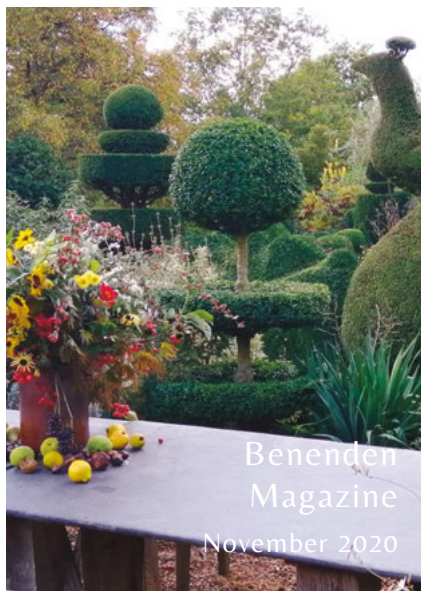


A photograph of a flagpole with a white flag featuring a red cross, set against a sunset sky. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the lower right, casting a warm light. The flagpole is a dark vertical line, and several guy wires extend from it to the ground. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of stone battlements are visible. The background shows a hazy landscape with trees.

Benenden Magazine

January
2021



AFTER AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR
THE BENENDEN MAGAZINE
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Editorial



In my January 2020 editorial, I wrote about my resolution to be as optimistic as possible. How little did I know that I would have to work extremely hard at that as the year unfolded! So once again, I'm making the same resolution and, fingers and toes crossed, I very much hope that 2021 will herald much to be optimistic about.

Throughout the last year, we worked hard to bring you this magazine every month and we've had lots of great feedback from readers, which makes it all worthwhile. Thank you to all the regular contributors and feature writers who have kept the village up to date and submitted a variety of articles. A big thanks also goes to Wealden Print in Hawkhurst who managed to keep printing - even when they had a skeleton staff working just a few days a month, and to the tireless team of volunteers who deliver it to you.

More thanks must go to the staff and volunteers at Ward's the butchers and Benenden's community shop and café for working hard to stay open (as much as possible) and providing such an important service to the village. Hats off to their ability to adapt nimbly to changing circumstances.

Finally, we are very pleased to introduce a regular topical health news item in this issue (page 19) by nursing and health consultant Peter Ellis, who will be known to many in the village. Previously, he has had senior nursing and care management posts at hospitals, hospices and care homes, and researched, lectured on and written extensively about nursing care. So, he is well qualified to write on the subject for us.

Happy New Year everyone.

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

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

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Village Calendar

January

Monday 18

Parish Council Meeting, on Zoom, 7pm

The Village Calendar may look a little light for the foreseeable future. Coronavirus and the Prime Minister's lockdown of the entire country have rather put a crimp in our social lives and dates have been cancelled left, right and centre. Even the civic amenity vehicle won't be around for a while.

These will be trying weeks for us all as we negotiate a new landscape of self-isolation and social distancing. To that end, David Commander has come up with a list of guiding principles to steer us all through the confusion. We hope they may be a help until normal service is resumed.

Guiding principles

Our approach to making decisions about specific events, services or issues can be guided by these principles:

Be calm and trust the advice given by relevant authorities.

Protect the vulnerable. It's not just your health, but the health of others who may be more vulnerable.

Continue to love our neighbour. Respect their needs and concerns as much as your own - but safely. If you have a neighbour living alone and isolated they would appreciate a call.

Be transparent and open with one another, sharing accurate and up to date information.

Be creative when making decisions - "how can we do this differently in these circumstances".

Parish Council



A new year always feels like an opportunity to reset and focus on what's important to us, and I am sure we are all hoping that the next 12 months will bring more good news and positivity than 2020.

With the past year in mind, the Parish Council has unanimously agreed to lower its annual precept for 2021/22, thus avoiding any increase on your annual Council Tax bill in April with regard to the PC element. We understand that the past year has been exceptionally hard for all, so hopefully this will go a small way to helping out.

We have now moved a step closer to the making of our Neighbourhood Development Plan, with the public consultation period for Regulation 16 closed, and the next stage of moving towards submission of the plan to the independent examiner being progressed by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Once this stage has been completed, the intention is to hold a referendum in May, at which we hope the village will deliver a positive result for a plan we believe will secure a bright and prosperous future for Benenden.

After the sad death of Michael Patrick, the Parish Council is looking for a parishioner who would like to take up the task of maintaining the area around our war memorial. Further details of the duties involved will be published in the next edition of this magazine, but in the meantime if you are interested in taking on this role, please do contact our clerk, Caroline, for further details.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few thank yous: to Hole Park Estate, Graham Beveridge, Russell Cruse, John Kingsnorth and the Cyster family for their efforts in supplying and erecting the lovely Christmas tree on The Green; to my fellow councillors for all their hard work and support over the past year; and to Caroline, who keeps everything running smoothly and in order. Frankly we would be lost without her!

Happy 2021 everyone - it can surely only be better than 2020.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair
nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org

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 18 January 2021,
on Zoom, 7pm

Please email the Clerk for access to the meeting

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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.

Each 10am service will be recorded, and the video available the next day on www.benendenchurch.org

If back in lockdown, a recorded service will be available on Sunday morning on www.benendenchurch.org

Sunday 3 January	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion
Sunday 10 January	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst
Sunday 17 January	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion
Sunday 24 January	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst
Sunday 31 January	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Tuesday 5 January 10am Communion

Tuesday 12 January 10am Communion

Tuesday 19 January 10am Communion

Tuesday 26 January 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

Funerals	2 December	Sheila Clarke	Funeral St George's and committal Charing Crematorium
	7 December	Andrew Prentice	Funeral and burial
	22 December	Adam Gardner	Funeral Kent and Sussex Crematorium

Rector's Letter



Hope

It always seems strange writing this for the January edition looking back at the celebrations of Christmas, when, at the time of writing, we've not even 'done Christmas'! What I do know for certain: that it will have been different. I trust though that through all the uncertainties you still managed to find a way of enjoying Christmas, with family or friends (socially distanced, of course), and were able to get along to or engage with many of the church services and hear afresh the hope in the Christmas story.

Despite the influence of COVID-19 on many of our plans, both family plans and on church services, Christmas is still a time of light coming into the world and of hope. We celebrate the birth of God's Son together, and remember all that this means, if we let the story into our hearts. The days are starting to get longer, there is more light. We are at the beginning of a new year; putting the old one behind us. It can be a new start, not 'more of the same' if we approach it in that light.

We've just had the exciting news of one of the vaccines being approved by the MHRA, which is being administered in this country. This is really good news for all of us. Hopefully, by the time this is published, other types of vaccine will have been approved for use too. Then we can really start to look forward, with hope, to a better year than last year. One that is healthier for us all: physically, mentally, financially, and socially. We are, after all, as human-beings made to be in society, in community with one another. When we start to come out of lockdown, we must not forget some of the good things that this pandemic has shown us: caring for one another; looking out for one another; being concerned for one another. The Bible calls it: "loving your neighbour as yourself". (Maybe there are some other truths hidden in the Bible too!).

With the busyness of Christmas behind us, please don't think that January is going to be quiet. In church we will be celebrating: Epiphany (on 3 January), the Baptism of Christ (on 10 January), and Candlemas, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, on 31 January. And then, before you know it, it will be Ash Wednesday, on 17 February. There is still plenty to celebrate (and/or remember) together in the coming days and weeks. Maybe 2021 is the year when that promise you make yourself every year of a new start really happens. There is hope; there is light. Throughout all this, there is still God. Come and worship Him together. Happy New Year; may it really be a new one for you.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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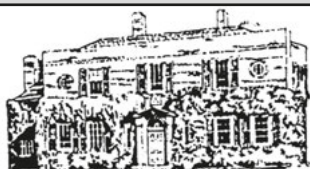
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Just a Thought



The family has to eat

The New Year is upon us. This means the season when food and cooking seem to dominate advertising, television, radio and magazines is almost over. Three bird roasts; myriad ways to cook a carrot; designer puddings and cake extravaganzas will no longer be headline features.

Now, must tackle the fridge.

As far as I see people cook for one of three reasons: pleasure, comfort, or necessity. I am definitely in the last category - the family has to eat. As a child I was not a big eater and, being immediately post war, the food was not very exciting. It did not help being confronted every day with a school lunch of stew, congealed gravy and cabbage and being forced to sit until I finished. Oh, the relief when I was eventually allowed to have sandwiches.

More turkey? I thought we'd finished it!

There was a short period when I had to cater for the family while still at school and it was on a very tight budget. As a teenager, I really had more fun things I would rather be doing but I learned the basics. Working overseas after university was a revelation as far as food was concerned. Not only was the menu a complete change with lots of lovely different fruit and vegetables but, there was someone else to do the cooking. Every time my husband and I set up our own household overseas (in whatever country), I made an effort to take on a cook who had been trained by someone who was actually interested in cooking.

Oh, the cranberry sauce! I knew it was there somewhere.

I was determined that my children would fare better than me and so we had many enjoyable sessions cooking fun things, with the bonus that we didn't have to clear away. Perhaps that bit was not such good training. I am glad to say that all my children have grown up to be good cooks and a couple of them are really interested in food. They do tease me when anyone is making a cake saying that I have to stay out of the kitchen or it will sink! This refers to one disastrous time when a 'fat cat' birthday cake was changed to a 'swimming pool' (filled with blue icing) due to there being more maize than wheat in the flour - a Zambian solution to local grain shortages.

Can one microwave leftover sprouts?

Although I am retired it is the time cooking takes that I have an issue with. 'Good quality ingredients, simple recipes and reasonably short preparation time' is my motto. Nowadays there are all sorts of gadgets which help as well but I'm not really interested enough to follow them up.

I give up. Let's just have scrambled eggs tonight - after all, the family still has to eat.

Sue Fisher

The Bull at Benenden.

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**Wishing our patrons
A Very Happy New Year!**

*Thank you so much for your support over this
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We look forward to seeing you all again sometime very soon!

Look after yourselves xx

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Benenden Players' news

We're missing the panto and our lovely audience. But we have another terminologically inaccurate 'Benenden Players: For One Night Only Revue' planned for you. Right now, your friends and family are secretly rehearsing, ready to record a song or two, a sketch or a musical interlude. We'll be hosting these online for you to view from around mid-February. If you're tired of watching the repeats of repeats of repeats on TV then join our Benenden Players Facebook page, or email me and we'll get back to you with viewing details nearer the time.

Nancy Tolhurst, Benenden Players Chair
nancy.tolhurst@btinternet.com

Benenden Action Team news

With the new Tier 3 rules well in place throughout Kent, and beyond, I'm sure we are all just hoping for a respite over the Christmas period and into the new year. For me, personally, the ever-present threat of COVID-19 has worn very thin now. With the village and its surrounding parishes seeing spikes and numerous cases, it is now well ingrained within our community, so we must stay vigilant.

This is the time our volunteer force comes into its own. Always prioritising others needs before their own. We have helped more people with food vouchers, property maintenance, lifts to appointments and delivering presents to local children.

Our plan to create a network of like-minded people ready to mobilise quickly and support our community has proven to work very well. We are now having conversations that make positive, long lasting changes to people's lives, and all that from a volunteer base focussed on helping their neighbours. I am sincerely thankful for all those involved and please do call on us if you feel we can help in any way in 2021. We are here for you.

Guy Hagan, BAT co-ordinator

07515 275150 guy@rawfellconstruction.co.uk
www.benendenaction.co.uk

Namibian Schoolchildren news

It's been a while since I wrote for some assistance for three children that nearly had their schooling in Namibia stopped. Ruben, Rusia and Mercy were all sponsored by Wild Dog Safaris in Namibia but due to COVID-19 and the abrupt halting of safaris, there was no further funding available. Now I have some positive news, thanks to several Benenden people stepping in to make a difference. Ruben, the oldest, didn't manage to change schools but we managed to secure sponsorship through a different avenue. He has a full bursary from AGAPE Ministries International for 2021 and this will allow him to stay in Windhoek Christian Academy. Ruben is beyond happy and looking forward to the new school year.

Rusia's school, the Holy Cross Convent, will now charge only 50% of the fees in 2021. They say she has worked hard, done all her online work during COVID and they would really like her to stay. This brings the cost to about £110 a month, and if people are still willing to help, we should just be able to cover this. Unfortunately, we can't continue Mercy's education. This was hard to do (such a bright young boy) but he wasn't quite old enough to understand. If anyone else would be able to step in, we could reinstate him.

So, a big thank you, I can't tell you what a difference your help will make. For donations I have set up a JustGiving account on www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/liz-kirby. Alternatively, if you prefer, send a cheque (payable to Elizabeth Kirby Savings Account) to me at Little Haywards, Cranbrook Road, Benenden, Kent TN17 4ES. This account will be checked by the Church treasurer.

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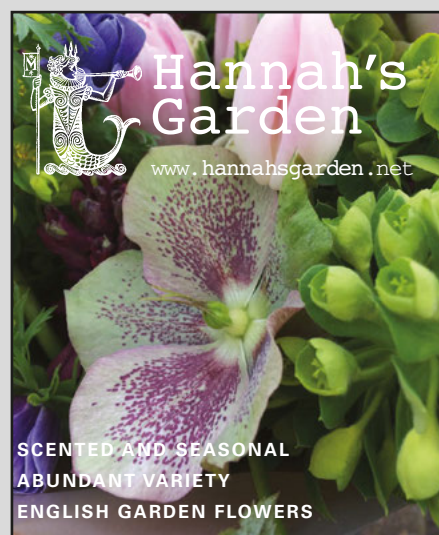
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Village Hall news

We're full of hope as the Benenden Village Hall team wish everyone a very Happy New Year. More than ever, we hope that everyone had a safe and joyful Christmas and wish for bright new beginnings and a more positive year in 2021. We hope that the new year will see a slow but steady return to normality and lots of smiling faces through the hall doors.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our regular hirers, most of whom are small business owners who have been hit hard by the ever-changing rules and we hope that, as the restrictions ease, they see a flood of new business. We also hope to see the return of our beloved Village Lunch Club and the Fine Arts Society, as well as the Benenden Players. This January will be rather sombre without the panto to liven things up!

We're confident that everyone is aching to return, with a new-found enthusiasm and appreciation for the activities available. If you're thinking of starting your own classes or looking for a new venue in the new year, we have several regular slots available so please do get in touch.

Holly Clayson 07419 989830
enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org
www.benendenvillagehall.org

Planning Matters

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

14 December 2020

- 20 03297 FULL and 20 03298 LBC Tilden Farm, Water Lane, Hawkhurst. Removal of outbuilding; Conversion of existing granary into a dwelling.
- 20 03291 LBC Eaglesden, Mill Street. Existing boot room to be demolished and re-built; internal re-modelling; loft conversion; addition of rooflights; replacement of rain water goods.
- 20 03185 Recreation Ground. Trees T1 (HORSE CHESTNUT) - Fell; T2 (OAK) - 15-25% Reduction; T3 (OAK) - Thin crown 15-20%

Talking Shop

The end of 2020 has been a turbulent time at Benenden's. At the time of writing, we have been in the process of getting back to as much of a 'normal' as possible after one of our team tested positive for coronavirus. As soon as it was reported, the infected person and all contacts were quarantined and Benenden's was temporarily closed. During the closure we were fortunate to be able to borrow the fogger from the church and committee members leapt into action, thoroughly fumigating the shop, and then sanitising all surfaces.

The shop was not opened again until all of this was done, and it was staffed by unaffected people until the period of isolation was over. The person concerned has recovered well and no one else was infected as a result. During these unsettling times, our greatest concern is the well-being of our customers, staff and volunteers and we hope that our prompt action will reassure all concerned. We are grateful for the goodwill shown by the whole community at this time.

We thank all those volunteers who have come forward to help keep our shop and café going for the last few months. It would have been impossible without them. Thank you, too, to all our loyal customers for your valued custom; please keep coming as, hopefully, things improve during the new year. We are unable to say when the café will open properly again but every effort will be made to get things up and running as soon as possible as we can't wait to get that warm, comfortable, friendly community feeling back again!

We wish you all a very happy, healthy and hopeful New Year. Please keep supporting your local shop and all volunteers are welcome with open arms.

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Primary School news

As we enter the final chapter of 2020 I think it is fair to say that this was not the year we expected or planned for. We faced challenges that could only have been imagined and coped with unprecedented levels of disruption and uncertainty. Whilst many organisations have had to close their doors, schools have valiantly pushed on providing a refuge for vulnerable and keyworker children during the first lockdown, developing remote learning opportunities and since September coping with rising levels of infections in the wider community, whilst trying to provide a safe learning environment in school.

Moreover, I am very proud to say that despite all the challenges the pandemic has presented and continues to present, the staff, governors, children and parents have continued to show enormous determination, creativity and resilience.

Despite Kent moving into Tier 3 in early December, it was business as usual for us and our Christmas preparations continued. Barn Owls, Cuckoos and Firecrest were busy rehearsing their nativity, the classrooms were decorated, the Christmas trees went up and the corridors were adorned with lights. The school looked amazing, all magical and twinkly. The dates for the Christmas parties and Christmas lunch were agreed and each class visited St George's Church to enjoy a short service with Revd David and Revd Ylva before the end of term. There were even a few more surprises in store for the children with a visit from Santa Claus and his elves arranged. We were determined that Christmas in school this year would not be cancelled, albeit it would be different.

We are all looking forward to a more normal 2021 and we wish everyone a very happy New Year.

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

Parent Teachers and Friends Association news

By now you are hoping your 2021 diaries will be fuller than last year and certainly less need for the word 'Zoom'. The Benenden Primary School PTFA is no different and is welcoming in the new year thinking positively towards filling those pages to the fullest.

Despite the Tier 3 restrictions at the end of last year we were still pleased to run several Christmas activities, keeping things as normal as possible for the children, whilst also raising much-needed funds. It was a fantastic effort by both parents and staff. The children took delight in choosing a present from the Gift Cave and expertly wrapped it for their chosen recipient. They enjoyed a Christmas Jumper Day in exchange for a donation to the Hamper Raffle (bonus prize, a voucher from Chapel Down) and a Year 5 student was pleased to see their Christmas card design selling in the community shop. Local businesses had the opportunity to sell at our Virtual Christmas Market and, despite their own challenges, were extremely kind to donate a percentage of sales to the school. The new-found knowledge of all things 'virtual' has opened up exciting additional opportunities - perhaps something for all of us to get more involved with.

All funds raised go towards key school projects including STEM-focused learning kits, Forest School items and reading books.

We hope our updates help you to feel connected to the village school. We welcome any suggestions and hope to welcome you to in-person events soon. Wishing everyone a happy New Year. May it be less 'Zoom' for us all.

Athena Cripps, Benenden CEP, PTFA

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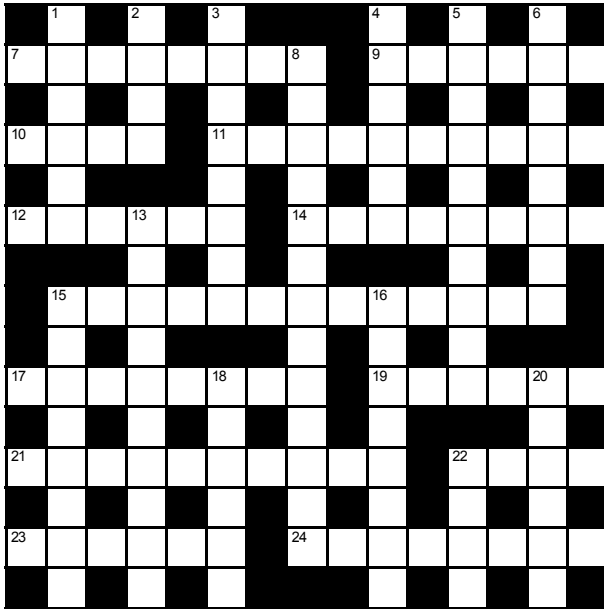
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MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

CROSSWORD No23 (Difficult)



Across

- 7 Galloper on rocky shore? (3,5)
- 9 Homework? Yes; cough up, first (6)
- 10 Parking mixed-up emo's mode of self-expression? (4)
- 11 A pair of mules in my suitcase? One, perhaps (4,6)
- 12 Know oneself or, as it turned out, the answer (6)
- 14 High upon the foam, we RN types and our ships (3-2-3)
- 15 Initially see wrong direction (4,9)
- 17 Cocktail sounds like query from Welsh stereotype (8)
- 19 Have to meet at US hospital? (6)
- 21 Mountain railways are fun before rails are mixed inexpertly with copper (10)
- 22 Fish finger prints? (4)
- 23 Accept melody? (6)
- 24 Trick or amulet runs Windows program on Mac (8)

Down

- 1 Headgear of a Private Dick, a Fed or a Gangster (6)
- 2 Fake southern pork? (4)
- 3 Studio department housing terribly sharp CGI experts (8)
- 4 Rain in Spain is a pain (6)
- 5 Topographical charts most welcome (6,4)
- 6 Waterfall in Lens? (8)
- 8 Awfully exact encomium notwithstanding, dismiss from Church (13)
- 13 Schaffer play to boo is Equus. Terribly creepy (10)
- 15 Building or bowel? When alarm sounds it could be both! (8)
- 16 Familial wisdom is a domestic play on words (8)
- 18 Almost hurt but, without Jay, one gets used to it (6)
- 20 Altogether confusing Clone B (2,4)
- 22 Bargain in Kentish port? (4)

SUDOKU

				4			9	
5			2	6		7		
		2				3		
	8		6				2	
9								
				9	7			4
				2	1			
	4		7					8
		9			8			5

Each column, row and block **must** contain numbers 1 to 9 in any order. Each number can be used only **once** in each column, row or block.

CODEWORD No23 (Tricky)

12	9	7	13	25	20	2	22		19	26	26	25	19	2
22		2		10		7			18		5			19
26	9	2	22	8	19	21	22		4	9	5	26	9	26
12		19		12		15			26		25			10
25	10	8	12	16	25	25	1		24	25	23	23	25	23
1		25		22		18		13		18		10		19
				25	3	19	17	7	2	19	16	9		18
13		23		20		19		19		22		25		22
17	12	25	6	7	25	17	19	18	23					
12		24		1		11		25		25		23		7
21	19	22	12	25	21		25	23	10	20	22	10	1	8
9		25		18			22		20		4			19
9	5	22	8	25	1		9	17	17	19	13	10	9	1
14		25		19			19		17		1			23
25	1	23	19	2	2		25	16	17	25	16	25	18	19

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number represents a letter. Break the code and complete the grid. Three letters have been given to help you. Heavy lines denote a new word.

FOURWORD

1	2	3	4
2			
3			
4			

In the grid, place all of these letters to make the same four words across and down. Four clues are given to help you.

DDDEEHIIILLMMOOOS

- 1 Do it to save it
- 2 Unemployed god
- 3 Dying to get back mood
- 4 Trees for Cockney ships wheels?



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Iden Green and Benenden WI

Hopefully everyone received the November/December issue of WI Life which included the voucher books. Unfortunately, however, the West Kent News will be online only, for the foreseeable future, as the printers are receiving insufficient advertising revenue.

An interesting talk on stem cell replacement was held on Zoom. The Federation would like us to encourage all men between 18 and 55 to join the Anthony Nolan register as this makes such a difference to blood cancer and in many cases is curing it.

If you are considering how you can do something useful with your time and skills during January, you may like to reach for the knitting needles? I have a couple of patterns for child and adult hats which can be forwarded so please get in touch. They could be used for next year's Christmas boxes but please keep any finished items for now. Scarves are also always welcome.

Shirley will contact everyone in January with news of plans, however if any of you would like to join me in a Zoom video meeting please get in touch. We hope and trust that the New Year will prove to be a happy and prosperous one for all our readers.

The WI offers women the opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and campaign on wide-ranging issues. If anyone would like to join us when we eventually return to having our meetings and get-togethers in the Memorial Hall, please email me.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

The Poppy Appeal

In this extraordinary year, when all charities have been facing unprecedented difficulties in fundraising, we are delighted that more than £3,650 has been raised for the Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal in Benenden and Iden Green. We are most grateful for so many generous donations.

Jane Dalton Holmes

Benenden Branch Royal British Legion

Benenden School news

In the final week of the autumn term life at Benenden took on a distinctly wintry feel. Firstly, we awoke to the surprise arrival of the first snowfall of the season, which the girls enthusiastically embraced, as you can imagine. This perfectly introduced our Winter Chill event, a weekend of relaxed Christmas activities and, most importantly, food! Crêpes, strawberry and chocolate kebabs, popcorn and s'mores kept the girls energised in the cold while they enjoyed some traditional fairground games.

We were also entertained by a student-led talent show, held in aid of APIE, our chosen charity which works to improve education in Rwanda. This extraordinary event featured nine acts of students and staff singing, dancing and rapping. A rock band of Year 11 girls were our fitting winner.

We were also treated to two marvellous events in which sixth formers interviewed high-profile figures. One of our student societies grilled Jacob Rees-Mogg, the Leader of the House of Commons, before BBC News presenter Mishal Husain was on the receiving end of questions for a change in a special virtual event. In both events, the speakers gave the girls a fascinating insight into their careers and offered them sound advice on entering the workplace.

Finally, we ended the term with a virtual Mark Reading, which is our traditional autumn term closing assembly, featuring prizegiving, carols, readings and our much-anticipated school-wide rendition of The 12 Days of Christmas, which is always a lovely way to end the term.

Clearly, this term has been another challenging one, as it has been for schools across Kent and indeed the UK, but we are very much looking forward to a more positive year in 2021 and I wish you and your families a very happy New Year too.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

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Benenden Hospital news

To say 2020 was unusual would be an absolute understatement. For all, but particularly those directly affected by pandemic and those on the front line in the health and caring profession, it would be a year to forget.

What we can't forget, however, is how health and care professionals stepped up to the plate in 2020.

While the team at Benenden Hospital has not literally been on the front line in the fight against COVID-19, I'm proud that my colleagues have played a part by supporting NHS colleagues in Kent. It was a given that we would support the NHS during the pandemic as we did when we helped TB patients over 113 years ago.

My colleagues have adapted in 2020. They've been incredibly flexible in what they've turned their hands to, and they've showcased the diversity of their skills; the way in which they have come to the fore to help support not only the NHS but our own hospital and our patients.

And we value the support the hospital continues to receive from the local community; and as we move through this new year we will continue play our part within a community in which I am so proud to live.

We look to 2021 with positivity and are hopeful for the future. What will continue unchanged is Benenden Hospital colleagues' commitment to having the time and space to care for those who come to us.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse

Topical health news

Are you vacillating over vaccination? Like many people you are probably concerned about the safety and efficacy of the new COVID-19 vaccines. There has been much talk in the public and professional press about the speed at which they are coming to market as well as about reactions among the first cohort of real-world recipients. Like most vaccines, these are not risk free, with a small minority of people, usually those with severe allergies, reacting badly. Fortunately, the management of reactions is straightforward and immediate risk to health is, using the jargon, not 'statistically significant'.

There have been three lessons which have emerged from the pandemic which suggest people should have the vaccine. The first is, when needed, we can create products to support life in short order e.g. the development of various 'ventilators' during the first wave - no one questioned their route to market. Secondly, we have seen how our existing knowledge of medicine stacks up when applied to managing people with COVID-19, as we use steroids, antivirals and laying patients prone - all already familiar to us to reduce deaths. Plus, we have seen how we all need to approach the pandemic. "I wear a mask to protect other people"; the new mantra being "I will have the vaccine because it will protect me and society at large".

Peter Ellis

FOURWORD
1 HIDE, 2 IDLE, 3 DOOM, 4 ELMs

6	7	9	4	3	8	2	1	5
2	4	1	7	5	6	9	3	8
8	5	3	9	2	1	4	6	7
1	2	5	3	9	7	6	8	4
9	6	4	5	8	2	1	7	3
3	8	7	6	1	4	5	2	9
4	1	2	8	7	9	3	5	6
5	9	8	2	6	3	7	4	1
7	3	6	1	4	5	8	9	2

SUDOKO

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

CROSSWORD No23

Across: 7 Sea horse, 9 Poem, 11 Pack animal, 12 Satori, 14 Men-of-war, 15 East southeast, 17 Daquiri, 19 Muster, 21 Funiculars, 22 Dabs, 23 Attune, 24 Emulator
Down: 1 Fedora, 2 Sham, 3 Graphics, 4 Sprain, 5 Relief maps, 6 Cataract, 8 Excommunicate, 13 Obsequious, 15 Evacuate, 16 Homespun, 18 Inured, 20 En bloc, 22 Deal

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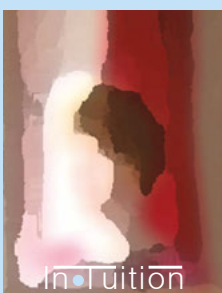
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Hot Topic

Iden Green Playground Appeal

Can you help Iden Green replace its much-missed playground? A campaign is under way to raise the funds needed for new equipment for the playground, which had to be closed last year because of the dilapidated and potentially dangerous state of the climbing frame and swings. It is now a sad sight, standing empty in the middle of the village recreation ground.

Over the past nine months a working group - the Friends of Iden Green Playground - has put many hours of thought into what parishioners would like to see in a restored playground and held detailed discussions with potential equipment suppliers. Now comes the hardest part: raising the money needed to turn the playground back into a vital part of village life.

The Friends are acting under the auspices of Benenden Village Trust (BVT), which is responsible for the play areas in both Benenden and Iden Green and views the new playground as one of its top priorities. The working group is led by Julie Lewis, whose house backs onto the recreation ground and who appreciates how important the play area has been for village children over the years. The four other members of the group are all local mothers of children under 10 - including two teachers - and know from experience what playground features work best for children.

The working group was established last March and hoped to make rapid progress, but almost immediately COVID-19 complicated its task. Says Julie: "It's been a long year and a struggle. We've had to rely on meeting



remotely on Zoom and still haven't all met in person. Restrictions mean we haven't been able to think about usual fundraising events - such as bring-and-buys or coffee mornings - and it was hard enough getting equipment companies to visit the site."

The plan drawn up by the Friends would give the playground one or two multi-functional wooden climbing frames, complete with slides, and four or five swings. The surrounding area would be covered with safe surfacing and the finished playground would be similar to Benenden's magnificent new facility, albeit much smaller.

However, it will be a challenge to raise the many thousands of pounds needed to make all this a reality. Benenden Parish Council has already pledged substantial support to the project and BVT will make a significant contribution. Generous donations have been received from Benenden's community shop and the Henhurst Charitable Trust, but this will still leave a considerable funding gap. The Friends and BVT are looking for other sources of assistance, but hope that local businesses and individuals will also chip in.

If you have ideas for fund-raising, please email Julie Lewis (julielewis@live.co.uk). If you wish to make a contribution, please contact Caroline Levett, the BVT manager (bvttrust@gmail.com). Martin Dickson, Benenden Village Trust



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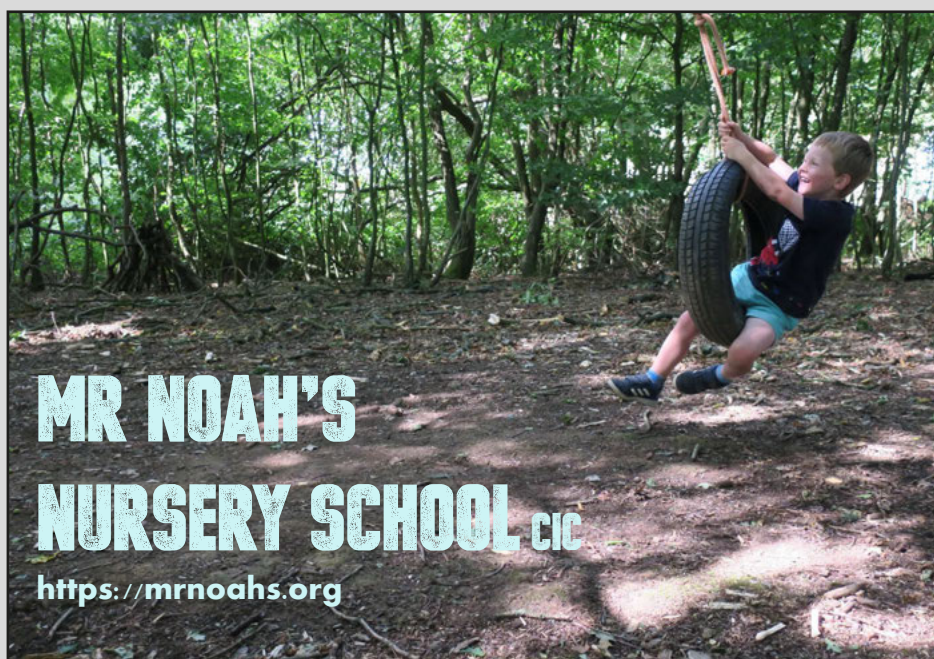
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Securing the future of the parish's charitable housing

Robin Dalton Holmes explains the past and future of a project to provide more affordable housing in Benenden

Benenden Almshouse Charities is a local body, run by local trustees, for the benefit of local people. It was formed by the amalgamation in 1960 of the Gybbons & Sharps Charity and the Thorn House Charity, which go back much further and emanate from the village workhouse known as Feoffee, founded in 1733. The Thorn House Charity was in existence as two cottages for poor families, rebuilt in 1778, but the financial burden of the responsibility for poor families became beyond the resources of local residents and the Government financed the transfer of over 140 parishioners as freemen to South Australia in the early 19th century. The reduced burden of this relief, however, lasted for only a few decades.

The charity currently has nine almshouses, six of which are in the former workhouse property, situated in Walkhurst Road, consisting of five one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit. Adjoining the Feoffee property are two fields, which have been continuously let for grazing, and a small area of woodland. These eight acres were an endowment made in the 1700s to provide an income for the workhouse but now produces a rent which makes only a minimal contribution to property maintenance. The other building owned by the charity is

Thorn Cottages in Coldharbour Road, Iden Green, refurbished in 1988-89 to form three one-bedroom units.

Almshouses provide charitable accommodation and date back over 1,000 years. The beneficiaries are not tenants but licensees. They do not pay rent but contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of the building and the running of the charity. It is for this reason that they are the only form of housing exempt from the right-to-buy legislation. The criterion for occupation is not age but residency in the parish, as well as need.

Conversion and refurbishment in the 1980s produced three more residential units, but at the expense of space, facilities and the charity's reserves, and the trustees have become increasingly aware that the accommodation is now cramped and situated in historic buildings that are inflexible and subject to high maintenance, which became very apparent a few years ago when there was a need to replace half of the roof of the Feoffee property at a cost £80,000.

The conclusion was reached that the best way forward would be to provide new accommodation, if possible on the land already owned by the charity. This meant that existing residents would be able to remain in residence, undisturbed, and choose whether to relocate or remain in Feoffee or Thorn Cottages when the new buildings were finished.

It was decided to seek planning consent for 12 new almshouses adjacent to Rothermere →

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for the construction of the new almshouses but will also provide some monies for the refurbishment of the existing Feoffee and Thorn properties.

The new almshouses, together with the existing accommodation, will mean that the charity

will increase its units from nine to 21 and from ten bedrooms to 32. Although refurbishment of the existing accommodation may mean the loss of a few units to provide more spacious accommodation, the number of units available to parishioners will have at least doubled and the number of bedrooms trebled.

All of these properties will be exempt from the right to buy and will be held for the benefit of the parish in perpetuity. The nature of the new accommodation and possibly the existing accommodation will mean that it is more compatible with the requirements of younger families, from which there appears to be a growing demand. If successful the project will provide an extremely valuable asset for the village at a time when increasing property values are limiting housing opportunities for local people. The administration and operation of the almshouses will remain the responsibility of local trustees who derive no financial benefit from this role.

If matters progress as the trustees hope, the project will take approximately two years to complete.

→ Close and the trustees decided that the best way to finance this was to seek planning permission on the remaining land fronting Walkhurst Road for a private housing development, which coincided with the 2015 Parish Plan's support for affordable housing, and the Neighbourhood Development Plan's attempts to identify suitable housing sites.

A planning application was made in March 2019 and, after a great deal of work by the trustees and their consultants, this autumn Tunbridge Wells Borough Council resolved to grant detailed planning permission for four one-bedroom, six two-bedroom and two three-bedroom almshouse units and access roads to the new houses and the grazing land, although this has not yet been formalised.

The private housing element is subject to an outline consent for 13 units. The charity believes that it will be able to proceed to an agreement with a house builder that will enable the construction of the almshouses before or at the same time as the private housing. It is also hoped that the purchase price that the private housing will produce will be sufficient not only

Elevation



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Margaret
circa 1943

Resilient, inventive and funny

Charlie Sampson pays tribute to his mother, Margaret Sampson, who died in 2020 just short of her 100th birthday

My mother was a young woman when World War II broke out and her experiences during and immediately after the conflict taught

her the qualities of resilience, inventiveness and humour in the face of adversity.

She spent her childhood in Leigh-on-Sea on the Essex coast. Her father was the local GP and her mother looked after the home. Her education at the local convent school was rudimentary - this being long before girls' equality - but she was a voracious reader with an opinion on almost every topic. She would say: "I never failed an exam in my life because I never took one."

At the outbreak of war, she was evacuated to Woodstock in Oxfordshire, then recruited by MI5, whose HQ had been moved to Blenheim Palace to avoid the bombs. Her bosses soon discovered that she had a special talent for listening to and transcribing the conversations between enemy agents that gave vital intelligence to the war effort.

It was in this period that Margaret met her future husband Ralph, who was a Spitfire pilot with the County of Kent squadron. After the war, the family moved to Scotland as Ralph was a Scottish rugby international and well-known

north of the border. Margaret finished her career in MI5 to become a full-time mother looking after three sons: Jamie, Stevie and Charlie. She was a passionate gardener and a brilliant, inventive chef serving up classic dishes with a twist - with vegetables and fruit grown in her kitchen garden. If she were a younger



woman today, Maggie's Kitchen would be an internet sensation!

She demonstrated her iron will when she moved the family from a comfortable Victorian town house in Scotland to a dilapidated farmhouse with no roof in the countryside. Her vision to turn this wreck into a beautiful family home was decried by the village gossips as 'Margaret's Folly', but she was determined to prove them wrong, and she did.

When Ralph retired from business, they moved to Benenden, close to her brother in Appledore. She continued her passion for gardening at home and as a volunteer at Sissinghurst. She supported St George's Church, financially and practically, although her relationship with God was complicated due to her less than happy childhood education. However, in her typically pragmatic way she would say: "One must always stand on the side of good."

Her fighting spirit came to the fore when, at 92, she contracted cancer of the oesophagus but underwent chemotherapy and beat it. She never felt sorry for herself or lost her sense of humour and would often say: "I'm sorry to disappoint you but I'm not ready to die just yet." Her final years were spent at home looked after by carers and in the company of her adored grandchildren. Margaret is greatly missed, but her example of determination, stoicism, warmth and her sense of humour live on with those that knew and loved her.



Margaret on a fishing trip
before the war

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Benenden History



Fig.5

Going up in smoke

Peter Stennet discovers fun and frivolity in the 300-year-old clay pipes he has discovered in his pond

Pipes made of clay were first smoked in England after the introduction of tobacco from Virginia in the late 16th century. Devon-born sea captain Sir Walter Raleigh, who founded colonies in the New World, was one of the first to promote this novel habit in England.

It spread quickly across the country and by the mid 17th century the manufacture of clay pipes was a well-established trade. By the late 1600s, when the industry reached a peak, almost every town and city in England had pipe makers, with millions being produced not only for local use but also for export.

The size of the pipe bowl increased over the decades to keep up with fashion and to allow more tobacco to be consumed. Long pipes allowed a cooler smoke, but also broke more easily and so they were often thrown away on the spot after use.

Almost every aspect of everyday life was celebrated on a clay pipe, including: plants, animals, birds, coats of arms, royal events, names of inns, Masonic symbolism, sporting events, advertising, heads of celebrities and even characters from mythology.

Among the everyday treasures (aka ancient rubbish) I have unearthed from the mud taken out of our pond



Fig.2



Fig.1

are some lovely examples of the pipes Benenden villagers used to smoke. The oldest, probably 18th century, is plain with a thick stem and a long, thin, sloping bowl (Fig.1). But decorated pipes became popular, particularly with animals. The 19th century bowl (Fig.2) features a bird, and you can see the short peg underneath which the smoker held to avoid burning fingers on the hot bowl.

A bowl clasped inside the claws of a bird (Fig.3) is quite common and heraldry was

another popular form of decoration. I knew that some clay pipes had bowls in the form of human heads, and I was really hoping to find one. In the end I was fortunate enough to find these three

(Fig.4). Fig.5 is particularly unusual and caused a stir when I unearthed it. Along the stem it reads "the whole dam family", and includes a dog!

As people became more prosperous, the size of the bowls grew larger. In Fig.6 you can see three sizes: small, medium, and huge - which was a holiday souvenir. It features footballers and has a boot and ball beneath the bowl to hold and has blue writing proclaiming it to be "a gift from Grimsby".

Once filled it would certainly have lasted a long time!

My final photo (Fig.7) shows a bowl in the form of a chamber pot or 'guzunder'. Pipes were not often painted, and I am surprised how well the colours have survived on this one.



Fig.3



Fig.4



Fig.6



Fig.7

The eagle has landed - and it's come to Kent

I was surprised to learn that in 2019, six White-tailed Eagles had been released on the Isle of Wight as part of a reintroduction program. I thought that the wild coastline in Scotland would be a much preferred habitat and indeed the first introduction program took place on the island of Rhum off the west coast.

I remember seeing my first White-tailed Eagle on Mull at close quarters while it was roosting on a tree. It is truly an impressive bird at close range and after one glance at that huge yellow beak, it was easy to imagine it ripping into its prey.



The last known breeding attempt in the UK was in 1916 on the island of Skye. The extermination of the eagle was Government encouraged as it was seen (probably incorrectly) as a competitor to the fishing and sheep farming industries. The extermination along the south coast was much earlier (no records after 1780), with the Isle of Wight being one of the last known breeding locations.

White-tailed Eagles do not breed until about five years old and then it can sometimes take a few attempts until they successfully fledge any young. While they are maturing, they are known to wander off on extensive journeys, and as the released birds have satellite tags, it has been possible to follow in some detail their explorations. One bird with a ring G274 took off and flew to Sussex, crossing the Kent/Sussex border on 1 April, when he flew over this parish. They fly at high altitudes (typically at 2,000ft), so it would have taken a sharp-eyed observer to pick this up.

Having left the Isle of Wight that morning and crossed into Kent at four in the afternoon, he eventually roosted in Elham Park Woods, near Stelling Minnis, having journeyed 103 kilometres during the day. Next morning, G274 set off for Dover and landed on the beach, probably consuming a meal of fish or wildfowl before following the coast up to Ramsgate, cutting inland just north of Canterbury and eventually roosting in woods six kilometres south of Faversham.

The next day, he flew almost on a direct line back to the Isle of Wight, for a three-night round trip of 524 kilometres, where he was seen catching grey mullet and cuttlefish in the Solent, as well as catching rabbits on the downs. He began his next foray on 20 June, spending the first night in woods near Spithurst. The next day, he landed at Birling Gap and roosted in Jarvis Wood, was seen a day later at Rye Harbour and tracked over Hemsted Forest before settling in Eastwell Woods, near Ashford. He then made his way back home, travelling 490 kilometres in six days.

The other three released birds also made extensive trips, some much further afield than this one. G318 journeyed to Weston-super-Mare and made a second trip to Yorkshire; G393 summered in the North York Moors, while G324 made the longest journey and spent most of the summer in the Lammermuir Hills in Southern Scotland. I thought she might stay there but she came back to the Isle of Wight on 9 September.

Given good views, the White-tailed Eagle is relatively easily identified. Its broad wings are so enormous it is often referred to as a 'barn door'. The adults have white tails but the recently released birds will not have a fully white tail until they reach breeding age. Their main diet is fish, but waterfowl and mammals are often taken depending on availability. Unlike Ospreys, which plunge dive to catch fish, the White-tailed Eagle flies low and drops its feet into the water to grasp its prey. They are, however, great scavengers and will feed on anything the sea washes up.

White-tailed Eagle fishing



White-tailed Eagles weigh up to six kilos, with the females being some 25% larger and heavier than males. They can lift their own weight in prey and have been known to take lambs, but since their introduction some 30 years ago, there have been only 36 instances of the eagles taking lambs to the nest, of which 24 were already dead.

Farmers in Ireland took a great exception to a release program in Killarney National Park back in 2007. Following a demonstration at Kerry airport when the eagle chicks arrived, quite a few of the first release chicks were shot or poisoned and the program was nearly shut down, but the authorities persevered and the first chicks were hatched in 2013.

Back in the Isle of Wight, another seven chicks were released in August 2020, in addition to the four surviving chicks from 2019. The aim is to release about 60 chicks over about five years to establish a breeding population on the island of six to eight pairs. The chances of seeing an eagle locally will be greatly enhanced.

Two decades ago, the only raptors to be seen were Sparrowhawks, Kestrels and the occasional Hobby, but Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Buzzard are now familiar and possibly White-tailed Eagle will once again be seen in their old hunting grounds.

Another introduction program caused quite a lot of excitement when a Lammergeier (also known as a Bearded Vulture) was spotted in Derbyshire, where it spent most of the summer. By DNA analysis it was shown to come from a reintroduction program in the French Alps, and while many

experts did not think it would survive - particularly as carrion forms the major part of its diet and it is illegal to leave dead stock lying about; - survive it did, and it has made its way back to the Alps.

It does not have a satellite transmitter like the eagles, but it is so large (it dwarfs an eagle) that it was well tracked as it made its way south over England, crossing the channel at Beachy Head, having passed over Tunbridge Wells.

Charles Trollope 240821
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Eagle journeys shows the spring journeys of the released eagles

In Your Garden

Tidy garden in January



January is such a busy month

People often ask me whether I continue working in clients' gardens throughout January and February, and the answer is always a resounding 'yes'. For me, the months before Christmas are a little fraught; with leaf clearing to finish off before I start bulb planting; with festive pot displays to change over and keeping lawn edges clipped, paths swept, autumn is fast-paced. Once we get to January I can breathe a sigh of relief and approach my to-do list with some degree of control.

Bonfires figure regularly. I can get so much cleared away and tidied up and I often rally a gardening friend or two for a bit of horticultural camaraderie - usually it's the hedge-cutting contractor as he is often at a loose end in January and he brings his chainsaw, which is handy for all those jobs I can't quite get done myself. I also have a dear girlfriend gardener who helps out for free - anything to get her out of the house post-Christmas, she tells me.

We head off into the backs of the borders, loppers in hand, and emerge with bundles of



Scented paperwhites
for early spring

stuff for the bonfire, and this will go on all day until dusk, twice a week, throughout these two months. It always amazes me how much shrubs in particular grow each year, and we invariably do not manage to burn all of it before the end of February.

This is my cut-off point, largely as this is the time I start cutting back the deciduous grasses. In one particular garden there are roughly 100 tall miscanthus and we use battery-operated hedge cutters to trim them all to within a few inches of the ground. This makes light work of the task - it's clearing away that takes forever! Back and forth we go to the compost clearing site, with huge bundles of parched bleached stems rolled up underneath our arms. They are tricky to burn, emitting lots of smoke that's very unpopular with the neighbours, so we often burn half and let the other half rot down.

We are then into early March and back onto

a tight schedule again as the garden wakes up. My friend retreats to her day job and is replaced by my merry band of contractors, who slink back in April to give the lawn its first cut and re-commission the irrigation system.

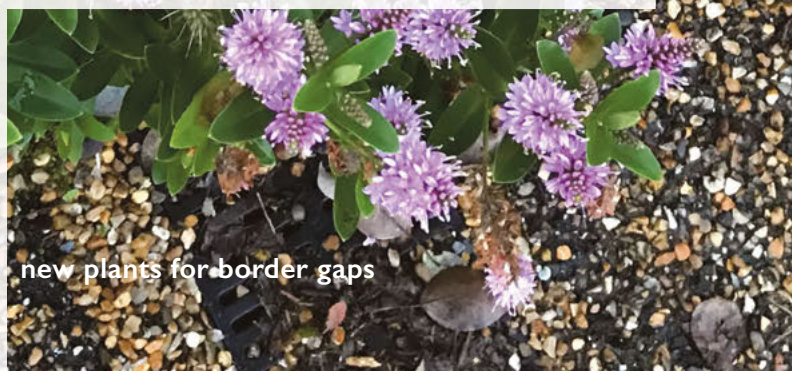
I would be lost without these two early months in the gardening calendar and I do have the same

ethos at home in my own garden. It makes all the difference to get the borders tidy and ready for spring. I hope you also manage to find the time to wrap up warm and start getting your gardens ready for the year ahead.

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Above: Preparing for Christmas: St George's adorned with the refurbished star; installation of Hole Park's Christmas tree; Benenden's in festive spirit; Ward's the butchers sell out of turkeys for the first time ever
Front cover: Sunrise from St George's tower. Photograph: David Commander