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Magazine
June 2023





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Editorial



I turned up late to the Coronation picnic, due to grandchild-related chaos, and I confess I wasn't sure what to expect. This wasn't an 'official' event, after all, and it had an element of 'on the hoof' about it, so would the village turn out en masse, or would most of them sit in their gardens and leave the communal stuff to others?

As ever in Benenden, I needn't have worried. The Green was heaving with Sunday afternoon revellers; barely a blade of grass was left uncovered by tartan rugs and those funny picnic chairs with the pockets in the arms for your drink. I unerringly hunted down the group with the best and most copious selection of booze, sat down and dispatched minions to fetch me cake. When the minions told me where to get off, I went and got cake myself.

It was a cracking do. The fact that it had all been arranged in haste by enthusiastic denizens, keen not to let the occasion go unmarked, made it an even better event. This was the community in action, robust and wholehearted, with not a dissenting republican in sight. I fear that if somebody in a yellow t-shirt had stood up and shouted "Not my King", they'd have been pelted with rock cakes and strung up from the church steeple. We're mostly a friendly bunch, but it didn't seem the time or place to plot the downfall of the monarchy.

This month, we'll be back again, for the village fete, a far simpler cause, with no political implications, just a bit of local fund raising, a beer tent and, quite probably, a cow leaving its pat on the grass for bingo purposes. It's what we do best. We embrace communal events like long-lost friends; non-residents travel from the ends of the earth (or Rolvenden) to join in; people envy us our sense of community and our unceasing enthusiasm. A lot of people would like to live in Benenden, but we actually do, for which I, for one, am regally grateful.

Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

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

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com (day off: Thursday)
Curate: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 rev.ylva@gmail.com (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday)
Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 julia.collard@btinternet.com
Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 sue@undaunted.co.uk
www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com
Please inform the Rector, Curate or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Sunday 4 June	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 11 June	8am BCP Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Sunday 18 June	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	
Thursday 22 June			7.30pm Archdeacons' Visitation Service at St Nicholas, Sandhurst
Saturday 24 June			4pm Connect Four at Mission Church, Sandhurst
Sunday 25 June	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 10am Morning Worship is broadcast on our YouTube channel: search 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

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

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org
Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Baptism	20 May	Kirah-Jane Rance
Weddings	20 May	Amy Smith and Matthew Edwards
	27 May	Lucy Newman and Micahel Barfoot
2	28 May	Anna Munro-Faure and Liam Shepherd

Church Letter



Look out for and take care of one another

What a wonderful event the Coronation was last month. We heard a lot in the Coronation service, about 'service'; service to others by our monarch. The very first words that King Charles III said, in response to the boy who welcomed him to the abbey, were, "In his name, and after his example, I come not to be served, but to serve." The words of the Collect - the special prayer for the Coronation - said "...that we and all people may live in peace and prosperity and in loving service to one another." These words are a timely reminder that we are all - whatever our station, whatever our role, whatever our job, whatever our vocation - called to serve our fellow people.

Think back to the life of King Charles' mother, Queen Elizabeth II. Remember the dedication that the then Princess Elizabeth made on her 21st birthday: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." No one can deny that she fulfilled that promise. What a hard act for King Charles to follow.

Then, we too have a hard act to follow. That is because it was Jesus who said: "I came not to be served, but to serve." He then simplified all the rules that were in existence at the time to this: "Love God; and love our neighbour as yourself." It was Jesus who knelt and washed his disciples' feet, and then said, "Do you know what I have done to you? I have set you an example." In one way, so very simple and obvious: look out for one another, and take care of one another. However, it is at the same time, such a hard thing to do; that is because there are no conditions or restrictions imposed by Jesus; 'neighbour' is anybody. It is not just those people who happen to be like us; it is not just those people that we like. We are simply called to love, to serve, one another.

Take a moment out of your busy day to think about the community that we live in and all the things that happen. Take a moment to give thanks for the people that make all those things happen. Each and every one of us have gifts that we can use to help others. Each and every one of us can get involved in our community - for the good of everyone in the community. Get involved, as 'one who serves'.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Coronation service, prayed: "Let each of us dedicate ourselves, in body, mind and spirit, to a renewal of faith, a joyful hope, and a commitment to serve one another in love." May we each serve one another, in our community, in love.

Revd David Commander, Rector and Area Dean

Village Calendar

June

Friday 2	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Afternoon, Fraud and Scams, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.19
Saturday 3	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 3	Stringfever, Benenden School Centenary Hall, 7.30pm	p.15
Saturday 3	Skittles, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 5	Churches Count on Nature, St George's Church, 2pm	p.13
Tuesday 6	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 6	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Wednesday 7	Local Pilgrimage, Mission Church, Sandhurst, 10.15am	p.13
Saturday 10	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 17	Benenden Fete, in aid of St George's Church, The Green, 12noon-4pm	pull-out
Saturday 17	Darts, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 19	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Tuesday 20	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 20	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 20	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.19
Tuesday 20	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Garden Party at a Member's home, 5pm	p.19
Saturday 24	Fish and Chip Supper, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 25	BBC Big Band, Benenden School Centenary Hall, 7pm	p.15
Tuesday 27	Merry and Bright, Garden Party, Balmoral Cottage, Benenden, 2pm	p.19
Friday 30	Benenden's Community Shop, AGM and Volunteers' Social Evening, Benenden Village Hall, 7pm	p.20

Iden Green Toddler Group

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

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

Benenden Bowls Club

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

Cakes & Chaos: Café and Toddler Group

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

Warm Welcome Space

Fridays and Sundays in the Memorial Hall, 1-3pm

Parish Council



In the summer of 2022, I had the privilege of being co-opted as a member of the Benenden Parish Council. Councillor Presgrave was born!

Although I have been a frequent visitor to Benenden over the last three decades, it was as a daughter rather than an active member of the community. Having moved permanently to the village in 2020 from south London, I set about the exciting task of finding out what village life was all about, and what a delight it has been. I started volunteering at our beautiful community shop, Benenden's, in August 2020, and discovering what an incredible place Benenden is.

As the summer and autumn progressed, it never ceased to amaze me what a caring community we have the privilege to be part of. There are so many initiatives to help and support local people. I attended my first crib service at St George's on Christmas Eve and it was a delight to hear such a familiar story refreshed as seen through the eyes of the children and families who actively participated in the service. Who knew there was an octopus and a spaceman in the Christmas story!

I also attended my first midnight mass on Christmas Eve, which was as beautiful as it was uplifting. On Christmas Day, I volunteered at the village Christmas lunch. Again, the huge effort and contributions made by villagers to ensure the lunch was a success was humbling. There were beautiful decorations, excellent food and an abundance of laughter, brought to a close with everyone watching King Charles III make his first Christmas day speech as our new monarch.

To supplement my new incarnation as Councillor Presgrave, I participated in two very interesting and informative online training courses: 'Becoming A Local Councillor' in January 2023 and 'The Dynamic Councillor' in March 2023, run by the Kent Association of Local Councils. It was a pleasure to meet other councillors via Zoom, some very long-standing and others who are as new to the role as me.

My first year as a councillor has proved to be challenging but, more importantly, very interesting and fulfilling. It has been a fantastic way to participate in our local community and it has certainly helped me grow as a person. Here's to the next year.

Cathy Presgrave, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk

07593 226462 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org

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

Parish Council Meeting

Monday 19 June 2023,

Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

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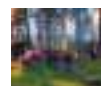
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Talking Point



Reflections on a flag

Hanging out our ancient and somewhat threadbare Union Jack to celebrate the King's Coronation stirred up all sorts of memories and associations in my mind.

In The Netherlands, where I lived for well over 30 years, the national flag has an enormous significance. Almost every house owns one, and it is brought out to celebrate both national and personal events. On the day of Winston Churchill's funeral, all the flags were at half mast, as they are every year on 4 May to commemorate all who died in the cause of freedom. The following day it is hoisted to the top to celebrate the 'Bevrijding', the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazi occupation. When a child is born, the flag is accompanied by blue or pink ribbons as appropriate. When students pass their final school exams, the flag, together with their school bag, is raised to celebrate their success for all to see.

Our Union Jack was given to me by an elderly friend, Joy, when we moved to the UK. Although Joy had lived all her life in Holland, her father was British, so she had British nationality. When Holland was occupied, all British men were taken away to Germany and the women and children interned just across the German border. Joy was very concerned that the children were receiving no education. She somehow persuaded the kommandant to supply her with writing materials and set about teaching them, and as well as the basic school subjects, she also taught them the value of prayer.

After the war, this amazing lady was tasked with restarting the British primary school in the The Hague and becoming its headteacher. Years later, many of her former pupils, now adults, still spoke with love and admiration of her lasting influence on their lives. In her later years, which is when I knew her, she was still an inspiration and a quiet example of Christian living to many, including myself.

During the war years, it was forbidden to display or even to possess a Dutch or British flag. At the Bevrijding, all the flags, including Joy's Union Jack, were taken from their hiding places and hung out in triumphant celebration. And so it is that our flag, steeped in history, has come to symbolise for me dedication, service, faith and love, and precious memories of a gentle, modest woman who embodied them all.

Revd Dr Rosemary Kobus van Wengen, Assistant Priest

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Classic car show

Come along to the fete on Saturday 17 June to show off your car and have a great time. Parking will be at the top of The Green in front of the church on a first come, first served basis and cars will be patrolled throughout the afternoon.

The fete opens at midday, but I urge classic car owners to arrive earlier to get parked up before the crowds arrive. A small prize will be presented to the car judged 'best presented car of the fete' later in the afternoon. If you would like to enter this competition then please email me your name and registration number.

However, you can also enter on the day.

Richard Stubbings ricval@tiscali.co.uk

Benenden wine tasting

Our recent Burgundy evening will be a hard act to follow, but we've come up with a cracker for our next gathering on Friday 7 July.

We're drafting in an aspiring French sommelier, Antoine Costello, to present us with 'Wine in Pairs', a liquid demonstration of how the same grape, grown, handled and vinified in different ways, can produce wildly varying wines, all of them top class.

If that sounds a bit 'academic', let's just say it's another excuse to enjoy some very nice glasses in agreeable company, with a drink on arrival and the usual excellent food, all for the bargain price of £25. Venue will be the café at Benenden School, please arrive at 7pm for 7.30pm. Booking is via pmartinthomas@hotmail.com.

Peter Thomas

School governor vacancies

The 1010 Federation, which currently comprises Goudhurst and Benenden primary schools, is looking for new governors to join our governing board. We are an ambitious team committed to achieving outstanding standards for the local children we serve and to

BENENDEN FETE 2023

FETE DONATION DEADLINE

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NO more children's items now.

LAST DATE for other items is **Sunday 11 June**.

We can't accept anything more after that date.

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For information about school governance, go to www.nga.org.uk/Governance-Recruitment/Be-a-school-governor-or-trustee.aspx.

If you are interested in applying, we'd love to hear from you.

Caroline Stern

caroline.stern@1010federation.org

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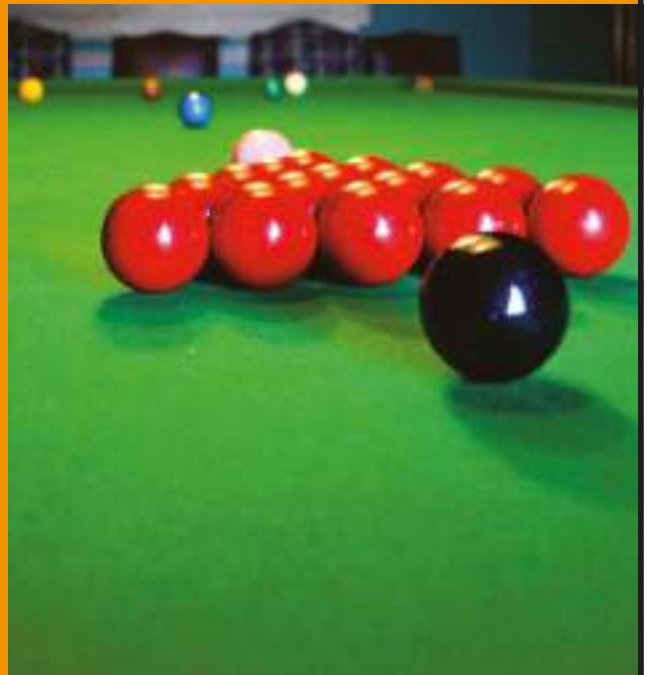
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Annual subscriptions (January - December) will be £10 and application forms are behind the bar.

Look out for dates of events and an open afternoon in the parish magazine.



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Save our historic wells

Benenden Parish Council is fundraising to assist with the cost of refurbishment of the structure around the Iden Green well. Both the Benenden well and the Iden Green well structures have deteriorated to such an extent that the cost of repair is huge. We will be holding various events for this over the next few months. One of these is a race night at The Bull at 7pm on 18 July. Please save the date in your diary and look out for more information in the July issue. Any donations would be gratefully received. More information:

www.benendenparishcouncil.org/content/benenden-and-iden-green-wells-refurbishment-appeal
Graham Beveridge 240730

Church nature count

As part of our benefice's commitment to biodiversity and good stewardship of our natural and cultural resources, we have decided to take part in an initiative called 'Churches Count on Nature', which runs every year in June. This is a joint initiative by environmental charities and churches, a week-long opportunity to record and log our churchyards' plants, insects, birds and other wildlife, to create an inventory of all the different forms of natural life that are flourishing within their boundaries. This year the counting takes place from Saturday 3 June to Sunday 11 June.

We're running a session of plant and insect identification in each churchyard, and would love for anyone who is interested to come and help. We will meet on Monday 5 June in Benenden and Tuesday 6 June in Sandhurst, both sessions will run 2-4pm, but you are welcome to come and take part for as long or as little as you wish. Light refreshments will be provided.

At St Nicholas, Sandhurst there will be an opportunity to try your hand at identification and recording on Saturday 3 June, 2.30-5pm, during our Teas in the Churchyard event.

Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie, Curate

Pilgrimage walk

Our first local pilgrimage at the end of April this year was wonderful, I think everyone who took part would agree. We wandered through the orchards of Iden Green and through Strawberry Wood, taking in the blossom and unfurling spring greens. The afternoon was perfect; the sun was out, the bluebells were at their very best and the birds sang. We had a very good turnout, with over 20 people coming to walk, chat, reflect and enjoy God's nature together.

Our next walk will be on Wednesday 7 June, when we will start at 10.15am for 10.30am, meeting outside the Mission Church in Sandhurst. We will walk two and a half miles to The Woodcock in Standen Street, where we will have lunch, then walk back in the afternoon, a different route but similar length. It's possible to join for just the morning or afternoon, we are organising transport, and if you would like to bring your own lunch instead, this is also fine. We hope you can join us, Revd Ylva and Lyn Hayes. For more information, please contact: Revd Ylva 07766 711957 rev.ylva@gmail.com

Benenden Village Trust

The Benenden Village Trust annual general meeting will take place this year on Monday 31 July at Memorial Hall, starting at 6pm. The trust would be delighted to see as many members as possible to hear about developments over the last 12 months, ideas for the future, and to ask questions of trustees.

The trust, established to promote recreation in the parish of Benenden, owns and runs not only the village hall but also St George's Hall, and the playgrounds and recreation fields in both Benenden and Iden Green. Membership is open to all residents of the parish and is free. Details of becoming a member can be found on the trust website: benendenvillagetrust.org.
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Benenden School

I always know the summer term is here when in the evenings the girls are outside playing tennis, listening to music or milling around on the terrace lawn chatting. It is simply the best time of the year when Benenden quite literally blossoms.

During Easter I had the pleasure of visiting our first overseas school in south China. Benenden Bilingual School Guangzhou, as it will formally be called, will begin its phased opening in September. We have partnered with respected Hong Kong-based education company CTFEG to deliver this brand-new school, which is a stunning development that lives up to our aspirations.

Meanwhile, it was an equally busy Easter for dozens of our students who were exploring various parts of Europe on a variety of trips. These included two trips to Spain - the Chapel Choir tour and the Spanish language trip - in addition to two CCF events, our showjumpers competing in Felbridge and our debaters travelling to Durham.

It has been lovely to welcome members of the village community to school recently to enjoy performances, both by our own musicians and professionals appearing under our Hemsted Park brand. These have included the London Film Music Orchestra, Ronnie Scott's All Stars and comedy from The Chase's Paul Sinha.

Although the school took a weekend leave over the Coronation weekend, we gathered as a community on Friday 5 May for our own Coronation service which, with very splendid music, was fit for the King and Queen. I felt proud on the day to see Benenden alumna, HRH The Princess Royal, on horseback behind the royal carriage - no car or carriage for her as she confidently joined the cavalry. As a family we enjoyed joining the Benenden picnic on The Green on the Sunday, and thanks to all involved with that memorable occasion.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

Music at Hemsted Park

There are two Hemsted Park events in the Centenary Hall at Benenden School this month: Stringfever at 7.30pm on 3 June and the BBC Big Band at 7pm on 25 June. Stringfever are a quartet of three brothers and a cousin who have toured internationally playing a variety of music from classics to popular hits. The internationally acclaimed BBC Big Band are joined by multi award-winning vocalist Claire Martin for an evening of world-class music, inspired by the great swing bands and legendary jazz vocalists of the 20th century.

Tickets: www.hemstedpark.com/events

Primary School

Forest school has resumed in our summer site much to the excitement of all the children. Year 3 had the fantastic opportunity to take part in a session of bubble football, where they worked in teams to play football while being inside a giant inflatable bubble. If it was as much fun to take part in as it was to watch them, the children had an amazing time. There were lots of head over heels, muddy bottoms and laughter. If you ever get the chance to have a go then I highly recommend it.

Huge congratulations to Alfie Hicks, Blake Day and Harris McClintock for their recent West Kent Football trials. They have all made it through to the second round, where they will now train for several weeks with Kent coaches until the final selection is announced. This is a great achievement as I know that hundreds of boys and girls trial every year.

We marked the Coronation with a theme day and it was a joy to see everyone dressed in red, white and blue or as royalty. The day concluded with an amazing street party. Events such as these are very special and I know the children will treasure them forever. Well done and thank you to everyone who was involved.

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



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BENENDEN FETE

2023 PULL-OUT GUIDE



**Cakes | Fun Dog Show | Bric-a-Brac | Tools-R-Us | BBQ | Hop Inn | Cream Teas | Coffee
Milkshakes & Ice Cream | Children's Zone | Face Painting | Raffle | Books | Plants
Classic Cars | Pony Rides | Chic Boutique | Bouncy Castles | Tombola
Coconut Shy | Cow Pat Bingo | Live Music | Dancing
Strawberries & Cream | Jewellery
Church Tower Visits**

BENENDEN FETE 2023

Bells ring out

12.00	Fete opens with children's Royal Crown competition followed by Bridgepoint String Orchestra	2.15 - 2.30	Weald of Kent Morris (Arena)
		2.30 - 4.00	Jane Whiteley plays the organ (Church)
12.30 - 1.30	The Bull Open Mic musicians (stage)	2.30 - 3.00	Ami Piper Dance School Show (Arena)
	Reg E. Mental magician (Arena)	3.15 - 4.00	Children's Royal Races (Arena)
1.30	Fun Dog Show: Waggy Tail, Sits & Fun Agility (Arena)	3.15 - 3.30	Rhythm of Life Choir (Stage)
		3.35	Cow Pat Bingo
2.00 - 2.30	Rhythm of Life Choir (Church)	3.45	Regal Dog winner announced
		3.50	Raffle winners announced
		4.00	Close



BENENDEN VILLAGE FETE



Wonderful Stalls

Discover fabulous finds and bargains on our stalls including books in the Memorial Hall; pre-loved clothes and jewellery in Chic Boutique; children's toys, games, books & clothes; tools and machinery at Tools-R-Us; plants galore; a treasure trove of Bric-a-Brac items and vintage textiles.

Scrumptious Food & Drink

Buy scrumptious cakes and jams; sit down to cream tea in the Church; savour Flying Fox fresh coffee; treat yourself to strawberries and cream and Northiam Dairy Moovers & Shakers milkshakes and ice cream; pick up popcorn; snap up burgers and sausages from the BBQ and wash them all down with real ale, cider, wine and fizz from the Hop Inn.

Recyclable cups

Pay £1 deposit for the cup when you buy your Hop Inn drink. Return your cup to get your £1 back. It's that simple. Enjoy – Return – Reuse.

Children's Zone

Head for the children's area for lots of fun and games organised by the PTFA with a huge selection of toys, costumes, clothes, books and games to tempt all ages and get your face painted by the creative Pre-School mums. Plus, who can resist a bouncy castle/assault course, Tombola, Soggy Sponges, showing off your skills at the Coconut Shy, Limbo and Splat the Rat. Then head to the top of The Green to enjoy a pony ride run by Hemsted Forest Equestrian Centre.

Classic Cars

At the top of The Green take a walk around a display of classic cars lovingly cared for by local owners.

In aid of St George's Church

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ARENA FUN & GAMES

12.00

ROYAL CROWN PROCESSION:

Calling children under 12 to make, decorate and bring a fabulous crown to wear in our opening procession. Prizes awarded for the three best crowns. Get creating and gather at the church entrance promptly just before midday.

12.15

Bridgepoint String Orchestra:

Led by Tom Elliott.

12.30

REG.E.MENTAL MAGICIAN:

Hilarious magic and comedy for children.

1.30

FUN DOG SHOW:

Bring along your talented pooch to take part in Waggiest Tail, Most Doggie Sits & Fun Agility.

2.15

WEALD OF KENT MORRIS:

Make sure to have your Hop Inn drink in hand while you enjoy this truly English dance performance.

2.30

AMI PIPER DANCERS:

Enjoy a lovely display by Ami's talented students.

3.15

ROYAL RACES:

Calling all children (aged 5-12) who fancy their chances in the Spud & Spoon Race, Sack Race and Three-legged Race. Turn up to enter. Medals are up for grabs.

Cow Pat Bingo & Morris Minor Balloons

A star attraction and nail biting! Buy a grid square and hope our very special Northiam Dairy cow chooses it to deliver a cow pat to win you a night for two at The George in Rye. Then try and guess how many balloons have been packed into the Morris Minor – not as easy as you think.



In the Church

Climb up the St George's Church tower to appreciate the stunning views over the village and surrounding countryside. This is a not-to-be-missed experience. Afterwards relax with a delicious cream tea and take a moment to speak with Hemsted Park about all the fantastic events taking place at Benenden School.

Music, Music, Music

Our bells will ring out to start the fete followed by the children's crown procession led by Andrew Graham playing the bagpipes - a royal favourite! The music stage welcomes the talented musicians from The Bull's Open Mic Club and the joyful Rhythm of Life Choir. The choir will also sing in the Church after which Jane Whiteley will play the beautiful organ. The perfect background while enjoying cream teas in our wonderful Church.

Fabulous Raffle Prizes


Don't forget to snap up a raffle ticket with a chance to win great prizes, including an amazing flight from Headcorn donated by Paul Tolhurst. Buy them in advance at the village shop Benenden's and The Bull or on the day at the Raffle stall. Other prizes donated by: Tesco, Pashley Manor Gardens, Chimera Climbing, P.Ward & Sons, The Bull, Helen Jewsbury, Hannah's Garden, Kino, Benenden Players, Carriage Hair Studio, Benenden Bonfire, Biddenden Cider, Anna Caddick, Ami Piper School of Dance, Banjara, Candlewise, Palmstead Nurseries, Hemsted Park, The Vine Inn Tenterden & Weald Smokery.


Parking & Toilets

Please don't park on the road. Lots of parking and portaloos are available on the field by the village hall and disabled parking is at the bottom of The Green.

A HUGE THANKYOU TO: Our sponsors and all those who have donated items, prizes and their time to make our fete such a wonderful event.

Plus special thanks to: Seán Holden, Kent County Councillor for Benenden, for his support of the fete. Benenden Hospital for making our fete logistics a lot easier. Kent County Council and Andrew White. Thankyou to Louise, Jane & Peter for First Aid support. **We just couldn't do it without you all!**

 Benenden Village Fete

 @benenden_fete_2023

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Benenden Pre-School

Our Coronation activities at pre-school of course had to include making crowns, the central feature of the ceremony itself. The children cut out their crowns carefully with great concentration, practising superb scissor control. They enjoyed choosing from a range of materials, including fluffy feathers, colourful matchsticks and shiny sweet wrappers, with which to decorate their crowns. Maths skills came into the equation, too, as they helped work out where to staple the crown to ensure it sat snugly on their heads.

The children also made Coronation cupcakes and, in the spirit of the weekend, parents kindly continue to help out at pre-school. A mum who is a vet brought in special bandages, showing the children how to attend to their poorly toy animals and helping them practise using syringes to administer food colouring injections. Two other mums are helping us plant flowers and vegetables for the summer as well as giving the garden a tidy. We look forward to the return visit of a musical grandmother with her guitar and her story books. We are blessed.

We are looking for face painting volunteers for our stall at the village fete on 17 June. If any arty people have an hour to spare please let us know on 241137.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor
supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

Benenden Cricket Club

Our home fixtures for June on The Green are:

Saturday 3 June v Richard Gairdner's XI
at 1.30pm

Saturday 10 June v Hastings and Bexhill
Barbarians at 1.30pm



Benenden Cricket Club
Invite New Members

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07810 658981

Benenden Cricket Club

April usually brings the welcome sounds of leather on willow drifting from The Green, with 22 guys ambling round the Benenden cricket pitch dressed in whites, seemingly standing still until intermittently bursting into frenzied action, followed by gentle applause from the audience, seated on benches around The Green with a beer in hand.

The 2023 season, though, has begun with a torrent of rain, which caused our pitch to be so sodden with water that it was soft to the point of not being able to play on it without causing damage. So instead of games commencing in earnest in late April, our first official home game was on Saturday 20 May, for which we were victorious, so we are so far unbeaten this season!

Some of our regular players (including your correspondent) are injured for much of this season, so we are looking to attract new players. Don't worry if you haven't played much recently, as we never forget that everyone came to where they are today, from where they were yesterday! I myself started playing aged 40 after a gap of 29 years and still enjoy playing.

If you are interested in learning more, then contact Peter on pcslnewman@yahoo.co.uk, or else we'll see you at The Green with a beer in hand.

Barry Bassett

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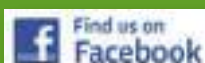


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Merry and Bright

We would like to start by giving Lesley Higham and Peter Ellis a big thank you for giving us a very interesting demonstration of a defibrillator and basic resuscitation first aid. Our numbers are slowly growing and we were pleased to welcome a couple more members last month. We will be visiting Charlotte Molesworth's beautiful garden for our cream tea garden party on 27 June. We hope the weather is kind to us. Everyone is welcome.

Laraine Penny 241763

Julia Collard julia.collard@btinternet.com

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

With thanks to the parents who have supported our recent events, the PTFA used some of its funds to put on a fabulous royal street party to celebrate the King's Coronation. It was a magical affair, with entertainment from Ben's Magic Emporium, a delicious royal cupcake handmade for each child by our amazing parent Helen, and a commemorative bookmark that each child got to take home. It will be a school day the children will remember.

The PTFA are now in full swing preparing for the upcoming village fete and will be on The Green with children's stalls, toys, games, tombola, popcorn and more. Please stop by and visit us.

We are also seeking volunteers to help run our stalls, so all parents, family members and friends of the school please help out if you can. The profits from the fete will ensure the first phase of the wellbeing garden can commence as planned this summer holiday. Information about the project or to support and donate can be found here - <https://gofund.me/ae775de1>



Rachel Tinker, Benenden CEP, PTFA Chair
www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk/PTFA/

Village lunch

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join the village lunch, held in the village hall at 12.30pm on Tuesday 20 June. There is always a main course, a pud and coffee or tea, for £5 per person. If you would like to come, please let me know by Thursday 15 June.

There will be no village lunch in July but we will be back on Tuesday 15 August and really look forward to seeing everyone then.

Genevieve Greenwood 240526

Iden Green and Benenden WI

We are sad to inform everyone that our friend and long-standing member, Peggy Chapman, passed away peacefully, recently. Peggy was the vice-president and backbone of our group for a long time and joined in as many activities as possible. She especially enjoyed singing, as her mother, whom Peggy insisted founded our group, was a piano teacher in Iden Green. She will be missed.

We held a successful AGM on 16 May when Shirley was elected as our president. Again, the plant and produce stall proved a popular adjunct to the proceedings.

Our visit to the Red Lion at Brede was enjoyed by everyone and the food was excellent as usual. At our social afternoon on Friday 2 June at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, we will be pleased to welcome Emma Swietochowski, who is coming to advise us on the best way to avoid fraud and scams. Visitors are welcome.

Then on 20 June at 5pm, we shall hold our annual garden party at a special member's gorgeous garden. This is always a well attended, happy event, even when it's raining.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

Benenden Bells

As expected, our ringers 'did their bit' for the Coronation, with general ringing before the abbey service and a quarter-peal later as their Majesties appeared on the Palace balcony. This was rung on the historic eight bells that have rung for Coronations since that of George II in 1727 and was the first on these eight bells by an entirely local band, in living memory. We also rang the next day to open the picnic on The Green.

The following weekend saw us touring round various East Sussex towers on Saturday and marking Bell Sunday on 14 May, when the tower was open after the morning service. We welcomed a number of interested guests to view the bells and try their hand at ringing one; and hope that some will decide to join us in the band - we certainly need you!

No doubt many will have noticed that the historic church clock is no longer working. This is the inevitable result of over 200 years of good service since its installation in 1819. Several of the bearings have worn out and the consequent friction is enough to stop the mechanism. We are awaiting a full report from the clockmaker, but it seems very likely that the recommendation will be for a complete off-site restoration and refurbishment, inevitably costing some thousands of pounds, complete dismantling and removal of the clock works, replacement of worn bearings, testing and re-assembly in the tower. This clock is a fine example of its period and as a piece of historic machinery in our care, we cannot just leave it to stationary decay.

Such a restoration should be good for at least a couple more centuries of service. It has been upgraded to the extent of automatic winding (in 1970) and more recently with an electronic time signal regulator, neither of which has altered the clock itself, which remains as built in 1819.

Rod Lebon

Talking Shop

We have reached the midway mark in the year and it's time for our annual general meeting. All members are invited to this on Friday 30 June at 7pm in the village hall. We are planning a volunteers' evening afterwards to include a tasting of the new wines we will be stocking in the shop. To all our hard-working volunteers we extend a very warm welcome; please do come and enjoy a bit of jollity together. You have certainly earned it!

Due to changes in the wines we stock, we are selling off many of our more expensive wines in a 'bin end' sale, where you'll find amazing bargains. With our new offerings, we don't make a huge mark up, so don't expect supermarket prices for top quality wines, but they are very competitive.

Very importantly, we have a plea to anyone with bookkeeping skills to help us. Mo Manning has done a terrific job of managing the task of doing this job in conjunction with Nikki, our paid bookkeeper, but Mo would like to take a well-earned break and we are looking for a new committee member who might be able to do it. The treasurer's input is to check the accounts monthly, comparing them with previous months and flagging up any discrepancy. This is presented to the committee at quarterly meetings, along with P&L accounts, and a report on the current financial situation.

In Mo's words: "The job is not onerous, as most of the work is done by Mel and Nikki and Nikki is now well versed in the system. Most months it takes about two hours to check the accounts and update the projected cash flow, with an additional hour preparing reports for quarterly management meetings. End of year, 31 March, is probably another two hours."

If you think you can help, please let us know. You will be doing a valuable service for the community.

Finally, we realise that the parking situation outside the shop can get busy but we ask you to respect our neighbours. Please do not park across anyone's driveway.

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

Benenden Hospital

It's National Growing for Wellbeing Week this month (5-11 June), an initiative organised by Life at No 27, a leading horticultural therapy and mental health counselling provider. The initiative is endorsed by Papyrus, a suicide prevention charity dear to the hearts of staff on our Bengan Ward, so I wanted to acknowledge both this and our new gardening team.

Since one of our grounds people retired earlier this year, he's been greatly missed, but I'm happy to now say our grounds team are a trio again. Thank you to Mick Winner, Alan Fagg and Tom Newbury for maintaining our grounds and sensory garden, Edna's Retreat. This is a place that brings joy to staff and visitors who'd like a place to sit and reflect. Research shows gardens and gardening can help people through periods of difficulty, restoring balance when it feels like life is veering out of control.

I'm proud to say that we offer staff the opportunity to apply for the Lord Plant Travel Fellowship, with £3,000 for the successful staff member to travel anywhere globally, learn about healthcare-related ideas or fundraise for numerous causes. Kate Minett, one of our excellent staff nurses, was awarded the fellowship last October to support a year of events raising funds and awareness for Papyrus. Four events have raised £3,367 of the £5,000 target. On 21 July, a team of brave souls will take part in a sponsored tandem skydive from Headcorn Aerodrome. Their final event will be a charity dinner dance at the London Beach Hotel in Tenterden on 9 September.

I'm so inspired by the dedication Kate and the ward team have shown towards this important cause and I wish them the best of luck meeting their target. If you'd like to sponsor any of these events, visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bengan-ward; to purchase tickets for the dinner dance (£40pp), please contact kate.minett@benenden.org.uk
Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse

Topical health

The growing season is now well underway and we are starting to see patients with musculoskeletal issues caused by gardening. The problem with gardening is that we tend to get stuck in to one job which we can do for hours until it's done: bending weeding, pruning, digging etc.

We advise people to:

- Vary their jobs - mix it up with half an hour on each job, rotating through all the things that need doing, but not staying solely on one job.
- Take regular breaks for a walk around, drink etc.
- Use a kneeling pad.
- Invest in power-assisted secateurs if your hands struggle with pruning.
- Use a wheelbarrow rather than carrying things long distances.
- Keep tools sharp so you need less effort.
- When you lift, bend your knees, lightly pull in your tummy towards your spine and don't twist your back.
- Listen to your body. If it's saying you've done enough, then you have.
- Do some gentle stretches if you've been at it for a few hours. You would if you went to the gym.
- If anywhere hurts, put an ice pack wrapped in a tea towel on it for ten minutes and repeat several times.
- If you feel achy, have a soak in a warm bath with a cup of Epsom salts dissolved in it.
- Call a professional if you are worried you've hurt yourself or it's not easing.

Sophie Bendall 388542

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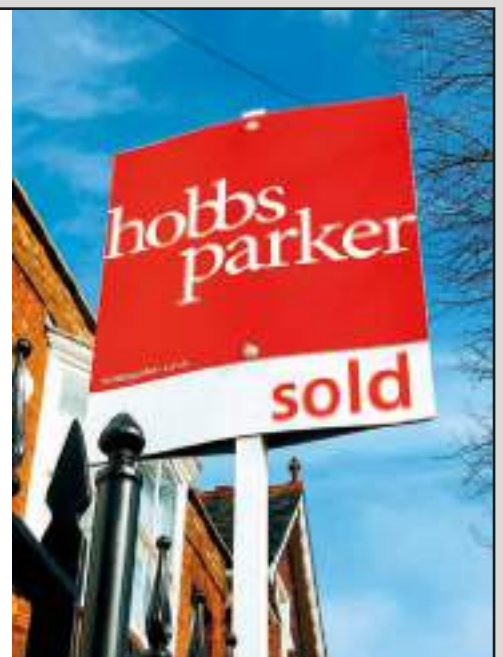
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The Coronation Big Lunch

It was a pleasure to see the village join together to celebrate the Coronation. The weather was fabulous, the church bells set the scene and Benenden Jazz created the perfect ambience. Huge thanks for the generous donations for teas which raised £246, to be split equally between the Prince's Trust and Friends of St George's.

Jo Clube and Caroline Gardner

Planning Matters

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

- 23/00865/FULL Finns Barn, Standen Street.
Erection of detached oak framed garage (amendment to scheme approved under 22/01852/FULL) to add an additional bay.
- 23/00875/FULL Bramleys, Apple Pie Farm.
Erection of single storey rear orangery extension, Addition of side dormer, Replacement dormer to rear, Replacement of all existing cladding to black composite cladding.
- 23/00781/FULL Benton Hoppers, Dingledden.
Conversion and renovation of semi-derelict building to holiday accommodation.
- 23/00929/FULL Hoads Brook, Goddards Green Road. Change of use of detached annex to form a separate residential dwelling with amenity garden, existing parking and access, and existing home office/studio; Erection of a new boundary fence with hedge.
- 23/00924/FULL and 23/01104/LBC Old Eaton Oast, Goddards Green Road. Variation of Condition 2 of 22/03244/FULL - Amend approved drawings for changes to fenestration, doors and roof materials.

Following Esquire Developments' presentation of its proposal for the development at Benenden Hospital South East Quadrant and North East Quadrant, Benenden Parish Council responded with a statement that can be read on the parish council website.

More planning matters at:
benendenparishcouncil.org

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Questions | 388402 | cfgparkinson@gmail.com



ABF fundraising event

An event at Benenden School on 8 July is planned to raise funds for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. A splendid afternoon tea will be served along with canapés and bubbly while you enjoy music provided by The Queen's Regiment Association Corps of Drums, Cranbrook Town Band and the Old School Samba Band, visit the archery stand, browse the ABF shop and enter the raffle.

Tickets are available from Martin Mortimer (email martinmortimer@hotmail.co.uk) and cost £32 (adults) and £12 (under 14). Bank transfer and cheque payments accepted; please contact Martin for details. Pre-booking by the end of June is essential for catering purposes. Tickets may be available on the door depending on advance sales.

Chris Parkinson 388402
cfgparkinson@gmail.com

Garden Party recital

A special Garden Party Recital in aid of the Hospice in the Weald will take place at 3pm on Saturday 29 July in Sandhurst. Pianist Daniel Grimwood and cellist Adrian Bradbury will present a super programme including music by Alexander Glazunov, Felix Blumenfeld, Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter and Adolf von Henselt. Tickets will be available at the end of May.

Gillian Davis 850384




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John Betts: new manager of the village hall

Benenden village hall has a new manager. He is John Betts, a retired Kent Police Inspector, who took over the running of the building at the start of May.

John replaces Holly Clayson, manager for the past three and a half years, who has stepped down to spend more time with her family. Benenden Village Trust, which owns the hall, thanks Holly for her work to keep the hall functioning through some difficult years, when Covid so badly disrupted lives and social gatherings.

John was born and brought up in Cranbrook, where he still lives. He knows Benenden well, and often attends events in the village. After retiring from the police, he worked in the village on a four-month temporary contract for West Kent Housing Association, supporting tenants at Harmsworth Court. His wife, Miranda, helps at the village fete and previously worked at the primary school and Benenden Hospital.

John retired from the police last September after 30 years' service, but wanted to continue working and this part-time job will give him more time to pursue other interests. He is a keen runner and enjoys cycling and playing the trumpet in the Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra. He will be performing with the orchestra in

their summer charity concert at Benenden School on Sunday 9 July.

"I also wanted to work locally", he says, "where I can feel part of the community".

John was attracted to the hall manager role because, "I felt my background, experience and skills were a good fit. I'm good at systems and processes, I'm organised and pro-active."

The job involves overseeing the smooth running of the hall, taking bookings, engaging with hirers, maintaining the building and making it even more central to village life than it is now.

The BVT trustees are keen to boost use of the hall and bring in more revenues to narrow the substantial annual deficit on its operations that BVT has to subsidise.

To encourage better interaction with users, John will be more of a presence at the hall, operating from its community office from 9.30-12.30pm most weekday mornings. He has inherited the hall manager's phone number (07419 989830) and email address (enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org) from Holly.

John's early career was as a computer programmer and IT developer, working in the private sector. He joined the police in 1993 and rose from constable to inspector, responsible for managing and developing staff, training, complaints investigations, resource management, incident management and maintaining standards.

He spent his career alternating between operational and strategic police roles at local and national levels. He was part of the Kent Police planning team for the 2012 London Olympics, mobilising the Kent Police contribution to policing the event, and led a public order unit in the capital during the games.

"One of the attractions of policing is that you never know what you are going to be doing from one minute to the next," he adds. Life at Benenden village hall may be a little less dramatic but will hopefully offer other rewards.

Martin Dickson, BVT

Life and work in the world of the digital nomad

Charlie Beveridge grew up in Benenden but is currently living in Bali and working globally online. Here she writes about her leaving the village for her paradise island. I'm (very smugly) writing this from a sunbed next to my pool, and once I've written it,

I'm looking forward to jumping on my moped to go scuba diving with some friends! At the age of 32 I run my own consulting and software business from the tropical island of Bali in Indonesia. I love this life. My friends here all run their own businesses remotely too - mostly in the software space, but also in journalism, dance teacher management, experience planning/management, actor agency and digital marketing.

I feel very at home here, but I didn't always live in sunny paradise. I grew up in Benenden, went to school locally and Durham University before spending ten years working in management consulting in London. I have lots of fond memories of the village: beautiful walks, lots of cosy pub evenings, tennis tournaments and even playing the drums in the panto. I would never have known then that life could look like this now.

It was the extended pandemic lockdowns that triggered the decision to become a digital nomad. I moved out of London and trialed a few places in the UK. But despite a very warm first summer, the weather wasn't brilliant.

I always had an itch that I would run my own business one day. I don't love being told what to do, so the idea of working for someone else for the rest of my life has never really appealed. I knew I needed to have enough experience first, though, so that I could be credible on my own. Consulting was a great place to learn a lot and fast, so I joined a large firm.

I'd had a run of crazy-hour projects by the middle of lockdown and I hit a real low point. It



pushed me to explore ideas for my own business. So, one drizzly evening after a post-work walk, drinking wine in a cosy Reigate pub, I realised that I could leave the big consultancy and start my own company helping exciting startups sell better into enterprise accounts. I could help them position their pitch better

because I knew how enterprise worked. The next day I called one of the management team at one of the software startups I'd been working with and asked if they'd hire me on a contract basis if I made this leap. They did!

I was suddenly free to set my own boundaries - choosing when and where I worked, how much I worked and who I worked with. That was (and still is) an amazingly liberating feeling. With that freedom I upped sticks and chose to work from Bali for a bit, then Lisbon for a bit, Scotland for a bit and Surrey for a bit. It was all super fun, although exhausting at times with all the travel admin and a run of awful Airbnb landlords. Ultimately, I decided that staying somewhere longer term would be healthier and more productive. Bali was the only place that had stolen my heart. It was the place I knew I felt the most inspired in, both professionally and personally. So many entrepreneurs with a zest for life. So many loving and kind people. So much endless possibility and optimism. So back to Bali for a year this time.

There are also some serious considerations when you choose a location like Bali. And I'm not talking about the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions - because I've experienced both now, and they're hugely overhyped by the media. If you're in my line of work, you realise that the closer to west coast US your clients are, the more you can charge and the more awesome



startups there are to target. Basing yourself on the other side of the world whilst targeting west coast clients can create geographical and time zone issues. I don't have many meetings, but when I do they are usually during the night or very early morning. That's a compromise I choose to make.

Bali is also a long way from home. I miss my family and friends very much and there are events that I miss. I miss meeting my friends' new kids and dogs before they grow up. I'm not there for Christmas or for my parents' Benenden Players' performances. I've missed

friends' weddings, birthdays, sad days and celebration days. But for keeping in touch more generally, Facetime, WhatsApp and Instagram help a great deal. And having happy and excited visitors even more so. I can make this choice to live here because I know that the people

I love the most in this world will always be the people I love most in this world, no matter where in the world we all are.

I've made sacrifices for this lifestyle and will continue to do so because I love it here. But it still isn't scratching every itch!

My passion is still tech and not consulting and I'm learning to code so that I can build my own software that automates my consulting service. Ultimately my clients will be able to click a button in an application and get the presentations and documents that I currently create manually. That would mean that the link between my time and the money I earn is finally entirely severed. That's a powerful thing for digital nomads. Having real freedom involves being able to choose when and where you work, no matter what. If your direct source of income is dependent on meeting with other people at times that suit them, you are never truly free (beware of any job offer which tells you that you can work remotely as much as you want).

When I no longer have to do any work, will I live full time on the beach? Probably not. I'm the kind of person who always needs stimulation. So even when my business is nicely mature, I know I'll be onto the next thing. What that might be I have no idea. Watch this space.

If you have any questions, want to learn more, or are just keen to follow my journey, you can always find me at [linkedin.com/in/charliebeveridge](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charliebeveridge) on LinkedIn and on Instagram @charlie_beveridge. I'd be happy to hear from you.



‘Strongholds of Satan’ that brought Kent into disrepute

Peter Thomas on a book that unearths the colourful history of local racecourses

It's a long time since anybody went horse racing in Kent. Just over ten years, in fact, since Folkestone closed down 'temporarily' in December 2012, never to open again. Wye had suffered the same fate in 1975, and we now live in one of those impoverished British counties with no racecourse at all, barring a smattering of point-to-point tracks.

To some people, this matters not at all, while an extreme few may still share the historic view unearthed by author William Morgan that racecourses are “Strongholds of Satan” and should be avoided at all costs.

Luckily, enough people dispute this view that racing remains the country's second most popular spectator sport, but there was a time, as Morgan recalls, when it was rather more than that: a “potent combination of national sport, fair, local holiday and opportunity to gamble”, which outraged our religious leaders and kept Parliament on its toes trying to “restrain all the shenanigans”.

If you imagined this corner of the ‘Garden of England’ was spared these satanic excesses, though, you'd be wrong. In fact, you would have had to travel no further than Tenterden to join the ungodly sporting throng, at a course that staged its first fixture in July 1813.

To be more specific, the action took place at Reading Street, three miles south of town, near the garden centre (which obviously didn't exist at the time), and by all accounts it was rather more civilised than some, with Kent's Weekly Dispatch reporting that by 1817: “Tenterden races had to boast of a numerous and fashionable company, on each day, and the sports were very good.”



The Sporting Magazine spoke of coaches and chaises in abundance, the beauty of the town “immured in waggons ... the ordinaries, the ball and the theatre were crowded”. In fact, by 1826, the Maidstone Journal declared that the ball was “admirably attended, and the great room at the Woolpack, so suitable for such purposes, filled beyond all expectation”. The race crowds enjoyed a lovely hot day and “we heard of no accidents, nor of anything unpleasant occurring”.

Not so in Tunbridge Wells, sad to report - a town still known for its unholy tendencies. As far back as 1738, races were run at “Tunbridge-Wells-Common, near the said Wells”, and in 1798, they “drew together such an immense concourse of fashionable company that it was with great difficulty a bed could be procured”. By 1826, however, things had taken a turn for the worse, with rascally trainer Tommy Coleman causing a near riot when he tried to engineer a win for his favoured candidate in a race for which he trained all the entries, “causing booing while they were still running and rather more when they returned ... some tried to pull the jockeys off their horses, some tried to protect



them and the steward, Cumberbatch, waved his flag from the stand and announced that he was not going to pay over the stakes.

“This did nothing to calm the situation and a couple of trainers were set upon. Tom Brown, from Lewes, fleeing across the furze, coat-tails flying and equipment falling off all over the place. Tiberius Theobald pretended to ward off all comers with a pistol, but was chased back to the town and mobbed. Carriages were turned over and a number hid under tables.”

It's a wonder Morgan can lower himself to record such debauchery. I met the man in Ireland recently and very much enjoyed the company of an Old Radleian graduate of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, an amateur rider with a long family history of hunting and racing and a successful career in stud management and journalism. Sadly, all that education didn't manage to cure his fascination for the less edifying aspects of the Sport of Kings, which is how, after an obsessive near 40-year quest, he finally produced Volume I (The South-East) of



his exhaustive history of the nation's defunct racecourses and their chequered past.

At more than 1,000 glossy

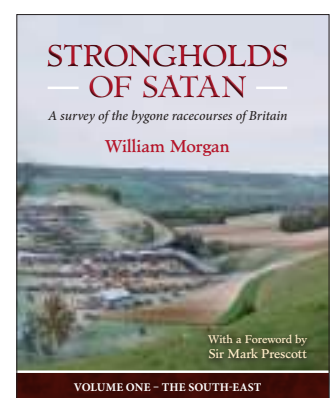
pages, it's no frothy holiday read, but it's a fascinating journey through several centuries of social history, with the added appeal of a local guide book and more than the occasional foray into some regrettably bad behaviour. There are ancient maps and prints, augmented by revealing drone shots of courses that can still be identified even now. You may be as surprised as I was to learn of the location of some of them, which you may have driven past unsuspectingly.

I grew up in Tonbridge, so was aware that the sportsground had been a racecourse, where, according to the *Sporting Times*, “the rustics assemble in large numbers, and take a great interest in racing, and enjoy themselves thoroughly”; but Sevenoaks was a new one on me.

Eridge Hunt seems to have been a nice place to spend an afternoon, with its “utter absence of rowdiness, which too often spoils a race meeting”, although there was, according to the *Sussex Express* in 1890, “a very unfortunate accident ... in regard to the tenants' luncheon”, involving a several times collapsing tent, eventually rectified by Mr W E Urquhart, provider of a “first-rate champagne luncheon”, who was, apparently, not a man “to be beaten by trifles” and had everything in “apple pie order” by the time his guests arrived.

Edenbridge, New Romney, Ashford, even Bromley, are all there in colourful detail, so much so that I've promised my wife that when we retire, we'll take a lengthy trip round the country's bygone Strongholds of Satan (I'm hoping volumes 2-4 will have been published by then), seeking out long-lost racecourses and possibly even still-surviving pubs that were frequented by the racegoers of old. If we want to take the books with us, we may need a bigger car.

Strongholds of Satan: A survey of the bygone racecourses of Britain, by William Morgan, is available from www.mainholmpress.co.uk, (£75)



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Hidden in the treetops but a sight to behold

Charles Trollope reports on a welcome addition to local birdlife

Whenever I go for a walk locally, and in particular Hemsted Forest, I pass places where I used to see birds. It was very often a song post like a dead tree stump, a particular favourite of the Tree Pipit. Sadly we have lost so many breeding birds.

Along with the Tree Pipit, we have lost Turtle Doves, Nightjars and Woodcock, to name but a



Firecrest and Goldcrest, *Regulus ignicapilla* and *Regulus regulus*
Stephen Message www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk

few. It is therefore a great pleasure to report that we have a new breeding species. The only problem is that it is very small and moves rapidly in the canopies of the trees, which makes it very difficult to see. It is a Firecrest and is a stunning bird to see if you are lucky enough to get good views.

Most parishioners will be familiar with Britain's smallest bird, the Goldcrest, and the Firecrest is a close relative with similar plumage, except it has a striking white eyebrow stripe. It is also fractionally larger.

The Firecrest first bred in Britain in the New Forest in about 1970. It has slowly expanded its range northwards and small numbers have bred in Kent since 2000. The population has increased both in Bedgebury and Hemsted Forests, but they are not restricted to the forests and have been seen/heard in the parish at quite a few locations.

One of my first encounters with a Firecrest was when I was asked to lead a dawn chorus visit to Rolvenden churchyard in 2006. As I expect you know, the churchyard has very old

and large yew trees, in which Goldcrest like to nest, and I was hoping to see one. Sure enough, one appeared, and to my utter amazement it was not a Goldcrest but a Firecrest.

That spring I came back a number of times to see if it would breed. It was easy to locate as it sang constantly, hoping to find a mate, which of course was rather unlikely. I told our resident bird artist Stephen Message about the existence, and together we checked on any breeding evidence. Later that summer, the Firecrest was still there and seemed to be feeding young, which was a great surprise.

As we had not seen a female, we wondered if hybridisation had taken place, but with Stephen's eye for detail and expertise he was able to establish that the young were not hybrids, although this is not that unusual in the bird world, particularly with closely related species and one species lacking a partner. We concluded that parental instinct took over and the Firecrest was helping feed the young of a Goldcrest pair.

The Firecrest is a short-distance migrant/resident. This particular bird came back to Rolvenden in 2007 and in 2008 and sang wholeheartedly but was not recorded breeding or helping feed young again. It was a few years before I heard or saw another, but I now hear them regularly in both forests as well in local conifers, especially in Standen Street.

'Crests' are quite confident birds and I have seen them in hedgerows, holly bushes and apple trees and have approached to within a few feet without them taking any notice.

If they erect their crests it is a stunning, colourful sight that will last long in the memory, but it is their song in the main that alerts me to them. They are both very high-pitched, with the Goldcrest more rhythmic and ending in a flourish, whereas the Firecrest's remains on a high sibilant note with no flourish. It is easy to miss them in the general sound of nature, but once you have become familiar with the songs then it is easier to pick them up. I would be pleased to hear of any Firecrest sightings.

In Your Garden

Spring husbandry and summer pots

I would normally have penned an article on good husbandry in the garden for the April issue, but we have had such a cold and slow start to this year in terms of plant growth that I delayed writing on the subject until now. Of course, nature has a canny habit of regrouping and now everything has shot up, leaving a very short window indeed to implement these tasks.

Playing catch-up in the borders is now something I am quite footloose about and consequently I just get on with it once I have the time. In a perfect world we would have all staked our lofty herbaceous by now, ideally in very early spring, when the crowns of plants are emerging. It may seem odd staking such a tiny plant, but it is near impossible to do so once too late - and I cannot stress enough the difference it makes to the borders if done properly.

Bamboo canes and string, weaved through in sections, will work; pressing in branching sticks around the edges will also do the trick. Of course, metal hoops are wonderful if you have enough of them, but they can be expensive (and you always need more than you budget for) but I have been known to opt for a few decorative ones for last-minute staking (e.g. single-coiled for peony stems), or wooden hurdles are handy in key spots.

If you can manage to tiptoe throughout the beds and weed, I would definitely do this now. Very soon the herbaceous will have covered the ground, so get the weeds out before they set seed. Any spent bulb foliage can come out (or be left to die back into the ground if you wish) and early spring plants can be cut to the ground now, before allowing new fresh growth to emerge (e.g. pulmonaria and primroses).



I also tidy up hellebores, taking out any spent flowering stems and tatty leaves. I may leave a few of their seedlings in situ but it will be a few good years before they show a flower.

If you haven't already done so, I would make a trip to your local plant nursery to stock up on colourful annuals and trailing plants for your summer pots. I always purchase a number of foliage plants too - I know

there are so many pretty flowers to choose from, but foliage is equally as integral to a summer display, providing structure and texture. Some of my current favourites are *Panicum* 'Sparkling Fountain', either a dark purple/black or lime green *ipomoea*, *coleus* and silvery *helichrysum* all mix well. On a larger scale, cannas are unbeatable, the variegated *Arundo donax* is also a whopper but worth it for some serious height in your display. Dahlias and tender salvias are also great in pots, as are interesting conifers or even small deciduous shrubs such as a guelder rose with its lanky leaf-laden branches and open habit.

As always with containers, keep the growing medium fairly rich, and preferably add a bit of loam (from a bag of topsoil) to keep the compost texture more stable and nutrient rich. Loam also has better water-holding capacities than bagged composts. Finally, if you can be organised enough to source large water-holding saucers to place underneath your pots, then so much the better for your plants.

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Above: A village in celebration: marking the Coronation of King Charles III with the Big Lunch initiative on The Green, at the red, white and blue primary school street party, and at St George's Social Club; Jane Dalton Holmes with the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award 2023; Kate Minett receiving Benenden Hospital's Lord Plant Travel Fellowship; Edna's Retreat Front cover: Appreciating a snail's pace. Photograph: Amelia Thomas