

Benenden Magazine

October 2019



Standen Street Fruit Farm Apple Day

Sunday 13 October

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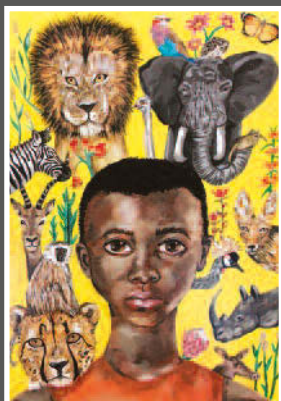


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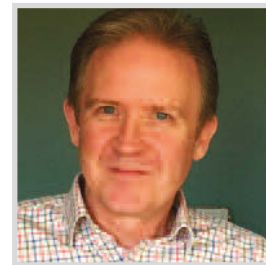
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Editorial



Benenden bonfire on the move

In magazine land, we're always a month ahead of the rest of you. While you're still revelling in the elongated balminess of September, we're already deep into the October issue, wondering if we've got any pictures of pumpkins for the front page (we hadn't) and realising that before too long we'll be printing recipes for mulled wine.

My fellow editor Ruth Clark brought home to me the impending nature of the end of the year when she informed me the other day that she had secured her spot as No 1 turkey on the Ward's Christmas list, which as we all know is a position conferred only upon village elders, like being supreme pontiff, only with extra giblets.

So, that's it. The ineluctable, immovable events of the village cycle are taking us towards Christmas lunch already, except this year there's one immovable event that has been moved. Our bonfire night extravaganza, so long an annual feature on the Glebe Field, has been overtaken by events and will have a new venue.

Now that the new primary school is in situ (see a report from the open day on page 10), the organisers have decided that, although fireworks could feasibly be launched from the Rolvenden side of the site, there would be no place for a fire of any note so a move had to be made. Briefly there was the unthinkable threat of no fireworks night in the village, but Benenden Girls' School has stepped in to save the day and the whole shooting match will now be held on the field to the left of the main entrance on Cranbrook Road, on Saturday 2 November, with pedestrian-only access.

No doubt, given the 'can do' attitude of the Bonfire Committee, this year's conflagration will be as big, bright and brilliant as ever.

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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Acting Advertising Manager: Paul Leek, Advertising Assistant: Iain Fraser

Distribution: Marilyn and Dick Hill, Layout Editor: Camilla Macdonald

Contributions to: benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com by the 10th of the preceding month.

Advertising orders or queries to: advertising.benendenmag@gmail.com.

Distribution queries to: dd.rhill@btinternet.com.

Postal address: c/o Community Office, Benenden Village Hall, Benenden, TN17 4DY 01580 240371

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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

Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 julia.collard@btinternet.com

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 6 October	8am Communion	11am Harvest Service followed by Harvest Lunch, Village Hall	5pm Evening Prayer
Sunday 13 October	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 20 October	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Sunday 27 October	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Friday 1 November			7.30pm All Souls' Day Service

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The Roman Catholic Chapel TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Wedding 14 September Catherine Settle and Tomas Mabelson

Funerals 13 September Audrey Ball Charing Crematorium
30 September Barbara Barham Funeral

Rector's Letter



Efforts of the past securing the future

I know a lot of people are going to mention it this month, but ... what a fantastic new primary school we have. Thank you to everyone who has worked to bring this about. It is something that the whole community should be proud of and should be happy to support. This is for our children and for future generations; they - and the staff - are the ones that really matter in all of this; they now have somewhere to teach and work, to learn and play, that is wonderful. Already people are looking back, remembering and wondering how teaching and learning ever happened in the old facilities. Here's to a great future at the new school.

Here we are back in October once again, and November is just around the corner. Both months are times of looking back, of reflecting, of remembering. At the end of the month we have our annual service to remember and commemorate those whom we love but see no more. In November, of course, we have our service of Remembrance and Acts of Remembrance. I would encourage you to be involved in both of these services if at all possible.

Remembering our loved ones whom we see no more, reminds us of who we are and where we have come from. It is an important part of our individual identities. Doing so all at the same time - with community - reminds us that we are part of something bigger, something stronger than we can be individually. Remembering, in November, those who lost their lives during times of conflict should remind us of the price of war and the incredibly high value of living in peace with our neighbours; something that current nationalistic tendencies in many countries around the world seems to be forgetting. We would do well to remember.

So please join us for the service of Commemoration of the Faithful Departed at 7.30pm on Friday 1 November, at St George's Church. Refreshments will be served at the back of church from 7pm. Names will be read out, and people are invited to come forward to light candles in memory of loved ones. If you would like one or more names read out, please let Cathy Baker have these by Sunday 27 October (emailing her at: benendenchurch@gmail.com) or by putting names on a list at the back of the church.

Please also join us as local community, but also aware that we gather nationally to remember those on both sides of all conflicts that this country has been involved with over the years. We gather to remember young men and women who died fighting for the freedom to live, freedom to speak, freedom to think, freedom to worship as they wished. Our service of Remembrance at St George's begins at 10.45am on Sunday 10 November, followed by an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial immediately after the service.

Remember: so we don't forget. Remember: so we don't make the same mistakes.

Revd David Commander, Rector

Village Calendar

October

Friday 4	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 5	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 5	Darts London Fives, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 6	St George's Harvest Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.9
Monday 7	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Lunch at the White Hart, Newenden	p.23
Friday 11	The Music Scholars of Benenden School, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.9
Saturday 12	Skittles, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 13	Apple Day, Standen Street Fruit Farm, Iden Green, 1pm	
Tuesday 15	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.25
Tuesday 15	Iden Green and Benenden WI, A Vet's Life, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.23
Wednesday 16	Defibrillator Training, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Training Centre, 6pm	p.15
Saturday 19	Benenden Bowls Club, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10am	
Saturday 19	Bingo, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 20	Harmsworth Court Service, Community Room, 4.30pm	
Sunday 20	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.17
Monday 21	Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7pm	
Monday 21	Ethiopia: The Cross and the Coffee Pot talk, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.15
Tuesday 22	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	
Saturday 26	Stephen Message, Art Exhibition, Memorial Hall, 10-5pm	p.35
Saturday 26	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 27	Stephen Message, Art Exhibition, Memorial Hall, 10-4pm	p.35

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Benenden Bowls Club

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

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 5 October Domestic Waste only

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

Saturday 19 October Domestic Waste only

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

Garden Waste will no longer be accepted by the Civic Amenity Vehicle

Parish Council



Some may say that being a Parish Councillor is a thankless task, and I wouldn't entirely disagree, but every now and then something comes along that gives us some encouragement that we can, and do, make a difference.

This happened over the summer months, when one of our vigilant councillors picked up that planning applications had been submitted relating to the project approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for houses in Walkhurst Road (now named Vere Meadows). Perfectly correct for Wedgewood Homes to do so, of course, but it appears TWBC do not have to inform us that these applications are live and we were particularly concerned about the one relating to external lighting and boundary enclosures, both being contrary to our emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan policies.

We informed TWBC that it is unacceptable that the Parish Council is not consulted on these applications, as well as objecting strongly to the lighting and boundary proposals. We also wrote directly to Wedgewood Homes expressing our disappointment that there was no prior discussion with us on the matter, and that the introduction of a street lighting scheme was wholly inappropriate for a rural village such as Benenden.

We are very pleased to report that Wedgewood Homes quickly submitted revisions to the scheme, showing that the only external lighting would be 'security' lights at the front entrances to the properties, and boundaries would be improved by introducing more hedging and climbing plants to exposed fences. The application was then approved by TWBC on 23 August, and our thanks go to all residents who also helped by posting their objections to this application online.

We have since received reports that Wedgewood Homes are carrying out their work on site in a considerate and responsible manner, which must be good news for neighbours.

Date for your diaries: our autumn village clean will be on Saturday 9 November - normal arrangements of picking up equipment from outside the shop and Iden Green pavilion between 9-9.30am, to be returned by 11am.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair
01580 240364 nic.jthomas@btinternet.com

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org
For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on facebook

Parish Council Meeting
Monday 21 October 2019,
Memorial Hall, 7pm



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Just a Thought



Past and present

The young soldier arrived on duty with a sigh. It was late evening and he hoped for a peaceful night. Things had been quiet recently, though there had been trouble the previous week when a band of rogue militiamen had almost made it along the gorge.

His was a small unit posted to the fort built on the cliff top to guard where the gorge opened out. People could land on a beach of pebbles that had formed at the river's edge and as water was low in this season it was easier for men to get through. Settling at his post he looked up at the sky, which was clear with bright stars establishing themselves across the darkening canvas. The moon would be up soon to bathe the towering rock walls with its eerie light and create strange shadows with the shrubby bushes and hardy trees that clung to the crevices and hollows.

The soldier listened. Silence. Memories of the exploding cannon, terrified horses, shouting and screaming, suddenly crowded into his mind. He thought then, with longing, of his family so many miles away. His son, fair-headed, tough, always exploring (and getting into trouble), growing up fast. His daughter, quiet and thoughtful and dark like her mother. He wondered anxiously how his wife was coping. Surely the troubles would end soon and he could go home at last.

Perfect! Just what the young dad been hoping for. The place was both beautiful and quiet, far away from the hustle and bustle of the city, with not even a good internet connection. They had driven across the plateau, through valleys with their terraces of vines and finally, more locally, lines of lavender. At last the family had arrived at a delightful campsite situated in this dramatic slice through the limestone hills.

After establishing their camp in a well-rehearsed routine, and of course feeding the starving children - who hadn't had anything since the snack at the last 'aire' - they made their way down to the river, which was low at this time. They spread their towels on the pebble beach. The great cliff walls of the gorge towered above them, but not enough to blot out the sun which shone from the clear blue sky.

They all went for a swim, gasping and squealing at the coldness of the water. Eagerly the youngsters swam across to the other side and scrambled and slithered out on to rocks, ready to explore the gorge a little further. The boy told his younger sister that it was like exploring some new part of the world for the very first time. They tentatively clambered towards the narrowing rock faces. Then the boy followed the line up to the top of the gorge, and on the opposite side saw what seemed to be a ruined fort from long ago.

"Wow! Look at that. We're not the first after all. I wonder what that was for and who lived there."

Sue Fisher

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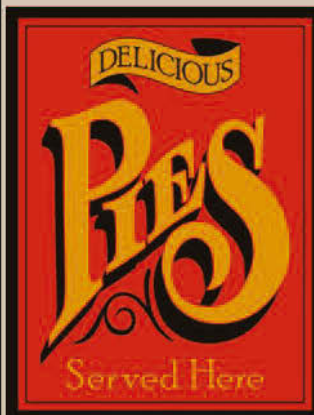


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News and Events

Neighbourhood Development Plan

NDP Regulation 14 consultation extended
Researching and writing the neighbourhood plan has proved to be a titanic task. The plan is nearly 90 pages long and supporting documents consist of nearly 300 pages, but all documents were published via our website (www.benendenneighbourhoodplan.org) on 25 August.

In the age of the internet, online publication is sufficient for formal consultation, and printing the full plan is very expensive. However, we did say we would also provide a limited number of hard copies. Unfortunately our printers have had problems and physical production was delayed. Printed copies of the plan itself are now, finally, available via the parish office or community shop, with supporting documents all online. We have also extended the deadline for your feedback until 31 October.

Once the consultation has closed on that date, a sub committee comprising some parish councillors and some NDP Steering Group members will review your feedback - as ever they must work within national and local planning policies and guidelines. They will make recommendations to the full parish council on changes required to the plan before it is submitted to independent examination later this year.

Expect to hear more from us in December and January.

Paul Tolhurst, Chair NDP Steering Group



Benenden needs You!

**Get involved
and help shape
our future**

St George's Church Harvest Lunch

Sunday 6 October, Benenden Village Hall,
12.30-3pm

The Harvest Lunch will follow the Harvest Festival Service which will start at 11am. Menu includes: smoked salmon terrine, chicken & gammon salad with new potatoes (vegetarian option available), lemon tart with fresh berries & cream. Tea, coffee & mints. Soft drinks are included. Wine & beer will be available to buy.

Always a popular occasion, so buy your tickets early (adults £7, under 12s £3.50) from:

Benenden's Community Shop, in Church or from
Lesley Attwood 243318 lesley.attwood@sky.com

Everyone Welcome

The Friends of St George's Church
are proud to sponsor a concert by

THE MUSIC SCHOLARS OF BENENDEN SCHOOL

Friday 11 October 2019
at 7.30pm in St George's Church

Tickets: £8 for adults - 16 and under Free
(ticket includes refreshments, a glass of wine/soft drink)

Tickets available at the door,
from Benenden's Community Shop,
or from Jo Clube 01580 242956 jo.clube@aviva.com

Music Scholars concert

The Friends of St George's are delighted to host a concert by the talented Music Scholars of Benenden School, which will be held in St George's Church on Friday 11 October at 7.30pm. The programme will include classical and more up-to-date pieces performed by individual girls using a variety of musical instruments.

The value of these annual concerts is not just in the enjoyment of the scholars' undoubted talents, but also in the fact that we often see them progress year by year. Proceeds are used to support and enhance the church and churchyard.

For ticket details, see above



The new primary school open morning

‘Probably the best primary school in the world!’

Peter Thomas joins the rest of the village at the open morning to mark the completion of the thoroughly modern Benenden Primary School

It's open morning at the new primary school and there's a twitter of excitement among those who have reconvened at the village shop to compare notes. Talk at the till is of a building that is, after so many years of waiting, wholly fit for purpose or even, after coffee and a slice of cake, "the best primary school in the county, possibly the world".

Up the road, Bill Martin, former school governor, is leaving the building in question with a look on his face that combines deep satisfaction and utter relief. Bill has been involved in this project from the beginning, as one of the driving forces who kept it going through tempestuous times, but even he's not sure quite how long it's taken. It must have seemed like a hundred years, I venture.

"More like 200 at times," he sighs, but the light at the end of the tunnel has been reached and suddenly it all seems worthwhile. "It represents 95 per cent of what we were hoping to achieve 15 years ago, and to be able to say

that is quite an accomplishment," he declares. "Now it feels strange to walk around a brand new building, which, for so many years, had remained little more than a distant dream and a very slowly developing set of design drawings.

"The positive and enthusiastic response from everyone I spoke to this morning was hugely gratifying and it seems at long last we have a unique new school of which we can all be proud. I am a bit conservative when it comes to modern new buildings and often don't like them, but this one is different and I run the risk of being quite excited by it!"

Lindsay Roberts, headteacher, is a recent arrival and has been spared all the controversy, but she's keen to add a little historical context to the debate. "It's cited in the parish records of 1936 that they needed a new school," she confirms, "and it's nice that all the work that's been done since then hasn't been in vain.

"I can't take any credit for what we've got but it's testament to the team here that things have gone so well since we opened, because on 27 August we didn't think it would happen, but everybody's worked very hard to make it work."

The late hitches that threatened the grand opening included the non-arrival of BT connections and well-publicised troubles with the 'green' roof, which had to be stripped due

to concerns about its weight; but despite signs apologising for a recent flood that has wreaked minor havoc, those who once worked in the ancient, creaking edifice of the old building are delighted with their new home. Even former head Gill Knox says it's so nice she's "almost tempted to come out of retirement". But only almost.

"It's so calm and quiet," says teacher Charlotte Williams, casting an eye around one of the well-equipped, purpose-built classrooms. "You walk along the corridor and it's such a relaxed atmosphere, whereas before you had to walk from one class through another to another and disrupt everybody's lessons to get anywhere.

"To be able to spread out into the outdoor areas to do so many activities is lovely and the reception class's outside area is phenomenal - so fit for purpose. It's amazing how we all soldiered on and succeeded in the old building but it's nice now to be able to get on with the working day properly, not having all the children eating lunch in the classrooms while you try to get stuff prepared for the afternoon.



Bill Martin

"It's a wonderful building and this morning is a big thank you to the village for all they've had to put up with. We think it's all been worth it."

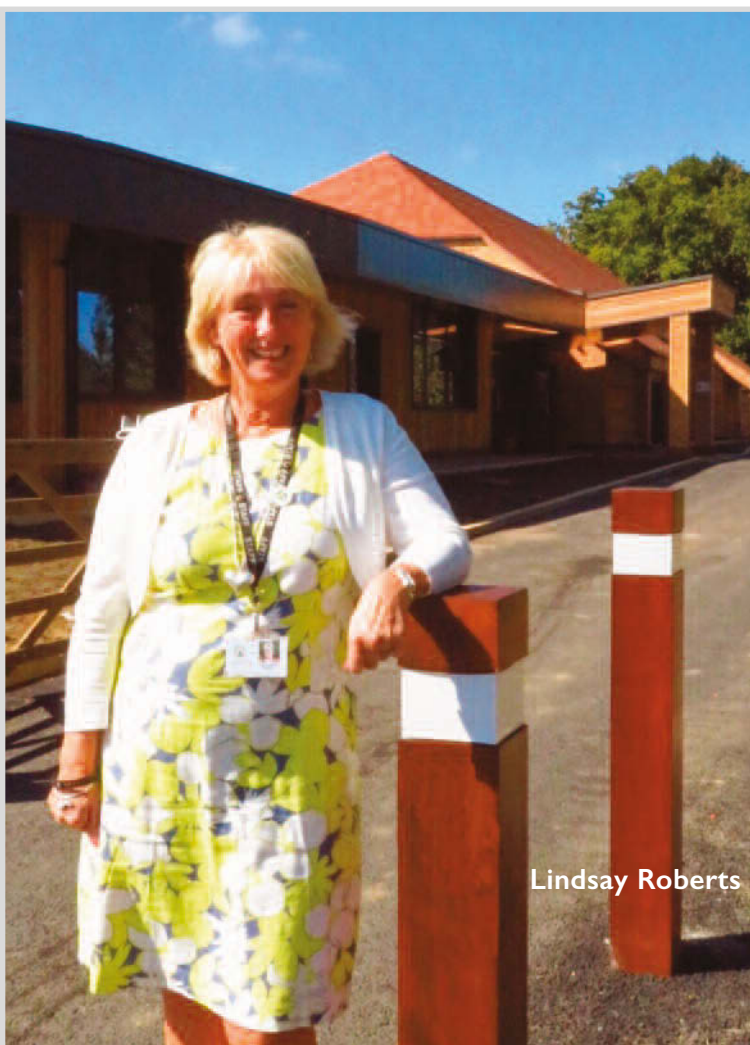
Outside, Bill Martin takes a look back at the smart new wooden cladding, the light and airy rooms and the glorious expanse of terracotta tiles, and he thinks it's been worth it, too. It's just that after 200 years or so of working to get the job done, perhaps he won't know what to do with his time. "Don't worry," he smiles, "I can get back to restoring my MG now. If it hadn't been for the school, I'd be driving it by now!"

Benenden Church of England Primary School open morning

We were delighted to welcome so many people from the village to look around our lovely new school. Judging from the comments, people are as excited as we are to have this amazing new building in which our children can learn and thrive.

The coffee morning raised a staggering £550 for Macmillan Cancer Support - thank you.

We welcome anybody from the village who would like to help in our school - with reading, cooking, group work and so on. If this appeals to you and you can offer a regular time each week, please contact the office on 01580 240565 for more information.



Lindsay Roberts

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 or telephone **020 7219 7107**.

www.helengrant.org

Produced by Helen Grant MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

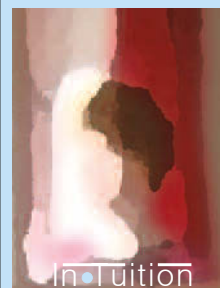


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Benenden Bonfire & Fireworks

Saturday 2 November

New Venue

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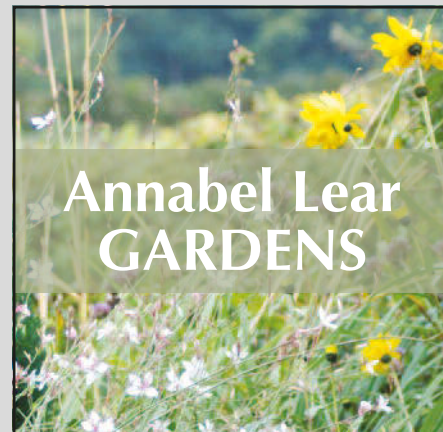




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Panto news

Over the summer Benenden Players have been busy. We try to provide some educational opportunities to our younger members: this year we are focussing on backstage skills as a critical part of a great performance. Thanks to the support of the Benenden Bonfire society we delivered a one-day sound workshop to a select bunch of youngsters. This gave participants an introduction to sound controls; to explore how a sound desk works; practice mixing and setting up sound levels to achieve the best results; and have some fun producing sound effects; concluding by putting this learning into practise. Later this year we'll host a lighting effects day.

But now it's autumn and the panto season has begun with auditions at the village hall. Bev Beveridge crafted another brand-new show, Sinbad's Quest, during the long hot days of summer, and with so many kids and adults turning up to try out, the creative team now face the difficult job of selecting the best cast to bring the show to life.

Finally, preparation for our late summer revue (Saturday 28 September) is almost complete, featuring a host of your panto favourites, a number of sketches, and some new musical numbers as well. Tickets have been going fast: you can still buy them in the community shop or online. I hope to see you there.

Nancy Tolhurst

All Souls' Day service

Friday 1 November, St George's Church,
7.30pm

If you would like the name of a loved one read out in this reflective service please let Cathy Baker have these by Sunday 27 October (emailing her at: benendenchurch@gmail.com) or by putting names on a list at the back of the church. Refreshments will be available for a time of fellowship from 7pm.

Revd David Commander, Rector 240658
revdavidcommander@gmail.com

ETHIOPIA: THE CROSS AND THE COFFEE POT
Monday 21 October, St George's Church, 7.30pm



An illustrated talk by
Rosemary
Kobus van Wengen

Donations invited for
Water for Ethiopia

The Arnold Cole Trust

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

All applications in writing please to:
The Secretary, Arnold Cole Trust, Scribbins,
Benenden, Kent TN17 4DT. Please note
applications must be received no later than
30 November.

Defibrillator training

Wednesday 16 October, Benenden Hospital
Quinlan Training Centre, 6-7.30pm

Learn about emergency resuscitation and the use of defibrillators at the Benenden Hospital Quinlan Training Centre, (free and open to 10 years old and up). To confirm attendance please email:
lhigham@benenden.org.uk



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Village hall highlights

Over the summer break we have been busy making improvements at the hall, so you lovely hirers can make your party go with even more of a swing. Sonos is now available as an extra to your hall hire. Sonos uses your smartphone/tablet to stream music via our WiFi system - all you need to do before your hire is to download the Sonos app for free, from any app store on your smartphone or tablet. The app will act as your remote control for the hall's surround-sound speakers, where you can play music, adjust volume, add your music service accounts and much more.

Our lovely staff will ensure that the system is all set up ready for your party and will take you through the app on your phone. Music at your fingertips for your party or event. You can also hire our lighting system to turn the hall into a dance floor, and we even have a rotating glitterball to add that bit of Strictly to any occasion.

In addition to the new sound and lighting system, we have also now installed an audio induction loop. Also known as a hearing loop, it is a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids, providing a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.

The staff and trustees of the hall are committed to providing all hirers with the best possible service and strive to make our hall a wonderful asset to our community. We would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions as to which other services you think would benefit the hall and its users.

The Farmers' Market in the village hall:

Tuesday 1 October, 9-11am

Tuesday 8 October, 9-11am

Tuesday 15 October, 9-11am

Tuesday 29 October, 9-11am

www.benendenvillagehall.org

Lorraine Jones 07419 989830

enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org



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Please come and join us. You do not have to get messy, just have fun!

Revd David Commander, Rector

01580 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com

We'll be reviewing how Messy Church is going after the September, October and November services, and making a decision whether to continue in January or not. Your feedback would be welcome.

Talking Shop

A taste of autumn

It may be autumn but at Benenden's the good cheer continues, with plenty to tempt the palate and enliven the social scene. As we let you know last month, the shop is now stocking Harvey's best bitter, and IPA and it is selling well.

Harvey's is produced in Lewes, in a brewery which has been operational for over 225 years and is unashamedly made with locals in mind, but if you are not a Harvey's devotee, there are plenty more great local brews to choose from on the shelves, as well as ciders and great wines.

As the weather turns cooler, the café will be returning to the provision of the wonderful soups which are always so popular. There will also be a choice of hot meals as well as the tempting and popular range of homemade cakes.

Tickets for the hugely popular Benenden Bonfire Night will be on sale in the shop from 1 October. It will take place on Saturday 2 November this year. Tickets are also available for the Harvest Lunch, which takes place in the village hall on Sunday 6 October.

A date for your diary is the volunteers' carol singing, mulled wine and generally convivial evening which will take place in the café on Friday 6 December at 6.30pm. You still have plenty of time to sign up as a volunteer if you fancy joining us for this fun evening.

Bev Beveridge



Patients digging trenches (heavy grade work)

Benenden History

A breath of fresh air: Benenden Hospital

Founded in 1907, Benenden Hospital was originally a sanatorium for Post Office workers suffering from tuberculosis (TB). It all started with Charles Garland, a Post Office clerk, who was appalled at the plight of his many colleagues who were contracting and dying from TB. The dusty and cramped offices in which sorting clerks and telegraphists worked, made perfect breeding grounds for the highly infectious disease to flourish, and Garland had the idea to set up a friendly society for him and thousands of his fellow employees to contribute a small amount into a fund to help those who contracted TB.

Such was the opposition, derision and countless obstacles that it took ten years before the Post Office Branch of the National Association for the Establishment and Maintenance of Sanatoria for Workers Suffering from Tuberculosis Friendly Society came to fruition. This was despite figures from the early 1900s showing that out of every 100 deaths of Post Office sorting clerks, almost half were down to TB, a disease which went on to claim the lives of writers Emily Bronte and George Orwell, poet John Keats

Results of Treatment at Benenden				
	1907	1908	1909	1910
ARRESTED	11 - 27.92%	76 - 41.26%	94 - 41.7%	102 - 38.5%
IMPROVED	9 - 21.03	70 - 38.46	99 - 43.8	124 - 46.8
UNIMPROVED	8 - 27.59	30 - 16.48	32 - 14.1	35 - 13.2
DIED	1 - 3.45	6 - 3.3	1 - 4	4 - 1.5
Total	29	182	226	265
	1911	1912	1913	1914
ARRESTED	9 - 33.0%	181 - 60.4%	171 - 58.4%	112 - 40.38%
IMPROVED	137 - 49.1	91 - 30.4	110 - 36.5	126 - 45.65
UNIMPROVED	49 - 17.2	23 - 7.6	25 - 8.1	27 - 9.78
DIED	2 - .7	5 - 1.6	3 - 1.0	11 - 3.99
Total	279	300	309	276
	1915	1916	1917	1918
BETTER IMPROVED	44 - 19.38%	52 - 27.84%	49 - 19.22%	25 - 9.06%
IMPROVED	123 - 54.1%	94 - 48.48	105 - 60.7%	192 - 69.56
UNIMPROVED	36 - 15.86	30 - 15.46	34 - 9.91	36 - 13.04
WORSE	11 - 4.85	10 - 5.15	17 - 6.67	9 - 3.37
DIED	13 - 5.73	6 - 3.1	10 - 3.92	14 - 5.07
Total	227	194	255	276

and actress Vivien Leigh. At the turn of the century, about 300,000 people nationally were suffering from the illness, but only 22,000 a year could be treated.

At the time there were only 500 beds in England and Wales where treatment for TB was carried out, so a new sanatorium was needed. Benenden was chosen because of its location in the open countryside, ideal for TB patients, for whom it was thought fresh, clean air and bed rest were key to their recovery. The 250 acres of land, which included a working farm and a church, were bought for £20 an acre and on 14 July 1906, Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, third daughter of the late Queen Victoria, laid the foundation stone which can still be seen today in the Pavilion restaurant.

The sanatorium was built and equipped impressively quickly and took its first patients in March 1907, less than a year later. Then, it had 196 beds in all (38 today) and 25 were reserved for society members while the rest were used by members of other societies and bodies that belonged to the National Association.

Patients were given various grades of work while they were being treated, depending on their stage of recovery, to help cure them and maintain their fitness for when they returned to work. Examples of grades included NGU (Not Get Up



Nursing staff pictured in 1911



Two patients on a graded walk,
(possibly the Benenden Loop)



The bomb blast which killed caretaker Mr Abrehart

from bed), OTL1 (Out of bed To Lavatory Once), OTW (Out of bed To Wash), U2H (Up for 2 Hours) and UAD (Up All Day). Once they reached UAD stage, they went on graded walks, but men and women were segregated and had to walk different routes around the grounds. However, their paths would cross in the woods, on the so-called Benenden Loop and, for reasons probably best left to the imagination, they became known as the 'Mingling Woods'.

Some patients stayed for months, even years, and when they left they were 'drummed out' by the Bensan Band, Bensan being the nickname for Benenden Sanatorium - hence the name Bensan Ward, still in use today.

During the First World War, the sanatorium was near military operations and there were fears that supplies could be cut off. The safety of patients and staff could not be guaranteed so the sanatorium was closed but re-opened just a few months later when the fears appeared unnecessary. In December 1925, the upper storey of the east wing was gutted by fire and it led to the sudden withdrawal of 20 to 34 beds, but it was rebuilt, and things returned to normal the following year.

During the Second World War, Benenden lay in what was known as 'Bomb Alley' because it was

along the route enemy planes took to London. In September 1943, the sanatorium's laundry, boiler house and St Margaret's Church suffered bomb damage, but no-one was hurt. Sadly, on 17 June 1944, at 4.40am, a house next door took a direct hit from a flying bomb and caretaker Charles Abrehart, his wife Dorothy and their daughter Joan were all killed while they slept. Although the sanatorium was badly damaged, no-one inside was seriously hurt.

The year 1955 marked a milestone for the society as it marked its 50th anniversary, but it was also the year Garland died, and the hospital's Garland Ward was named after him. Two years later, the changing nature of the illnesses being treated at the sanatorium led to it being renamed the Benenden Chest Hospital, a name that some still associated it with until quite recently.

Today, 112 years on from its foundation and following a multi-million-pound re-development, it is an award-winning private hospital offering a wide range of healthcare consultations, treatments and diagnostic services, including orthopaedics, weight loss, cataracts, varicose veins, gynaecology, urology and private GPs.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director

www.benendenhospital.org.uk



Patients used to be drummed out
by the Bensan Band



The Queen on her visit in 1950, closely
followed by special guest Charles Garland

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Fabulous fete flying experience

Little did we know when we walked over the road to Benenden fete this year that it would end up with us strapping ourselves into a light aircraft to soar around that very same village green.

We already thought we'd hit the jackpot that afternoon when our Cavapoo, Daisy, claimed first prize in the waggiest tail category of the dog show.

But there was even better to come as the grand raffle was drawn and our number came up.

Village resident Paul Tolhurst, a qualified flying instructor, had donated a light aircraft flight from Headcorn aerodrome as the premier prize.

As there are four of us in the family, he very kindly agreed to split the prize into two stunning one-parent / one-child trips soaring up into the skies above Kent.

Each flight took us out across Bewl Water and back over Benenden to see our home and the village from the air, then on across Romney Marsh towards Rye before heading back to the airfield via the north of Ashford.

Along the way we soaked up glorious aerial views of the beautiful countryside, lost our stomachs in a couple of steep 'rollercoaster' dives and got the chance to play pilot as we took the controls ourselves (grown-ups only, under the expert supervision of Paul, of course).

Huge thanks to Paul and the village fete organisers for the chance to enjoy such a wonderful experience.

And if you didn't buy a ticket for the draw this year, make sure you don't miss out next time around.

Stuart Collier

Hospice in the Weald

I am writing this in the 'cool' of 28 degrees at 5.30pm, having 'enjoyed' temperatures of over 30 degrees earlier today. However, when we had the Open Gardens and Jazz Evening in Biddenden in August, the temperatures were at least 12 degrees cooler and we endured extremely heavy rain. That didn't prevent our stalwart supporters and dedicated committee from experiencing a very enjoyable evening. Who would have believed that 60 plus people could happily be huddled together under gazebos? Thank you, Robin, for supplying them.

A massive 'thank you' to Fiona and Paul for opening their gardens to us and supplying the committee with much needed sustenance. Also, grateful thanks go to Bob Sharp, a brilliant saxophonist, who entertained us.

Thanks go to Tracy Claridge for the raffle prize and good wine. Everyone agreed it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and we beat the inclement weather. The icing on the cake was the £1,800 raised for the hospice, so enormous thanks to everyone who supported such a good cause. The biggest thanks go to everyone on the committee, and their husbands, who worked tirelessly with good humour and laughter. How lucky we are to have people who give so generously.

A date for your diaries:

Christmas card sale and coffee morning,
St George's Church, Benenden

Saturday 2 November, 10-12noon

Please support the hospice and buy your cards whilst enjoying a coffee with cakes.

Please do contact me for further details:

Jenny Stevens, Hospice in the Weald Friends
Co-ordinator for Benenden and Sandhurst
07720 006244 jenny.tenterden@gmail.com

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Benenden School news

Benenden was a busy place during the holidays but nothing can match the atmosphere of the school being filled with the girls once more. They quickly began the serious business of learning and the Six Twos were busy on their first weekend with UCAS activities and preparing their personal statements.

I am incredibly pleased with what our girls achieved in their exams this year, especially in the face of some incredibly challenging exam papers as part of the Government reforms. Of course, there is far more to an education than exams but this certainly does not stop us celebrating girls' impressive achievements during the summer.

At GCSE, the coveted new Level 9 top grade was the most common achieved at Benenden, accounting for a third of all grades (34 per cent). Twenty per cent of girls achieved nothing less than a Level 8 (equivalent to A*). This represents an improvement on last year's excellent results, when 57 per cent of grades were at this level.

At A Level, the percentage of girls achieving A* - the highest level - is currently at 23 per cent. I say 'currently' because it rose last week following re-marks and may continue to change over the coming weeks, such are the perils of the examination marking system! More than half of grades (55 per cent) were A* or A. Perhaps even more pleasingly, 80 per cent of leavers got in to their first-choice university, and they are now heading off to some truly impressive higher education destinations in the UK and abroad.

Our project to build a new school hall and music school has continued to progress over the summer months. The basement, ground floor and first floor of the music school is now in place. Building support pits have been dug for the new hall and the next stage is to build the foundation floor. As you may have noticed, we have a rather large crane on site helping with the project.

Finally, it was lovely to welcome local drama group YT93 Performing Arts Academy to use our theatre for a week for their summer show, Mamma Mia! We are always delighted to share our facilities with the local community.
Samantha Price, Headmistress

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: Iden Green Tennis Club



When: Friday Term Time groups from 5pm onwards



How much: £6 per session



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

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

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Brian Biggs visited us at our last meeting to give an enthralling account of his 42 years as a tugboat captain. He made us laugh when he talked about his qualifying course, which consisted of myriad relevant subjects, including midwifery, taught by a nun! We also learnt about the London docks, boats and bridges and how gradually technology infiltrated the vessels. This meant that working in the open was no longer necessary and they missed the fresh air, which had been considered 'good for the lungs'.

We visited the tranquillity of a member's delightful farm for a special coffee morning, where we were surrounded by sheep, chickens and gorgeous flowers. These enhanced the happy, sociable and convivial atmosphere within, where we enjoyed coffee, cake, chat and a bountiful raffle.

On Monday 7 October, we are looking forward to visiting the White Hart in Newenden for lunch. Most members will be meeting at the village hall at 12pm. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 15 October at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, when we look forward to listening to an account of a vet's life. Should any ladies feel they would like to join us, please contact us on the number or email below. You will be made very welcome.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

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For more information please visit www.benendenhospital.org.uk/gp

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☎ 01580 242 521

✉ hello@benenden.org.uk

📱 benendenhospital.org.uk/gp



Benenden Village Trust news

We have been delighted by the positive response to the new play area on the Benenden recreation field. Both residents and visitors to the village have said how much they appreciate the facilities, but it has been pointed out that additional seating is needed and more picnic benches would be appreciated. Before considering buying new ones, we thought we would just ask if anyone has unwanted picnic tables or benches that they might donate? They would need to be in reasonable condition but we could give them a cosmetic makeover if needed.

Attention must now turn to the Iden Green Play area; we will do some more running repairs, but the rot has set in and the end is in sight. The Trust would very much like to see a new play area here too, but what sort of equipment will best meet the needs of users? We need a few people with understanding of the local children, enthusiasm, ideas and a little time to generate a fresh design and work with us on any fundraising needed. The experience and ideas of the Play Benenden group will be at your disposal. Could you spare a little time? If so please contact me or our clerk, Caroline Levett, bvtclerk@gmail.com / 01580 240371.

Elsewhere, the Trust is currently considering the facilities at the Bowls Club and the St George's Club and plans to carry out a wider consultation when ideas for improvements have become firmer.

David Harmsworth, Chair
www.benendenvillagetrust.org

Village lunch

Tuesday 15 October, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

Our village lunch costs £5, is open to all ages and everybody is welcome. If you would like to come along, or if you enjoy cooking and would like to join the band of volunteers, we would love to hear from you.

Genevieve Greenwood 240526

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or helenjcommander@gmail.com



Benenden Hospital news

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any organisation or charity they work for and at the hospital we are looking for people who are kindly willing to give their time to help meet and greet our patients and visitors.

We currently have a small team of volunteers who provide guiding services and deal with reception and patient queries as well as a range of other administrative duties within a very busy hospital setting.

Our other volunteer roles include catering, portering, gardening and maintenance of our extensive grounds. We are enormously grateful and indebted to our volunteers for the invaluable support they provide our patients and visitors, and our staff.

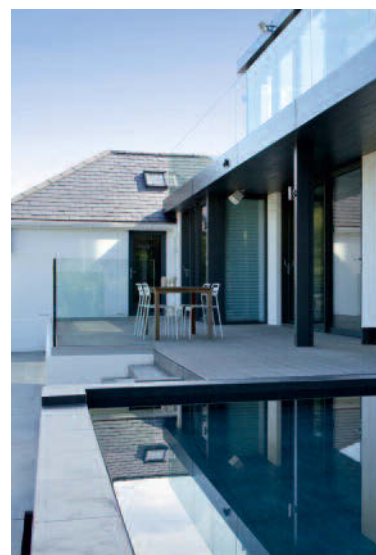
For many, it gives them the chance to give something back to the community, meet new people, boost their confidence and gain work experience.

I'm a volunteer myself, and trustee, for Canterbury Oast Trust, and many of our staff are volunteers too. So, if you're a friendly person who is willing to give the gift of time, however much that may be, we would love to hear from you.

Contact: Emma Clements 857406
volunteering@benenden.org.uk
Jane Abbott, Hospital Director



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Fete stalwart steps down

I first started living in Benenden in 1999, at Church Cottage, funnily enough right next to the church. To be honest, the bells at St George's used to annoy me, but for some reason I went into the church, the Reverend Christopher Smith volunteered me onto the fete committee, and that was that.

Now, after 20 years of service, I have decided 2019 was my last year at the helm and it's time to look back at how the event has moved on over the decades. In 1999 the St George's Church Fete, as it was called then, took place in the vicarage garden, into which we all squeezed for a quintessential village event. Over the years, it spread out to include the Glebe Field - a most welcome use of more space, with more things to do, more of a spectacle, and great fun for all.

Then Christopher moved to the coast, the Reverend Charles Hill took over and he was relieved of any fete duties for more pastoral and academic matters. It continued smoothly on, growing year on year, the committee changing from time to time, with the motto 'it'll be alright on the day' never truer. Some people who you didn't see all year suddenly turned up on the Friday and Saturday and, hey presto, it always seemed to work, then as now.

How the day has changed, though. The Benenden Village Fete, in support of St George's Church, as it is now called, takes place on the Green, for all to come and see and take part and enjoy. The Reverend David Commander is now part of the committee, Capt Jack Sparrow at this year's event!

I have so enjoyed working with so many members of the committees over the years, and I am very pleased to pass over the reins to Joy Rowlands, with the same committee of 2019. They are a great team and you can rest assured the fete is in very good hands - and I will still be organising and running the very popular Hop Inn.

Thank you for all your support over these 20 years. Benenden is a great place to live, with great people who are not afraid of mucking in when the time comes. Thank you.

Tracy Claridge

The Friends of St George's Church



Quiz Night

Friday 15 November 2019
7.15 for 7.30pm
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To book a table please contact
deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com 01580 240454

Benenden Pre-School news

Benenden Pre-School has started the new academic year with a second 'Outstanding' from Ofsted under its belt. The Pre-School rooms were repainted over the summer holidays so it looks very smart and the garden has also had a face-lift: we are so lucky to have a couple of green-fingered parents generous with their time.

As part of our 'green' contribution, we are supporting a company called TerraCycle to 'recycle the non-recyclable'. The nearest collection point is Charity Farm on Swattenden Lane, where we can take any type of crisp packet, cake/biscuit wrappers and any Ella baby food pouches. We have a receptacle for all these items so please free to fill it.

supervisor@benendenpre-school.co.uk

Hospice in the Weald musical event

Wednesday 16 October, 3pm

Gil Jetley will be coming from Italy to present a premiere of his own arrangement of the Warsaw Concerto for solo piano. His programme will also include Bach-Busoni and Schubert-Liszt. Tickets by donation (minimum £16).

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Spotlight on: Nick Snow

Dark side of the moon: war crimes and the space race

What connects Benenden, German WWII scientists and the Saturn moon rocket programme? It's Nick Snow who has lived in the village for 15 years and he has written and co-produced a film about this that is currently touring the UK.

Nick trained as a journalist in the early '80s and found himself working on a magazine for the satellite TV industry. "I was lucky in that I was given a lot of responsibility early on and have spent the rest of my career linked to the TV business in one way or another." Today Nick's publishing company Advanced Television covers media technology.

TV satellite launches were a regular occurrence in the early '90s and he was sent to French Guyana several times to report on them. While researching the launchers he became fascinated by the role German scientists played in developing rockets that not only launched satellites but also helped America to reach the moon.

"German scientists and technology were in great demand at the end of WWII by the British and the Americans and I knew that my grandfather was involved in the British intellectual reparation programme." Delving deeper into the history Nick was inspired to write a thriller ten years ago: *The Rocket's Trail*, which features Wernher von Braun and his deputy Arthur Rudolph. Von Braun

developed the V-2 rocket during WWII, after which he was secretly moved to the US. Rudolph was also extracted to the USA where he eventually became project director of the Saturn moon rocket. But Rudolph had direct links to war crimes and, although the USA military went to extreme lengths to cover them up, he was eventually deported, the only former Nazi to be so.

But then Rudolph tried to return and faced a tribunal, the transcript of which forms the basis of Nick's script for the drama documentary. "Making the film with director Johnny Gogan involved interviewing some fascinating people, such as Eli Rosenbaum, Chief War Crimes Prosecutor of the USA. It took a while to raise the funding, but we eventually did it," he says. *Prisoners of the Moon* premiered in March at the Dublin International Film Festival.

"It's a story that not many people know, and I wanted to tell it to a new generation on the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11. We don't want to detract from the incredible achievement of landing on the moon, but there are stories of human endurance connected with rockets that need to be told, and there are lessons about technology developed with no moral compass".

See *Prisoners of the Moon* at 7.30pm, Saturday 9 November in Benenden Village Hall. Details below.

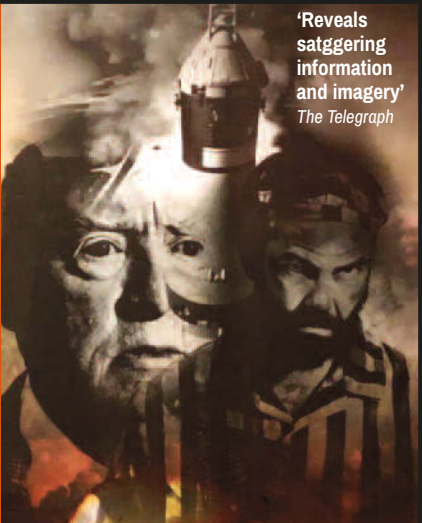
www.prisonersofthemoon.com

Ruth Clark

Saturday 9 November, Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm

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Busy beekeepers helping the hives

We all know the buzzing sound of bees on a summer day, but did you know that there are over 270 different species of bees in the UK? All these bees can be divided into two main groups, the solitary bees and social bees. Solitary bees live on their own and you might find them in the brickwork of your house or any small hole they might find suitable to build their nest. Social bees, like the bumble bees, live in groups of 50-150, but the most popular social bee is the honeybee, which will live in a colony of up to 50,000.

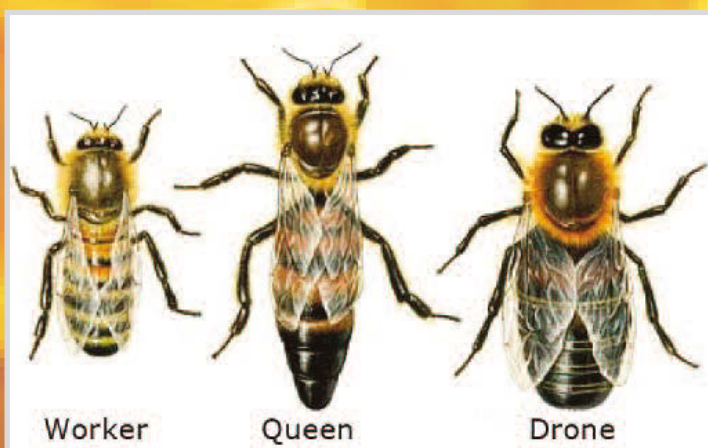
A colony will normally consist of a single queen, thousands of female worker bees and during spring and summer a few hundred drones, with every member playing a vital role for the survival of the colony. The queen is the only female bee able to lay fertilised eggs which will hatch into worker bees. The tasks of worker bees range from cleaning, nest building, brood rearing, bouncer at the entrance to keep intruders out, undertakers and water collectors, to the final task of foraging pollen and nectar.

The drone's role is to fertilise a virgin queen during her mating flight. A queen will mate with multiple drones during her mating flights, which will give her enough fertility for her lifespan of on average 2-3 years; unfortunately the lifespan of the drone is immediately over after mating, but if you find a dead drone on the floor then look closely and you might see a little smile on his face.

Bees pollinate one third of all the food we consume, as well as flowers, while they fight against monoculture, pesticides, pests and diseases. With the end of summer approaching and honey all harvested, the beekeeper is now busy to prepare the colony for winter. This will include a close check on their food storage and feeding them to make sure that their larder is full for the winter months. This is also a time to treat against varroa mites, a pest which arrived here in the 1990s from Asia.

The bees themselves will expel the last drones from the hive, which are no longer needed, and start sealing all the little gaps to create a draft-free hive. As soon it gets colder, they will cluster closely together,

flutter their wings and shiver to keep each other warm, with the queen well protected in the middle. Flying will be minimised and only on a warm day will some bees come out for a short cleansing flight or to collect water to dilute any crystallized honey, before the temperatures finally rise again in spring and the hunt for nectar and pollen starts again.



Eike Mangold and Steve Tredwin

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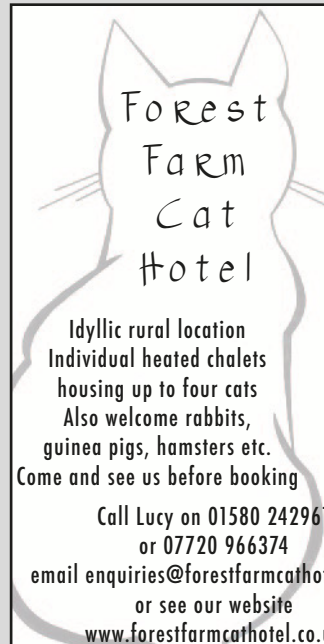
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Food & Drink

Chateau hopping in France

Our roving wine correspondent Tracy Claridge reports back from a summer spent in pursuit of the finer things

My youngest daughter Alice, post GCSEs, my partner Deborah and I headed off for la belle France this summer for what might best be described as a busman's holiday.

A beautiful 19th century property (www.chateau-orignac.com), like most in need of repair and some TLC, it boasts 100ha of vines and sunflowers and cereals and dairy, sitting in the Fins Bois Cognac region, and is owned by the Meyer family, famous for Commander Meyer, who persuaded the Germans not to blow up La Rochelle at the end of the last war.

I had intended to leave all UK news behind, but Brexit was the first question as we sat down for supper with Yvan Meyer, my great friend and colleague, head winemaker and technical director at Maison Sichel. Everywhere we went it was the same. The love/hate relationship has always existed with France. Now they are worried that we are leaving, if indeed we ever do?

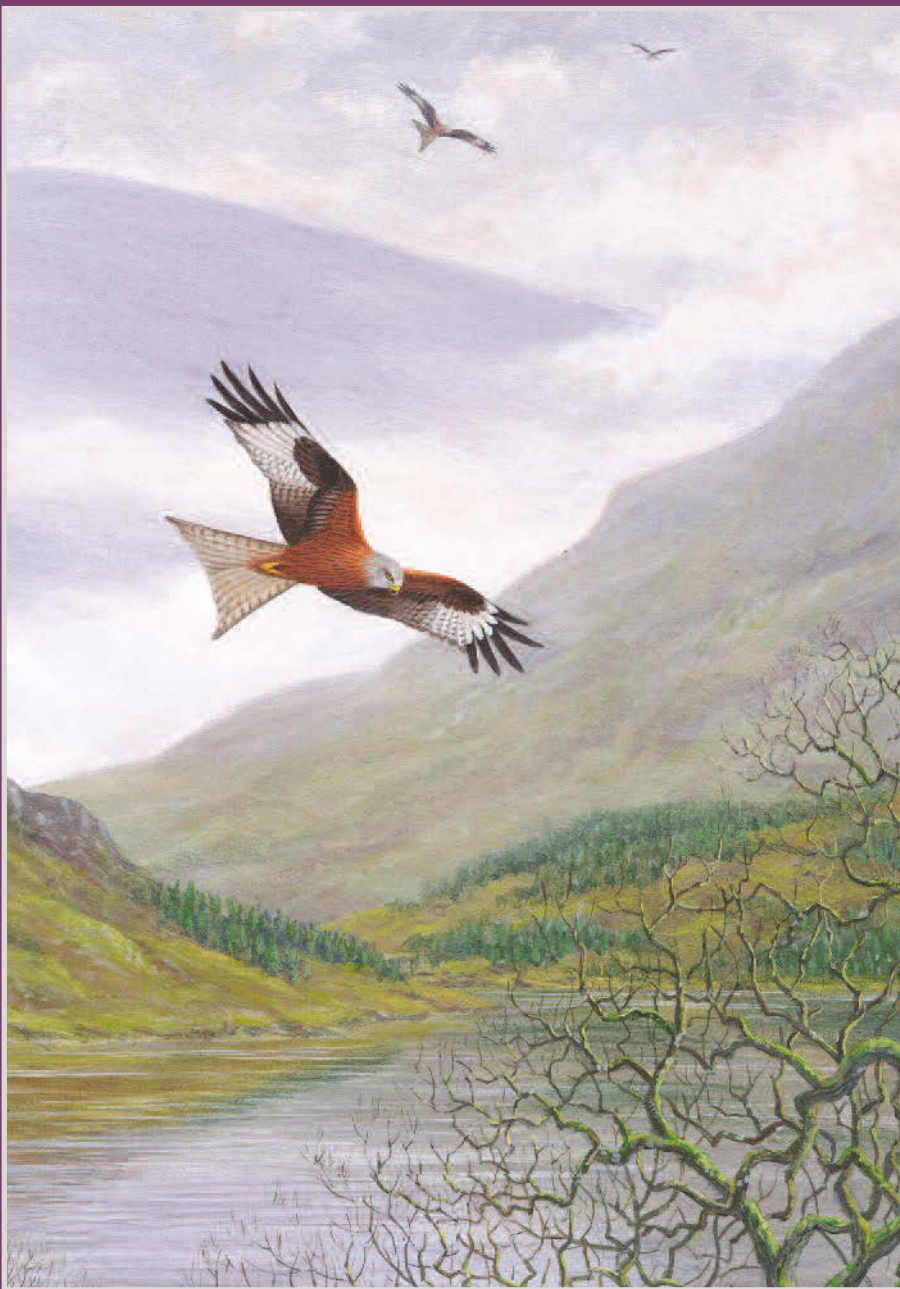
We picked up my other daughter Emily from Bordeaux airport, and after three days

at Orignac we headed to the other side of the city, to Chateau Biac (www.chateaubiac.com), a Lebanese-owned property overlooking the Garonne at Langoiran. We stayed in Vieux Biac, a 17th-century house that has been tastefully converted into gites. They are available to rent and I would highly recommend them.

We spent a day in Perigord before heading south, arriving at Domaine St Hilaire, 15 minutes from Pezenas, at teatime. It was once owned by one of Napoleon's generals, Baron Hilaire Reynaud, but is now a 70ha estate owned by English couple Nick and Lisa Kent (www.domainesaint-hilaire.com).

Nick has given it the attention it requires and although the winery is a work in progress, like many previously run-down properties, the wines are improving under careful management and are all available in the UK. The accommodation is 5* and available to rent.

We headed back up the other side of France, spending a night in the beautiful town of Beaune in Burgundy and then Reims before the short journey home. Even with the poor exchange rate, good/better value was to be found everywhere on the food and wine front. I came back to Brexit nonsense, found myself not knowing what to believe and who to trust anymore, but what I do know is that I love France and their certain *je ne sais quoi*/joie de vivre. Sante.



Bird Notes

The reintroduction of species into former areas where they have now become extinct is a highly controversial area of conservation - when the species is a predator then the level of controversy is significantly heightened. This year is the 30th anniversary of the release of Red Kites in the Chilterns and on the Black Isle in northern Scotland.

Back in 1989 there was a small population (52 pairs) in mid-Wales and it was hoped that this existing population would expand to recolonise former areas. Red Kites are colonial nesters and the population in Wales had been stable for many years with little evidence of any expansion. The habitat of the Welsh population could be described as an upland area with secluded valleys and

remote woodlands, which could be considered the preferred habitat for this species, but Red Kites were well known to occupy a much wider range of habitats including urban areas, helping to cleanse the grimy streets of medieval towns and cities, and it was probably persecution that drove them to this remote area of Wales.

Red Kites are mainly scavengers and road kill can make up a large part of their diet. However when the opportunity arises they will take young birds, which is fine if it is a young corvid but not so good if it is a young Lapwing. Needless to say there was considerable debate regarding where these introductions should take place and eventually the above mentioned two release sites were chosen, with young Red Kites imported from Germany, Spain and Sweden and a few from Wales.

The reintroduction has been successful beyond the wildest expectations, particularly in southern England. Successful breeding took place after a few years of release and the population has exploded, to the extent that anyone now travelling up the M40 around Oxford cannot help seeing Red Kites on the hunt for roadkill. I have certainly counted over 20 on quite a few occasions.

Between 1989 and 2013 over 1,000 young birds have been released, which includes other subsequent release areas. The population has increased to such an extent that there are no reliable figures but a conservative estimate in 2017 gives a figure of 4,000 pairs in Southern England alone.

Given that the world population is estimated to be 23,000 to 29,000 pairs, this means that southern England supports an amazing 15% of the world's Red Kites (they are mainly European birds).

The reintroduction to the Black Isle has, by comparison to the Chilterns release, been very disappointing. Exactly the same number of young birds was released in 1989 in both areas and the breeding success was comparable. The habitat was different but thought to be equally good if not better and the food supply equally good, but the population has stagnated at 200 pairs.

What went wrong? A number of Red Kites have been found poisoned and the release area is adjacent to intensive grouse shooting moors where there is intensive predator control, some of it illegal. All birds of prey are protected but it is very difficult to police remote areas. The evidence is pretty damning when birds of prey, particularly Hen Harriers, fitted with satellite tracking devices keep disappearing over driven grouse moors.

There have been no releases in southern England since 1994 and because of the fantastic success in the Chilterns some of these young Red Kites have been used in other release projects - there is a possibility that some may even go to Spain, where the Red Kite is not faring so well. Spain might be making good use of the descendants of the birds they provided 30 years ago!

Red Kites are now seen regularly in Kent. I see about two or three a year in our parish and I frequently get reports from parishioners, some including photos. According to the Kent Bird Report 2016, there are about 450 sightings per year - up from 250 two years earlier. This is a rapid increase and I have heard that they have begun breeding in east Kent. I think the future looks very bright for the Red Kite as it is very adaptable across many habitats, and I believe it could well become our commonest bird of prey, overtaking the Buzzard, which is constrained by territorial behaviour.

Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com

Illustration: Stephen Message



Stephen Message

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In Your Garden

Sowing sweet peas and autumn containers

I have had such great success with an autumn sowing of sweet peas that I now no longer sow in the spring. Last year I did a trial where I sowed twice, and the results were definitely in favour of an autumn sowing. The only catch is that you will need

somewhere for the young plants to over-winter. This can be a cold-frame or a bench in a cool greenhouse or you could cloche them on a sheltered terrace, but the main thing is to protect them from excessive wet and cold.

If this all sounds a bit of a faff - and I understand a spring sowing is a lot less of a bother - then all I can say is that it is worth it. The plants are much stronger and sturdier without a doubt, they can go out in the ground as soon as the soil gets a little warmer - around the beginning of April is fine - and as they have better root growth, romp away very quickly with minimal tying-in. Spring-sown plants are very fiddly to tie-in in the spring and also succumb much more to slugs, so really, it's a win win if you have the capabilities for an autumn sow.

One final tip: it's a very good idea to pinch out the tips once the plants have reached four sets of leaves, so take out the top two leaves and this will stimulate new side shoots (and ultimately more flowers).

I get a lot of joy from planting my



sweet peas

containers in the autumn. They don't have to last as long as summer containers, so I can understand it seems a bit indulgent when Christmas arrangements are beckoning in December, but having some freshly planted pots near to a doorway is a pleasant seasonal transition.

Also plant choices have a different effect at this time of year when the light levels are lower and gentler. So, using foliage is a must: cyclamen, heathers, small grasses such as festucas and tiny evergreen shrubs would all work, plus a delightful plant which looks like silver barbed wire (name unknown unfortunately). Then for colour try anything daisy-like: dwarf asters, yellow coreopsis and erigerons; gentians are a vivid blue and of course, cyclamen.

If you are in the mood, then aim high. Try a salvia, a rudbeckia or a dahlia with some tall grasses if you have the space. You may find it easier to put a big tall plant in a pot of its own and then group the pots together for a display, but using the tender plants will limit you to early frosts so I do tend to use hardier perennials more in the autumn - plus they can all go out in the garden afterwards. Whatever combination you choose, enjoy getting creative with your garden this October.

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Above: Culmination of tremendous hard work: Benenden Primary School open morning; Benenden Players' Sound Tech Day for Teens; Barry Bassett helps raise £27,000 for mine charity riding 300 miles; Stuart Collier and family taking their fete prize flight courtesy of Paul Tolhurst

Front cover: Sunset, Iden Green. Photograph: Clive Illman