to all involved.

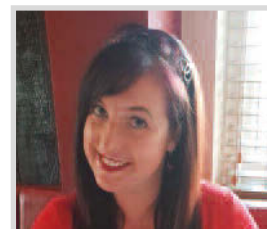
Samantha Price, Headmistress

Talking Shop

Introducing another new face at Benenden's

A very warm welcome to Nikki Stables who has joined the Benenden's team as assistant manager. Before she leaves for pastures new, Kate is doing most of the training but with lots of input from Mel and others.

Nikki recently moved from Maidstone to nearby Wittersham where she lives with her husband, two young sons, her mother, three dogs and two guinea pigs. She has been a teacher and a tutor



Nikki Stables

and has also run her own business from home and is now ready to take on another challenge. She is already well on her way to running the village's own community shop and café.

We hope she will be very happy working with us. Do come in and say hello.

We all want Benenden's to continue to flourish and, for that, we rely enormously on the many wonderful volunteers. I know that Nikki will want to encourage more volunteers to come forward and join the team. Speaking as one of the more occasional helpers I can honestly say it is really worth doing - and fun too!

Sally Ann Marks

Iden Green and Benenden WI

In February Mr Tim Antonisz entertained us again with an informative talk about antiques.

We have space for new members and are delighted to talk to ladies interested in joining us.

Dates to remember:

Friday 8 March, A Social Afternoon for members and friends to explore a variety of topics, speakers and crafts, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm

Tuesday 19 March, Red, Black and White Work with Mrs S Farmer, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm

Saturday 23 March, Coffee Morning with stalls: cakes, produce, bric-à-brac plus popular raffle, Memorial Hall, 10am

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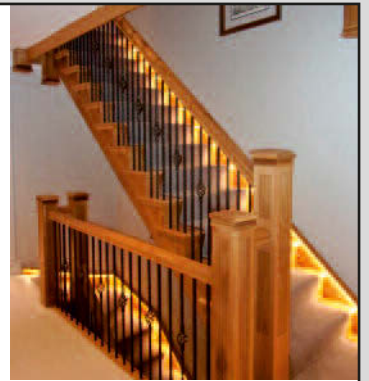
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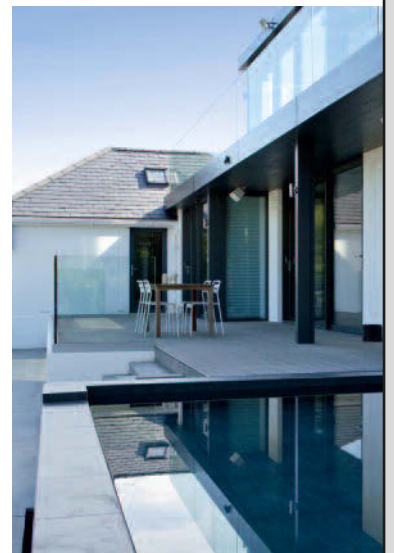
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Benenden Church Fete

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

Please save the date and get involved.

Preparations are already underway and we have many traditional stalls and activities planned to.

Last year's event was wonderful, and fingers crossed the sun also shines on us this year.

Once again we are looking for donations in the form of a 'promise' to be auctioned at the Fete. For example, could you offer an afternoon gardening, an evening's babysitting, a bespoke cake, or something else someone might value?

If so, please contact Paul Hewitt on phewitt1203@gmail.com or 07703 532744.

Volunteer help from villagers in the run up to, and on, the day is vital. If you would like to be involved, even for an hour or so, then please contact us as soon as possible.

Tracy Claridge 240454

tlclaridge@tlclaridge.co.uk

Joy Rowlands 240454

joyrowlands824@yahoo.com

Traditional games at St George's Club

St George's Club was founded in 1881 from funds provided by Lord Cranbrook. Its aim is to provide social space and recreational activities for all in the parish over 14. The St George's building is now owned and maintained by the Benenden Village Trust while the Club is run by a team of volunteers. We have a variety of fun events, traditional and non-traditional, most Saturdays, including cornhole tossing, skittles, quizzes, 'What's in the Box', and Mr & Mrs. There's cribbage, dominoes, two dartboards and, our pride and joy, a full-size snooker table. We enter teams in local snooker and darts leagues.

Find upcoming events in the magazine's calendar or the shop notice board. They start at 8pm in our keenly priced bar. We welcome villagers to come and see for themselves.

138 years and still social!

John Marshall 243089

chairman.john@clubmember.org

Cakes & Chaos



Drop-in Cafe
& Toddler Group



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



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



JUNIOR TENNIS COACHING

Iden Green Tennis Club is now offering tennis coaching
for Junior Members on Fridays during Term Time.



Who: Club Members of 6-18 years



Where: Floodlit Courts at Benenden School



When: Friday Term Time groups from 4.30pm onwards



How much: £4 per session until Easter 2019



Contact for further details:
eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com

Iden Green Tennis Club junior membership is £20 per year.

Christian Aid Week 2019

Sunday 12 May to Sunday 18 May

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

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

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

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



Whole site aerial view

Primary School takes shape

As you can see from these stunning pictures, work on the new primary school continues apace; apparently all remains on course for completion on 6 August. The foundations are already laid, the slab has been poured and the components for the first portion of the steel structure have been delivered and assembly has begun.

One feature of the new building that will serve as a permanent reminder of the efforts made to get this project off the ground is a structural rolled steel joist, or RSJ, which will remain exposed in the ceiling of one of the classrooms when the school is finished, for the benefit of future generations. To this end, head teacher Gill Knox last month invited several of the key figures from the early stages of the plan to sign the RSJ and ensure that their work will not be forgotten.

The locals whose formative efforts were commemorated included David Harmsworth, the chairman of the school's governors at a critical moment, and Bill Martin, with whom



RSJ signing with Gill Knox



I went down to Devon in 2003 to meet an architect who prepared the first design for the new building to our brief - a design that largely survives to this day, with a few alterations in size on economic grounds.

Joining them at the gathering on the Kier administrative site were current staff and pupils of Benenden CEP, who also added their signatures to the joist. Among them were three pupils who are regularly on site

compiling a detailed regular monitoring study, while smaller class groups arrived one by one to share in the making of a little piece of village history. Other facilitators of the project included Kier's site manager Bob Maher and county councillor Roger Gough (KCC cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education).

Robin Dalton Holmes



David Harmsworth and Bill Martin



Site visit by Primary School pupils



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Sunday April 7

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Benenden Art Show is back

Grierson Galleries are to return to Benenden in April, following the success of their Art Show at the village hall last year. No fewer than 27 artists will be featured in the two-day event which will run over the weekend from 6-7 April 2019.

Three artists are from Benenden itself, Mike Unsworth, Helen Jewsbury and Sharon Seymour, while many others have local connections.



Amanda Averillo
Chair II

The oldest exhibitor at 81 is David Aspinall of Hawkhurst (returning from last year), while the youngest is 24 year old Scarlett Woodman from Biddenden. Others will be bringing their works from further afield including Cranbrook, Heathfield, Orpington,

St Leonards, and Chatham. All works on display will be for sale.

Visitors to the free event will be able to watch Elke Gill from Biddenden working at her easel on the balcony during the exhibition.

Grierson Galleries was established in Sevenoaks in 2015 by Cranbrook residents Annie Watsham and Grahame Grant in an historic building on the High Street. They initially exhibited watercolours from

Kathmandu-based artist NB Gurung. Recently they announced they would be bringing works from both local artists and those further afield to The Hive in Stone Street, Cranbrook. Annie said: "This is a hugely innovative opportunity for the Gallery, our artists, the residents of Cranbrook and surrounding areas and one of which we are very excited to be part."

Designed as a business enterprise centre, The Hive will provide residential and visitor hot-desking, hospitality, events and meeting spaces and a range of business support services - all with stunning arts of work of all genres curated by Grierson Galleries on permanent display.

All works displayed in the HiveHub will be for sale at prices ranging from £35 to more than £5,000. As Annie says, "Art takes many forms and there will be bespoke silverware, leather works, paintings, photography, prints, ceramics and much more on offer. Grierson Galleries has built a solid but evolving bank of superb artists on whom to draw and can certainly create exhibitions with a difference."

Annie Watsham 01580 720559 07970 413492
annie@griersongalleries.com
www.griersongalleries.com

David Aspinall
Hot Kitchen 002





What's on a label?

Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée/AOC/IGP/VdT

There are currently more than 300 French wines entitled to the designation of AOC on their label. Legislation concerning the way vineyards are identified makes recognising the various AOCs very challenging for wine drinkers not well-versed in the AOC system.

The appellation d'origine contrôlée (protected designation of origin) is the French certification that applies to certain geographical indications for not just wines, but cheeses, butters and other agricultural products, all supervised by the INAO (Institut National des Appellations d'Origine). It is based on the concept of 'terroir', which does not have a direct translation. Terroir is not just about the soil and is not to be confused with the French word 'terre', meaning soil or earth. Terroir is about the soil, the sub-soil, the rock formations, the minerals, the water, the drainage, the right grapes in the right soil, viticulture and the climate - a combination of all of these.

Wine AOC is relatively recent. The year 1411 saw Roquefort cheese regulated by a parliamentary decree. In 1925 it became the first cheese to be awarded the full AOC label, and since then over 40 other cheeses have also been awarded AOC status. As well as having a saint for every day of the year, the French also have a cheese! On 30 July, 1935, the Comité National des Appellations d'Origine (CNAO), with representatives of the government and the major winegrowers, was created. Baron Pierre le Roy Boiseaumarié, a trained lawyer and winegrower from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, successfully obtained legal recognition of the Cotes du Rhone appellation of origin in 1936.

After WWII, the INAO was created, and the AOC seal was mandated in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The INAO guarantees that all AOC products are subject to a rigorous set of clearly defined standards. AOC products must be produced in a consistent and traditional manner with ingredients from specifically classified producers in designated geographical areas.

While the process of label approval is enforced to the millimetre, the quality control for the wine in the bottle is often much less strict. A taster on a blind tasting panel must approve the wines for it to receive AOC classification, this tasting often occurs before the product is even bottled, and by a so-called local expert, who may well have ties to the local wineries. Even if the taster is objective, the actual wine sample may not be representative of the actual AOC.

Under French law, it is illegal to manufacture and sell a product under one of the AOC-controlled geographical indications if it does not comply with the criteria of the AOC. AOC must appear clearly on the label or packaging.

Many other countries have based their controlled name systems on the French AOC classification. Italy's Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita followed the French model, and the EU standard for Quality Wines, Produced in Specified Regions (QWpsr) also closely corresponds. Spain's Denominación de Origen is very similar; the classification of Rioja and sherry in 1933 preceded the French AOC system, but their system developed very much in parallel with the French one. Vin de Pays (VDP) is the French national equivalent of the Europe-wide IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée). This quality category is positioned between Vin de Table (VDT), steadily being replaced by Vin de

France, VDF) and AOC. VDP was initially introduced in September 1968 by the INAO. It underwent several early revisions in the 1970s, followed by substantial changes in September 2000 and again in 2009, when all VDP titles were automatically registered with the European Union as IGP.

To sum up, there are three categories in France, AOC, VDP/IGP and VDT. Does AOC mean that the wine will be better than VDP or VDT? Wine drinking is very subjective, a matter of personal taste. We all have different DNAs and thankfully we do not all like the same wines. AOC is governed by strict rules and has less flexibility than VDP/IGP and VDT. The wines should be better, and mostly are. However, better value may well be had with VDP/IGP, as yields can be substantially higher and the price lower. In Italy, the 'Super Tuscans' are Vini di Tavola; they do not have to follow the strict rules of DOCG yet fetch high prices and are very good. Likewise in France, you can drop down the category levels if you want to produce something that does not conform to AOC rules. Global warming sees experimental plantings of different grape varieties in new areas in France. Is it becoming too warm in Champagne? Should we be planting Pinot Noir all over southern England? All this for another occasion methinks?

Tracy Claridge

Richard Banks at Benenden School Café

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7 for 7.30pm

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Local eating

The Small Holding, Kilndown

The first time I went to The Small Holding, I was taken by the menu. It was lunchtime and I was on the Half Acre menu, with five non-negotiable courses listed simply by ingredients. None of the ubiquitous pan-fried breast of this lounging on a sumptuous bed of that; just ingredients, three of which were potato; all in the same dish. Just to be clear, that's a dish consisting of potato, potato and potato; potato three ways if you want to dress it up.

What to expect? Boiled, mashed and chipped? I still don't know what they were, except that they were three different spuds and a thing of wonder.

Head chef Will Devlin has a habit of wrong-footing diners. His food is based on simple yet assiduously thought-out ingredients, mostly sourced at a distance of about 50 yards, from the restaurant farm and garden; then at every turn he'll pull a rabbit from what looks a regulation hat, and add new taste definitions to the most familiar of plants and animals.

I've been back to this handsome building in Kilndown a couple of times since and the surprises have never stopped. The latest time, following a few complimentary snacks - including a partridge dim-sum, after which I could easily have left a happy man - Mrs T, the urchin and I set about the nine-course Full Acre menu with gusto and uncertainty. Little bursts of shock and delight seemed to spring from nowhere, announced with pride and explained with care, matching the unfamiliar and the archaic (kohlrabi and lovage) with the simply succulent (lamb, oysters, venison, gurnard and rabbit).

"Eggs, Grains, Mushroom" may not have the ring of a restaurant classic, but it's another sleight of hand that ends up being a little bowl of sheer magic. Finish off with "Rhubarb, Brandy, Meadow Sweet" and you'll be able to die content in your chair.

I'd say £20 for lunch, £35 for the Half and £50 for the Full is as good value as you'll find in these parts. Add the intriguing wine pairing (£25 for the Half and £35 for the Full) and you'll end up not entirely broke, but taken aback and suitably enriched.

Peter Thomas



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Bird Notes

What effect is climate change having on our bird population? Do they like our warmer winters?

The first thing to realise is that most of our birds are migratory and climate change elsewhere on the planet may also have a significant effect. One example of this is the Sahara Desert, which is slowly growing larger and will be even more challenging to cross, and the Sahel, just south of the Sahara, where many of our warblers winter, is becoming more arid.

Over 100 years of ringing has provided much information on bird movements. Many of our well known garden birds such as the Blackbirds and Robins that we see in our winter gardens will have come south from their breeding grounds further north and east in Europe. And many of our own birds will have travelled south to overwinter in warmer climes in southern Europe, particularly during hard winters. Blackbirds and Thrushes that have remained here will be joined by their thrush family cousins the Redwing and Fieldfare. In Kent we see our orchards in winter full of these lovely thrushes. With warming temperatures a few breeding species have moved their breeding ranges northwards and the most noticeable one we often see in Kent is probably a pure white heron, the Little Egret. Its close cousins the Great Egret and Cattle Egret appear to be following the same trend. A much more discreet newcomer is the Cetti's Warbler which inhabits wet scrubland. Although it is very difficult to see, it makes its presence known with a very loud and strident call. It first came to Kent in the 1970s but it didn't survive the very cold winters that followed. It has since recolonised and it now has established itself on a line south of The Wash to the River Severn estuary.

With milder winters there are quite a few birds that do not feel the need to risk a dangerous journey to warmer climes. The two most noticeable species are warblers, namely the Blackcap (now quite a common visitor to the bird table in winter) and the Chiffchaff. Both these warblers were short-distance migrants wintering in the Med area, but more and more are over-wintering here. In fact it was only last week (3 February) I saw a Chiffchaff catching insects in the Iden Green sewage works. This has been very beneficial to their population which has more than doubled since the 1980s. A few years ago a Swallow spent the entire winter in Newick, Sussex. This is an exceptional case. However the Swallow now arrives about a fortnight earlier than it used to do which gives it the chance to have more broods in the breeding season. The Tit family of birds is very much resident all year round and records show that the Great Tit is, on average, laying 11 days earlier than 30 years ago.

The South East of Britain is in the northerly part of the Nightingale's range and with a warmer climate it was expected to move further north but if anything its range has contracted. There is a healthy population over the Channel and other factors must be limiting its potential northwards advance. Habitat and disturbance are possible reasons for this. Another migrant, the Willow Warbler, whose breeding range is northern/mid Europe, is definitely moving northwards and this is very apparent in Hemsted where it used to be a very common summer visitor. My records show the breeding numbers are about half what they were in the 1990s but the population is increasing in Scotland, thereby demonstrating that climate change is probably the driving force.

Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com

Hypericum and elaeagnus



In Your Garden

Essential Evergreens

Backdrop. Structure. Bare Bones. No, I am not talking about assimilating a copy of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' ... but discussing the merits of evergreen plants in your garden. Garden owners can yawn slightly on the subject of evergreens, and I sympathise as I too was in that camp. I am now a complete convert and when planning or re-addressing a garden, I always start with the evergreens.

Yes, I am aware that some have dark, murky foliage that tends to sit at the back of a border doing very little - but something has got to hide that ugly wooden fence. And then during the darkest days of winter, said plant explodes into flower; and not just any old flower - sprays of scented pink and white. This is 'Viburnum tinus' - very common, very hardy and indispensable on my drawing board. I cut sprigs of this plant when in flower and use it in table arrangements, along with some snipped silvery lavender and any hardy herbs you may have growing such as bay or rosemary. Very simple and very effective. Pittosporum, choisya, hebe, holly, laurel, hypericum, yew the list will go on and on but without them in your garden you will

not be looking at much - in any season.

During the summer months, they revert to structure mode and support the main show, that being all the flowering plants and shrubs. An evergreen in the summer is a worthy rest for the eye; place a box ball next to a jumble of delphiniums and you will get the picture.

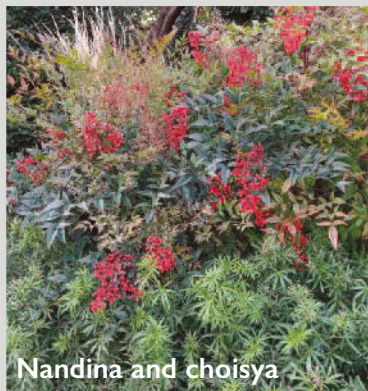
Evergreens come in all sorts of shapes and sizes - from a towering conical conifer to a small frondy fern; and they don't have to be green! Think of silvery lavenders and convulvulus, variegated hebes and euonymous, golden privets and red leucothoes all of which will break up the green and provide a pop of colour in winter. Ferns are particularly useful as the evergreen varieties such as 'Polystichum setiferum' and the lovely 'Blechnum spicant' grouped together generously in a corner really lifts the space and if planted together with small primroses can look perfect in early spring. The

trick with all evergreens is to group them to vary the foliage and habit or plant a few of one variety together. One little fern on its own is going to look very lonely - so be generous and you will reap the rewards!

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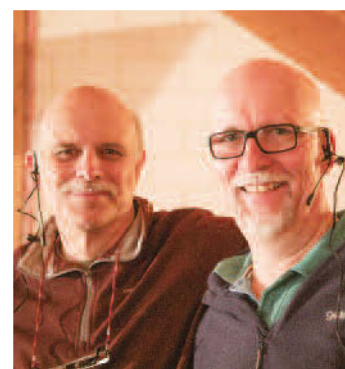
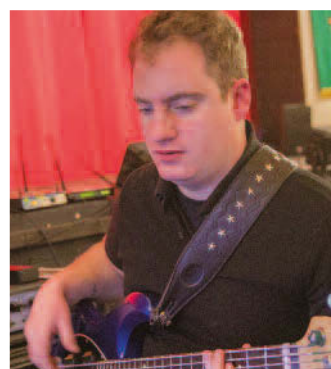
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Above: Months of hard work allowing opportunities for so many people to be involved in the village pantomime and to share in the extraordinary sense of teamwork and achievement. Photograph: Hayley Agora

Front cover: The Legend of King Arthur: wizardry and community magic. Photograph: Hayley Agora