

# Benenden Magazine

October  
2017





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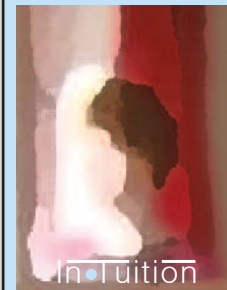
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# Editorial



Ah 'tis the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness; when we look around and see the harvest gathered in and in the garden there is less to do - which is good - though the days are shorter - which is sad. Crisp autumn mornings are always bracing and invigorating, inviting one to stride out and breathe deeply, while the fields are candyflossed with mist. We feel we have to make the most of the sun, and revel in its lingering warmth. Dark and soggy early evenings are less of a joy but even then the scent of woodsmoke, and that autumn smell a bit like bramble jelly in the cold air is an invitation to rush in, shut the door and light the fire. The warmth and comfort inside experienced all the more acutely after the chilly weather outside.

The stars always seem brighter on a cold night and I have been known to walk into a hedge while stargazing in the course of taking my disapproving dog for a late night amble. I can just about identify the Plough and Orion's Belt but that is the extent of my knowledge. You can feel the presence of all those other stargazers at the same sky from the same place over thousands of years.

I always wish I were a painter or a photographer and could capture some of the wonderful effects of light and colour at this time of year: evenings when the sun seems to give an almost red/rosy light as it goes down, sheep and cattle looming out of the mist and the colours of turning leaves. It's quite possible I've never quite grown up and where I'd really like to be is back at nursery school painting fircones and colouring-in the traced outline of an autumn leaf. Colouring-in was one of my strong suits at school and, sadly, is something this generation of children doesn't seem to do (making geography in particular much less fun). However, psychiatrists have expounded the many benefits of colouring-in and you can now get adult colouring-in books of all sorts. The perfect occupation in front of the fire.

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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# Church Calendar

## St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 david@dc-uk.co.uk (day off: Thursday)

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk

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

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 1 October	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion and Sunday School	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 8 October	8am 1662 Communion	11am Harvest Service followed by Harvest Lunch, Village Hall	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 15 October	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Sunday 22 October	8am Communion	10am Matins	5pm Praise Service at Mission Church
Sunday 29 October	8am Benefice Communion	10am All-age Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	
Thursday 2 November			7.30pm All Souls Day Service

## Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 david@dc-uk.co.uk (day off: Thursday)

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

## Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Rev Peter Michell 240642 www.idengreen.org.uk

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

## The Roman Catholic Chapel

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

## From the Parish Registers

Weddings  
9 September Toni Mitchell and Jason Walden  
16 September Sarah Channing and Ryan Mills  
23 September Kate Driver and Dan Potter

Funeral 21 September Mervyn Carey Funeral at St Margaret's, Horsmonden

# Rector's Letter



## Free, but priceless

Last month, in my letter, I wrote about the beauty of the nature that I had experienced when on holiday over the summer in Scotland, and also of the beauty of our churchyard and the wildlife there. I would encourage everyone to be observant and take it all in. We are surrounded by the beauty of creation; we are well blessed in the area where we live, and in the country we live in; we should not take it for granted.

This month, in the church, we mark the Harvest; a traditional village time of celebrating the harvest being gathered in; the crops brought into the barns; the fruit and hops safely gathered for another season. We have done so down through the centuries to give thanks for the crop from nature, and for the people who have worked through the year to produce the harvest. This is a traditional, rural event; one that we continue to uphold - even though most of us have never worked on a farm or out in the field. What we can all do at this time, even if we haven't got our hands dirty with the earth, is celebrate all that we have; we can celebrate all the things that we have been blessed with in our lives. Just like the beauty of nature, we should not take any of the things we have been blessed with for granted but recognise them and be thankful.

Very early in November, we will hold a service to commemorate the faithful departed. This gives us all the opportunity to remember and celebrate the lives of those we have known, and loved, and have been blessed to share life with. The service at St George's Benenden, takes place at 7.30pm on Thursday 2 November (All Souls' Day); the service at St Nicholas Sandhurst is at 10am on Sunday 5 November. A list of all the names read out at last year's services will be available in both parish churches in early October; can you please check these sometime in the month and let me know if you would still like the name read out, or if there are other names you would like adding this year. Please join us at either service as we remember those whom we love but see no more; those whom we miss in our lives. Whether they passed away recently or many years ago, we still feel the loss of a loved one. Come and remember them in one of these gentle, reflective services.

We have all been blessed with the gift of life; that gift includes those whom we love. Life is fragile; life is precious. The gift of life is given to us freely - but it is actually priceless. Do not take the gift of life for granted, but embrace it and respond to it with a generous and grateful heart.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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# Just a Thought



## A novice at Greenbelt

'So where is the tent?'

'Over there!' my daughter exclaims, waving in the direction of the sea of tents.

'And which one of the 1,764 tents might it be?' I ask tentatively.

'It's a blue one.'

'Oh that's good, it cuts it down nicely to one of 593.'

Having finally located the tent and unloaded my baggage I take a look around. There are youth groups, church groups, families of varying sizes, people from nine months to 90 years, all sorts of everybody. It is the Greenbelt Christian Festival. Time to plan how to get through the next three days without being sucked up into the giant soap bubbles emanating from the children's novelty tent, or deafened by the rock and pop groups pounding their self expression from the main stage or waylaid by a multitude of stalls determined to significantly lower my cholesterol, or clothe me in environmentally friendly, ethically traded, natural products from the developing world.

I studied the thick directory all laid out in user-friendly colour-coded sections. In the end I thought if I stuck a pin in six blue, three pink, one purple and a green it would give me a satisfactory mix. In my randomness I seemed to have landed Molten Meditation, Fuse Factor, Feel the Noise, Loving the Hell out of People and 'Baby Makes Three' - maybe I'll just try that again.

I also appeared to be letting myself in for a lot of walking between tents, the arena, and some large marquees, but significantly my daughter let slip that everyone sits on the ground. Now there was a limit to the amount of earth-hugging that this novice Greenbelter was prepared to engage in. To fold myself double on the ground and remain in a semi-foetal position for anything up to an hour whilst some person endeavoured to lift my soul, was a step too far.

'Well you can take a camp chair,' she reluctantly conceded, 'but you will have to sit round the edge.' The edge was fine by me. Still, I trotted from this venue to that and looked, listened, sang, laughed, thought and listened again. I even took part in 'harmonic temple singing' if only once!

Preparing for bed came some time after midnight but that was just as well since nobody under the age of 25 even considered the possibility before then. Which brings me to the delicate topic of portaloos. Never mind spiritual challenges, I will just say that I soon learnt to use the permanent facilities whenever the opportunity arose.

I suppose Sunday night was the most memorable. As I lay under my duvet on my camp bed, sheltered from the wind and rain, there was wave after wave of loud, enthusiastic singing. Apparently the visitors to the organic beer tent were moved to sing traditional hymns and choruses to modern pop tunes and were not subject to the midnight curfew as it was deemed an 'act of worship'. Quite an experience, but a good one!

Sue Fisher

# Village Calendar

## September

Sunday 24 Benenden Pre-School 50th Birthday Tea Party, Benenden Village Hall, 10am p.9

## October

Friday 6 Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm  
Saturday 7 Bingo with nibbles, St George's Club, 8.15pm  
Sunday 8 St George's Harvest Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm p.9  
Thursday 12 Benenden Women's Club, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm p.17  
Friday 13 The Music Scholars of Benenden School, St George's Church, 7.30pm p.23  
Saturday 14 Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon  
Saturday 14 Benenden Bowls Club, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10-12noon  
Saturday 14 Pavilion Quiz Night, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm p.17  
Saturday 14 Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm  
Sunday 15 Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm p.25  
Monday 16 Planning Committee and Transportation Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7pm  
Monday 16 Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm  
Tuesday 17 Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm p.29  
Tuesday 17 Iden Green and Benenden WI, Whale Watching, Memorial Hall, 2pm p.21  
Saturday 21 Hospice in the Weald Concert and Supper, Benenden Village Hall, 7pm p.15  
Saturday 21 Cornhole Tossing, St George's Club, 8.15pm  
Tuesday 24 Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm  
Tuesday 24 The Royal British Legion Benenden Branch AGM, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm p.23  
Saturday 28 Benenden Engineering Society, local MG TC under restoration visit, 10am  
Saturday 28 Stephen Message, Art Exhibition, Memorial Hall, 10-5pm p.35  
Saturday 28 Fish and Chip Supper, St George's Club, 8.15pm  
Sunday 29 Stephen Message, Art Exhibition, Memorial Hall, 10-4pm p.35

## November

Thursday 2 Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, St George's Church, 7.30pm p.25  
Wednesday 8 Benenden Engineering Society, Giants of Brede, The Bull, 8pm

### Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

### Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

### Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

### Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 7 October for Garden/Compostable Waste

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



# Parish Council



Recent months have seen increasing concern in local parishes on pressures for development, particularly new housing. This is, of course a national problem with a rapid growth in population, all of whom have to be housed. It is not just Benenden but also neighbouring villages and small towns such as Rolvenden and Tenterden, both in Ashford Borough.

In our Borough there are proposals for significant new development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst and even here in Benenden. Of course there has to be growth to keep our village vibrant and to maintain local facilities - the school, churches, shops and pubs etc. In the latter case they are closing at an alarming rate, and this will get worse as the new Business Rate regime hits home.

Our priority here for the next few months is to develop our own plan for Benenden - the Neighbourhood Development Plan. We have a group of active workers to progress this - and if you wish to help in this regard, please let me know.

There will be a series of public meetings to comment, listen and, as workshops, to develop a future path for our community. All in the village are invited to take part. These will all be in the Village Hall on Saturday 28 October at 9.30am, Saturday 11 November from 1.30pm and again on Saturday 9 December from 1.30pm.

Our autumn litter pick, as mentioned in the last magazine, has been put back to Saturday 18 November. It will be colder then, but we should look neat and tidy for Christmas!

Finally, another issue which we need to be aware of is local crime. Benenden is a largely crime-free area and we want to keep it that way. However over the summer there have been incidents in the car park in Hemsted Forest, off Goddards Green Road. If you go there by car, please do not leave handbags and other valuables visible. There have also been incidents of theft and at least one house has been burgled. Please, if you experience, or witness anything like this, do report it to the police. They need to know if we are to be properly policed and protected.

Peter Davies, BPC Chairman  
01580 240723 [chairbenendenpc@gmail.com](mailto:chairbenendenpc@gmail.com)

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 16 October 2017,  
Memorial Hall, 7.30pm

**Planning and Transportation  
Committee Meeting**  
Monday 16 October 2017,  
Memorial Hall, 7pm  
(new timing for a trial period)



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# News and Events

## Benenden Pre-School News

Welcome back Benenden Pre-Schoolers! We kick off the new school year by celebrating the 50th anniversary of Benenden Pre-School with a birthday tea party in the village hall and a trip down memory lane. The anniversary has also been the theme for the Pre-School this term with the children taking part in exciting activities such as helping to create a colourful display of handprints.

New memories continue to be made as we welcome all our new and returning children who have settled in brilliantly during their first month. The Pre-School staff have been working hard to create a real sense of belonging for the children so they become familiar with the routines and environment, as well as making new friends.

We also look forward to our annual Autumn Walk coming up later this month where the children get to explore the changing colours of nature ... whilst kicking a few leaves and jumping in puddles!

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

## New Houses for Iden Green?

A well attended meeting of the Benenden Parish Council was told of plans for a housing development on farming land by the Iden Green cross-roads with an entrance off Standen Street. The proposal for eight houses of between three and five bedrooms was outlined by representatives of the Cyster Farming Partnership. The land, currently a commercial apple orchard, is outside the limit of built development in the village and is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It's understood that a formal planning application may be submitted by the end of this year.

## St George's Church Harvest Lunch

Sunday 8 October, Benenden Village Hall,  
12.30-3pm

The Harvest Lunch will follow the Harvest Festival Service which will start at 11am. The menu includes smoked salmon terrine, shepherd's pie with peas and carrots (vegetarian option available), fresh fruit pastries with cream. Tea, coffee & soft drinks are included, but 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](mailto:lesley.attwood@sky.com)

Everyone Welcome

## New Garden Settlement in the Weald?

Faced with the requirement from central government for Tunbridge Wells to find space for more than 12,000 new homes, the Borough Council is currently reviewing its options in a new Local Plan.

Many local residents may not have realised that the consultation process has now closed, nor that one option is to create a new 'Garden Settlement' of between 5,000 and 7,000 new homes - a sort of Milton Keynes or Harlow in the Weald. No site in the borough has been identified for this new town. But equally, none has been ruled out.

Planners and council members are currently shaping the final strategy and making possible site allocations. There are four other options competing with the Garden Settlement concept: Corridor Growth mainly along the A21; Focused Growth mainly around Tunbridge Wells and Southborough; Semi-dispersed Growth adding Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst to the mix; and finally Dispersed Growth - development distribution proportional across all of the Borough's settlements. Including Benenden and Iden Green.

To read the full Issues and Options document - go to <http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/portal> and chose the 11th topic on the list.



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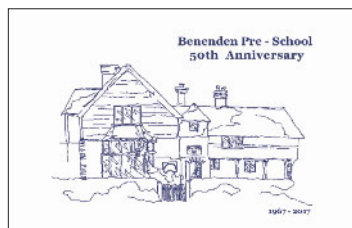
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## New Primary School: the great leap forward

Funding agreement removes barrier  
to the big build

The time for talking may soon be over and the time for digging finally upon us, with the news that plans for a new primary school in Benenden have taken a mighty leap forward.

The long-running saga of the school has taken many twists and turns, and the proposed building and its site have been wrangled over for at least 17 years - according to conservative estimates - but at a meeting held at the 'old' school last month, Kent County Council announced that funding issues had finally been resolved, bringing the project that much closer to fruition.

A statement from the Governors of Benenden Church of England Primary School said: "At our most recent meeting with KCC on 15 September we discussed progress towards building our much-needed new school. We are absolutely delighted to announce that during the meeting, Roger Gough - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education - confirmed that KCC have reached an agreement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency for the full funding of the new school.

"This is fantastic news and removes the largest remaining obstacle to commencing building work. Conversations are now underway with potential contractors in order to determine dates for the work to begin and - most importantly - when the new school building will open.

"The school's governing body will continue to push for the earliest possible opening date and will keep you fully informed about progress. A large number of people have worked tirelessly for many, many years to make the building of a new school a reality. Whilst there is still much work to be done,

today marks a very significant milestone towards providing the children of Benenden and the surrounding area with the facilities they richly deserve.

"If you have any further questions or comments about the new school then please email [office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk)."

The new school, to be built on the 'pasture site' adjacent to the Glebe Field, consists of a horseshoe-shaped building around a central courtyard and will replace the current school buildings on the Green which date back some 400 years. The school's facilities were described as "inadequate" as long ago as 2003 by Ofsted, who estimated that around 20 per cent of the pupils' day was wasted trekking across the Green and the main road.

The project is estimated to cost between £4 million and £5 million, with the costs split between ESFA and KCC, who will fund the increase in pupil numbers, allowing the Published Admission Number to rise from 175 to 210 pupils as part of a push to create 8,000 new school places countywide by 2022.

The scheme has been delayed of late by funding issues, partly involving the need to diverge from standard ESFA design because of the site's position in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area. The final design has been reduced in size by approximately ten per cent but will look essentially the same, adhering closely to the original concept and including all the required facilities.

First work on the site will consist of an early works enabling contract which will include construction of the new access arrangements, some earthworks around the new school car park and fencing.

Peter Thomas

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[dulwichprepcranbrook.org](http://dulwichprepcranbrook.org)



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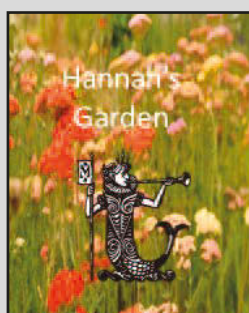


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## Hospice in the Weald

We have been busy and have had some very successful events:

- We hosted 'Tea at Three' at Harmsworth Court and raised £130.
- Charlotte Molesworth held her Open Studios in June and volunteers from Hospice in the Weald fundraising group made cakes and helped serve teas for some of the days. We were amazed and delighted that Charlotte donated over £1,000 to the Hospice. Thank you, Charlotte.
- On Sunday 18 June there were two Open Gardens in Mockbeggar Lane, Biddenden. As it was Father's Day, we weren't sure of the response we'd get, but we raised £1,931.48. In addition to this, Sue and Derek East opened their gardens for NGS and raised £716.88 for the Hospice. This made the total from the Open Gardens £2,648.36, for which we are very grateful.
- On Friday 18 August we all enjoyed the wonderful gardens at Moonrakers in Biddenden, along with a glass, or two, of wine and fantastic canapes. The music from Blue Jasmine was great - easy listening jazz - it complemented the event perfectly! We were thrilled to make nearly £2,000 for the Hospice.

As always, we are very grateful to everyone who has supported these events in aid of such a worthwhile charity.

### Future Events

- Saturday 21 October - Concert in Benenden Village Hall to include a rock choir, jazz music and classical music, to include a hot meal. Tickets £25 each - try to make up a table of eight and enjoy a great variety of music.
- Thursday 7 December - Sheila Hume - Christmas wreath making - more details to follow.

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



## Charity Concert

In aid of Hospice in the Weald

**Saturday 21st October, 7pm**  
Benenden Village Hall

*Join us for a fantastic evening of rock,  
jazz and classical singing featuring*

**Tonbridge Rock Choir**  
**Blue Jasmine**  
**The Wealden Duo**

Tickets £25 to include two-course hot meal.  
Tables of 8. Cash bar.

For tickets call Jenny 01580 388831 or Kay 01580 240566

www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk  
Registered Charity No. 280276

## 9th annual Richard Beattie Davis musical event

Wednesday 11 October, Sandhurst, 3pm

Coming from Italy for a masterclass and concert in London and then down to Sandhurst for the final 2017 recital, Gil Jetley's programme includes Bach/ Busoni, Chaconne/ Schumann Kinderszenen/ Chopin Ballade no. 4/ Mendelssohn Rondo Capriccio. In aid of Hospice in the Weald. Tickets by donation (minimum £16), in advance from Gillian Davis 01580 850384.

Meanwhile on Tuesday 12 September at 3pm we were blessed with the weather that we should have had for the summer garden party! Unfortunately several people were 'under the weather' and they missed a very special event. Malcolm Binns played his heart out and it wasn't until the second encore that he said that his hands had had enough! Malcolm received a bottle of the special 'Cuvée de Richard' wine. A special thank you goes to Ruth Fagg who kindly dealt with 'front of house' and fruit juice in the garden. Once again, everyone showed their appreciation with extra donations and, after expenses we raised an unbelievable £515 for Hospice in the Weald. Gillian Davis 850384



# Want to learn to paint and draw?

Steve Pierce-Smith is a professional artist and has taught painting and drawing for a many years.

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**Monday afternoon 1pm - 3pm Benenden Village Hall**



Other classes take place in Horsmonden, and Isfield.

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**steve@remingtons.co.uk** or call **01797 253285** for details.



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## Village Activity and Fun Day

Thank you to everyone involved in any way in the second village Fun Day and making it such a success. The weather was kind to us; and many people came along and simply ... had fun together. The events were free, and enjoyed by young and old; some got quite competitive! If you weren't there you missed: hook-a-duck, polelath turning and greenwood working demonstrations, chuck(and catch)-the-egg, splat-the-rat, wet sponges, face painting, stretchy elastic, bell ringing and church tower visits, coconut shy, a children's entertainer, wheelbarrow racing, cream teas, a raffle, and some great live music. Thank you to all those who contributed prizes or food or their time and talents to make the day happen. The objective was not to make money but to have fun; but there was a profit and the Committee have made a donation to the St George's Pre-School. If you missed the fun this year, next year's Fun Day is on Saturday 1st September 2018; if you would like to get involved, please contact:

Revd David Commander 240658  
[david@dc-uk.co.uk](mailto:david@dc-uk.co.uk)

*Thank you to Hayley Daley for some of the photographs on the back cover.*

## Benenden Women's Club

Wow! What a terrific afternoon we had on Thursday 14 September when we visited Godinton House near Ashford. The house, originally a mediaeval hall house, was constructed in the 14th century and subsequently altered and extended to become the amazing property that it is today. The last owner had no family but wanted Godinton to be open to the public to enjoy following his death in 1996, and therefore a Trust was created to manage the house and magnificent gardens.

We were treated to an excellent guided tour of the house followed by a superb cream tea and were then free to explore the gardens and parkland at our leisure.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 12 October in the Iden Green Pavilion, and the subject will be advised at a later date.

Ruth Barwick

## Pavilion Quiz Night

Saturday 14 October, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm  
£10pp to include a delicious hot meal.

Please bring your own refreshments, nibbles and a sense of humour.

To book your table or places please contact:  
Bill Lewis 243093





Alan Parsons

## Benenden History

Three years after the death of 'Cherry' Ingram of The Grange in Benenden, the house and gardens were bought by the rock musician/producer Alan Parsons who turned a wing of the house into a recording studio. This is his exclusive account of his time there.

# When Rock and Roll came to Benenden

We were living in London in 1984 and we decided to move out of the city. So we drove around Kent looking for a big house - a sort of rock star residence - and The Grange was the first one we'd seen. We stopped off in Tenterden and went into the estate agent in the High Street and he showed us round and we went for it straight away. We moved there in January 1985. We weren't the first owners after Ingram. The house was first occupied by Martin and Judith Miller who ran the famous Miller's Antiques Guide from there. I think they must have been there at least two years. After we bought it, The Millers then founded the Chilston Park Country House Hotel near Maidstone.

It was a big and quite expensive job to put a studio in ... and the sad thing was that when we sold it the guy turned it into a car repair shop.

Benenden was a fair distance from London so I tried to avoid going there and stayed in Kent. It was a colossal house for our family - my then wife and our two children - something like 15 bedrooms, and the idea was that it would be used for the



studio clients. It was mainly self-generated work from people connected to the Alan Parsons Project. We made two albums there - Gaudi and Freudiana - and legendary producer, Gus Dudgeon, who'd worked with Elton John for years also recorded there. John Miles was a vocalist on our albums so he was around a lot.

Paul McCartney was there for a day or two and we worked on a track together but it never came to anything unfortunately. We did one album for a band called Vitamin Z with Geoff Barradale who now manages the Arctic Monkeys.

I remember Donald Molesworth, the gardener, was very knowledgeable on all the plants and trees. We didn't know much about 'Cherry' Ingram and his trees except what Donald told us, but we did love living in such a fantastic botanical location. I do remember we lost more than a hundred trees in the storm in 1987 - a huge oak tree blocked the driveway so that was pretty traumatic at the time.

Eventually we sold The Grange and moved to a smaller place, a beautiful Hall House in Standen







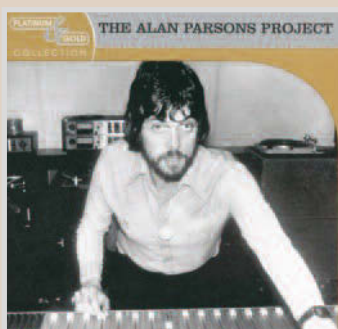
Street (in Iden Green), now owned by the theatre producer Michael Codron - it was quainter and more manageable and we started building a studio in the barn next door but then around 1990 we decided the kids should go to a Steiner school in Forest Row, East Sussex, so we moved there and that was the end of our Benenden experience.

I loved the village but I suppose I was seen as the rock and roller who had made all his money in music and didn't deserve to live in that house. I remember we had a pointer puppy who we didn't like being inside and the only time the neighbours actually complained was when he barked at night.

I wonder if my telephone box is still in the garden? I moved it from a British Telecom depot somewhere around Tonbridge and installed it in

the grounds but it was incredibly heavy - it took 12 people to lift - so it probably is still there somewhere. Give my best wishes to anyone who remembers us.

**Alan Parsons was talking from his home in Santa Barbara to Kent Barker**



**Alan Parsons** is an audio engineer, songwriter, musician, and record producer.

He worked on the Beatles' 'Abbey Road' and 'Let it Be' albums.

He was nominated for a Grammy for his work on Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon'.

He engineered and produced Al Stewart's 'Year of the Cat'.

In 1975 he formed The Alan Parsons Project with songwriter Eric Woolfson.

The Alan Parsons Project made ten albums including the famous 'I Robot'.

He has since made a number of solo albums and is still touring with his band 'The Alan Parsons Live Project'.

He now lives in Santa Barbara, California.





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## Iden Green and Benenden WI

We travelled the West Coast of America this month with our speaker who enjoyed the beautiful countryside and its wide open spaces as well as seeing some city sights.

Some of our members enjoyed a return trip from Tenterden to Bodiam on the railway with lovely weather to enjoy the views along the way.

In December (sorry for such an early mention!) we are holding the District WI Carol Service in St George's Church, Benenden on Monday 4 December at 11am, villagers, friends and family are all welcome.

Dates to remember:

Tuesday 17 October, Whale Watching, Minnie Garnier, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm

Tuesday 21 November, Members' Winter Party, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm

Saturday 25 November, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Elisabeth Spicer 01797 252456

## Students and School-Leavers

Grants are available from the Gibbon and Buckland Charity. The charity started in 1602 with the gift of the School House at the foot of the Green; it still gives some support to the Primary School, but also uses its income to give worthwhile grants to young persons under the age of 25 who are resident in, and have been resident in, the Parish of Benenden for not less than three years, to support them in further education or in getting started in working life.

Trustees will also give consideration to applications for grants for gap year projects of educational worth. Application forms available from Benenden's Community Shop, or from the Clerk to the Charity, David Harmsworth, at [gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com](mailto:gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com) or 01580 240683.

Latest date for applications 30 September.

A poster for a 'Sweet Pea Workshop at Blue Hen Flowers'. The background is a close-up of purple and white sweet pea flowers. The text is in a mix of fonts, with 'Sweet Pea Workshop' in a large, elegant script and 'at Blue Hen Flowers' in a smaller, simpler font. To the right, a yellow box contains the event details.

*Sweet Pea Workshop at Blue Hen Flowers*

**Saturday 7 October  
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I'll provide all you need to grow stunning sweet peas next year.

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Please sign up in Benenden's Community Shop or email [Sheila Hume bluehenflowers@gmail.com](mailto:Sheila.Hume@bluehenflowers@gmail.com)

## Village Hall highlights

Life as the Village Hall Administrator is always varied, and never boring. I took over the role in January 2016, and it's a privilege to be involved in something which is such a big part of our community, and great to see the hall so busy and bustling with activity.

Every month I will be letting you know all that's happening, whether it be new classes and events, updates and information on our current classes, or improvements at the hall (we have some very exciting things in the pipeline!).

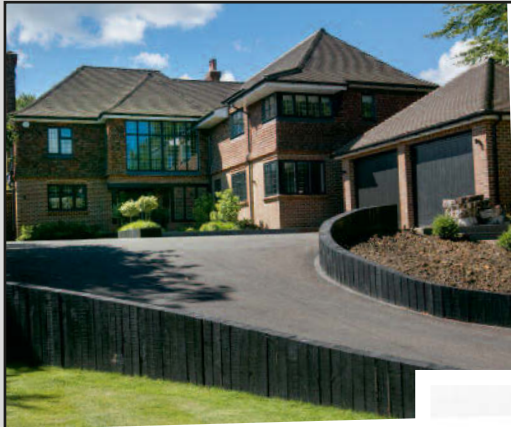
In September we said a big hello to our Primary School's breakfast club in addition to an incredible four new classes starting alongside our regulars. For children and young adults we have 'Messy Mini-Makers', an arts and crafts class for 1-5 year olds, and we welcome judo to its new home on a Saturday morning (previously held at the Weald Sports Centre).

For adults we have a ten-week painting and drawing course, and in October a free taster course in flamenco dancing in readiness for a regular Tuesday evening slot (perfect if the Strictly bug has bitten you!).

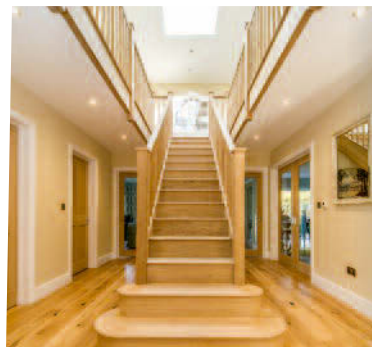
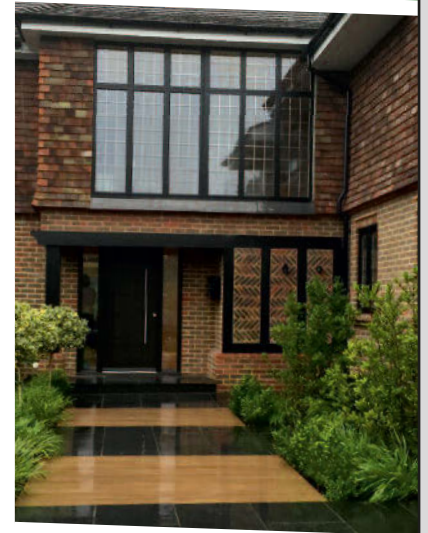
Information about all classes can be found on our website ([www.benendenvillagehall.org](http://www.benendenvillagehall.org)) or you can pick up a paper copy of the timetable at the village shop or the hall.

Lorraine Jones 243123





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## News from Benenden School

I am writing this as the lovely sound of girls chatting and laughing once again fills the corridors here at Benenden - which of course marks the very welcome start of the new school year.

We are still celebrating our GCSE results, in which more than half of all results were graded at A\*. Eighty per cent of all grades were at A\* or A and 40 per cent of the year group received nothing less than an A. We are understandably delighted with these results and are incredibly proud of our girls whose hard work richly deserves such success.

We are looking forward to an equally successful and enjoyable 2017-18. The Autumn Term is always particularly busy and upcoming highlights are numerous. These include a History trip to Russia, the girls involved in our ionics liquids research project will be visiting UCL, we are hosting a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths conference and a Computer Science Day, the Chapel Choir are singing evensong at St George's, Windsor, visiting speakers include Dr David Starkey and December will mark the 10th Benenden Model United Nations conference, which will be a proud occasion for the School. There is also the small matter of the whole-school production of *The Sound of Music* being performed over three days, and work began this week in earnest on what promises to be a magnificent show.

We will also be represented once again at the village's Remembrance parade and our Music Scholars are busy preparing for their concert at St George's on 13 October, and we would be delighted to see many of you there.  
Samantha Price, Headmistress

## The Royal British Legion Benenden Branch AGM

Tuesday 24 October, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm  
All branch members will be very welcome.

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

### *The Music Scholars of Benenden School*

Friday 13 October 2017  
at 7.30pm in St George's Church

Tickets: £5 for adults - 16 and under Free  
(ticket includes refreshments, a glass of wine/soft drink)

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

## Workshop for small businesses

Wednesday 11 October, Blue Hen Flowers,  
Benenden, 9.30-1pm

Want to take your business up a gear? Are you keen to work more efficiently? Do you want advice on best use of social media? Then come to this workshop with Chloe Scragg of Executive Support Consultants.

Now a true 'company of one', she helps time-starved freelancers and small businesses with limited resources to navigate their way through the myriad tools and systems available on the market in order to grow their businesses and reduce the feeling of being completely overwhelmed.

Chloe can share first-hand experience and case studies of where to focus your energies, how to utilise your best skills, the importance of up-skilling, the need to find proactive people to help you and which tools will aid your business, and which ones will waste your time.

If like me you just want to grow flowers (make truffles/run a holiday let/make jewellery), but can't keep up with all that needs to be done, come to an interactive morning with time to share experience and problems over coffee and cake with other wonderful small businesses.

The cost is £35.00. To book please contact:

Sheila Hume 240838  
bluehenflowers@gmail.com



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With the weather getting cooler, there is a very welcome return of our sumptuous, warming soup to the café at Benenden's Shop, along with a new addition of a delicious chicken curry and rice which is already proving very popular.

Moreover, for a scrumptious sweet course or a perfect accompaniment to tea or coffee, there is a wonderful selection of home-made cakes, lovingly prepared by Su Lacy and Ronnie Hogben. These highly proficient cooks produce cakes somehow redolent of childhood teatimes in a bygone age. Su has been producing her cakes for seven years now and is responsible for the hugely popular and unique lemon and ginger cake. She began, as Ronnie did, by baking as a hobby for family and friends but, she admits, she got 'carried away'. Thank goodness she did. We are happy to enjoy the benefits!

Ronnie's family also enjoy the results of her baking successes; her daughter requests cakes 'for the office' knowing how the sharing of cake can cement relationships and make the world seem brighter. One of the greatest pleasures of volunteering in the shop is seeing customers enjoy a slice of cake while putting the world to rights! Ronnie's husband, Jim, has proved to be priceless in the kitchen as a tester and cook's aid and we have him to thank for meticulously measuring out the ingredients so that the product is absolutely perfect! Ronnie enthusiastically described the pleasure of shutting the door on a cold dismal day and enjoying the process of baking in a warm kitchen suffused with baking aromas.

Benenden's have a wide range of cakes on offer; Bakewell tart, white or dark chocolate and raspberry, lime and coconut, coffee and walnut, apple, pecan and caramel, Victoria sponge, cappuccino and fruit cake, to name but a few. Many customers have surrendered to the temptation of a slice and we haven't yet met anyone who has regretted it!

Bev Beveridge



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Eve Willard 01797 253431 or

Anne Tylden-Wright 850281

Benenden Bridge Club A small and friendly club which plays rubber bridge on Thursday afternoons from 2-5pm in the Memorial Hall, Benenden. For further information please contact:

Lesley Attwood 243318 or

Anne Tylden-Wright 850281

## Village Lunch

Tuesday 17 October, Benenden Village Hall,  
12.30pm

All welcome - £4 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. Please contact Sheila on 01580 240838 if you haven't already put your name down but would like to come. We look forward to seeing you.

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3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

284ml double cream

¼tsp grated nutmeg

1.25kg potatoes, peeled

175g grated gruyere

Salt and black pepper to taste

### METHOD

- In a large saucepan, bring milk and garlic to the boil, add cream, nutmeg and stir.
- Slice potatoes, approximately 5mm wide.
- Season and add to saucepan of liquid.
- Simmer until just cooked - about 20min.
- Turn, rather than stir, every 5min so they do not catch at the bottom.
- Gently fold in half of the cheese.
- Put in a buttered oven proof dish and scatter rest of cheese on top for 20-25min until golden brown and bubbling.

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## Molly Dancers

Last month in Benenden, Seven Champions Molly Dancers performed their unique dance which turns out to have a surprising history.

Molly Dancing is thought to reach back well before the 19th century, when agricultural workers from eastern England took part in a winter-time street performance. This was performed on Plough Monday, the first Monday after Epiphany (or Twelfth Night) and so was the first day after the Christmas holiday. It is thought by some that renegade farm workers who were meant to return to work following the festive celebrations instead decorated a plough and pushed it around the village, calling at houses of well-off villagers to collect money. Possibly closer to the truth was that it started with 16th century farm workers dancing for money in mid winter because there was no work available on the land. Disguised with blackened faces and women's clothing, they performed versions of local dances in exchange for reward - their disguises were said to ensure that they were not recognised by the landowners so as not to affect their future employment prospects. If the householders

weren't forthcoming with donations then they threatened to plough up the garden, or if there wasn't a garden, the doorstep. They could be destructive, drunk and disreputable in appearance and their dances were viewed as degenerate and subsequently ignored by early 20th century dance collectors and so Molly Dancing disappeared around the time of the Second World War.

The Molly Dance has seen a revival over the last 40 years and today's Molly Dancers have disguises that are more likely to consist of a strip of black or white makeup across their faces - as was seen on the Seven Champions Molly Dancers when they entertained around the village. Unlike the Cotswold Morris dancers (such as the local Weald of Kent Morris) they dance with no sticks, no hankies and no bells. Seven Champions claim that their performances are "characterised by the rhythm of our hobnailed boots, our excellent custom of dancing to unaccompanied female singers or solo musicians and our habit of appropriating tunes and songs from anywhere we please" - so maintaining the free spirit of yesteryear.

Tim Dwyer







## Champagne, King of Wines and Wine of Kings

I lived in Australia in 1980-81 and whilst there I made great friends with Bill and Jane Shrapnel. Bill is descended from Major-General Henry Shrapnel (1761-1842), a British artillery officer whose experiments, initially conducted in his own time and at his own expense, culminated in the design and development of a new type of artillery shell.

Bill was a consultant for Unilever, Jane was a nurse, and both were keen amateurs of wine, dreaming one day of owning their own vineyard in Australia. Their dream came true three years ago, when they bought a vineyard in Orange, New South Wales, and called it Colmar Estate.

Having spent a whole year cycling around France in his youth, Bill fell in love with Alsace wines and every so often would come over to Europe for a conference, and tie it in with a vineyard area of France. We have had lots of fun, so it was great to meet up with them both in Reims in May this year.

We stayed within walking distance of the magnificent Notre-Dame de Reims, the High Gothic Roman Catholic Church, seat of the

Archdiocese of Reims, where the Kings of France were crowned. The Cathedral replaced an older Church, destroyed by fire in 1211, that was

built on the site of the basilica where Clovis was baptized by Saint Remi, bishop of Reims, in AD 496.

The purpose of their visit? To check out the quality of modern Champagne, and to try and pick up tips to improve the production of their own bubbly. I set up three appointments, starting with De Castellane, the label with the red cross, in Epernay. Part of the Laurent Perrier group, they produce 3,000,000 bottles per year, most under their own label, some under own brands such as Oudinot at M&S.

The House was founded in 1895, and is famous for its 66-metre tower built in 1905 by architect August Toudoire, which offers a panoramic view of Epernay and the Marne valley. It has six kilometres of underground chalk vaulted cellars, where the champagne is slowly matured before being brought to surface for final bottling and packaging.

Their champagnes are always reliable, not breathtaking, but offer good value for money and this was a good place to get the palate in tune. I can highly recommend their tour [www.decastellane.com](http://www.decastellane.com).

We then took a short trip just around the corner to the headquarters of Pol Roger, 44, Avenue de Champagne ([www.polroger.com](http://www.polroger.com)). Unbeknown to me, this house does not have a tailor-made visitor centre, so I had to call in a favour, and I can assure you it was well worth it. Pol (Paul) Roger was founded in 1849 by the eponymous Pol Roger, at the young age of 18. His first champagnes were





released in 1853 and the company holds the Royal Warrant as purveyor of champagne to

Queen Elizabeth II.

Pol Roger had been the favourite champagne of Sir Winston Churchill since just after WWI, and inspired the famous quote, "My tastes are simple. I am easily satisfied with the best", as well as the well-known maxim of Napoleon, "In victory, I deserve it, in defeat, I need it"! Sadly, Churchill never visited Pol Roger, but nonetheless proclaimed it "the most drinkable address in the world"! Following his death in 1965, the company placed a black border around the labels of the Brut NV shipped to the UK.

After an excellent tour of the cellars, we tasted a range of their champagnes, culminating in the 2004 Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill. The exact blend is a closely guarded secret, but Pinot Noir dominates, which gives it structure and weight, while some Chardonnay provides elegance and finesse. Composed exclusively from grapes sourced from Grand Cru vineyards which were already under vine during Churchill's lifetime, this Cuvée is made only in the very best vintages and is always released later than the other vintage-dated champagnes from Pol Roger. I can honestly say it is the finest champagne that I have ever drunk.

I am not a fan of old, vintage champagnes, as they become more like an aged wine with a hint of fizz. However, the 2004 is showing little sign of maturity, has great body and finesse and lingers on the palate. Yes, it is not cheap, at about the £130 mark per bottle, but it is sensational.

Most champagne houses produce a "house" cuvée, a blend that should taste virtually the same every year. The odd one out is Jacquesson, our last port of call

([www.champagnejacquesson.com](http://www.champagnejacquesson.com)), owned by brothers Jean-Hervé and Laurent Chiquet, where each year is different. They do not seek any continuity from one year to the next and the style seems to happen naturally, linked to the quality of the raw material, the typicity of the terroirs, and their subjectivity.

Cuvée 740 is from their 2012 harvest from Ay, Dizy, Hautvilliers, Avize and Oiry. The 2012 winter was long and cold; spring and early summer were very wet and there were severe attacks of mildew. However, a superb end to the growing season produced a small crop of remarkable quality. The Cuvée 740 is completed with several reserve wines from the previous 700 cuvées.

The ethos of the Chiquet brothers is summed up thus: "It's the ties that bind. The ties that bind the present to the past. The ties

that bind the roots to the earth. The ties that bind the vines to the sky and the ties that bind men to the land, allowing them to follow their dreams and their convictions. It is also a constant quest, year on year, to seek to reveal the full expression of their terroirs, to make the best wine that each vintage allows."

So, with Jacquesson, you will not get the consistency of other houses, and I find their numbering system confusing, but when the vintage excels, their champagnes rank among the best.

Did Bill and Jane pick up any tips along the way? Only time will tell. We left Champagne and drove to Wehlen on the Mosel to start our Riesling journey, more of which next month.

Santé.

Tracy Claridge [TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk](mailto:TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk)





## Bird Notes

In July we hired a villa in Gers, South mid-France between Pau and Toulouse. It was a family holiday rather than a bird watching one, nonetheless I always keep a bird list going. The habitat around the villa was not unlike our own Weald with rolling wooded hills interspersed with farm land but more arable than pasture compared to the Weald. The two main crops were maize and sunflowers - somewhat different from Kent. Huge acres of large sunflowers all following the sun is quite a spectacle. It would be interesting to compare the two habitats bird-wise also bearing in mind the more southerly location.

On arriving at the villa we were greeted with the lovely song of the Turtle Dove. It was also the first bird we would hear on awakening in the morning, which was fantastic. It was quite common in the surrounding area. France has seen quite a dramatic drop in their population but nothing like the 95% that we have experienced. It was not long before the more exotic and melodic call of a Golden Oriole was heard from the surrounding trees. This is always a difficult bird to see - despite the male being a vivid yellow with black primary feathers it seems to blend into the trees. To my great surprise the male appeared on a bare branch in a fig tree in the garden feeding a fledgling. This is the best sighting I have ever had. The chance of seeing this summer visitor in Kent is very unlikely as the UK is at its northern end of its breeding range with just a few occasionally breeding in Suffolk.

Outside our bedroom was an old greengage tree with lots of peeling bark and a good micro habitat for small insects and spiders, so I wasn't surprised to see a Treecreeper climbing up the trunk looking for a meal in its characteristic way. Europe has two species of Treecreeper, our own species and a Short-toed Treecreeper. There are few diagnostic differences between the two and very good views or photographs are needed to ascertain them. In this part of France the short-toed species was the more likely but I was not sure. However their calls are very different and this is the usual way to tell them apart. The short-toed has crossed the Channel on a few occasions, Dungeness being the best place to find one, and it is the call that is used to confirm the identification: the call is a "tut" like Coal Tit call. One morning, whilst still in bed, I heard what was a possible call, leaping out of bed I was delighted to see that sure enough, there it was climbing up the greengage tree. ID confirmed!

Walking the lanes between the various farms, the commonest farmland bird was the Cirl Bunting, a bird not unlike our Yellowhammer (also a member of the bunting family) with a similar liking for farmland habitats. This is not altogether unsurprising as the Yellowhammer has a more northerly range whilst Cirl Buntings prefer Southern Europe. Their ranges, however, considerably overlap and 50 years ago the Cirl would have been quite common in Kent. It is now restricted to Devon and a recently introduced population in Cornwall. With climate warming I would have expected the range of the Cirl to move northwards, not the other way round, but nature is not always that easy to predict. It was whilst walking the hedgerows and byways, I came across a little bird with a



top: Golden Oriole, *Oriolus oriolus*;  
above: Cirl Bunting, *Emberiza cirlus*  
Illustrations: Stephen Message  
[www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk](http://www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk)

zip zip sounding flight call. Frustratingly it would continually disappear into the undergrowth. I thought it was probably a juvenile Meadow Pipit but I had seen no adults and there was something telling me that this bird was different. After a very patient half-hour wait one bird at last gave me good views. It was like a very small warbler with a well streaked back and head and bright white lower body with distinct buff edges and its tail had a white tip. It certainly was not a Meadow Pipit. I was fairly certain what it was and it was most unexpected as I had only seen this species many years ago in the Algarve. It was a Zitting Cisticola which is a new name as it was formerly called a Fan-tailed Warbler. There were a pair and from the way they were behaving I am sure they were breeding. I enjoyed getting to know an unfamiliar species away from the known nature reserves.

On the birds of prey front there were not surprisingly Kestrels in the area as the mixed farming habitat is ideal for small mammals. However the commonest bird of prey was the Black Kite which is a summer visitor from Africa. It breeds in forests near lakes and rivers as well as human settlements as it is a good scavenger, like its cousin the Red Kite. It is slightly smaller than the Red Kite with a much less forked tail. Whilst walking through the village I was somewhat astounded to see a flock of eight birds circling together. As they have only two to three eggs this was more than just a family. It made me think of the large numbers of Red Kites I see on the M40 so perhaps it is not unusual that they hunt together. The Black Kite breeding range includes most of France and stops short some 100km from the Channel. Most years a few make it to Kent as vagrants but I have never seen one here yet.

Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com



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## The Village Gnome

### NATURE'S WAY

This may sound counter-intuitive but stop! Stop it at once. Stop tidying your gardens. You're not leaving anything for the less visible inhabitants of your garden to hide in, to eat, to make nests in or to hibernate in over winter. The obsessive hacking down and clearing up at this time of year leaving every corner of the garden bare of leaves, grass stems, rosehips, or nettles is leaving them with nowhere to go or find food when the weather turns cold and nasty.

Could you not leave a few logs, or bits of wood, piled in a damp corner? It would certainly help the frogs and toads. Together with a few dead leaves and tussocks of grass this will provide them with the perfect winter accommodation, encourage worms, good for gardeners as well as delicious to eat. And if the odd snail does move in that'll be good news for the thrushes. You may even attract the odd hedgehog, though I've only ever seen one in my garden, but they like a bit of rough.

If you trim your hedges back hard in the autumn they won't have any blackberries, rosehips, hawthorn, holly or viburnum berries as food for local blackbirds, dormice or robins and later on mistle thrushes and other migrants. A



thinned hedge doesn't provide much shelter from the wind and rain. Leave it glorious and overblown and much more interesting to look at till February when all the berries will have been eaten.

The bees will be extremely grateful if you leave that overgrown ivy, covered as it is with strange bobbly flowers at a time when nothing else is in bloom. You will be amazed at the hum of contented and busy bees as you pass it in September and October - and its berries look wonderful in a Christmas wreath.

Nettles are the principal food source for the caterpillars of many of our native butterflies so if you root out every nettle now don't be surprised at the dearth of butterflies next summer.

If you're feeling keen you can buy palatial residences for hover flies and solitary bees at great expense in your local garden centre, but much more easily you can create a paradise for them in your own garden by doing nothing at all except let nature provide.

I could go on but I'm quite exhausted with not tidying my garden and may have to go and peer under my log pile and count my frogs.

MG



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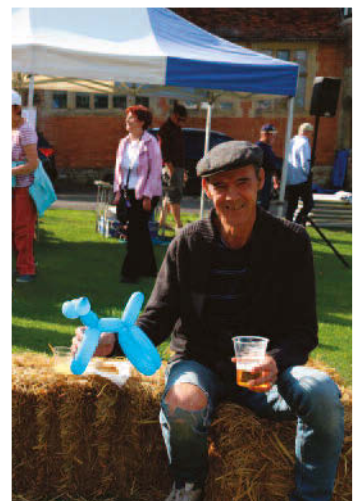


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Above: Making the most of village spaces: energetic and colourful Molly Dancers; Village Activity and Fun Day providing a fabulous afternoon of entertainment  
Front cover: A Common Blue butterfly on Common Knapweed, St George's churchyard. Photograph: Peter Driver