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# Benenden Magazine January 2019

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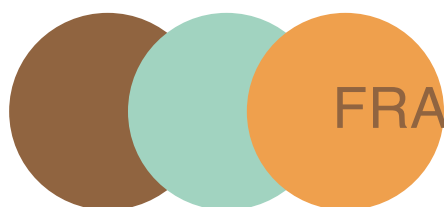
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# Editorial



One of the advantages of being the one of the revolving editors of the Parish Magazine is you get to hear of all the many things that are going on in the village. Given that we are a relatively small community there are an extraordinary number of concerts, recitals, wine-tastings, classes and performances - culminating, of course, in our own very dear panto (Oh yes it is!). Tickets are still available but hurry as they always sell out (see page 11). In the Village Hall and in the Iden Green Pavilion there are myriad opportunities to join art, dance, yoga or dog training groups to name but a few. People have mentioned that they don't know what's going on when so this month we are publishing their schedules on page 17. Some of the classes may be full but if you'd like to join the contact details for each class are on the timetable. A bit of zumba should get rid of that Christmas pudding bulge!

Rather alarmingly 2018 has vanished behind us. Where did it go and so quickly? My list of things that I wanted to do is only partly accomplished but, just like last year, I am full of hope that this year I will be more organised! We are embarking on a new, shiny 2019 full of uncertainty. Our political climate seems as uncertain as the weather, with isobars scudding across the political landscape leaving uprooted ideas, flooded hopes and snow drifts blocking the way we thought we were going to go. In such uncertain times we are fortunate to live in a close community which still has places where people can meet and talk and get together. Perhaps the biggest Benenden success story recently has been the café in the community shop which is always busy, has expanded to meet the need, and is largely run with the help of volunteers. On behalf of everyone a very big thank you to them.

With good wishes for a very happy and prosperous New Year from all of us who contribute to the Parish Magazine.

Minnie Garnier, Co-Editor

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

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# Village Calendar

## December

Monday 31      New Year's Eve Party, St George's Club, 8.15pm

## January

Saturday 12      Darts, St George's Club, 8.30pm

Tuesday 15      Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm      p.9

Tuesday 15      Iden Green and Benenden WI, Members' Meeting, Memorial Hall, 2pm      p.9

Saturday 19      Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.30pm

Sunday 20      Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm      p.15

Monday 21      Parish Council Meeting, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm

Tuesday 22      Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm

Saturday 26      Skittles, St George's Club, 8.30pm

Thursday 31      The Legend of King Arthur, Benenden Players Panto First Night,  
Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm      p.11

## Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

## Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

## Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays on the recreation field, practice night, 6.30pm

## Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

## Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 12 January for Domestic Waste

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

Saturday 26 January for Garden/Compostable Waste

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

# Parish Council



My name is Mervyn Skeet and I have been a parish councillor for two and a half years. I have lived in East End for 10 years with my wonderful wife and two teenage children. I have a strong interest in local politics and I am keen to see all parts of the village represented. In a previous stint as a parish councillor in Essex, planning issues were almost always top of parishioners concerns and so it is in Benenden.

We currently have a dilemma on planning issues which will be difficult to solve to everyone's satisfaction. I am also a member of the Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) steering committee and a great deal of fantastic work has been done by a relatively small group of people. As noted in prior editions of the magazine, the committee has worked with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) to reduce our housing target to about 100 dwellings in the 15 years to 2033. Great work, but we still have to build 100 houses. I have not met anyone who wants them built near where they live.

Some parishioners think we can build five houses on 20 sites around the Parish, others that we should only build on 'brownfield' sites, and a third group who would prefer 12+ houses on a smaller number of sites. This is the dilemma and we need to ensure that there is a reasoned debate to try and find a compromise that the village can support.

I believe it will be difficult to persuade TWBC of the merits of 20 sites but it also cannot be right to have all the required houses being built in one location and 'swamp' that part of the village, particularly if there are no amenities nearby. It is for these reasons that the middle ground of a smaller number of sites with 12+ houses may be the more viable solution. In this edition of the magazine the NDP committee have published the key criteria that are guiding the process. The committee needs your views to ensure that these criteria reflect the Parish's aspiration.

The Parish Council is looking for volunteers to help with Speedwatch to monitor the speed of traffic through our village. Does Speedwatch work? In most locations, the answer is yes. In Teston in 2016, 350 vehicles were observed in an hour and 25 of those were speeding. On the same day and in the same location a year later 350 vehicles passed the Speedwatch team again but only five were detected speeding. An 80% reduction is not to be sniffed at, so please volunteer if you can.

Mervyn Skeet, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk  
01580 240371 [clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org)

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

## Parish Council Meeting

Monday 21 January 2019,

Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm

# Church Calendar

## St George's Church

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

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 [maisonsicheluk@tlclaridge.co.uk](mailto:maisonsicheluk@tlclaridge.co.uk)

Churchwarden: Julia Collard 241944 [Julia.collard@btinternet.com](mailto:Julia.collard@btinternet.com)

[www.benendenchurch.org](http://www.benendenchurch.org) 850849 [benendenchurch@gmail.com](mailto:benendenchurch@gmail.com)

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

Sunday 6 January	8am Communion	10am Christingle Service	5pm Choral Evensong
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Sunday 13 January	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
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Sunday 20 January	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
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Sunday 27 January	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	
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## Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

## Iden Green Congregational Church

Elder: Tobin Bird 240027 [www.idengreen.org.uk](http://www.idengreen.org.uk)

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

## The Roman Catholic Chapel TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 [www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org](http://www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org)

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

## From the Parish Registers

19 December Vera Webster Interment

21 December Rachel Chapman Funeral Kent and Sussex Crematorium

# Rector's Letter



## Always looking forward?

I've said it enough times over this last month, the month when Church has been remembering and celebrating Advent: "Advent is a time of waiting, of looking forward to something or someone; a time of excited preparation ... for something that is to come." It's a joyous time of anticipation and making ready. I follow that up by saying: "It's a time of preparation for Christmas, celebrating Christ's birth, and preparing ourselves (somehow) for Christ's coming again." Children, most especially, have been waiting excitedly (and impatiently) for Christmas. Most of us have also been looking forward; waiting for something special, and happy, and joyful.

Well, now the excitement of Christmas is over, for another year ... so now what? We did all that waiting, the looking forward to Christmas ... and it's now passed. For all the anticipation, it still only lasted 24 hours just like any other day. It's now behind us again; so now what?

We seem to spend our lives looking ahead to things that are still to come, and we do so either with expectation or with anxiety. We always seem to be waiting for something. As I was preparing to write this we were looking forward (looking ahead that is, rather than looking forward with anticipation and relish) to the Brexit vote in Parliament. Now we wait to see what happens next; and we wait, uncertainly, for 11pm on Friday 29 March. On a much happier note, we look forward to the village pantomime (oh yes we do!). Or on a more pragmatic note, we wait for appointments, or results, or operations, or exam results, or ... we're always waiting for something.

We are always looking ahead to something else. I'm always doing that; the Church is always doing that. Even before Christmas I was looking past Christmas to think about Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In January last year I had my first conversation about a Christmas service for 2018. We are always looking to the next thing.

Perhaps by always looking forward (ahead) to something else, we forget to live in the here and now. And if we forget to live life now - well, life has this habit of passing us by. Before we know it, all those things that, at the time, seemed important, they've all happened; we've continued to look forward (usually with anxiety), life has happened and all of a sudden we reach our last appointment. And only then do we realise that it's too late - we've missed living life. There's a verse in Luke's gospel where Jesus says: "The kingdom of God is within you." That means you are living in God's kingdom now; don't always be looking forward to it, anticipating its coming. Live it now; your life is part of the Kingdom. Now. So this New Year, as well as planning for the future, remember to live life now, please.

Revd David Commander, Rector





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# Just a Thought



## The CTD report

The Chairman, an imposing Balsam Fir, was anxious to begin, 'Councillors and Representatives please take your places. We have quite a lengthy report to discuss.' There was a murmur and shuffling of leaves and scattering of sparkles as everyone settled down.

'I would like to welcome representatives of Lights, Stars, Baubles, Angels, Tinsel and Miscellaneous.'

'I wish we had a better title,' muttered a cracker to a plastic bell, 'Miscellaneous sounds so dismissive.'

'I am pleased to say that the annual Christmas Tree Decorations Report is very positive this year and praises the high standard achieved.'

A murmur of satisfaction rippled through the room and councillor White Spruce exclaimed, 'Yes, well done!'

'However,' the Chairman continued, 'there are one or two things that do need to be addressed. Let me start at the top as it were. Stars! It has been reported that there were an unacceptable number of droopy stars at the tops of trees this season. Stars must remember that they are in a position of prominence and should stand firm and upright at all times.'

'But that can be difficult,' the Star representative explained, 'we need a firm foundation and it is often very precarious up there!'

'I sympathise but standards must be maintained,' the Chairman replied firmly. 'Next - Lights, yes Lights,' he went on with a hint of pleasure in his voice, 'Wonderful reports, such variety, so many colours and the intricacy of the flashing sequences deserve congratulations'.

The Lights contingent glowed with pleasure although the Douglas Pine complained that too much flashing led to branch tingling and that he had a fondness for real candles himself.

'Now, where are we - oh yes - angels. It appears that they were in decline this year. I don't mean that disrespectfully just that there were not so many of you.'

'We were not very popular on trees. But we did well in other areas of decoration,' a rather plump angel said defensively, 'perhaps we need a make-over to modernise our image, at least for trees.'

'Oh I don't know about that. There is something very uplifting and special about the traditional angel,' exclaimed the Norwegian Pine, exhibiting an excellent command of English.

'Let's get on,' said the Chairman resolutely, 'baubles next. It's a mixed report here. There was an amazing assortment of colours and designs. However the perennial problem of providing an easy means of attachment remains.'

'Yes madam, I am just coming to your contribution,' he nodded, acknowledging the agitation of the well-endowed tinsel representative. 'A beautiful show but it is felt that greater restraint might be desirable when distributing your favours, as a little goes a long way! Finally, concerning Miscellaneous, an increasingly bizarre variety of items found their way on to trees alongside crackers and bells this year. I think it best if these are left to individual circumstances.'

'In closing, I thank everyone for their invaluable contributions. See you all again next Christmas and I wish you a Happy New Year.'



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# News and Events

## Benenden Players Round Table Romp

Arthurian adventure hits stage in only four weeks

Final rehearsals before Christmas have come and gone, including getting all the cast kitted out in their final costumes. It's striking how being properly dressed for the role does lift everyone's game. Over the break we will have painted over last year's scenery, and transformed it's Mexican desert, South Eastern rail carriages and the village school into a historically accurate representation of the court of King Arthur. Tickets went on sale on 3 December, either online, or via our Pop-Up Box Office Sunday mornings in the community shop. By mid December we had sold around two thirds of tickets, so hurry, hurry, hurry. I promise, almost nothing about Brexit ...

And, in other panto news, some Thank Yous. Firstly we were so pleased to be able to hand over to Chris Parkinson a cheque for £620 for the ABF following the Trench Foot Review; so thanks to all that attended, bought raffle tickets or spent money in the bar. Finally I'd like to thank Tractorfest for their very generous donation to the Players: we are trying to upgrade our stage lighting in line with the improvements we've already made to our sound equipment and their cheque will provide us with a very good start.

Nancy Tolhurst, Benenden Players  
07711 139218 [nancy.tolhurst@btinternet.com](mailto:nancy.tolhurst@btinternet.com)

## Iden Green and Benenden WI

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year. With no meeting in December, our next will be a Members' Meeting on Tuesday 15 January, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm.  
Shirley Fidler, President 752232

### JUNIOR TENNIS COACHING

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



Who: Club Members of 6-18 years



Where: Floodlit Courts at Benenden School



When: Friday Term Time groups from 4.30pm onwards



How much: £4 per session until Easter 2019



Contact for further details:  
[eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com](mailto:eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com)

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

## Junior tennis coaching through the winter

Junior coaching with Iden Green Tennis Club has restarted thanks to the generosity of Benenden School who have allowed us to use their super courts during the winter months. We will be moving back to Iden Green when the lighter evenings allow.

We now have three groups of children enjoying coaching on a Friday night with our fabulous coach Pete.

Adult mixed doubles club mornings are held on Saturdays throughout the year. Come along and have ago. All welcome.  
Ellie Cochrane, Chair Iden Green Tennis Club  
[eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com](mailto:eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com)

## Village lunch

Tuesday 15 January, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

All are welcome. It's just £5 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. Please call Genevieve on 01580 240526, preferably by Friday 11 January, if you haven't already put your name down but would like to come. We would be very grateful if anyone coming to the lunch is able to pick up anyone who needs collecting.





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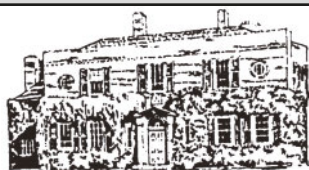
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## Benenden Bonfire Society

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Initial application forms will be available from Benenden's Community Shop on Tuesday 1 January 2019.

Completed forms must be returned to the shop no later than Friday 1 March 2019.

Notwithstanding the lower numbers this year, which the committee are comfortable with, after we have settled costs there will a sum of £7,500.00 available for distribution and we look forward to receiving applications from eligible projects.

Successful applicants will be notified by mid-April and full details published in the May 2019 magazine together with an update of income/outgoings for the event.

Grant Matthews

Chair, Benenden Bonfire Society

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

## Christmas village lunch

A big thank you yet again to all those who attended the Christmas village lunch on Tuesday 4 December and especially to those who have volunteered to do the cooking, serving and driving during the year, namely Kathleen and Anthony Brewis, Zena Bawden, Jenny Forster, Hazel Matthews, Genevieve and Robert Greenwood, Sheila and Charlie Hume, Minnie Garnier, Jan Dunkley, Heather and Phil Robbins and Kay and Bill Martin. If you have never come but would like to join us in 2019 please do, whether to help with cooking, driving or serving or just to enjoy the lunch. We would love to see you. The next lunch is on Tuesday 15 January.

## Wellbeing in the Weald

Wellbeing is important to us all. It's not just about healthy eating and regular exercise. Wellbeing is more to do with feeling good about ourselves, getting the most out of our lives and feeling connected to other people. It enables us to cope when life gets tough, circumstances change or our health suffers.

'Wellbeing in the Weald' has been formed by a group representing a cross section of the community including a local GP, Dr Dineli Charlesworth.

Our aim is to organise new and promote existing wellbeing activities in the Weald including community walks, lunch clubs, choirs, volunteering and other social activities that bring people together on a regular basis.

Our first project in the New Year will be a variety of Wellness Walks on different days, terrain and distance to suit people of all levels of health or disability. We are in the process of setting up a community choir in January (no singing talent required, just a sense of fun!) - more details to follow once a venue has been confirmed.

We can all feel lost at times - wondering what it's all about, what we're good at or what we enjoy. Yet there are many local people with skills they would love to share with others. We're hoping this project might fill that gap in our community.

Do you attend or would like to lead an activity that promotes wellbeing?

Want to register your interest? We would love to hear from anyone aged 16-106 years.

Do email [wellbeingintheweald@gmail.com](mailto:wellbeingintheweald@gmail.com) or follow us on Facebook / Instagram #wellbeingintheweald



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or see our website  
[www.forestfarmcathotel.co.uk](http://www.forestfarmcathotel.co.uk)

## Village Hall highlights

Happy New Year to one and all! It's that time of year when a lot of folk are making a resolution that 2019 is going to be the year to start exercising. If this is you, the hall is the perfect place to get started on the road to fitness.

So, while you are at home sitting cosily in front of the fire, chomping on a mince pie, and/or having a glass or three of wine, why not have a look at the hall's timetable of fitness classes? For the first time we are publishing our complete timetable in the Magazine - see page 17 for full details, contact numbers and email addresses. You can also pick up a takeaway copy, which is updated monthly, from the village hall.

Millie Friday is offering a free Zumba taster class on Monday 7 January at 11am in the main hall. Zumba is the perfect antidote to being a Christmas couch potato! Contrary to popular belief Zumba is for all fitness levels - you choose the pace that suits you. To register your interest contact Millie on 07525 237390 or email [milliefriday@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:milliefriday@hotmail.co.uk).

In addition to Zumba, we have a great mix of classes and clubs to suit everybody, and for all ages. These include monthly delights (artistic and culinary) from The Arts Society High Weald and Village Lunch Club, as well as weekly classes in yoga (for adults and children) tap-dancing, ballet, pilates, judo, ballroom dancing, dance and exercise for seniors, and not forgetting our four-legged friends, we even have dog training.

If you are interested in holding a class at the hall, get in touch - we'd love to welcome you to the family!

One last note - don't forget to buy your tickets for the Benenden Players 2019 pantomime 'The Legend of King Arthur', taking place 31 January - 3 February. I was at rehearsals a couple of weeks ago and it promises to be another good one!

For further information on events and classes check out either our Facebook page [@benendenvillagehall](https://www.facebook.com/benendenvillagehall) or go to: [www.benendenvillagehall.org](http://www.benendenvillagehall.org)  
Lorraine Jones 243123  
[enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org](mailto:enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org)



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just have fun!

Revd David Commander, Rector  
01580 240658 [revdavidcommander@gmail.com](mailto:revdavidcommander@gmail.com)

## Talking Shop

Happy new year from Benenden's

As 2019 bursts upon us with all its challenges, we would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy new year. Benenden's will be offering the same cheery welcome, whatever the weather; or the political climate! Pantomime tickets will be available from Ruth in the café on 6, 1, and 20 January between 10am and 12noon. Payment can be made by cash, cheque or credit card.

If you've been wondering about a new year's resolution, do think about volunteering in the shop. We're always happy to welcome new helpers and it really is such a pleasure to work with and serve such friendly, fun people! We are planning to give our volunteers a small welcoming information sheet that they can hand out to anyone who is new to the village, explaining how Benenden's works and how to volunteer if they would like to. It's a great way to get to know local people and make friends.

Bev Beveridge



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## CLASSES AND GROUPS AT BENENDEN VILLAGE HALL

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9.30–10.30am <b>Dance and exercise for seniors</b> Jean Chapman 01580 240232	10.15am–12pm <b>The Arts Society High Weald</b> (every 4th Tuesday in the month) For membership info rachel.hay@btinternet.com	5–5.45pm <b>Acro *</b>	9.30–10.30am <b>Power yoga (beginners)</b> Ruth Birch wealdpoweryoga.com	9.10–10.25am <b>Yoga</b> Charlie Hartley 07766 222316
9.30–10.30am <b>Power yoga (all levels)</b> Ruth Birch wealdpoweryoga.com	11.30am–3pm <b>Village lunch club</b> (every 3rd Tuesday in the month) Sheila Hume 01580 240838	5.45–6.30pm <b>Grade 1 tap *</b>	10.30–11.30am <b>Dance and exercise for seniors</b> Jean Chapman 01580 240232	10.45am–1pm <b>Hawkhurst U3a members only Scottish Dancing</b> Peter Hoole wofitha@hotmail.com
11am–12pm <b>Zumba</b> Millie Friday 07525 237390		6.30–7.15pm <b>Acro *</b>	3.45–4.15pm <b>Primary ballet *</b>	5.45–9.15pm <b>Cwnsaethu dog behaviour and training</b> mail@jamesreavil.com 07545 476381
3.15–3.45pm <b>Pre-primary ballet *</b>	1.30–2pm <b>Pre-school ballet *</b>		3.45–4.15pm <b>Pre-school ballet *</b>	
3.45–4.15pm <b>Primary ballet *</b>	2.15–2.45pm <b>Acro Tots *</b>		4.15–4.45pm <b>Acro *</b>	
4.15–4.45pm <b>Acro *</b>	4–5pm <b>Namaste Kids</b> Hayley Sanderson hayley@namastekids.co.uk www.namastekids.co.uk		4.45–5.15pm <b>Standard 1 ballet *</b>	
4.45–5.30pm <b>Standard 1 ballet *</b>			5–5.30pm <b>Private lesson *</b>	
5.30–6pm <b>Acro *</b>	5–5.30pm <b>Musical theatre *</b>		5.15–5.45pm <b>Modern jazz *</b>	
6–6.45pm <b>Standard 2 ballet *</b>	5.30–6.15pm <b>Modern/tap *</b>		5.45–6.30pm <b>Musical theatre *</b>	
6.45–7.15pm <b>Standard 3 ballet *</b>	5.30–6pm <b>Tap *</b>			
7.15–7.45pm <b>Senior modern/tap *</b>	6.15–6.45pm <b>Private lesson *</b>			
7.45–8.30pm <b>Senior ballet *</b>	6–6.45pm <b>Private lesson *</b>			
8.10–9.10pm <b>Fitness pilates</b> with taylor-made fitness taylormadefitness.biz	7–7.45pm <b>Adult PBT *</b>			
	8.15–9.45pm <b>Ballroom dancing</b> Stephen Kidd 07505 215687			

\* Charlotte Hudson School of Dance  
charlottehudsonschoolofdance.com  
07875 525518

## CLASSES AND GROUPS AT IDEN GREEN PAVILION

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9.15–11.45am <b>Iyengar Yoga</b> Caroline Turck carrie.t@care4free.net	9.15am–1pm <b>Aspinall Art Group</b> David Aspinall d.t.aspinall@btinternet.com	9.30am–1pm <b>Benenden Art Group</b> Bill Lewis 01580 243093	9.15–11.45am <b>Iyengar Yoga</b> Caroline Turck carrie.t@care4free.net	8.10–9am <b>Kettlercise</b> Jane Taylor jane@taylormadefitness.biz
1–5.30pm <b>Iden Green Art Group</b> Sally Ann Marks sallymarks100@hotmail.com	7.30–9pm <b>Iyengar Yoga</b> Jean Brown 01580 240013			9.15–10am <b>HILI Fitness Circuit</b> Jane Taylor jane@taylormadefitness.biz
				10.20–11.20am <b>Fitness Pilates</b> Jane Taylor jane@taylormadefitness.biz
				2–4.30pm <b>Pilates</b> Gina Klimisova klime3@me.com

## Drafting the NDP

In the light of Paul's request for your comments on the Key Criteria on the opposite page there are a couple of things which might be good to clarify especially as the NDP reaches the drafting stage. There are a number of misapprehensions swirling about as to what is or isn't being done and therefore a number of assumptions being made, so a quick look at some of the issues:

The NDP does not stand alone: it is part of a larger plan, TWBC's Local Plan. Like a piece in a jigsaw our NDP only has some power to influence when it is drafted, independently examined and accepted as part of the Local Plan and will then protect the Parish against future speculative development.

No-one wants excessive house building but the government is pushing the Borough Councils hard. After negotiation with TWBC Benenden has accepted a total of around 100 houses to be built over a 15-year period. This ties in with the figure set out in the 2015 Parish Plan. So then the next question is where?

The NDP is not offering sites; landowners have offered 19 sites in Benenden to TWBC for consideration. Kent Barker mentioned last month that he 'knows of' small available sites, but if they have not been offered in the Call for Sites they are not 'on the table' they cannot be assessed and therefore cannot be taken into account. However, small 'windfall' sites that do come up later may count towards our total in the light of new guidance in the NPPF.

It has been said that TWBC has dictated what sites they prefer and the NDP has simply said yes. Not so. TWBC has trained the working groups on how to assess the sites and are consulting with the working groups as to which sites Benenden thinks are best. Everyone in the Parish will have the opportunity to assess and vote on this.

So why not build five houses here and there around the Parish as this was the preference of many people? Although there are 19 sites on offer, there are not enough small sites to accommodate just five houses. This doesn't mean there are no small sites, just that almost

all are bigger sites, and if someone gets permission to build just a few houses in one corner of a bigger site then that whole site is opened up for future development. Nor does this mean all the sites have to be huge developments of 50 houses. The list of sites is available to see on the TWBC website at [www.tunbridgewells.gov](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov) on the Local Plan webpage or at the Parish office.

Why not build small groups of houses scattered around the Parish? The impact on the AONB would be much greater, the impact on local infrastructure more damaging - ten houses equals 25-30 cars - thus because our rural landscape is our greatest asset and our strongest protection, so much so that the NPPF indicates it must be protected and preserved, these developments would be opposed by TWBC, CPRE, Natural England and WKPS. However, this does not prevent someone converting eg a couple of outhouses or a barn in future which can contribute to our total.

The Parish has indicated their preference for utilising so-called 'brownfield' sites (previously developed land) first if possible: this militates against using far-flung, rural, greenfield sites.

The Parish has indicated it wants a range of housing types, if possible locally-led, including affordable housing, in order to provide for Benenden's housing needs in the future. The working groups have prioritised this in their consultations over sites. Small developments do not have to provide any affordable housing, are often one type of house and may be far away from amenities (contra to the NPPF and to our own 2015 Parish Plan) which means more car use and less connection with the existing community.  
Minnie Garnier, Housing Supply Group



**Benenden needs You!**

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our future**



## Site Allocation Criteria

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are undertaking a Call for Sites to underpin the evolution of its Local Plan. As part of the Neighbourhood Planning process each of the sites offered by local landowners within the Parish are assessed by Benenden Neighbourhood Planning Team.

Our assessments must be objective and consistent. Site assessment is complex and involves the application of multiple criteria to each site, in some instances an element of judgement is required to deliver the best balance of housing types. To help us, training on the site assessment process was provided by TWBC, with input from Merit Thornton Planning Consultants. We have developed our assessment criteria based on the guidance offered in the new National Planning Policy Framework.

To ensure that the criteria we are using reflect the Parish's aspirations, the NDP Steering Committee want to share the key criteria with Benenden parishioners and obtain feedback from them before finalising our site assessments.

### KEY CRITERIA:

#### 1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Area

Sites within the AONB have a high level of protection in terms of conserving landscape and scenic beauty. Any development should minimise the adverse impact on the landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural life of the AONB. Any development must also enhance any Conservation Area, the setting of heritage assets, historic parkland and listed buildings. Sites outside the AONB and not part of a Conservation Area will therefore be given greater weight. The dark skies and rural nature of the Parish is highly valued by residents and statutory bodies and should be to be maintained.

#### 2 Site size and scale of development

The Parish's cultural and physical infrastructure is inadequate for major development. So large sites will be given a reduced weight. The NDP is required to provide adequate Affordable Housing

to ensure local people have the option to remain within the Parish. Greater weight will be given to sites where affordable housing or other developer contributions to community infrastructure can be mandated. These are sites of ten or more dwellings.

#### 3 Previously developed land

The NDP will give greater weight to land which has been previously developed (often known as 'brownfield') for residential development. This will include the curtilage of any existing dwellings, but may not include all green spaces within a proposed site.

#### 4 Close to existing amenities

To ensure residents of new dwellings have the best opportunity to integrate with the community and to have access to local services; it is desirable to develop sites close to existing settlements. This is in line with the 2015 Parish Plan and the 2017 National Policy Planning Framework. Sites within walking distance of the main village of Benenden will be given greatest weight, although Iden Green and East End are also regarded as significant settlements.

#### 5 Site access and safety

Safe access onto narrow roads, sometimes with poor visibility, has been taken into consideration. Sites with dangerous access or those that increased the risk of accidents have been given reduced weight.

#### 6 Maintaining local job opportunities

Benenden's vision of a thriving and sustainable community includes a commitment to support local business and enhance job creation. Therefore sites that already support local jobs and light industry will be given less weight for residential development.

Paul Tolhurst, Chair Steering Group

It is vitally important that we have your comments - positive as well as negative - on the key criteria to be applied. Post your comments by 25 January on the cards provided in the community shop or email [benenden.n.p@btinternet.com](mailto:benenden.n.p@btinternet.com)

# MEET YOUR MP Helen Grant

Helen Grant, MP for Maidstone and the Weald, holds regular surgeries around the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you, please e-mail Helen at [helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk) or telephone **020 7219 7107**.

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## Letter to the Editor

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

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN HOUSING DEBATE

The debate between Paul Tolhurst and Kent Barker in last month's edition generated a lot of interest including this letter from the residents overlooking site 158, formerly known as the Orchard site.

Dear Mr Barker,

We write to thank you for expressing the views of many in last month's parish magazine when you wrote that 'we should stand up and say NO - we don't want large developer led estates in Benenden.' The village has expressed the view that it does not want large scale development and this should be respected in the final NDP. By approving larger estate style houses in the centre of our village we are changing the landscape forever. Fields and orchards cannot be recovered. Brownfield sites should always be preferable, even if they are further away from the centre of the village they are sustainable if close to existing settlements. We are not NIMBYs - but custodians of our backyards who must look out for future generations. There must be a way of fulfilling our quota of houses bestowed by TWBC by looking again at a series of smaller developments.

We are not simply driven by self-interest, we want to secure a better future for the whole village.

Yours,

Mr and Mrs A Betts, Mr and Mrs S Collier,  
Mr and Mr R Mills, Mr and Mrs C Parkinson,  
Mr and Mrs D Catlin, Mr and Mrs C Dunkley,  
Mr and Mrs S Raw



## The Roman Catholic Chapel

The Roman Catholic Chapel on New Pond Road offers coffee and biscuits after the 9am Mass on the first Sunday of each month. Whether you are new to the village, here on holiday or just feel like coming along to Mass and a friendly natter, you are very welcome.

## Local bridge players

Would you like to join us? A knowledge of basic Acol is necessary, improvers welcome, both clubs are friendly and provide tea and biscuits.

Rubber Bridge is held on Thursdays, 2-5pm, in Memorial Hall, Benenden.

For more information please contact:

Lesley Attwood 243318

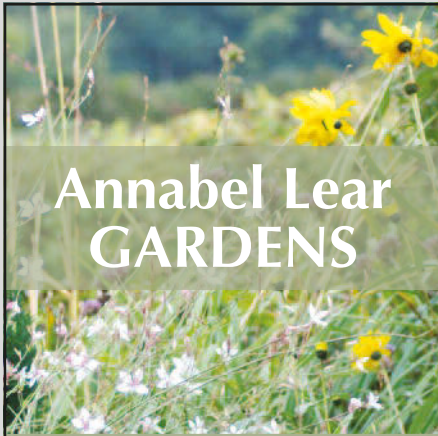
Anne Tylden-Wright 850281

Chicago is held on Mondays, 2-5pm, in Mission Church, Back Road, Sandhurst.

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Eve Willard 01797 253431





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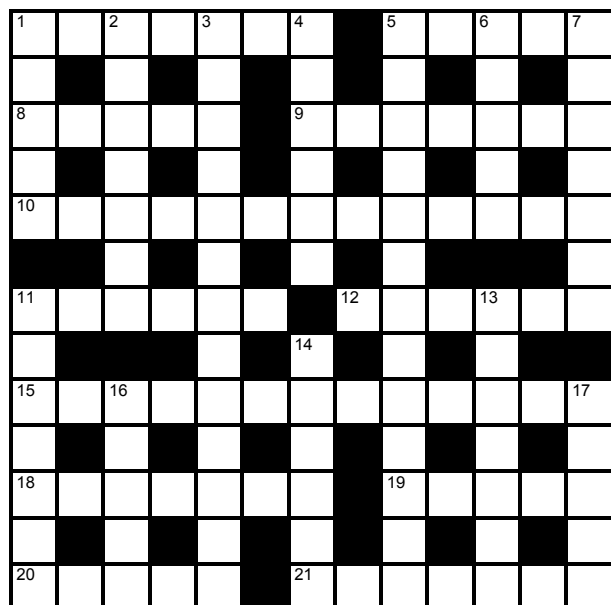


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# MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

## CROSSWORD No9 (Tricky)



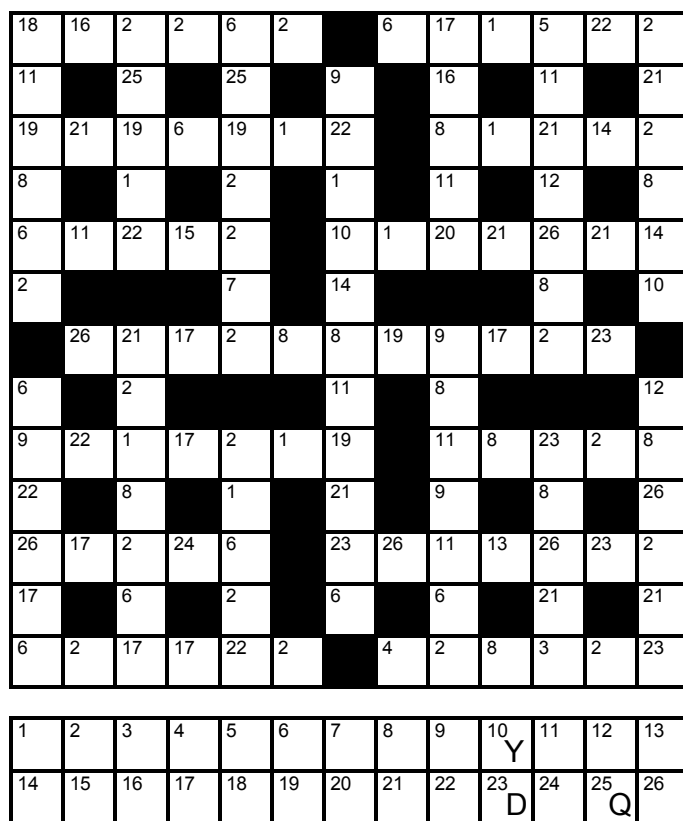
### Across

- 1 Reversing a horse, I'll bet (7)
- 5 Upset by the typo? (3,2)
- 8 He's praying difficult diets will work! (5)
- 9 Bit between teeth? In a roundabout way in the mouth (7)
- 10 Looks to buy upset hippo new sword (6-7)
- 11 Young fish couriered in for unhealthy breakfasts (3-3)
- 12 Your loss if you don't develop (6)
- 15 Gosh, mum! I'm a Orc! Something I ate? (5,8)
- 18 Element illuminated ahead of common greeting followed by hesitation (7)
- 19 Identify moon of Jupiter before Bond's boss in a manner of speaking (5)
- 20 Seductive warning pressure regarding number (5)
- 21 Come what may, there's a good chance of new PM in her place (7)

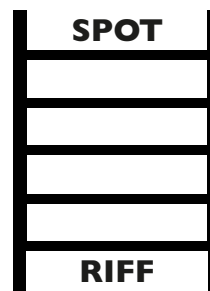
### Down

- 1 Damp morning bed? Ew! (5)
- 2 Smoker found my niche, eventually (7)
- 3 Self-absorbed inept icons rot badly (13)
- 4 Type of magazine extolling shiny hair? (6)
- 5 Disturbed hobo? Cosh, since no alternative (7,6)
- 6 Count on small child being out of bed (3,2)
- 7 Docile mount; friend of pagan god? (7)
- 11 Costs surround bad French women (7)
- 13 Confused oldies I adore (7)
- 14 Calculate with German mountain top (6)
- 16 All I must add to give river reptile its full name (5)
- 17 Deadly Northern matriarch with a degree in herpetology (5)

## CODEWORD No9 (Moderate)

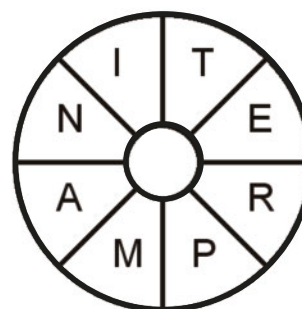


## STEP CHANGE



Change the word at the foot of the ladder into the word at the top by altering only one letter at a time.

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Find the missing letter at the centre of the wheel to create a nine-letter word.  
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## News from Benenden School

It has been a particularly enjoyable few weeks since my last column, featuring among other events the Lower School production of *Coram Boy*, our annual Model United Nations conference, the Chapel choir performing the world premiere of *Make We Merry* by composer David Bednall and an enthralling lecture from Michael Portillo.

We have also just held our annual carol services - four here in total, including one for our former students - and these were all lovely, uplifting occasions. These took on particular poignancy as they were the last carol services to be held in the school hall before it is demolished to make way for our exciting new school hall and music school. We will continue to use the hall until the end of January and we have a series of events planned to say a fond farewell to the building, which has served the school so well for 80 years.

As soon as we return in the New Year the older girls will be taking on their mock exams, so they will be revising during the Christmas break. We also have a team of pupils taking part in the Independent Schools Ski Racing Championships in the French Alps.

We are delighted to have been awarded a Highly Commended accolade in the inaugural Independent School of the Year awards, run by Independent School Parent magazine, in the Community Outreach category. This is in recognition of our role in re-establishing the village shop. As a school we have only played a very small part in this project but recognition for the community's wonderful success is richly deserved. We are proud of our association with the shop and I know how much our pupils enjoy volunteering there; it provides them with invaluable experience and hopefully helps the shop staff too.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

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## Benenden Pre-School news

All the children and staff at Benenden Pre-school are currently enjoying their festive break but it won't be long before they are back and full of energy to start another term! The end of the last term was full of festive fun with plenty of Christmas activities including baking and decorating gingerbread men and creating Christmas cards for mums and dads. We hope everyone enjoyed their gifts!

Even though we are in the thick of the winter the pre-school always encourages the children to enjoy the outdoors no matter what the weather and January will be no different. They are lucky to have a range of activities available outside including sandpits, climbing frames, mud kitchens and balance beams.

We wish you all a Happy New Year!

To find out more about Benenden Pre-School, please email:  
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## Talisker Atlantic Challenge 2018

Billed as the premier event in ocean rowing, this is a challenge that will take the teams more than 3,000 miles west from San Sebastian in La Gomera, Canary Islands (28oN 18oW) to Nelson's Dockyard English Harbour, Antigua and Barbuda (17oN 61oW). The annual race begins in early December, with up to 30 teams participating from around the world.

One Benenden mother is on the start line of the world's toughest row across the Atlantic. Alison Wannell is taking part in the Talisker Atlantic Challenge 2018. Here her mother writes from the Canary Islands waiting anxiously for the race to begin.

Tuesday 11 December. I am sitting on the wall in La Gomera Marina where my daughter Ali is about to set off on the 3,000 mile Atlantic Challenge in an ocean rowing boat, 29ft long and 6ft wide. Ali is rowing with three guys, Toby, Justin and Jeremy in the team called Heads Together and Row.

This is now an annual event and this year there are 28 boats going, 88 rowers from 14 different countries. All are rowing for charity. Some of you may remember Ali and Jeremy held a fundraising quiz night in The Bull, in July 2017 which was really well attended. Thank you all for that. Ali's boat are rowing for Combat Stress, Mind and Marine Conservation.

Today some of the boats have had a practice start, the two support yachts have also been out in the bay, warming up and the weather is gorgeous, warm sunshine and a

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gentle breeze. Everyone has had a busy morning completing their final preparations for the start tomorrow at 10am. The boats will leave in 5 minute intervals, starting with the Fives, up then the Fours, then the Trios, Pairs and finally the Solo rowers who are incredibly brave in my book. Ali's boat will be 18th to leave. Antigua here they all come, with the first boats arriving in English Harbour about 26 January. Christmas this year will be very different for them all but gosh, they will gain some amazing experiences on the way.

It is already a huge jump for my daughter having learnt to row on the Stour at Kent university!

The extraordinary race can be followed live on [www.taliskerwhiskyatlanticchallenge.com](http://www.taliskerwhiskyatlanticchallenge.com). This will show the positions, and how far they have to go etc. We wish them all a safe journey.

Gilly Walton, anxious mum

**CODEWORD No9**

1	A	2	E	3	K	4	J	5	B	6	S	7	Z	8	R	9	P	10	Y	11	O	12	F	13	X
14	G	15	V	16	H	17	T	18	C	19	U	20	W	21	N	22	L	23	D	24	M	25	Q	26	I

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Answers

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**Down:** 1 Bedew, 2 Chimney, 3 Introspection, 4 Glossy, 5 Hobson's choice, 6 Tot up, 7 Palfrey, 11 Females, 13 Idolise, 14 Summit, 16 Gator, 17 Mamba



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## Spirit that embodies 700 years of tradition

Armagnac is France's oldest spirit and thrives to this day. Here Tracy Claridge charts its colourful history.

Armagnac is made in the south-west of France in the heart of the Gascony region. It is obtained by distilling white wine and leaving it to age for many years in oak casks. Unlike Cognac, it can be sold as a blend or as a single vintage. Cognac is distilled twice, Armagnac only once.

France's oldest spirit, Armagnac was already being produced in the 14th century. In 1310,

Maitre Vital Dufour cited the 40 virtues of this spirit in a treatise on medicine found in the Vatican: "If taken in moderation, it sharpens the wit, revives the memory, makes a man merry,

preserves youth and delays senility."

Apart from its many therapeutic qualities, Armagnac was soon appreciated for its taste and it was the Dutch who were responsible for its large scale exportation to northern Europe through the port of Bordeaux. Ever-increasing quantities were exported, especially as result of the War of Independence in the United States.

At the same time, in the region of Armagnac, more and more vineyards were being planted with Piquepoul (Folle blanche) and grape-growing played a major role in the region's economy. Armagnac came into its

own at the king's table in Versailles, and greater care taken with the ageing process meant its reputation soon extended far beyond the region's frontiers. Unfortunately Phylloxera was to destroy three-quarters of the vineyards beginning in 1879, but the region pulled itself back up and in 1909 the Fallieres decree was signed, delimiting three areas of production, Bas and Haut Armagnac and Tenareze. The vineyards were replanted with grafted rootstocks from America and a decree concerning the Armagnac appellation was signed in 1936. A more recent decree in 2005 defined more precise and rigorous conditions for production.



### THE SOILS

Together, Bas and Haut Armagnac and Tenareze account for 14,000 hectares of vines planted in three departments, Gers, Landes and Lot-et-Garonne, where the climate is temperate

and mild. Lying to the west, Bas Armagnac is a hilly area where the vines grow on poor, acidic clay and fine quartz sands, mixed in places with reddish traces of iron. Alluvial deposits are typical of the region, producing light, fruity, delicate spirits. In the middle of the appellation, Armagnac Tenareze is a transitional area with silt and shallow calcareous clay soils. The resulting eaux-de-vie are full bodied and robust. Haut Armagnac is located in the south and east and has recently been redefined. The hills are limestone and clay-limestone and the valleys are covered with a mixture of sand and silt.



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**THE GRAPES** Some ten different grapes are authorised for the production of Armagnac, but four principal varieties stamp their own personality on the spirit. Ugni blanc (Trebbiano) produces acidic wines that are low in alcohol and make elegant, high-quality eaux-de-vie, particularly in the Bas and Tenareze regions. Folle blanche is the best known and gives delicate spirits that often display floral character and a high degree of finesse. They are particularly at their best when used for Blanche or young Armagnacs. Baco, a hybrid obtained from Folle blanche and Noah grapes, was created in the post-phylloxera period by a Monsieur Baco, a schoolmaster, and produces round, suave eaux-de-vie that offer scents of very ripe fruit, especially after a long period of oak ageing. Colombard is now widespread and is used to great advantage in the making of Vin de Pays/IGP Cotes de Gascogne wines. Its fruity, sometimes spicy, aromas are excellent for blending.

**DISTILLATION** Distillation must be completed before March 30 of the year following the harvest, but may be brought forward according to picking dates. Most Armagnac (95%) is produced in a still that is peculiar to this type of eau-de-vie, the continuous alembic still, made from pure copper.

**MATURATION** The eaux-de-vie remain in new oak casks until all the oak's extractable substances have been absorbed (from six months to two years) and are then transferred to older barrels to pursue their slow maturation, where they gain aromas of vanilla, prune and dried fruits and the degree of alcohol diminishes as the alcohol evaporates (the angels' share). The spirit turns a beautiful amber, then mahogany, colour.

**BLENDING** When the cellarmaster deems the ageing period to over, he begins the

blending (coupage). A mixture of distilled water ('petits eaux') and Armagnac is gradually added to the blend in order to reduce the alcoholic strength (minimum 40% alc/vol).

**VINTAGES** Production of a single vintage brandy is peculiar to Armagnac and must correspond to just one year's harvest. Armagnac does not mature further once bottled. It should be stored upright so that the alcohol does not cause the cork to deteriorate.

**MY FAVOURITE ARMAGNACS** The companies I can highly recommend are: Chateau du Tariquet, Chateau de Pellehaut, Maison Gelas, Domaine de Joy, Dartilangue, Castarede, Baron de Sigognac, Chateau du Busca Maniban, Chateau de Labelle, Laubarde, Delord, Domaine de Boingneres, Chateau de Briat and Armagnac Jean Cave.

## Chile warmers

In November we enjoyed a grand tasting of Chilean wines from producer Luis Felipe Edwards at the Benenden School café. Our largest gathering yet had over 50 assembled to try a selection of fine and affordable wines which confirmed Chile's capacity for value for money, consistently delivering well above comparably priced wines from Europe.

What struck me was that within the variety of styles and grapes there was a cohesiveness to the wines making it a distinctly Chilean evening. The Dancing Flame Sauvignon Blanc at £11.65 was a superb alternative to New Zealand, as was the Pinot Noir of the same name. Star of the show, the Gran Reserva Carignan 2013 (under £12) laid on a full, rich, raisiny mouth feel, warm enough for any cold winter night. The evening was great fun, hugely sociable and a lovely way to join the village on a vinous journey. Look out for our next tasting.

Alfred Nicol

## Local Enterprise ... Enterprising Locals

### CRANDEN ENGINEERING

I'm sure I'm not alone in having driven past the relatively small-scale industrial buildings on Cranbrook Road and wondered what they did there. The name Cranden Engineering gives a clue that they might be manufacturing something but the reality is far more specialised and interesting than I could have guessed.

Readers might be surprised to hear that Cranden are the fourth largest employer in the Benenden area and have been in business for 34 years in the building that was once the laundry for Benenden Girls' School.

Cranden are the UK's premier precision diamond tool manufacturer, for grinding very hard materials, like inconel, tungsten carbide, kevlar and ceramic for a huge range of uses from manufacturing aerospace and automotive parts to the threads in pipes used in the petroleum industry. Their USP is their extremely accurate profile wheels which are accurate to +/- 5 microns (= 2/10 of 1000th of an inch). They export all over the world: their largest markets are the USA and Europe, then the the Middle East, Brazil,

Mexico, Canada and Russia. Brexit will pose no problem for them, and would in fact open up many other new opportunities for worldwide trade for Cranden, but, like much of industry, they want the government to get on with it.

Andrew Cranshaw set up Cranden with his then-partner, Eric Dennis, an ex-forces Brit living in Germany. They started manufacturing in Benenden in 1984 and the name Cranden is taken from a bit of both their names ... or from Cranbrook and Benenden whichever you prefer! Andrew was, in fact, born in Stafford but moved to Ticehurst when his father, also in the same business, moved there to take up a job with Diagrit Electrometallics in Staplehurst. Andrew had intended to start out in the City but, instead, was offered job at Kendia producing resin bonded diamond tools in Cranbrook. Eventually after the two companies were forced into an unhappy merger, Andrew grabbed the opportunity of the redundant laundry building becoming available in Benenden to bring staff and customers with him and set up Cranden. Andrew claims he only knew about the building because his favourite pub was the much-lamented King William IV



Operating machinery  
for casting steel



Tank of liquid nickel used  
in the electroplating process



Removing a hot resin bonded  
base out of the press to cool



and later recruited his current sales manager there. They have 42 employees, doing a range of specialist jobs: engineers, technicians, including two industrial chemists, and moulders. They occasionally offer apprenticeships and skills training.

They manufacture two types of diamond tools: electroplated and resin bonded. About 70% of what they produce has a steel body with diamonds bonded to the surface with electroplated nickel. Resin bonding tends to be used for the larger diameter wheels needed, for example, to manufacture the ceramic shafts in heating pumps. They can also be used for trimming reinforced plastics and for machining the carbon fibre bodies of Formula One racing cars. Customer lists read like a Who's Who of

'There are only about four companies in the world that can achieve the accuracy we do here in Benenden' Stuart tells me as we walk through the maze of production and testing machinery in the factory.

The diamond coating comes from off-cuts from the gem industry which are crushed and graded. They come in a huge range of 'sizes' from a gritty substance that looks a bit like caster sugar to something much finer than talcum powder. The industrial diamonds used at Cranden have no value to anyone other than to a company like Cranden, they would not be recognised by any jeweller and have no street value whatsoever.

Soo Hosland-Round, Technical Manager, then took over and showed me how the resin tools are manufactured. The resin layer, which includes the abrasive grit, is formed onto the wheel bodies in a mould at great heat, then hardened over time. Soo also showed me where all the chemical waste is gathered and taken away for treatment so that nothing is allowed to pollute the idyllic surroundings in which this extraordinary company operates.

Minnie Garnier



British Manufacturing; Jaguar Landrover, McLaren, Rolls Royce, Ford, BAE Systems and the MOD to name but a few. The tools they produce for industry use natural or synthetic 'industrial' diamonds - more familiar to the layman in DIY shops as diamond tools.

Stuart Cleary, apocryphally recruited in the King Billy, showed me round the electroplating side of the factory, with its faintly ominous steaming baths of nickel salts, and showed me where the steel wheels are machined and profiled to order and prepared for the plating process. The steel or hardened steel wheels are profiled using form tools produced elsewhere in the factory on state of the art CNC grinding machines and then coated with diamond.



Soo holding a resin bonded cutting tool





## Operation Turtle Dove in Kent

Kent is a stronghold for Turtle Doves and apparently Benenden is

a Turtle Dove 'hotspot'. Nicole Khan, RSPB Turtle Dove Conservation Advisor, explains where help is needed.

### The Turtle Dove

Although we often think of the Turtle Dove at Christmas time (the famous verse we all know from the Twelve Days of Christmas Carol), this species is in fact Europe's only migratory dove; breeding in Europe during the

spring and summer and wintering in Sub-Saharan Africa, so you are unlikely to see them in the UK after September.

The Turtle Dove is a dainty species of dove (weighing in at around 140 grams) with a charismatic turrtrurr-ing call. Its wings are distinctively mottled with chestnut and black and its black tail has a white edge.

Their most similar relative in the UK is the Collared Dove, which has a plainer white-grey body, differentiated by its

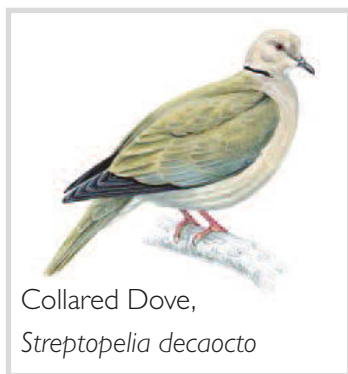
larger size, while Turtle Doves are only slightly larger than a Blackbird.

### What is Operation Turtle Dove?

Operation Turtle Dove (OTD), launched in 2012 is a project which aims to reverse the decline of Turtle Dove. OTD is a partnership of four like-minded organisations with the determination to save this iconic species. The project partners are the RSPB, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, Fair to Nature and Natural England.



Turtle Dove,  
*Streptopelia turtur*



Collared Dove,  
*Streptopelia decaocto*

### Why do Turtle Doves need help?

Turtle Doves are the UK's fastest declining bird species and they are threatened with global extinction (IUCN Red List of Endangered Species).

In the UK, the latest Breeding Bird Survey data shows a 94% fall in breeding abundance between 1995 and 2015 and Turtle Doves have disappeared from more than half of their breeding range occupied in 1970.

There are four main factors associated with the decline of Turtle Doves. These include the loss of suitable habitat in both the breeding and non-breeding range, unsustainable levels of hunting on migration and disease.

The Operation Turtle Dove team are working hard to understand these threats so that we can develop and deliver conservation solutions.

### Food shortages on their breeding grounds

Research points towards the loss of suitable habitat on the UK breeding grounds and the associated food shortages for Turtle Doves being the most important factor driving the decline.

Turtle Doves eat only plant material (mostly seeds) and in the past have relied on seeds from plants associated with arable fields. However over time these plants have become much scarcer and evidence suggests a lack of available food has shortened their breeding season. The resultant reduction in nesting attempts is one of the main drivers of their sharp decline in the UK.

### Turtle Doves in Kent

Kent is the stronghold for Turtle Dove in England. Within the county, 12 important core Turtle Dove areas have been identified as the highest priority for the species. These areas are known as Turtle Dove Friendly Zones (TDFZs) and are the areas where OTD is prioritising its work. Taking this approach will maximise the effectiveness of the project's work by targeting areas that have retained Turtle Doves, despite their current rapid rate of decline in abundance and distribution.

The parish of Benenden falls within one of the Kent zones, and is a hotspot for Turtle Doves.



A foraging Turtle Dove

A dedicated Turtle Dove Advisor operates in the Kent TDFZs, working with farmers and landowners to deliver Turtle Dove habitat on the ground.

The response from landowners to the project has been extremely encouraging, especially from the farming community in Kent, we have been overwhelmed with amount of enthusiasm the project has received. We are currently working with private landowners (including garden sites), farmers, campsites and nature reserves.

The project is still relatively new in Kent and it is hoped its reach will grow and expand. The aim is for advice to be delivered to at least 75% of land area within each TDFZ.

### What Turtle Doves need

In the UK Turtle Doves are birds associated with the farmed environment. They feed almost exclusively on seed, favouring the seeds from native plants traditionally found on the farm. Favoured plant species include Bird's-foot trefoil, Fumitory, Clover, and Vetch species. Their feeding areas need to be relatively short in height and contain about 30-50% bare ground so the birds can access the seed easily.

These areas can be created through cultivated margins, which allows for the natural regeneration of flora already existing in the seedbank or by sowing a special bespoke Turtle Dove mix (Fig.1).

Turtle Doves nest in dense vegetation such as mature hedgerows or scrub, 3-4 meters tall and wide, with a preference for thorny species such as Hawthorn or Blackthorn. The presence of native climbers such as Dog rose, Old man's beard, or Brambles are added bonuses (Fig.2)

As their diet consists of seeds, an accessible source of freshwater is essential for Turtle Doves. This can be a pond, ditch or even just a puddle. The key is there needs to be easy access for the birds to get to the water's edge.

As well as advocating natural forage areas, we are also encouraging landowners in TDFZs to provide an OTD prescribed supplementary seed (see our website link at the end of the article) as a practical way of delivering suitable seed to Turtle Doves in the early breeding season (mid-April to June).

Providing supplementary food for Turtle Doves when they return to the UK in spring will help to ensure adult birds are able to get into good breeding condition and will help to bridge the gap when native wildflower seed is scarce at the start of their breeding season.

**How you can help**  
We would be very grateful if you could report any Turtle Dove sightings you have in the area.

You can do this via the OTD website: [www.operationturtledove.org](http://www.operationturtledove.org) or by emailing [Nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk)

If you are interested in creating Turtle Dove habitat, please do get in touch. We can offer a full free Turtle Dove habitat assessment and provide support with seed mixes.

[Nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Nicole.khan@rspb.org.uk)  
[www.operationturtledove.org](http://www.operationturtledove.org)



Fig 1: An area of suitable Turtle Dove forage habitat, with native arable plants and areas of bare ground

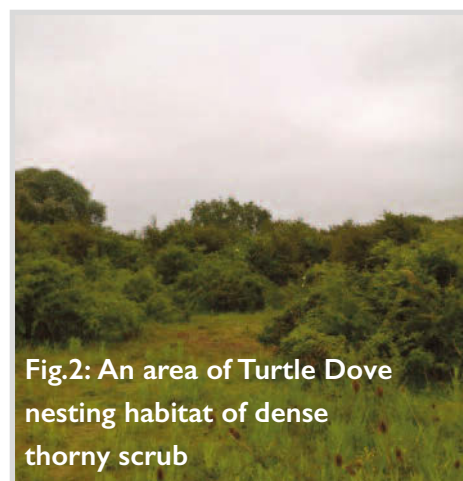


Fig 2: An area of Turtle Dove nesting habitat of dense thorny scrub



## In Your Garden

### Winter colour and scent

I must confess that in the days before I took up gardening as a profession, I never gave a second thought to what was happening outside over winter - I only seemed to look out of the window if it was snowing. All that has completely changed now that I spend a working week outdoors, and I find myself at the opposite end of the scale, generally fretting that my clients have something to look at and enjoy for 365 days a year.

It's a tall order but a very amiable one if you start looking at colour from a different perspective. Sunlight levels change over winter, they become lower and softer and this gives a wonderful glow to any plant caught in its rays. A group of dogwood stems backlit by sun is mesmerising; a swathe of bleached grasses offset against an evergreen backdrop, such as a conifer or even just a green lawn, has a pared-down quality to it; a waft of perfume from a branch of witch hazel or a sprig of sarcococca stops you in your tracks - it's definitely the case that 'less is more' in the winter garden, and that's what makes it a real treasure for me.

If you start from a house window that you



Dogwoods in front of a mature Norway spruce



Hellebores and gaultherias

mostly look out from (for me this is my kitchen and then the breakfast room) and place plants where you will see them, then you will quickly see the difference it makes. I have a block of *Stipa tenuissima* outside my kitchen window, a juniper, adding steely grey notes and then a large bay tree against the house wall. It's a real winner every winter.

My clients love having containers planted somewhere beside the house, so I use small hellebores with hardy cyclamen, some dogwood sticks cut from the hedge and a few of those miniature evergreen packs of shrubs you can buy at the garden centres. A few grape hyacinths and some anemone blandas pushed in after planting keeps it all going into spring.

If all of this sounds like too much work, then I recommend visiting a garden open to the public over winter, such as Sheffield Park, any of the RHS gardens will be good, and if you are ever in Norfolk, the Bressingham Gardens are spectacular. Enjoy the winter months, wrap up warm and keep your garden ticking over - it will make all the difference come the spring.

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*Stipa tenuissima*



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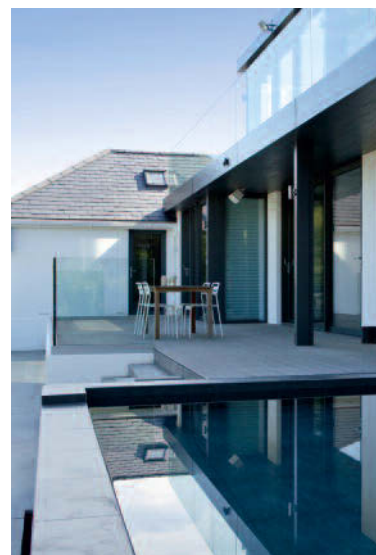
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Above: Fundraising, friendship and fun: warmth and welcome at the Christmas village lunch; Chris Parkinson accepting a cheque from the Benenden Players for ABF The Soldiers' Charity following the Trench Foot Revue; Pantomime rehearsals embracing talent from all ages. Photographs: Hayley Agora

Front cover: Festive spirit shared at the Christmas village lunch. Photograph: Minnie Garnier