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Editorial



At the start of the month, we were feeling very pleased with ourselves. This was to be remembered as the edition that marked our tenth anniversary - a whole ten years since the mag was transformed into an all-singing, all-dancing, full-colour, A4 representation of our busy and vibrant community.

Building on the work of its founders, we like to think the current team has picked up the village ball and run with it, to the point where visitors to Benenden often comment on what a remarkable publication this is for a parish of this size. We, of course, point out that this is a remarkable parish.

This month, we're looking forward to the Benenden Art Fair; celebrating the efforts of some retiring village fete stalwarts and some questing Benenden adventurers; focusing on the need to protect our natural environment; reminding people they have the chance to take part in both a Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid film night and a hard-fought quiz at the village hall.

Then, sadly, came the hammer blow that one of our greatest supporters, the wonderful Peter Driver, had passed away. We were already celebrating the life of another friend of the magazine, Rohan Barnett, when news of Peter's death reached us, and the loss is still very much in our hearts.

Peter was a great contributor to these pages as our de facto wildlife correspondent, following on from his great work on the Benenden Nature Facebook page; if you asked him for a 750-word piece about local bats, it would appear two days later - following a brief protestation that such a task might be beyond him. It never was.

I like to think he's looking down from on high, delighted to see that we're championing local hedgehogs. I think next month will make him chuckle, too, when he realises that the obituary we're going to carry will make him, in these parts at least, more talked about than even Robert Redford. We'll miss him, but he leaves the parish a better place than he found it.

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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

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

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

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

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

Communion

Sunday 12 October 8am BCP Communion 10am Pet Service
Sunday 19 October 8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Saturday 25 October 4pm Connect Four

at Mission Church, Sandhurst

Sunday 26 October 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

Morning Prayer 8am Mondays and Fridays

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

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

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

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Weddings 20 September Brogan Hogg and Max Dallison

27 September Charlotte Gardener and Ben Thompson

Funerals 10 September Peter Driver Funeral

19 Elizabeth Moore Thanksgiving Service and interment

Church Letter



Any unfulfilled promises in the busyness of this year?

And so the year continues to march onwards. September was a busy month within the village and church. The new school/academic year started; with new classes or teachers for most children; new schools for many; off to university for the first time or returning to uni; starting new jobs at new schools or in new roles for some adults. Both the children and the adults need our support and encouragement as they step into something new (age does not completely eliminate the nerves).

We've also had: the Ride+Stride sponsored event to raise funds for Friends of Kent Churches; our regular Grief and Loss café; a Scarecrow Festival in St Nicholas; a Canterbury Diocesan roadshow to the Weald Deanery; and our Harvest Festival services. At St George's we gave all the non-perishable food donations (thank you) to Nourish - a foodbank charity in Tunbridge Wells serving this area - and Water Aid, an international charity working to supply clean water to so many communities who do not have what we take for granted.

Now we move into October and things quieten down a little. Important but not particularly exciting is the quinquennial at St George's Church, an inspection of the fabric of the church the church building - undertaken every five years, checking if bits have fallen off, or are about to fall off, or if there's any leaks, or the church electrics need attention. As the church is well maintained, it is hoped there won't be any major surprises ... or expenses.

There will be a meeting in the Weald Deanery with a guest speaker talking about the work of Social Justice Network, and St George's will be holding a Pet Service at 10am on 12 October. Pets of all shapes and sizes are welcome, as are their responsible owners. It's an opportunity to thank God for the blessing of the animals dear to us.

We will also be preparing for another important service in our church year: All Souls' Day on Sunday 2 November. At this service we all gather to remember loved ones who have died, whether in the past year or many years ago, we still miss, love and remember them. Please come along and light a candle for a loved one - 7.30pm at St George's. Any names to be read out should to be sent to Cathy Baker, please: benendenchurch@gmail.com). Then, before you know it, it will be Remembrance, the Mini Market (at the Mission Church in Sandhurst), Advent, the Parish Carol Service and Christmas - there, I've said it, Christmas - and another calendar year will draw to a close.

Do not get to the end of the year with regrets. If you promised yourself at the beginning of the year to try something new or do something different, and you've not done it yet, now is the time to get on and do it, so that you don't bemoan (again) not getting around to it.

Revd David Commander, Rector and Area Dean

Village Calendar

October		
Thursday 2	Hug in a Mug, Benenden's Community Shop, 10am	p. 17
Friday 3	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 6-8pm	p.24
Saturday 4	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 4	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 10-5pm	p.24
Saturday 4	Tabletop Curling, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 5	Benenden Art Fair, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm	p.24
Sunday 5	National Open Garden Scheme, Balmoral Cottage, Benenden, 12noon-5pm	p. I 3
Tuesday 7	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 7	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Wednesday 8	Hemsted Park, Harry the Piano, Benenden School Recital Hall, 7pm	p.21
Fri 10-Sat 11	Hemsted Park, Sherlock Holmes: The Hunt for Moriarty,	
	Benenden School Theatre, 7pm	p.21
Saturday 11	Golf Game, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 12	Apple Day, Standen Street Fruit Farm, Iden Green, 1.30pm	p.9
Tuesday 14	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.9
Wednesday 15	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Lunch at Merriments, Hurst Green, I2noon	p. I 2
Friday 17	Hemsted Park, The Real Manhunter, Benenden School Theatre, 7.30pm	p.21
Saturday 18	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 20	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Tuesday 21	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 21	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 21	Iden Green and Benenden WI, History of Great Dixter, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. 12
Wednesday 22	Benenden Gardening Club, Matthew Reese: Malverleys Garden,	
	Benenden Village Hall, 6.30pm	p.9
Thurs 23-Fri 24	Hemsted Park, Spot's Birthday Party, Benenden School Theatre, I Iam & 2pm	p.21
Saturday 25	Ladder Toss, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 26	The Angry Whelk Fresh Fish Stall, Benenden Village Hall, 12-2pm	
Monday 27	Benenden's Community Shop, AGM, Memorial Hall, 7pm	p. 17
Tuesday 28	Merry and Bright, Talk on Windmills, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.14
Thursday 30	Hemsted Park, London Concertante Four Seasons,	
	Benenden School Centenary Hall, 7pm	p.21
Friday 31	Craftanoon: All Hallows Eve, Benenden's Community Shop, multiple time slots	p. 17
Friday 31	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. 12

Iden Green Toddler Group

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

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

Cakes & Chaos: Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-1 lam

Parish Council



For those of you who did not know, Benenden Parish Council (BPC) has lost a much-valued colleague recently following a short illness. Peter Driver lived in Iden Green, becoming a councillor in September 2018, and we are all glad he decided it would be a worthwhile thing to do. He was a real asset who brought a wide range of experience, knowledge and a great sense of humour to his duties, along with a consistently kind and likeable temperament.

Peter's clear passion for nature and the environment made him an obvious choice to take the lead on the creation of a wild-flower meadow on land next to the primary school known as the Beacon Field, for which the BPC has responsibility. Since 2021 this has been a real challenge and hard work, but Peter was good at recruiting volunteer help from fellow councillors, locals and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, whose help and advice has been invaluable. We will all remember Peter's reports at PC meetings, regaling us with tales of the invasive Creeping Thistle and the ever-marching Bristly Oxtongue! The good work that he brought to the meadow will continue in his absence and one fine day, in the not-too-distant future, it will come to fruition and be enjoyed by us all.

Peter also took the lead on highways and was ever optimistic and cheerful that the inertia on the part of Kent County Council on issues such as signage, potholes and the ever-present volume and speed of traffic throughout the parish would be resolved, believing that perseverance might just win the day. The highways improvement plan, which Peter did a lot of work on for Benenden, has been reviewed and submitted several times since 2022, keeping the core issues of the plan to the forefront. In his last parish council magazine letter, Peter spoke about Speedwatch, which he had also taken part in many times over the years, and which, due to lack of regular volunteers, had been disbanded. As was mentioned in the September issue, Speedwatch is about to be resurrected, something which I know Peter would heartily approve of.

Julie Lewis, Parish Councillor julielewis@benendenparishcouncil.org

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

Parish Council Meeting Monday 20 October, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

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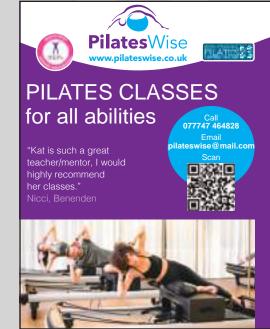
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Benenden Village Hall

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Talking Point



Energy explained, from kettles to kilowatts

There are few things more ordinary than boiling a kettle. Flick the switch and, moments later, there's hot water for tea. It's so familiar that we rarely stop to think about what's happening where that energy comes from, what it costs, and what it means for the world around us. Yet energy has a way of making itself noticed. Sometimes it's the arrival of a bill that's higher than expected. Sometimes it's a chilly evening when the heating doesn't quite take the edge off. And sometimes it's when we hear talk of new technologies, regulations, or prices rising and wonder how it all fits together.

Over the coming months this magazine will carry a series of short articles that aim to take some of the mystery out of 'energy'. Each will explore a different piece of the puzzle: how heat pumps work, how solar panels capture the sun, why insulation makes such a difference, and even the hidden power used by appliances left on standby. The idea is not to persuade or preach, but to explain in clear terms, with examples from everyday homes like ours.

For me, the interest in energy is both professional and personal. Professionally, I've spent much of my life working with building services engineering - the systems that heat, cool, and power our homes, schools, hospitals, and workplaces - and I'm currently an honorary professor in building services systems at University College London. I've lived in Benenden for 25 years with my wife, Kate, our children grew up here, and I look after the village website, benendenvillage.org.uk, which provides links to local organisations and activities.

What I've learned through both work and life in the village is that energy is never just a technical subject. It's about comfort, health, money and, increasingly, the choices we make about the kind of future we want to leave behind. Some solutions are simple and low-cost, others require planning and investment, but together they can make homes more comfortable, reduce bills, and cut the pollution that contributes to climate change.

Energy can sound complicated, but at heart it's simple: it's what powers our lives. My hope is that this series will make it easier to understand and maybe spark conversations - whether over a cup of tea at Benenden's community café, a walk through the village, or at a local event.

I look forward to sharing these topics with you.

Tim Dwyer



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News and Events

Arnold Cole Trust

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

Applications in writing (no later than 31 October) please to: The Secretary, Arnold Cole Trust, c/o the Parish Council Office, Benenden Village Hall.

Village lunch

All Benenden villagers are invited to join us for lunch in the village hall at 12.30pm on Tuesday 14 October. If you would like to come and haven't written your name down already, then please ring me by Thursday 9 October if possible. It costs just £5 and lifts can be arranged. We look forward to seeing you. Sheila Hume 854627

Benenden Gardening Club

Matthew Reese will be giving us a talk on Malverleys Garden in the village hall on Wednesday 22 October. Malverleys is a ten-acre English flower garden, near Newbury, that has been designed and developed by Matthew over the last decade. It was featured on BBC Gardeners' World episode 8 with Rachel de Thame and Joe Swift.

The garden is laid out in rooms separated by yew hedging with each having a distinctive style. Exquisite planting influenced by the writings of Christopher Lloyd, William Robinson and Vita Sackville-West. Free for members, guests £5. Raffle and bar. Doors open at 6.30pm.

Eleanor Cochrane



Standen Orchard Apple Day

All are welcome to come along to the wonderful annual Standen Orchard Apple Day celebration starting at 1.30pm on Sunday 12 October (Standen Street TN17 4LB). Lots of fun for the family including music and archery. Pick apples, see them pressed, and apple juice will be for sale. Bring a picnic to enjoy in the beautiful orchard. Local produce stall holders are very welcome. For more information contact me.

Susie Armstrong 07748 180801

Village Autumn Tidy

The next village tidy is on Saturday 15 November. Equipment (litter pickers, hi viz jackets, bin bags) can be collected from outside the village shop from 9am and volunteers can take part at any time for any length of time between 9 and 1 lam. Litter collected and bagged should be left at the village hall and equipment returned to the shop by 1 lam. Volunteers will receive a voucher for a drink and cake to be used at the café.

For more information email: clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org





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Newcomers to Benenden

Are you new to Benenden? If so, welcome on behalf of St George's Church. Please do get in touch with me so I can add you to a list to invite you to our newcomers' lunch for new residents. We hold this every other year and we don't want to miss the opportunity to invite you.

Meanwhile do join us for our Sunday morning services at 8am and 10am, when you will be warmly greeted. We offer excellent coffee and home-made cakes or biscuits after the second service, when it's a good opportunity to meet your new neighbours and find out what is going on in the village.

Sally-Ann Marks sallymarks100@hotmail.com

Benenden Cricket Club

The fun day in August was a great success with more than 20 children taking to The Green's hallowed turf. Barry Bassett directed a two-over soft ball competition and some very competent, even competitive, parents also took part. Goody bags were handed out to all at the end and our talent spotter was on hand, disguised as the BBQ chef. It is no coincidence that the winning four in Benenden's win over Sandhurst was hit by someone not yet in their teens.

Peter Massey

Pavilion Jazz & Blues

This year's event was particularly well attended in warm, dry weather, although there was a chill in the air as things drew to a close just after 6pm. A great mix of jazz and blues from the resident band, Benenden Jazz, in support of vocalists Debbie Katis and Primrose Barron-Reid, who also played a solo set, all followed by an hour of 70s-90s songs from The Convertibles.

Special thanks go to all who helped with setting things up and dismantling; to Grant Matthews of WOW Cooking who provided meat for the BBQ; to Larkin's Brewery for the beer; the Pavilion Trustees and to all who supported the event by attending.

An impressive £2,300 was raised for four charities, equally shared between: CoppaFeel! breast cancer awareness, Evelina Children's Charity, The Big Cat Sanctuary at Smarden and Iden Green Pavilion.

Thanks and see you all next year I hope. Bill Lewis

Iden Green and Benenden WI

In September, we welcomed Nick Rendall, director of partnerships at Benenden School, and three students to our meeting. Nick gave an excellent talk on the history of Hemsted from Roman times until the estate was sold by Lord Rothermere to the founders of the school. It was a joy to see the pupils' enthusiasm for local history, and we look forward to a future visit when we shall hear the school story from 1924.

A lunch outing to Merriments is planned for 15 October, meeting there at 12noon. On 21 October at our 2pm meeting in the Memorial Hall, Amanda Taggart will talk about the history of Great Dixter house and garden. A social afternoon in the Memorial Hall is arranged for Friday 31 October, at 2pm, when Anna Millen will demonstrate making autumnal and Christmas wreaths. There will be time for the usual raffle, and tea and cake too.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

Balmoral Cottage open garden

Charlotte and Donald Molesworth's Balmoral Cottage garden is open to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme from 12-5pm on Sunday 5 October.

Varied, romantic and extensive topiary forms the backbone for mixed borders and the whole garden is organically managed. Particular attention to the needs of nesting birds and small mammals lends this garden a rare and unusual quality. Entrance is £7 for adults and £2 for children. Dogs are welcome.

The garden is just down the track to the right of St George's Church, Benenden. Parking is available.

Benenden Primary School

It has been a busy but successful start to the school year. The children have all settled into their new classrooms and have begun to get to know their adult team. Parents have had opportunities to come into the school in the form of coffee afternoons and 'meet the teacher' sessions. The outdoor spaces are being used well. These include 'Buzzards Hub', our new outdoor learning provision, our wellbeing garden, the outdoor classrooms and the adventure playground.

We also visited the church for our harvest celebration, where the children sang beautifully, as always. It's lovely to have such a strong link with St George's.

If you are considering sending your child to Benenden CEP in September 2026, we have open mornings and afternoons arranged. Please see our website for details. I would be very pleased to show you around - along with the head boy or girl.

Alison Brook, Headteacher 240565 a.brook@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk

In association with the Friends of St George's Church

THE MUSIC SCHOLARS OF BENENDEN SCHOOL

Wednesday 12 November 2025 7pm to 8.30pm in Benenden School Centenary Hall with welcome drinks from 6.30pm

> Attendance Complimentary with a retiring collection for the Friends of St George's Church

Music Scholars concert

We are delighted that once again Benenden School are hosting a concert for their senior music scholars on Wednesday 12 November at 7pm in the Centenary Hall, with a retiring collection in aid of Friends of St George's. For those of you who have attended in the past, you will know that the quality of the music is outstanding and the venue is like being on the South Bank. The school provides such a warm welcome and the Friends members are a great addition to the audience. Please do make a note in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.

Jo Clube

Poppy Appeal collection

We are once again arranging a limited house-to-house collection for the Poppy Appeal. From 25 October boxes will be placed in the community shop, Benenden Hospital, the St George's Club, the primary school, Benenden School, the Bull and the Woodcock.

During the mornings of Saturday I and Saturday 8 November, we shall establish a collection with a wider range of poppy items and our allocation of the 2025 enamel badges outside the community shop.

Royal British Legion, Benenden Branch

Merry and Bright

I recently wandered to the church for a cup of tea and joined some residents. While we were chatting, people came and looked around the church and a couple came over and asked about the village. We explained about all the clubs and social activities and they said how nice it was to have a lovely social village with lots of different clubs. I came home and thought about our very social village and that so many people help to run these clubs. We need to keep supporting them all. We do not want to see any disappear.

In the past our club nearly closed when membership got down to around six. I think a vote was taken and it was decided to give it six months more. A new committee was formed and now with a lot of hard work we are going well and have around 20 members. So come and support us. If you are interested in joining please contact us for information. We have only three more meetings in 2025 and if you are interested in joining for the rest of the year there's no membership payment until 2026 - just pay for tea and cake. We start next year on 27 January. Lifts can be arranged.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 28 October with a talk on windmills followed by a victorian tea. All in the memorial hall at 2pm.

Laraine Penny, Chair 241763

Laraine Penny, Chair 241763 Julia Collard, Secretary 241944

Sutton Valence Choral Society

Sutton Valence Choral Society, together with Bearsted Choral Society, Lees Court Music, the Beresford Sinfonia and a stellar cast of soloists, will be performing Mendelssohn's Elijah on Saturday 15 November 2025 at 7pm in Hemsted Park Centenary Hall. Join us for an evening of inspirational and beautiful music as we say farewell to our conductor Bryan Gipps who has guided us for the last 22 years. Tickets £22. Under 18s free. Available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/hemstedpark

Benenden Pre-School

We started the new school year with wet and windy weather and the children, even the new little two-year-olds in their first week or two of pre-school, are learning to dress themselves for the garden, pulling on splash suits and wellies with fast-growing independence. Once outside they are jumping with great glee in the muddy puddles, exploring how water is displaced by their feet. This is an early physics lesson, experimenting with force and gravity. Jumping in puddles also helps children develop proprioception, the sense which tells your brain about your body's position and movement, boosting balance, coordination and confidence. No wonder children love water: it's a wonderful teacher.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

Friends of Benenden Primary School

As the new school year begins, we are already busy planning an exciting year ahead. We are delighted to welcome new parents into the Friends' team this term and look forward to working together on some brilliant fund-raising events. It's always wonderful to see fresh ideas and enthusiasm join our efforts.

Of course, many of our much-loved traditions will be back, including our Christmas, Easter, and summer celebrations. Alongside these favourites, we are also exploring some new and exciting fundraising ideas - so keep an eye out for announcements in the coming weeks.

The Friends' committee is hard at work behind the scenes, but none of our events would be possible without the help of parents, carers and the wider community. Whether it's volunteering time, donating items or simply coming along to support our events, every bit of involvement makes a difference.

Evie Banfield and Jane Mason friends@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk/PTFA/

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Benenden Hospital

Autumn can be a wonderful season but, for some, October can be difficult as the nights grow longer, the mornings get colder, children return to busy routines and workloads increase after annual leave. I know many people who struggle to find routine during this time, so 6-10 October celebrates National Work Life Week, an important week that focuses on wellbeing both at home and at work.

I spoke with our Learning and Experience team, who create a calendar of wellbeing events throughout the year to support our staff, about the ways in which they stay grounded and resilient in the face of everyday pressures.

Josephine Baker, head of Learning and Experience, says: "As a team, we've become good at recognising when one of us is feeling stressed or is struggling. Rather than pushing through or ignoring the signs, we've built a habit of pausing together for just three minutes. We use a guided mindfulness meditation as a focused moment to breathe, reset, and reconnect.

"These moments help us shift out of reactive mode, clear our heads and often give us the clarity we need to tackle unexpected issues with more calm and creativity.

Sometimes, it's about the micro-moments we create in our day to support our wellbeing and productivity."

I hope you find inspiration this month to check-in with yourself more throughout the day, whether at work or at home. Let's reflect: what does work life balance look like to you? Claire Harley, Hospital Director



Talking shop

As I write this there is a very distinct sense of the inexorable march of autumn with its chilly evenings and darker mornings. To make the going easier, a reminder that you can warm up and cheer up in Benenden's café with sausage, mash and beans, chicken or vegetable curry with rice, macaroni cheese and lasagne, along with jacket potatoes with side salad and a choice of fillings. All kinds of hot and cold drinks are available as well as a cheeky glass of red or white wine with your food if you fancy it.

'Craftanoon' for our youngsters up to ten years, will take place on 31 October. Lots of fun games are promised with a spooky hamper being awarded for the best-dressed child. There will be three sessions; 1-2pm, 2.15-3.15pm and 3.30-4.30pm. The September magazine article incorrectly stated £12 as the cost of the tickets for this. The correct price per child is £5. Please do sign up quickly as places are limited.

All shareholders are invited to our annual general meeting which takes place at 7pm on 27 October in the Memorial Hall.

Early November sees the arrival of our Christmas stock, which promises to be rather different from what you might find in the mainstream shops. Do come and look. You may well find an answer to those 'difficult' choices.

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





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Planning Matters

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

- 25/01835/FULL The Barn Great Nineveh Nineveh Lane. Single storey rear extension and installation of rooflights and replace stables with annex building. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 25/01640/LBC Campion House, Standen Street. Removal of cementitious material from the external panels & re-rendering. Timber repairs, the re-introduction of I timber support, and the introduction of I timber support. Internal replastering & the replacement of 2 rooflights. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 25/01543/FULL Land Adjacent To Bikkel, Goddards Green Road. Conversion of outbuilding to single dwelling. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 25/01698/LBC Benenden C Of E Primary School, The Green. Addition of window to West elevation (Alterations to schemes 22/02278/LBC & 23/00410/LBC). The Parish Council supports this application.
- 25/01665/FULL Netters Hall, Attwaters
 Lane, Hawkhurst. Reinstatement of
 basement lightwell, new painted hardwood
 windows to the central range of the south
 elevation & conservation roof lights. (Alterations related to 22/03567/FULL &
 24/01668/FULL). The Parish Council
 supports this application.
- 25/01880/FULL Waters End Farm, Standen Street. Single-storey rear extension connecting to existing outbuilding; roof extension; repositioning of dormer window; removal of brick steps & extension of exterior retaining wall. The Parish Council makes no comment on this application.

More planning matters at: benendenparishcouncil.org



Friends of St George's Quiz

It's time to mark your diary for the Benenden quiz of the year: the hotly contested event that is the annual Friends of St George's Quiz.

We've space for II tables or so (teams of eight) which always sell out. To book and commit to a table please email deborahjenkins 26@btinternet.com sharpish, along with any essential dietary requirements.

It takes place on Friday 28 November. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. It's your chance to carry off the Benenden quiz crown. Taking place at our prestigious village hall, your ticket includes home-cooked lasagne. We'll lay on the plates, crockery and cutlery for the lasagne course. You bring drinks and glasses, dessert and pud bowls to keep your costs down.

The evening is an important annual fundraiser for us and helps protect the external fabric of Benenden's beautiful church. Cost is just £20 a head, which you'll need to pay (cash only please) on the night. If you want to take part but aren't in a team let us know and we'll do our best to accommodate you. Mark Hollander



Benenden School

The start of a new school year is always special for students and staff at Benenden. It's a chance to welcome new faces and to strengthen the sense of community that lies at the heart of our School. Our induction activities are carefully designed to help every student, particularly those new to the School, feel settled and connected from the very first day. The highlight for many is House Shout, our exuberant singing competition that takes place on the first weekend of term. This joyful, musical competition unites students of all ages and demonstrates how quickly our Houses become vibrant, supportive communities.

This term we are especially delighted to welcome exchange students from Chile and Australia. Their presence enriches our cultural understanding and sparks wonderful conversations across the year groups.

We are also thrilled to have launched the Benenden Primary Forest School, which takes place weekly in our beautiful grounds. This wonderful initiative offers younger pupils the opportunity to learn, play and develop important life skills in an outdoor setting. Our Sixth Form volunteers are an integral part of the programme, supporting activities and helping to guide the primary pupils as they explore the natural environment.

Music and song for St George's

The Rhythm of Life Choir invites you to start the winter season with a selection of song, music and more in St George's Church at 7pm on Saturday 22 November. We want to support the Restore, Renew and Rejoice project for St George's by raising much-needed funds. More details to come but do put this date in your diary. We hope to offer a lively concert to suit all the family. Sally-Ann Marks

Film night: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Benenden Village Trust is continuing its fundraising in support of the village hall. On Saturday 6 December we will be showing the acclaimed film 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid', starring Paul Newman as Butch and the late Robert Redford as Sundance, the leaders of the Hole in the Wall Gang. Butch and Sundance were real life bank and train robbers, who were no doubt downright nasty people; the film, of course, portrays them as charming and loveable rogues and also features Katharine Ross as the love interest, and one of Burt Bacharach's most well-known tunes, scooping four Oscars.

Whether you're a fan of western fantasy or simply looking for a sociable night out, this is the perfect opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere and see a cinematic classic. Once again the evening will include a pay bar, raffle, and meal. Feedback from previous events included high praise for meals provided by WOW Catering.

BVT hope to create a community event with a film to watch but time to chat and have a drink. So, contact your friends and get them to come along to what will be a good evening.

Reserve the date: Saturday 6 December at 7pm. Tickets cost £25 each and will be on sale throughout November, either online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/benenden-village-trust or from the village hall Monday to Friday mornings. Paul Tolhurst



AUTUMN/WINTER 2025

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Harry The Piano

8 October

Sherlock Holmes: The **Hunt For Moriarty** 10 & 11 October

The Real Manhunter 17 October

Spot's Birthday Party 23 & 24 October









London Concertante Four Seasons 30 October

Blazin' Fiddles

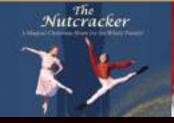
9 November

The BBC Big Band 22 November

Jess Gillam

11 December









Lost in Music

12 December

Hamlet

25 January

The Nutcracker

13 December

Faulty Towers **Dining Experience** 13 & 14 December

The Philharmonia Brass at Christmas 19 December





The Nat King Cole Story 13 February



Ben Fogle

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Cranbrook Literature Festival

The Cranbrook Literature Festival (10-11 October) is a not-for-profit event promoting the joy of the written word. Since 2016 the festival has attracted a huge range of authors (including Christy Lefteri, Lisa Jewell, Elly Griffiths and Richard Coles), and in return has paid for authors to work with pupils in local schools.

The festival returns with an exciting new programme, including author talks for adults and children, creative writing workshops, and school visits. Join us in Cranbrook to hear these wonderful authors in conversation. For more information, and tickets: www.cranbrookliteraturefestival.com Anna Stephen

Richard Beattie Davis recital goal exceeded

Another wonderful recital was held in Sandhurst when the Dutch pianist Florian Verweij honoured us with his presence. The recital featured an interesting mix of Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin and a charming early work by Prokofiev. In the Kent Courier Christopher Woodley reported: "As a coda to the proceedings Verweij was joined by Leslie Howard for duet arrangements of three pieces from Glazunov's ballet Raymonda. What a treat that was! One of the great pianists of our time honouring the memory of Richard Beattie Davis."

I started these classical music recitals 17 years ago when I asked Daniel Grimwood to play a concert for friends to raise money for the Hospice in the Weald, where Richard was cared for so wonderfully. Now it has grown into a marvellous force for good and pleasure. I am thrilled to announce that we started August with £19,856 and ended with £20,632. I was quite concerned because so many people are away in August. However, I have a faithful audience and some new ones joined us. Watch this space for 2026 dates.

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Programme

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> MHV, Vinehall Rd, Robertsbridge TN32 5JL For full details call 01580 883092 or email concerts@mhvschool.co.uk

Sissinghurst Scout Group

Members of Sissinghurst Scout Group have had a busy summer. The Cubs and Squirrels camped on a field locally; we attended Tractorfest; and the Scouts went to a huge, week-long, festival-style international camp on Detling Hill. They had the most amazing time with scouts and explorers from all over the country and the world. Local grants from Sissinghurst, Biddenden and Benenden have helped to subsidise their adventures.

Our scout leader is fundraising and has set herself a challenge to run two half marathons. Please help her to get to her fundraising target using the QR code below. She wants the Scouts to go on more big adventures.

We have vacancies for four-year-old girls and boys, and adults, meeting on Wednesday evenings in Sissinghurst. We'd love you to join us.



enquiries@SissinghurstScouts.org.uk

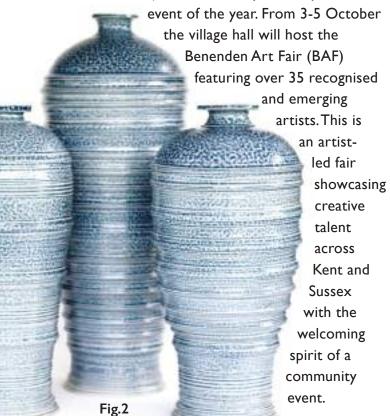
Gillian Davis 23

Benenden Art Fair



Glorious art at the heart of Benenden

We are now just a week away from my favourite

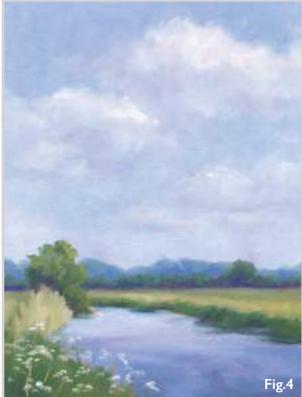


Last year we had a record-breaking number of visitors, and we were overwhelmed with the wonderful feedback from villagers. This year we have expanded the fair to include more artists and creatives for you to enjoy and have found more parking space for our exhibitors.

Our private view takes place on Friday 3
October, 6-8pm, and tickets are free to book on our website (www.benendenartfair.com/visit-us).
Biddenden Vineyards are kindly supplying their sparkling white and award-winning apple juice, and there is plenty to go around. If you'd rather visit over the weekend, we are open on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 October. The WOW café will also be open with a range of hot drinks, treats and light snacks, including their famous doughnuts!
The fair will be a perfect place to browse local art, share a coffee with friends and explore the beautiful countryside Benenden has to offer.

BAF wouldn't be possible without the support of our brilliant partners, for which we are so grateful. A special thank you to Biddenden





Vineyards, Jackson's Art, Kingsford Solicitors and Art4Site for their contributions. Hannah Buchanan, Benenden Art Fair Director

Opening hours

Friday 3 October, 6-8pm Saturday 4 October, 10-5pm Sunday 5 October, 10-4pm

About the fair www.benendenartfair.com

BAF benendenartfair@gmail.com @benendenartfair



Fig. I Amanda Thompson, Fish Friday

Fig.2 Peter Black, Vases

Fig.3 Megan Yelets, Winter

Fig.4 Hannah Buchanan, Blue Skies and Cow Parsley

Fig.5 Jude Askey-Brown, White Geranium

Fig.6 Scarlett Woodman, Crisp





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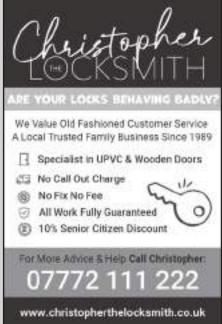
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Benenden Village Fete



Fete stalwarts retire: thank you Julia, Maggy and Mary

Leading the volunteer front in smiles and generosity of time, Julia, Maggy and Mary step down after many years at the helm of Bric-a-Brac, Chic Boutique and Strawberries and Cream. The committee and St George's Church are so proud of the achievement of the fete and its community, and none more so than the efforts that these kind three have put in, leading their stalls.

Julia, Maggy and Mary, from those of us who have enjoyed the fete or volunteered alongside you, thank you for making it such a joy for us all. Thank you for your team-mustering skills, for your competitive spirits to sell more, and make more, for St George's and all those many charities who have benefited. Thank you for washing spoons, sorting stock, storing stock and holding down gazebos. Thank you for hulling thousands of strawberries, battling with hangers and selling china amongst tombstones. Benenden and its community have been, and continue to be, very lucky to have you.

Athena Cripps, Co-Chair, Benenden Fete

Julia Collard: Strawberries and Cream

"As I grew up in Benenden, my memory of the strawberry stall at the church fete goes back many years. I remember as a child buying strawberries and cream from Norah Kerr-Wilson and Freda Reynolds. They were working out of an old green tent, were using saucers and you were given a few whole strawberries on the saucer with a dollop of whipped cream and the

instruction to bring the saucer back for washing up (in the back of the tent)!

I eventually volunteered to help and took over in 2000. The strawberries were bought at the Goodhew stall near Sandhurst and Robert Reynolds collected them on the Saturday morning. In 2002 the bowls (by then plastic) cost 30p, rising to 80p in 2003 and £1 in 2007, where it has stayed. I have been helped over the years by my family, especially my daughter Sue, who is taking over in 2026."

Maggy Hoyt: Bric-a brac

"Back in the mists of time, having become redundant as a mechanical music maker for the fete, the bric-a-brac stall came my way. Small but special and in the rectory garden. Then the leap to the village green. As the fete grew, so did the stall, until it could be divided into three: wine boxes, vintage and still the original base. Over the years it has been great fun, a great earner and a joy to run. I've been very ably supported by a team of enthusiastic, energetic, loyal and dogged volunteers, without whom it would have been nothing! My heartfelt thanks to you all, but it is now time to pass it on to someone younger and fitter who I know will do a great job: Amanda Garrett."

Mary Parkinson: Chic Boutique

"Soon after we came to the village II years ago, we really enjoyed our first fete, and within two years I was asked to run Chic Boutique for the discerning and fashion-conscious elite of Benenden (and you lot as well!). Every year we have been inundated with a vast volume of clothing and really enjoyed selling. There have been too many helpers over the years to list, but this year's Mrs Slocombes were Ruth Barwick, Louise Bowden, Anna Dane, Polly Hardwick, Angela Patrick, Angela Simmonds and Helen Turner, and they made a record amount of over £1,000. All hard work, but great fun. Always quit while you're ahead, they say, so now is the moment! I wish Michelle Burford every success as she takes on the task next year. Thank you so much to all the helpers over the years."

27





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Spotlight



Come on landowners: look after your public footpaths

Enthusiastic walker Lynne Hyde bemoans the condition of many of the public footpaths within the parish

The last time I raised the issue of our Public Rights of Way (PROW) was back in 2022 when, in an article, I talked about how my husband Jim and I regularly take secateurs out with us walking to clear what we can, but we are limited. Following the article we, the village, were donated some folding secateurs which were kindly arranged by Peter Massey (thank you). Did you win a pair of them? If you did, do you still use them for the purpose they were donated for? We most certainly do.

Some paths can be classed as okay, but when they are bad, they are dreadful, with little if any maintenance. If need be I report all major issues direct to KCC (www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem -on-a-right-of-way). However, I personally feel it is not their responsibility to have to do what can only be classed as regular maintenance. It is the responsibility of the landowner.

The worst issue, and my main bugbear, is when landowners fence off the footpath then seem to think no further maintenance is required. Long grass hides a multitude of issues: brambles, nettles etc. and in some cases



brambles completely crossing the path, a real trip hazard and not nice when wearing shorts!

For example, there is a PROW very close to us which has had the path fenced off from the original field. The field has recently been cut and in fact looks rather neat and tidy, but look down the footpath and it is a completely different story (see photographs above). I have on more than one occasion contacted the landowner directly, but feel I shouldn't have to do this every time the path needs clearing. A few weeks ago, I reported the path to KCC and supplied them with the contact details for the landowner. I'm not sure this has worked as nothing has been done.

I feel sure landowners very rarely walk the footpaths, otherwise they would not let them get into the state they are often in.

Another thing we can do is to ask landowners to also check markers and signage, as some are now all but obscured by vegetation and in some cases missing completely. I have on more than one occasion had to point walkers in the correct direction because of bad signage. If the signage is clear there is no reason why any landowner should need to complain that walkers are in places they should not be. General maintenance of stiles and gates are another issue: the easier they are to use, the less likely it is that people will leave them open.

Come on, landowners, please keep paths clear, and please remember field edge footpaths need to be a minimum of 1.5 metres. This website gives a good overview of your responsibilities. www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities 29



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Spotlight

could," says Dan.

Dan Hyder: aiming high in memory of his father

Earlier this year Dan and Claudia, along with Claudia's 14-year old son Addison, moved to Benenden and as soon as they arrived "it immediately felt like home" they said. Ruth Clark met with the trio to hear about why Dan recently undertook the seriously daunting National Three Peaks Challenge to raise funds for the Kent Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre. Dan and his father Martin were particularly close, working together in the family welding and fabrication business for 25 years. Sadly, Martin was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) eight years ago and he died late last year. "Unfortunately he had the most aggressive form of MS but although he conducted a souldestroying battle with the illness he was determined to still try and work as much as he

"During his difficult illness the Kent MS
Therapy Centre in Canterbury provided superb
help and I wanted to do something that both
challenged me and helped them in Dad's
memory." The centre provides a wide range of
services and therapies to help people with MS
and other neurological conditions manage their
conditions and improve their quality of life. The
centre also supports their families, friends and
those who care for them which Dan and his
family found immensely helpful.

The National Three Peaks Challenge involves

climbing the highest peaks in Scotland (Ben Nevis 1,345m), England (Scafell Pike 978m) and Wales (Snowdon 1,085m) in under 24 hours - including travelling between each. Did Dan train before undertaking this formidable challenge - on his birthday no less? No! "I'd only climbed one hill in preparation for the challenge", he admits.

Dan set out from Glasgow with other intrepid fundraisers at 6am, reaching Ben Nevis at 9am. The trek up and down wasn't too bad and at 2.30pm he was on his way to Scafell Pike in the Lake District. "I hated this one as we climbed it in the dark, finishing at Iam! By then I was starting to hurt but the fact that it was nothing compared to what my father went through spurred me on." A three-hour drive and snatched sleep took them

to Snowdon. After 23 hours 32 minutes, Dan had done it! "I was physically and mentally shattered, barely able to walk downstairs."

Dan's initial aim was to raise £1,000 and so far he has raised £1,714, all of which benefits the Kent MS Therapy Centre. If you'd

like to donate to his fundraiser, you can do so here: www.gofundme.com/f/my-dad-martin-hyder

Has Dan hung up his hiking boots? Nope! Addison has been inspired by the adventure and they are planning to walk the Seven Sisters route from Lewes to Eastbourne soon!





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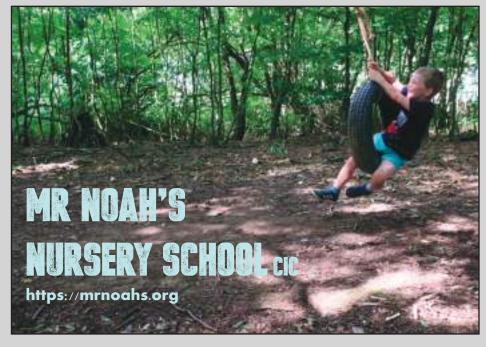




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Spotlight



Benenden message travels to South Africa

Three and a half years ago, I fulfilled a lifelong dream to live in South Africa - a country I knew would change me, though I hadn't anticipated just how deeply the people I'd meet would impact my life.

I now volunteer with Animal Relief for Rural Communities (ARRC), an organisation offering free veterinary care to working dogs and donkeys in Selwane, a rural community in Limpopo. ARRC also supports the wider community through a partnership with Mohlanatsi, a community centre in the heart of this under-resourced village.

Mohlanatsi is a lifeline for many. It provides a safe after-school space for children, many of whom are orphans, from broken homes, or living with HIV and other serious illnesses. Around 165 children aged four to 18 are registered for emotional support, social care, and academic help. The centre also supports the elderly generation of the village, respectfully known as 'gogos'.

ARRC visits at least once a week, bringing interactive games for the children, mobility

activities for the gogos, educational talks on animal welfare and conservation, and a hot, nourishing meal, often the only one some receive each day.

The gogos are remarkable a group of

people, most are in their 70s, with a deep hunger for knowledge. On a recent visit back to the UK, I stayed with my sister Victoria who lives in Benenden and attended St George's Church with her. It suddenly struck me how different UK church life is from that in South Africa and how fascinated the gogos would be to learn about it.

Inspired, I took photos of the church - its stained-glass windows, pews, altar - and even grabbed a quick picture with Revd Rosemary. When I returned to Mohlanatsi I shared these with the gogos during one of our sessions. Their reaction was pure joy. They were captivated by the beauty of the stone church, its ornate windows, and the

contrast to their own worship spaces.

Our conversation blossomed into a lively exchange about cultural and religious practices. The gogos described how their services often last over two hours, are filled with singing, dancing, and clapping, rejoicing in full voice. Baptisms differ too: while in the UK they often happen in infancy with a sprinkle of water, in Selwane, they take place in rivers when one chooses to be baptised, usually from age 16, with full-body immersion.

Despite the differences, one thing united us: our shared faith. We read the same Bible, believe in the same God and hold to the same messages of love, forgiveness, and caring for others. The heart of the church, no matter where it stands, beats with the same spirit.

You can follow the work that ARRC carries out on their website arrcanimalrelief.com/
Or make a donation using the following link

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Tracey Mobley



Benenden Nature



Hibernation salvation: time to help hedgehogs survive the winter

As days shorten and summer gives way to autumn, hedgehogs are busy preparing for hibernation. This time of year is crucial, they must build enough fat reserves to survive the colder months, but in modern gardens, they face challenges, from scarce natural food to hazards like strimmers, bonfires and fencing. With a few small changes, though, we can all help. Whether you have a large garden or a tiny patch, what you do this month can make a real difference to these much-loved but declining mammals.

Hedgehogs in decline

Hedgehog numbers in the UK have dropped dramatically. Once common in our gardens and hedgerows, rural populations have fallen by up to 75% since 2000. In the autumn, hedgehogs, especially those born late in the season, need to fatten up before hibernation in October or November. Juveniles (hoglets) must weigh at least 450-500g to survive winter.

Feeding for survival

You can help by leaving out food in the evening: cat or kitten biscuits, tinned meat-based cat or dog food (meat or poultry varieties), or specialist hedgehog food such as Brambles. Always check

ingredients - these foods are not regulated - and always provide a shallow dish of fresh water.

Avoid bread or milk. Despite the myth, both can make hogs unwell. Sunflower hearts and peanuts are poor nutritional choices and mealworms can cause metabolic bone disease. A feeding station, like Wildlife Watch's guide, with a plastic box and a 13cm square entrance, helps deter cats from stealing food.

Keep an eye out for hedgehogs out in daylight; this can be a sign they are unwell. Thin, wobbly or underweight hogs should be weighed (wear gloves or use a towel). If under 450g in autumn, contact a local wildlife rescue such as Folly Wildlife Rescue in Tunbridge Wells, 01892 543213.

Safe shelter

Hedgehogs need quiet, sheltered nesting sites.
Log piles, compost heaps and dense undergrowth (especially brambles) are ideal. If building a hedgehog house, follow a trusted design such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust's guide. Oak, beech, hornbeam, apple, pear or cherry leaves are the perfect size for hogs to form the laminated structure of a hibernaculum. Place the house in a quiet, shady, sheltered spot, such as against a wall, fence, hedge, or shed, with the entrance facing away from cold north and north-east winds.

Many invertebrates also use seedheads and dead plant stems to hibernate, so avoid tidying your garden too much in autumn. Waiting until spring to cut back borders helps, as the creatures in them form part of a hedgehog's diet.

Common garden hazards

Bonfires Build on the day you light it or move the pile before lighting. Use poles (not forks) to check for wildlife and light from one side to allow creatures to escape. Spread the word to neighbours and event organisers.

Strimmers and mowers Always check long grass and wild corners before cutting. Never run robotic mowers at night. Every year thousands of hedgehogs are injured or killed by these types of machinery.

Garden and sports netting Raise nets at least 30cm (12in) or store them away after use. If a



hedgehog becomes entangled, take it to a rescue centre immediately. Injuries may not be immediately apparent.

Fencing Repair damaged fences promptly to stop hedgehogs nesting underneath. Create 13x13cm (5x5in) holes at the base for access; use wildlife-safe wood preservatives and cover drains to prevent falls.

Pesticides and slug pellets These kill beneficial species such as earthworms, beetles, and caterpillars, which are important in the food chain. They can also poison hedgehogs.

Metaldehyde slug pellets are now banned in the UK and must be disposed of safely at a recycling centre. For slug control, use wildlife-friendly methods such as beer traps, grapefruit skins, sharp sand, coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, copper bands, wool pellets or nematodes.

Garden ponds Provide a slope or ramp as an escape route. Although hogs are great swimmers they cannot climb steep banks.

Hedgehog highways Hedgehogs can roam up to three miles a night searching for food, mates, and shelter. Create a 13x13cm hole at the base of your fence or gate, and encourage neighbours to do the same, linking gardens together.

Becoming a hedgehog champion

If you'd like to do more, join the free Hedgehog

Street campaign, run by the British Hedgehog

Preservation Society and People's Trust for Endangered Species. Hedgehog champions raise awareness, create hedgehog highways and encourage communities to make gardens safer. No experience is needed - just a love for hedgehogs.

A community effort

Hedgehogs were once a common sight in our villages. With a little help from all of us, they can be again. This autumn, leave out food, build a hedgehog house, check your bonfire before lighting and spread the word. Together, we can give hedgehogs a fighting chance this winter - and look forward to their return in spring. Cheryl Mason, Hedgehog Champion, Wild About Goudhurst

Photographs: Chapter Thirty Six Photography

TOP TIPS TO HELP HEDGEHOGS

- Leave out meat-based cat/dog food and fresh water
- Avoid bread, milk, fish-based foods, mealworms, peanuts, and sunflower hearts
- Check bonfires before lighting and long grass before strimming
- Create a hedgehog highway with a 13×13cm hole in your fence
- Build or site a hedgehog house in a quiet corner
- Avoid pesticides and slug pellets
- Become a Hedgehog Champion at hedgehogstreet.org

USEFUL INFORMATION

- RHS Plants for Pollinators' guide: www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators
- Wild About Gardens get creative for hedgehogs (free hedgehog booklet): https://bit.ly/4llOLhX
- Build a Hedgehog House This Autumn using Sussex Wildlife Trust's step-by-step instructions: https://bit.ly/47pWUPh
- Wildlife Watch make a hedgehog feeding station: https://bit.ly/4mMxGPC

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Food and Drink

Birchwood's back and even better than ever

The bad news, as you know, is that Birchwood in Flimwell recently closed down. The good news is that it has, as reported on these pages, reopened at Taywell, on the road to Goudhurst, and after my co-editor Ruth popped in twice and loved it, I knew it was safe to make my debut on the new site.

I went with family, six of us, outside on a summery afternoon, and we picked a bunch of dishes from the 'small plates' menu, then waited with curiosity and expectation, the latter from those of us who had experienced co-owner Will Devlin's cooking before, at his other Acre group venues, the Small Holding and the Curlew (now sadly extinct).

Well, I wasn't anticipating anything other than top notch, but my hopes were raised even higher when I saw a man in an apron rooting around in the flower bed/veg patch and heading back inside with a handful of leaves and petals. It was head chef Devlin himself, in the kitchen for the day.

Five minutes later, the plates began to arrive, complete with the flavours of the garden - about as local and sustainable as you can get, and also delicious. Steak tartare (from field to fork in about a mile) and a wonderful concoction of courgette and pearl barley were my highlights - a step up even from Flimwell - all chased down with an excellent Full Loop pale ale from Lakedown brewery (Burwash) and a crisp, dry white from Davenport winery (Horsmonden).

Birchwood is reassuringly back and still brilliant.



Good taste in Tenterden

Unless you happen to be a regular in the back room at Benenden's, a decent independent wine retailer can be hard to find in this neck of the woods. Imagine my surprise, then, when I strolled into Tenterden past a very smart frontage, at 90 High Street, announcing Cornucopia Bottle Shop and Tasting Room.

The main surprise was that the place was open. I'd strolled past many times before without joy, but it turns out that if you time it right - 12.30pm to 9.30pm on Thursday-Saturday and 12.30pm to 4.30pm on Sundays - you're in for a treat.

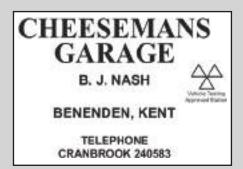


Gea Pereira, a charmingly knowledgeable and enthusiastic South African, concentrates on British wines, spirits, beers, ciders and foodie treats, much of it very local, some of it from further afield but with the same independent and individual outlook on life.

It being a tasting room, I tasted a wine called Oasthouse, from Warehorne Vineyards, made from the rather obscure (meaning I'd never heard of it before) Swiss grape Divico - bright purple, medium-bodied and bursting with dark fruits. It being a bottle shop, I bought a bottle of Pilgrim's Way pinot gris from Wayfarer Wines near Woodchurch, a very good version of a shamefully unsung grape, all ripe pears and gentle acidity. It being a very hot afternoon, I also took home a few bottles of Helles lager from the Three Legs brewery in Bexhill, and my remaining summer weekends were set.

It being English wines almost all the way, the prices aren't gentle, but the quality and the welcome are unquestionable.

Peter Thomas 37





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Last Word



Rohan Aveline Maitland Barnett

10 October 1947 - 7 June 2025

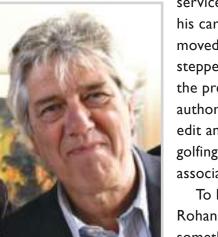
A memorial service followed by a celebration in the Bull for the life of Rohan Barnett was held this autumn, following his death in June. It was organised by his sons Sam and Matt and his daughter Lara. Rohan had been an integral part of Benenden life for some two decades after moving here from Suffolk. Curiously, no one seems able to quite remember when he did first appear in the village, but best guesses put it at around 2005. To his many friends and acquaintances, it seemed he had always been a part of local life.

He threw himself into village activities, immediately joining the Iden Green Tennis Club and becoming a regular of the Friday evening men's doubles - and the post-match sessions in the Woodcock or the Bull. He was an early - or even founder - member of the Benenden and Iden Green (BIG) Ukulele Group, and his expertise with website management ensured

he was always in demand to assist with the parish council, tennis club and Standen Community Orchard sites.

Rohan was a talented musician and guitarist, albeit one who was reluctant to perform in public -although he was persuaded to do a couple of sets at the SOL party music and beer festival in Iden Green, and he co-managed the bar there over a number of years.

His other passion was golf, often playing with other Benenden players at Littlestone or Rye. Although he had been a senior social worker and head of children's



services earlier in his career, after he moved to Kent he stepped back from the pressure of local authority work to edit and design a golfing magazine and associated websites.

To his friends Rohan was something of an enigma. He'd been

to a private school and often referred to people by their surname alone. He drove a top-of-the-range BMW and proudly displayed a sign in his kitchen saying life was too short to drink cheap wine. These attributes, alongside his passion for golf and tennis, might have singled him out as politically conservative. In fact he was extremely radical, even pronouncing that Jeremy Corbyn was too much of a centrist for his liking.

He was also a kind and generous friend, but he could occasionally display a waspish side to his nature. After ill-health forced him to retire from the tennis court, he still attended the after-game sessions at the Bull, where a table was habitually reserved for players on a Friday evening. But woe betide any 'outsiders' who tried to muscle in on the tennis table when Rohan was there holding court!

Kent Barker

In Your Garden



Inspired by paradise in Britain's tropical idyll

I recently returned from a trip to Cornwall, the Lizard Peninsula to be precise, where in between the heavy downpours we were rewarded with long periods of sunshine - and it was then that we ventured out to explore. A recommendation to visit Trebah Gardens was high on my list, as were the narrow streets of St Ives, neither of which disappointed.

Trebah is set in a 26-acre valley just north of the Helford river and is crammed full of tree ferns, bamboos, hydrangeas and gunnera, as well as having its own private beach directly on the river bank. It has a definite sub-tropical feel as most of the bamboos are well over 10m tall, we could walk underneath the gunnera leaves and the tree ferns were, well, tree-sized! Ginger lilies, aloes, kniphofia, agapanthus and day lilies were all in good health, and flowering beautifully were persicaria, schizostylis and tender salvias. A stream cascades down through the valley giving it a slightly prehistoric feel before it reaches the small beach, set on an idyllic stretch of the Helford estuary.

The gardens have been owned by 12 families over its 700-year history but are now owned by a trust to ensure it remains open to the public for years to come. It is possible to grow any of these plants in cooler parts of the UK where some of the plants would require winter protection, but they do require vast amounts of rainfall. Sadly, in this part of the country we cannot rely on such quantities to enable these

plants to reach their ultimate sizes but we can still grow them. I have planted most of these in various gardens throughout Kent and as with all good plant establishment they require good watering-in at planting and throughout their first year. Once roots have been put down then most plants will survive as long as they have been planted in the right soil and aspect.

A trip to St Ives threw up more inspiration as we navigated the maze of narrow streets. I noticed how many of the houses, looking like holiday lets, grew so many interesting plants in containers, either on windowsills or balconies or in large troughs outside the doors. All sorts of tender perennials grew here, a myriad of salvias, cosmos, cannas and begonias as well as slightly hardier plants such as penstemons, bidens and verbenas. All were growing away in such abundance I can only imagine they are left in situ over winter and survive, only to come back stronger the following year.

I also spotted a vast collection of herbs: basil, lemon verbena, rosemary and French lavender. It reminded me of trips to France in the summer, particularly touring the cities and seeing how creative they get with their pot

displays. The French are particularly fond of gaura and erigeron, both of which thrive on neglect in a container, and they are also very good at combining colours.

Back in the UK I am busy gathering plants for my clients' autumn pot displays, inspired by my trip to the south west, with its idyllic climate for growing. In no time at all we will be potting up tulips and other bulbs

for spring, followed by all the festive foliage and sprays we endure for the Christmas period.

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Above: Late summer highlights: Jazz & Blues at the Pavilion in Iden Green; the Cricket Club in full swing and the family double wicket game open afternoon on The Green; Sissinghurst Scout group embracing outdoor activities

Front cover: Visual delight: Autumn pickings. Photograph: Katie Scott