



Benenden
Magazine
November 2019



Stephen Message

welcomes you to his

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Original paintings inspired by the natural world.
Birds, landscapes and seascapes.
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Memorial Hall BENENDEN

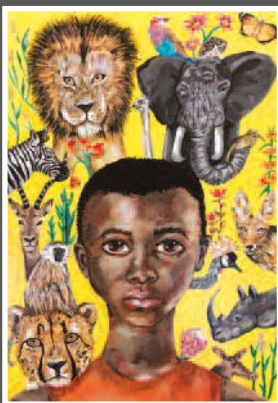
Saturday 26 October 10am - 5pm

Sunday 27 October 10am - 4pm

www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk



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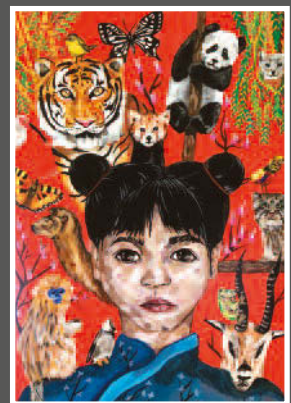
SOUTH AMERICA

climate change and raise funds for WWF. Each captures the beauty of Nature's diversity on one of four continents.



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The cards (blank inside) cost £6 for a set of four and £180 each. WWF receives 30% from every sale.



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Editorial



A time to remember

When it comes to my turn to write this editorial, I always fear not having enough to write about - although being pauciloquent is not something that many will accuse me of, I have to admit. But this month there is an abundance of riches.

'Remembering' is very much the theme for November. We will remember Guy Fawkes's attempts to blow up Parliament in 1605 at the Benenden Bonfire on 2 November, not forgetting that this year it is at Benenden School (just inside the main gates). The organising team would very much appreciate people leaving their cars at home and, if you must drive, perhaps car share and please park considerately. At 11am on Monday 11 November we remember the fallen in an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial in Benenden. This ceremony is always very moving, and thanks goes to Michael Patrick who does a wonderful job of keeping the flowers and grass around the memorial looking beautiful all year.

Looking forward, we also need to remember to look after ourselves; physically, mentally and socially. We are very fortunate that our village hosts a wide spectrum of sport, exercise and dance classes (see page 30) with something to suit everyone. While, the Wellbeing in the Weald project (see page 28) is doing tremendous work bringing people together through a variety of social activities right on our doorstep.

Finally, I must remember not to stand too close to the burner when frying onions at the Benenden Bonfire. Once bitten ...

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

November

Friday 1	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 2	Churchyard Working Party, St George's, Benenden, 9.30-12noon	
Saturday 2	Hospice in the Weald Christmas card sale and coffee morning, St George's Church, 10-12noon	p.15
Saturday 2	Benenden Bonfire and Fireworks, Benenden Girls' School, 5.30pm	p.9
Sunday 3	Luke Bartlett, Organ Recital, St George's Church, 6pm	p.15
Friday 8	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17
Saturday 9	Autumn Village Clean, Benenden's Shop and Iden Green Pavilion, 9am	
Saturday 9	Prisoners of the Moon, Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm	p.11
Saturday 9	Cyril Moore Skittles Evening for the Poppy Appeal, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Friday 15	The Friends of St George's Annual Quiz, Benenden Village Hall, 7.15pm	p.9
Saturday 16	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Club, 8.30pm	
Sunday 17	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.15
Sunday 17	Harmsworth Court Service, Community Room, 4.30pm	
Monday 18	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Tuesday 19	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.21
Tuesday 19	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Winter Party, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17
Tuesday 26	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	
Friday 29	Wines of Rioja, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	p.33
Saturday 30	Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.21
Saturday 30	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Benenden Bowls Club

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

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 2 November Domestic Waste only

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

Saturday 16 November Domestic Waste only

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

Saturday 30 November Domestic Waste only

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

Parish Council



I would like to introduce myself as the most recent member of Benenden Parish Council. I moved to the parish five years ago after spending 18 years in Sandhurst. Since moving to Benenden I have been involved in the tennis club, litter picking and volunteering in the village shop.

I took up my position only four months ago, so the workings of the council are still fairly new to me, but already I have seen how much time and effort is taken by my fellow members who all care deeply about this special area in which we live.

Much of the work involves the planning side of things, which can be complex and time consuming, but I think it is important local people have their say. I have also seen some level of success in changing certain aspects of development which BPC viewed as detrimental to our village. I am helping to review responses to the recent Neighbourhood Development Plan consultation and have been very interested to hear your views.

Lastly if I could bring up one of my main irritations - litter. The village is united twice a year for the village clean-up, where large numbers turn out to spruce up the area. This is a great initiative but wouldn't it be better if in between times everybody could be aware of litter and pick it up there and then so we have a tidy village all year round? But please do join the autumn clean-up on Saturday 9 November, check in between 9-9.30am at the community shop or Iden Green Pavilion.

Stephen Cochrane, Parish Councillor

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 November 2019,

Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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

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

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Friday 1 November

7.30pm All Souls' Day Service

Sunday 3 November	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion	5pm Choral Evensong 6pm Organ Recital
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Sunday 10 November	8am 1662 Communion	10.45am Remembrance Service	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
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Monday 11 November	11am Act of Remembrance, War Memorial
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Sunday 17 November	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
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Sunday 24 November	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship
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Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The Roman Catholic Chapel TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Baptism 26 October Mimi Beard

Funeral 18 October Audrey Ball Thanksgiving Service

Rector's Letter



The abundance of our harvest

At the beginning of October, St George's Church and Benenden Primary School celebrated harvest. The school did so with a service in church on the afternoon of Friday 4 October, and it was lovely to welcome the whole school community back into their church. The church family celebrated Harvest Festival on Sunday 6 October. Thank you to everyone who supported these two services.

Thank you also to everyone who worked so hard to decorate our church: from lychgate to sanctuary, it looked amazing. Thank you also to everyone who donated some produce to mark the harvest. A wonderful amount of food was then distributed between two local charities: Catching Lives, which supports and cares for the homeless in Canterbury; and Nourish, the food bank in Tunbridge Wells that supports families who struggle to find the money to feed themselves; Nourish covers our area, so the food may well come back to help families in our villages.

At the school harvest service, we played the 'Harvest Shuffle, telling a story about the abundance of the things we have been given and the needs of others; we did so by using the letters of the word 'harvest'. This finished up thinking about what we should all be doing more of out of all the good things that we have been blessed with ... share.

At the Sunday service we thought about, 'This is the world that God made.' (Like the nursery rhyme: This is the house that Jack built.) Thinking about the rich, the poor, the homeless - those who have to beg; and about the farmers, businesspeople, the millers and the bakers who make our bread. A loaf of bread was shared out amongst the baker, the miller, the businessman, the farmer and the 'rich'; all received several slices of bread. The 'poor' got half a crust. The homeless got the crumbs that were left.

That isn't 'the world that God made'. God made a world where there was enough. But God put the world into our care; and now we find there doesn't seem to be enough. But there is. It's just that we that have so much, seem to want more and more; and we don't 'share' what we have been blessed with, with those who have nothing. Or we do, but only at harvest time.

Tonight, I think that everyone reading this letter will have a choice of what they want to eat; we will not have to make the choice of whether to eat or not. But some people, living nearby to us, will have to make that stark choice tonight, and may go hungry. Out of the abundance of our harvest we must learn to share more of what we have been blessed with. And you too will be blessed, 'for God loves a cheerful giver.' (2 Cor 9:7) But 'each man should give what he has decided in his heart.'

Revd David Commander, Rector



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Just a Thought



I can do it by myself

The other morning I was struggling once again with a super-king-sized double duvet and it was in danger of winning. I have written about this challenge before. There is a strong feeling that 'I can do it by myself' whereas it would really be much easier and quicker if I called for help.

When I was a small child 'I can do it by myself' was a common refrain according to my mother, which used to test her patience severely. Never mind that the bus was waiting, and an entire queue was held up behind me. I was determined to get on and 'I could do it by myself' and would protest loudly if help was offered.

Of course as children get older and more able we spend our time encouraging them to 'do things by themselves' and become more independent. They are expected to take up challenges and test themselves in study, exercise and play. We are delighted the more competent they become.

By the time the young are teenagers this expectation is almost regretted as they embrace all sorts of activities, experiences and explorations. There opens up an amazing and somewhat overwhelming opportunity to be able to do things by themselves. These could include taking up a good cause; starting a music band; immersing themselves in an extreme form of politics; trying out drugs; going caving; travelling the world; dabbling in relationships. Parents of teenagers can endeavour to advise, support, direct even, but the desire to 'do it by themselves' is now rampant.

In the early adult years as youngsters enter the world of work, home building, serious relationships and becoming part of the 'real world' there is often a burgeoning of confidence, real or superficial. This means they do not need anyone as they are full of energy and ideas and they can definitely 'do it by themselves'. True this does not apply to everyone but there is a goodly proportion to whom it does.

As people become more mature many begin to realise that help from those around is not a bad idea, in fact should be considered or even applied for; although of course they could 'do it by themselves' if they had to. This is also the stage where the expectations of others, real or imagined, play a part.

Next come the very mature who think 'I am determined to do it by myself' to show that 'I am still independent and able to manage perfectly well'. Indeed this period lasts for a significant number of years for many, and all other things being equal, concerned others are happy for this situation to continue.

However, independence eventually morphs into the need for help. This state of affairs can be accompanied by a (sometimes reluctant) recognition that one can no longer 'do it by oneself', and gratitude for any help that one can get. In other situations the problem for friends and relatives is getting a person to realise when this stage has been reached.

Sue Fisher

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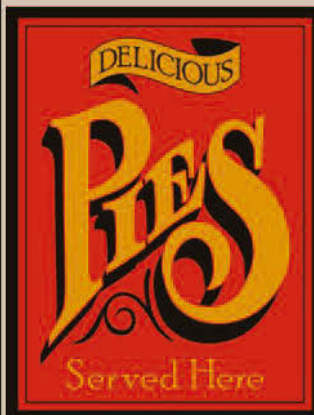


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News and Events

The Arnold Cole Trust

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

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

The Hygiene Bank

The Hygiene Bank is a volunteer-led charity working to eliminate hygiene poverty. Our aim is to bring communities together to tackle hygiene poverty and give support to local people. We collect donations of unopened, unused hygiene products and redistribute them to those in need in the local community, providing every-day hygiene essentials, such as toothbrushes and shower gel.

We need your help and support to continue to tackle hygiene poverty in our area. It's a lot closer than you might think. Our Christmas campaign, #itsinthebag is running throughout November, to give the gift of dignity this Christmas and our local donation points are at the Co-op in Cranbrook, Tesco in Tenterden and Benenden Primary School.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact volunteer@thehygienebank.com
Laura Crossley www.thehygienebank.com

Benenden Bonfire & Fireworks
Saturday 2 November 2019
New Venue
Pedestrian access only via
Benenden Girls' School main entrance
Cranbrook Road, Benenden, TN17 4ES

- Advanced ticket holders benefit from fast track entry.
- To reduce congestion, please allow time to walk or car share if you can. If you do drive, please park considerately.
- No personal sparklers or fireworks.

Gates open 5.30pm Bonfire 6.30pm Fireworks 7pm

The Friends of St George's Church



Quiz Night

Friday 15 November 2019
7.15 for 7.30pm
Benenden Village Hall

Tables of 8
£12 a head

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deborahjenkins26@btinternet.com 01580 240454

All Souls' Day service

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

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

Revd David Commander, Rector 240658
revdavidcommander@gmail.com



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7.30pm, Saturday 9 November
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The film will be followed by a live Q&A with co-writer & producer Nick Snow

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The Guardian

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Benenden Players' news

The 'For One Night Only' Revue wraps up and panto season starts

Our ad-hoc summer revues are fast becoming an annual event. So, I plead guilty; they should not be called 'For One Night Only'. These opportunities to bring the village together to cheer with and laugh at our friends and neighbours are always a welcome diversion to the normal gloom and doom in the media.

Music included recent panto favourites, as you'd expect from the Benenden Players, the excellent Benenden Jazz, accompanied by their regular vocalist Debbie Katis and some new talent, village hall favourite Karen Saunders, Louise Clarke, and a crowd-pleasing Flanders and Swann rendition by Chris Parkinson. The 'Les Misérables' medley proved deservedly popular, and Master of the House delivered exactly as hoped. Our public education duty was met by a cautionary tale of what can go wrong if you leave your drink unattended in The Bull; and Dusty herself turned up with '60s favourites for us oldies. And the comedy; well, we covered Fake News and some well-loved sketches, not to mention the chaos backstage.

Thanks therefore to the many bold, enthusiastic, supportive and strangely talented individuals who participated in the show, and thanks to our forgiving and generous audience. We've raised a surplus of just over £700 which will go a long way towards our new stage lighting. Which nicely enables me to highlight that Panto rehearsals have now started ... showtime will be 30 January to 2 February 2020 and tickets go on sale on 1 December.

Nancy Tolhurst

Open Days for New Entrants in September 2020

KENT ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL 2020

Parents can now apply for a reception place for their son or daughter online at www.kent.gov.uk/ola and can view the KCC information booklet from the www.kent.gov.uk/schooladmissions website.

The application process will open on 5 November 2019 and close 15 January 2020

Open Days for New Entrants in September 2020

The staff, governors and students of Benenden Church of England Primary School would warmly like to invite prospective parents on:
Friday 8 November, 9-12.30pm
Wednesday 13 November, 1.30-3pm

Please let your family and friends know if they have a child starting school in September 2020. Appointments can be made via the school office on 01580 240565.

Lindsay Roberts, Headteacher, National Leader of Education
Benenden Church of England Primary School
Benenden Road, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4EH

Primary School news

It is fair to say that all the children, staff and parents have now settled into the new school building. Indeed, it feels like that we have always been there. During September, the children in Swallows and Woodpeckers proudly showcased what they had been learning this term during their class assembly. It is so lovely to be able to gather as a whole school in our wonderful school hall.

In October our children enjoyed harvest celebrations with parents and friends attending a special service at St George's church. The children donated harvest gifts during the service which were divided between local charities: Nourish (Tunbridge Wells food bank) and Catching Lives (a charity for the homeless in Canterbury).

From 5 November 2019 you can apply for a reception place for your children to start primary school in Kent in September 2020. Please see box above for details.

Lindsay Roberts, Headteacher 240565

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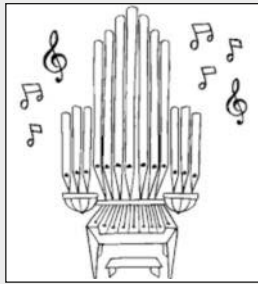
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Village hall highlights

This is my favourite time of year at the village hall. We have all our regulars back in full swing and Benenden Players are rehearsing for next year's pantomime. Weekends are crammed with various charity events and birthday parties, and the build-up to Christmas is just starting.

It really brings home just how much the hall is at the centre of our community and it's an absolute honour to be part of it. To see the place full of hustle and bustle and being used for such a variety of activities is wonderful. Thank you to one and all for helping make it such a success.

As we're bursting at the seams, if you are thinking of holding a party then please do book asap so you or your little ones are not left disappointed. Weekend slots are now few and far between up to mid-December.

Nextdoor Benenden is becoming a huge success with our online community and 30% of Benenden residents have now signed up. It's a great hub for keeping abreast of news and views, and for discovering what's going on in both ours and the surrounding villages. Check it out at www.nextdoor.co.uk.

The Farmers' Market in the village hall:

Tuesday 5 November, 9-11am

Tuesday 19 November, 9-11am

www.benendenvillagehall.org

Lorraine Jones 07419 989830

enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org



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This month at St George's Church, Benenden, 4-6pm

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

Revd David Commander, Rector
01580 240658 revdavidcommander@gmail.com

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

Hospice in the Weald

Christmas card sale and coffee morning,

St George's Church, Benenden

Saturday 2 November, 10-12noon

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

Please do contact me for further details:

Jenny Stevens, Hospice in the Weald Friends

Co-ordinator for Benenden and Sandhurst

07720 006244 jenny.tenterden@gmail.com

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Benenden School news

It seems hard to believe that it is half term already - time certainly does fly in a boarding school, especially at the beginning of a new school year.

Highlights since the start of term include our lovely Two Generation Sports event, in which parents come and participate in fun events with their daughters against other parent-daughter teams. It is always an enormously enjoyable day and this year was no exception.

You may have seen media coverage of independent schools coming under pressure from Labour when a motion to abolish the sector was passed at their conference. Needless to say, the sector is responding strongly and is challenging the various assumptions that have been made. Here at Benenden we are incredibly proud of our role in the local community and we have numerous strong partnerships with organisations, schools and charities. Indeed, our thriving decade-long partnership with The John Wallis Church of England Academy in Ashford was featured on the BBC recently and we will continue to develop our links with the local community, not because of any political pressure but because we have always believed that it is the right thing to do.

Meanwhile, work continues on the new school hall and music school. The music school is fast taking shape and the school hall is now officially out of the ground, with the completion of the complex groundworks meaning construction can now get underway.

Finally, we have been celebrating a host of pupil achievements in the first few weeks of term. One sixth former was named overall winner of the Young Economist of the Year competition, run in association with the Financial Times; another was awarded bronze in the Canterbury Festival Schools' Poetry Competition and all Benenden students entered for a new language exam have passed with a merit or distinction grade, including one sixth former who won a coveted Best Candidate Award.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

JUNIOR TENNIS COACHING

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



Who: Club Members of 6-18 years



Where: Iden Green Tennis Club



When: Friday Term Time groups from 5pm onwards



How much: £6 per session



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

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

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Recently 20 gaily clad ladies happily made their way to the White Hart eagerly anticipating the varied menu on offer. The happy buzz of conversation lapsed for a short period whilst we enjoyed our delicious meals, only to be followed by earnest discussion regarding which sweet to eat. It was a very successful outing, enjoyed by all.

At our last meeting, Lauren, aided by baby Pippa, demonstrated her resilience and empathy as she gave a very interesting account of her life as a vet. She explained the general set-up and economics of vet practices and made us gasp as she listed the varied objects such as socks, children's toys and spectacles which had been swallowed by dogs.

Members and friends are invited to another social afternoon at 2pm on Friday 8 November in the Memorial Hall, when it is hoped that we shall have a speaker to talk about Cranbrook in Bloom. Also, there will be an exchange book stall plus discussions centred on memories about special meetings or travels.

Two things that WI members really enjoy are socialising and eating. Both are on offer at our winter party in the Memorial Hall on the Tuesday 19 November when we are anticipating some melodious entertainment.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk



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The Battle of Barfleur, 29 May 1692, detail, by Richard Paton

Benenden History

The Benenden sailor who halted a French invasion

In all the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of D-Day earlier this year, another military campaign exactly 200 years earlier has been rather overlooked. It's one that's particularly relevant to Benenden as a village resident turned out to be the hero of the hour.

In 1744 England, through its protestant Hanoverian King, George II, was enmeshed in the War of the Austrian succession. The previous summer he had led the army at the battle of

Dettingen - the last time a British monarch commanded his troops in battle. Despite losing his horse and being forced to advance on foot, George and the so-called 'pragmatic army,' narrowly emerged as victors.

But while he was tied up in Bavaria, the French were amassing a fleet around Calais preparing to invade Britain. They intended to install the Catholic James Edward Stuart on the throne as James III who would then end Britain's

anti-French alliances with Austria and the Dutch. A French army estimated at between 6,000 and 15,000 men had assembled at Dunkirk equaling or outnumbering the standing British army in the south of England. But as ever they had first to get across the channel and, in this instance, past the British Fleet commanded by Sir John Norris of Hempsted Park in Benenden.

Norris had joined the Navy in 1680, rising through the ranks to Vice Admiral of Great Britain in 1739. He took part in a number of naval engagements including the Battle of Barfleur. He

miscalculated the location of Norris and his Channel Fleet, believing them to be in Portsmouth.

England was on a war footing. When parliament was told that the French Fleet was cruising off the British coast ready to support an invasion to put the Jacobite Pretender on the throne, the Duke of Marlborough rose to declare he would spend the last drop of his blood in support of the present Royal family.

John Collier, former mayor of Hastings and solicitor to the Cinque Ports, was asked by the Duke of Newcastle to keep "good look out upon the coast" and to report at once if he saw any sign of either the French or English navy.

This Collier duly did, reporting back to the Duke the following day that 15 French Men of War had sailed past Hastings and were believed to have anchored at Romney Bay to the east of 'Dengeness' (sic) point. Sir John Norris and the British fleet were approaching when "there was a violent rain that evening, and the wind changed".

Once the British ships appeared at Romney Bay the French rapidly withdrew, with Norris giving pursuit. As with the Spanish Armada 150 years earlier, it was the weather that helped save England. The violent rain and the change in the wind that John Collier had noted turned into a major storm. Twelve French transport ships were sunk, more than half going down with all hands. The rest were severely damaged and forced to limp back into Dunkirk. Roquefeuil's Men of War were dispersed by the storm, finally making it back to their home port of Brest badly battered. The British fleet, having found shelter in South Coast ports, remained mainly undamaged and the French invasion plans were cancelled.

Admiral Norris retired the following year to Hempsted, now the site of Benenden School. It was there he died five years later aged 78 and was buried at St George's Church. A memorial to him inside the church reads in part: 'There never breathed a better Seaman, a greater Officer, a braver Man ... nor consequently a truer Englishman than this Sir John Norris.'

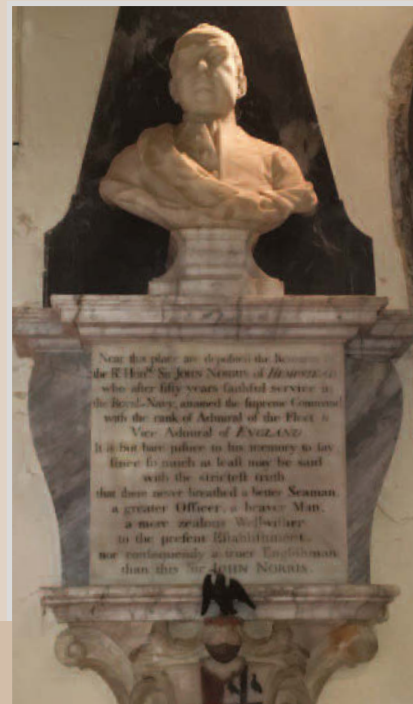
Kent Barker

was returned as MP for Rye five times between 1708 and 1734 and bought Hempsted around 1718.

By 26 February 1744 French transport ships had already sailed from Dunkirk and were on their way to Maldon in Essex, the intended landing site. Their covering squadron under French Admiral Roquefeuil had sailed from Brest but fatally



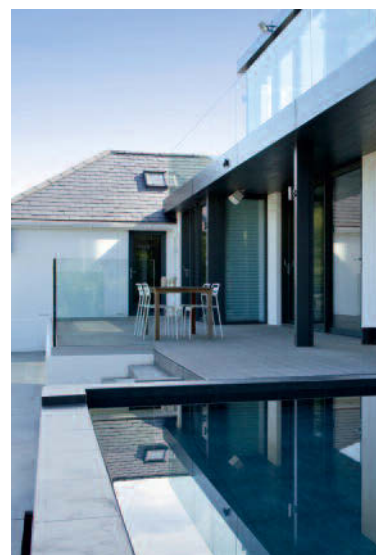
Admiral Sir John Norris, circa 1735



Sir John Norris memorial in Benenden church



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WINTER CONCERT

7.30pm Saturday 30 November

St George's Church, Benenden TN17 4DL

Brahms : Variations on a Theme by Haydn

Bellini : Oboe Concerto

Soloist : Caitlin Chiu : Benenden School Music Scholar

Mendelssohn : Symphony No. 3

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or Benenden Community Shop

Adults £10, Students £5

or

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Benenden Pre-School news

We have had a busy, if rather wet, first term at Pre-School: luckily the children are very happy playing in the rain and creating with mud in the mud kitchen, as we have had plenty of both! The rain has filled our water butt and given us lots of opportunity to enjoy our new water wall.

One of our innovative staff members responded to a challenge to create an activity to teach children about sustainability and built the water wall, completely out of recycled materials, designing it to allow children to investigate the flow and dynamics of water.

The children are fascinated by it. They explore how water moves, for example guiding the water to make the wheel spin and they develop their hand eye co-ordination while pouring water from jugs into bottle necks. To cap it all they are learning that something amazing can be made out of old plastic bottles, guttering and plant pots.

supervisor@benendenpre-school.co.uk

6TH DECEMBER 3-6.30PM

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Village lunch

Tuesday 19 November, Benenden Village
Hall, 12.30pm

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

Sheila Hume 240838

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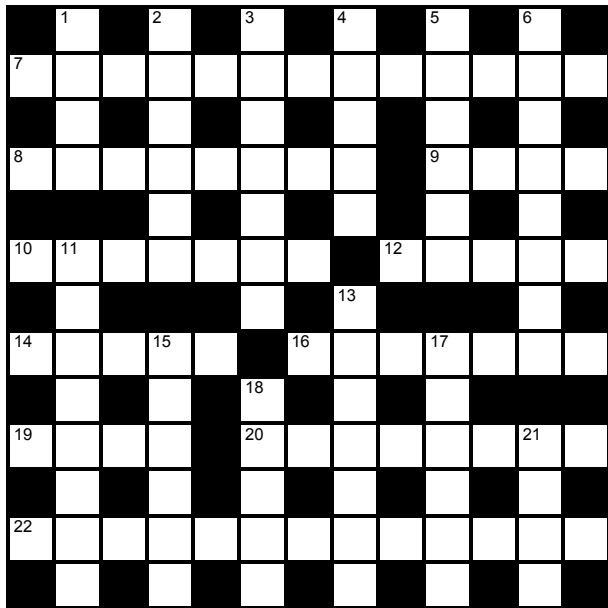


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MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

CROSSWORD No16 (Easy)



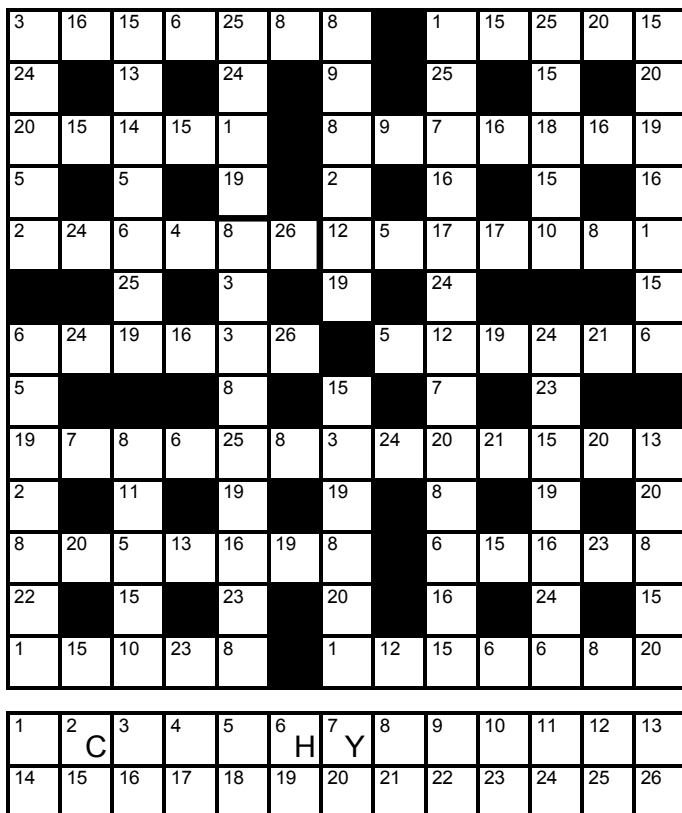
Across

- 7 I just propel on compressed air (3,10)
- 8 Propose particularly to Weasley (8)
- 9 Identify Evening Standard on March 15th (4)
- 10 Prudence, European Commission, Yoko and possessive pronoun (7)
- 12 Dusty, messy work room (5)
- 14 Order Methylenedioxymethamphetamine by post? (1-4)
- 16 Call me Moby Dick's narrator (7)
- 19 Holy glow from halogen bulb? (4)
- 20 Cold, dank, unruly shipyard? (8)
- 22 They make mincemeat of music (5-8)

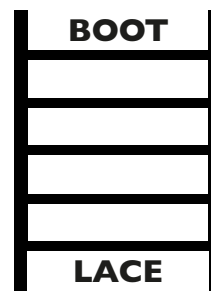
Down

- 1 Found in Nautilus? (4)
- 2 Given a choice, choose a particle (6)
- 3 The president without a suit? Democrats sincerely wish for this (2-5)
- 4 Cupcake to New York on Watership Down? (5)
- 5 Clothing item produces awful thirst (1-5)
- 6 Old bee in trouble. Not busy enough, perhaps? (4-4)
- 11 Partner a thoroughly messed-up armed cop (8)
- 13 Chic spy turns out to be a mind-reader (7)
- 15 Under pressure to standardise pub serving counter? (6)
- 17 Familiar mother may be a sick woman? (6)
- 18 Getting on, as they say? (5)
- 21 N or M as usual (4)

CODEWORD No16 (Moderate)

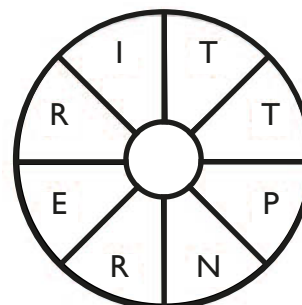


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Change the word at the foot of the ladder into the word at the top by altering only one letter at a time.

NINE FROM EIGHT



Find the missing letter at the centre of the wheel to create a nine-letter word. **CLUE: Convert and illuminate**

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Harvest lunch to savour

The Harvest lunch in the village hall followed a wonderful service at St George's Church, with a sermon by the Reverend David Commander all about giving and sharing. It is an important part of the Church calendar. The collection raised over £200 for Water Aid. We must all be grateful for the food we have to eat. There are more food banks and more homeless people than ever before, as well as people who have just about enough money to pay their rent or mortgage, but very little or nothing left to buy food.

Nourish deliver food parcels to Benenden www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk. Please call 01892 278227 for further information.

The lunch in the hall was attended by 41 people, and many said it was the "best ever". We ate, we talked, we listened, we celebrated, we gave thanks. The diary of a church mouse by John Betjeman always delights. God bless you all. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped to put this all together.

Tracy Claridge tlclaridge@tlclaridge.co.uk

Hospice in the Weald music

The rain could not dampen our spirits when we were listening to such wonderful piano music played by Gil Jetley. There was a themed walk through Schubert's gorgeous songs, so beautifully arranged by Liszt and a Bach/Busoni Chaconne. However, the highlight for many was a solo version of the 'Warsaw concerto' arranged by our pianist who had recently performed it with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London. Thanks to the generosity of the audience, we managed to raise £336 after expenses. This brings our 2019 total for Hospice in the Weald to an amazing £1,298 and £12,500 over the past 11 seasons. The first recital for 2020 is a garden party on the last Saturday in July.

Gillian Davis 850384



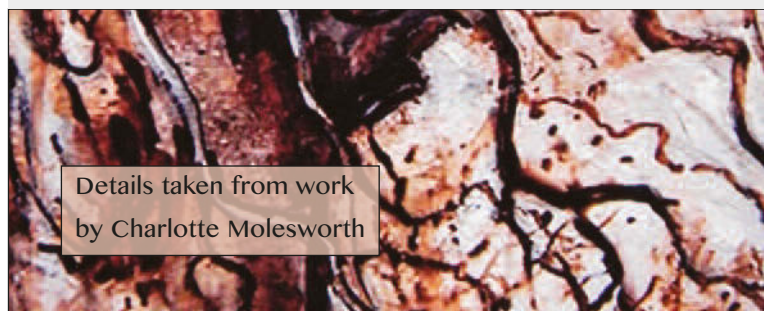
BUZZZARD BABY

by Mary Kellett

Squawk, yell, squawk yell
We really have the chick from hell.
Beak wide open, constant filling
Of course, as parents
We're more than willing
To have the little fellow flourish.
To boast that ours is so well nourished.
Unlike some parents I could mention
Who never give their kid attention.

And now he sprawls across the nest
Legs on one side, wings at rest
They never move, he doesn't flap 'em
"Can't be arsed, Mum, just won't happen"
I've told him he can't stay here hiding,
He should be up there soaring, gliding,
"Nah, not bothered, that's not thrilling,
I just want to stay here chilling".

His father had a lot to say
You can imagine - it took all day
Till finally our precious boy
Hauled himself up, without much joy,
And stood on legs so very trembly
Before the whole buzzard assembly
And flapped those great ungainly wings.
He jumped and flapped and as on springs
He rose above his nest, his home
And left us silent and alone.



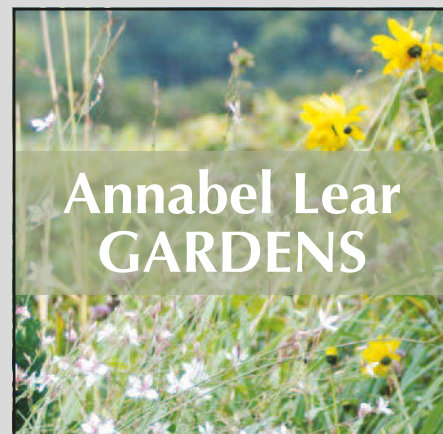
Details taken from work
by Charlotte Molesworth



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Stir-up Sunday and a family recipe

It may be November, but Benenden's is already preparing for Christmas and stocking supplies for puddings and cake. Stir-up Sunday is an informal term in the Anglican Church for the last Sunday before the season of Advent. It gets its name from the beginning of the collect for the day in the Book of Common Prayer, which begins with the words, "Stir-up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of the faithful people".

This year Stir-up Sunday falls on 24 November. But what does it signify? Traditionally it was the day when the Christmas puddings were started, although I must admit that I usually make the puddings in the October half term which gives them lots of time to mature.

Here is my Christmas pudding recipe, given to me by my Grandmother. It will make about three puddings. All ingredients available, of course, in Benenden's Community Shop.

Makes three puddings

225g Atora suet
450g raisins
225g currants
225g sultanas
110g candied peel
175g sugar
175g self-raising flour
50g sweet almonds
3 large eggs
Rind and juice of one lemon
225g breadcrumbs
½tsp nutmeg
Pinch of salt
137floz milk
4-5tbsp rum

METHOD

- Blanch the almonds (steep them in boiling water for a few minutes so you can easily remove the skins) and chop coarsely when cool.
- Put all the dry ingredients into a large bowl and mix well.
- Add the beaten eggs, lemon and all the other liquid ingredients. Mix very well.
- Cover with a slightly damp clean teacloth and leave for 24 hours or overnight.
- Grease well three ovenproof Pyrex-type bowls and fill to about two-thirds full.
- Cover with one large piece of greaseproof paper and then another by making a pleat in it (to allow for expansion).
- Secure tightly with string - you will need another hand to help you - and make a handle if you wish.
- Place in a steamer or large saucepan with a lid and enough water to rise about halfway up the side of the bowl. Bring to the boil and then turn down the heat, cover and steam for six hours - yes, really! Do keep checking every hour to make sure the pan does not go dry.
- When done, wait until cool, cover in more greaseproof paper and store until Christmas Day.
- On the day re-steam for about two hours. This can be done early in the morning and kept warm but do keep it topped up with water.
- Turn out onto a deep plate and pour hot brandy over it which you can light if you wish.
- Serve with lashings of brandy or rum butter and double cream.

Happy Christmas!

Sally Ann Marks

MINDBENDERS

Answers

CROSSWORD No16

Across: 7 Jet propulsion, 8 Positron, 9 Ideas, 10 Economy, 12 Study, 14 E-mail, 16 Ishmael, 19 Halo, 20 Dockland, 22 Organ-grinders

Down: 1 Demo, 2 Option, 3 No-trump, 4 Bunny, 5 T-shirt, 6 Bone-idle, 11 Compadre, 13 Psychic, 15 Isobar, 17 Malady, 18 Adage, 21 Norm

SPRINTERS

NINE FROM EIGHT

BOOT, LOOT, LOOK, LOCK, LACK, LACE

STEP CHANGE

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

CODEWORD No16

Community activities boost wellbeing

I remember when I had my first child and found myself spending my time at home instead of working, that I was unprepared for how isolating it was. I'm quite an outgoing person, but it was still a challenge to whip up the confidence to find and get involved with local groups and meet others in the same boat. This feeling of isolation can happen at any time and at any age of course: at school, starting university, when your children leave home, divorce, illness, when you retire, bereavement, or if you move to a new area.

It was seeing men and women in her surgery who were lonely, anxious and isolated that led local GP

Dr Dineli Charlesworth to get together with a group of people across the community to start Wellbeing in the Weald (WitW). "Many don't need anti-depressants to help them, they need the support of others, to feel connected and to experience the joy and benefit of getting involved with group activities. There is a large section of the community who are not well supported, particularly older teens and young mothers. People don't realise how many lonely people there are in our picture-book villages."

Although relatively new, the initiative started in early 2019, it has quickly grown with the aim to 'promote health and wellbeing to create a stronger community' across the Weald for anyone aged 16 and up. In addition to promoting existing clubs and groups that improve wellbeing, and physical and mental health,



Wellbeing

in the Weald



WitW organises a variety of activities easily accessible for us in Benenden and Iden Green.

The Wellness Walks, which have proved very popular, depart from the Cranbrook Congregational Church every Tuesday at 9.30am with a choice of walks to suit all levels of health or disability. No musical knowledge is needed for the vibrant Compass Choir, which meets every Wednesday from 5.30pm until 7pm in the Vestry Hall, Cranbrook. The community allotment in Oatfield Road, Cranbrook, has been extremely successful. It was donated by the council and the Sunday drop-in sessions from 10.30-12noon see young and old learning new skills and having fun. For those that just like to meet and chat, then the Wednesday drop in session (4.30-5.30pm)

in the Vestry Hall is ideal. For those affected directly or indirectly with dementia, there are monthly free sessions in Cranbrook Library. The next one is from 10-12noon on Saturday 30 November.

A lot more is being planned by the WitW team, including art workshops for vulnerable groups, such as carers and those unable to work due to chronic medical conditions, a Men's Shed, and a supper club. Plus, WitW has linked up with several other organisations to promote and support a range of activities. For example, joining with Weald Family Hub to fund a pilot scheme to teach mindfulness to children at Cranbrook Primary School.

Benenden-based Ulli von Herwarth is our local contact for WitW and has been involved since the beginning. "Wellbeing is not just about exercise and eating well, it's more to do with feeling good about ourselves, getting the most out of our lives and feeling connected to other people. It enables us to cope when life gets tough or when our health suffers."

WitW relies on volunteers and donations to run all their activities and is very lucky to have

just been chosen as the charity supported by Cranbrook Co-op's local community fund. As a result, if Co-op members nominate WitW as their charity, then 1% they spend on Co-op branded products is donated to it.

Keep up to date with news by following Wellbeing in the Weald on Facebook and Instagram or contact the group by email: hello@wellbeingintheweald.co.uk.

Alternatively, Ulli von Herwarth is pleased to provide more information. Email her at ulli.vonherwarth@gmail.com.

Ruth Clark

Helen Jewsbury discusses Artful mindfulness

I fell upon the beauty of clay when I was going through the general stresses of life. Bringing up two boys through their teens was sometimes challenging, I had a very stressful job, and had lost my dad. I had always loved art

and I had always created things alongside nursing and being a mum, and one day thought I would like to work with clay but hadn't a clue where to start. I wandered into my local art gallery, and whilst I was asking the owner to guide me on what air-dry clay to buy, she invited me to join her weekly hand sculpting class and that was it - I was hooked.

Within a year I had invested in a kiln and I was sculpting every spare moment and the mental benefits were obvious. With clay in my hands I lost myself in creating something that pleased my sense of humour and fulfilled my creative side.

I now teach for the sheer joy of inspiring others and have become involved in Wellbeing in the Weald. Artists volunteer a small amount of time to help people access the opportunity to learn something new. Sculpting is a form of mindfulness and people that come to my classes, say that they don't know where the two hours go. It is great to see the sense of achievement, and the relaxation achieved. To anyone who says they are not artistic I say everyone is artistic in one way or another, be it gardening, cooking, photography or art - you just need to discover it and nurture it. It will enhance your mental and physical health no end.



Fast or slow: just get moving

Ruth Clark on the wealth of health-giving exercise available in the parish

Public health expert Dr Nick Cavill once said "if exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented". Whatever your age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life. It can reduce your risk of developing many long-term conditions such as stroke, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Not only that, exercise can boost your mood, sleep quality and energy levels.

We are very lucky that we have a variety of exercise activities on offer in Benenden and Iden Green. There is something to suit all levels of fitness almost every day of the week - outside and inside.

BALLROOM DANCING

If you have always wanted to trip the light fantastic then learn ballroom and Latin American dances with Stephen. Perfect for beginners and improvers.

Tuesday, 8.15-9.45am, Village Hall

Stephen Kidd 07505 215687



BOOT CAMP

If you like to exercise outside, then this is just the ticket. It may sound tough, but the Benenden boot camp is fun and friendly and allows you pick a level to suit you, from beginner to super fit.

Caroline, an experienced personal trainer, starts with a warm-up then takes you through a variety of aerobic exercises. Every session is different. The first one is free.

Monday and Friday, 8.45-9.45am, Glebe Field

Caroline Kennedy 07971 295442

BOWLS

Bowls is a lovely social activity which also offers a low-impact, therapeutic form of exercise. The Benenden Bowls Club practises on Thursday evenings at 6.30pm and plays home and away fixtures on weekends. New members are very welcome.

John and Glenda Marshall 243089



CRICKET

Active since 1798, Benenden Cricket Club play friendly matches from May to September, mainly on Saturdays with occasional Sunday matches and T20 evening games.

New players are always welcome.

Guy Mawhinney 07808 093511

DANCE AND EXERCISE FOR SENIORS

The perfect way to exercise and have fun through dance.

Monday, 9.30-10.30am, Village Hall

Thursday, 10.30-11.30am, Village Hall

Jean Chapman 240232

FITNESS PILATES

This class adds three-dimensional movements and a whole-body focus to traditional Pilates. Over time you can expect to see improved flexibility and mobility, a stronger core and a better back. No previous experience needed.

Monday, 8.10-9.10am, Village Hall

Wednesday, 10.45-11.45am, Old School Hall, Sandhurst

Friday, 10.20-11.20am, Iden Green Pavilion

Jane Taylor www.taylormadefitness.biz



FITSTEPS

A new dance exercise class with ex-Latin and ballroom championship dancer Amanda. Fitsteps is a fun exercise class based on your favourite 'Strictly' Ballroom and Latin dances designed to exercise, tone and lose weight. Suitable for men and women of all ages and no partner required. Wednesday, 11.15-12.15pm, Village Hall

Amanda Beacroft 07768 095184

www.fitstepsamanda.com

HI-LI FITNESS CIRCUIT

This is a high intensity, low impact fitness class which doesn't involve running or jumping. Ideal for anyone who wants to get fitter without overloading the body. Suitable for all ages and fitness abilities.

Friday, 9.15-10am, Iden Green Pavilion

Jane Taylor jane@taylormadefitness.biz

IYENGAR YOGA

This form of yoga focuses on emphasising detail, precision and alignment in posture and breath control to achieve strength and flexibility.

Monday and Thursday, 9.15-10.45am, Iden Green Pavilion

Caroline Turck carrie.t@care4free.net

POWER YOGA

Based on a Vinyasa style of yoga, these are vigorous, fitness-based classes open to all ages and abilities, including complete beginners.

Monday and Thursday, 9.30-10.30am, Village Hall

Ruth Birch www.wealdpoweryoga.com

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

This is run by the Hawkhurst University of the Third Age, but anyone can get involved at any level. Current members have a level of competence



where beginners can be absorbed and helped to dance.

Friday, 10.45am-1pm, Village Hall

Peter Hoole 752193

www.hawkhurstu3a.org.uk



TENNIS

With two hard courts, a club house in an idyllic setting, Iden Green Tennis Club is a hive of social and physical activity. All welcome on Saturday mornings for our mixed

doubles session. A mixed team also represents the club in the Wealden League. The club holds occasional social mornings for members past and present with drinks and home-made cakes. Junior coaching takes place at Iden Green in the summer and at Benenden Girls' School in the winter.

info@idengreentennis.net

www.idengreentennis.net

YOGA

Charlie's classes are a great way to relieve stress, improve flexibility and build strength. Learn how to practise poses safely and in detail to gain the maximum health benefits.

Friday, 9.10-10.25am, Village Hall

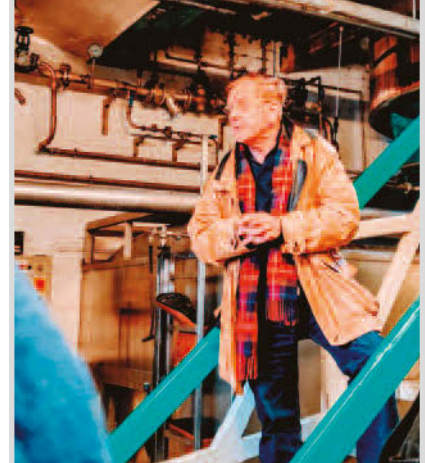
Charlie Hartley 07766 222316

www.yogahartley.co.uk



So, don't wait for the New Year to make a resolution to get fitter and more flexible. Why not start now and before you know it you will be reaping the rewards.





Food & Drink

Harvey's, a pint of history

If it has been well kept it will boast a gorgeous mahogany colour and will prove constantly rewarding. Not a Red Setter, a pint of Harvey's Best.

Benenden and Iden Green, in the shape of the Bull and the Woodcock are very much Harvey's territory; who knows how many pints have made the one-way trip over the bar? Some of them have certainly come the way of the nine Benenden Players who gathered one wet morning ready to indulge in one of the

brewery's much sought-after tours.

This being a parish magazine I'll resist analogies with pilgrimages to worship at a shrine; let's just say there was anticipation in the air as we crossed the East Sussex border and travelled onward

to Harvey's in Lewes. The ecclesiastical theme tempts again as you spy the brewery's Grade II listed spire dominating the townscape, and when the high priest, I mean head brewer, Miles Jenner arrives the spirits certainly lift.

Even at the weekend he is happy to tackle his commute - a small child could throw a large stone from the brewery to his house - to talk animatedly about his beloved Harvey's and its beer.

This is a family business: founded by John

Harvey in 1790, the eighth generation is now working in the firm. Miles himself is a second-generation head brewer, something he clearly regards as more a vocation than a job. The history of beer-making and the brewery flows, along with a few off-piste meanders: "To spread the risk Harvey's were also coal merchants and used to give away fuel to staff at Christmas. We kept up that tradition until 1994 when there was no coal to be had and so I bought a load from Poland. Unfortunately, they'd left a detonator among the coal, something one of our families discovered on Christmas Eve - no one was hurt, and everyone took it in good heart, but that was the end of that tradition."

The two-hour tour glides by and concludes when several of Harvey's brews are handed around. For us these included a rare Russian Imperial Stout so rich you could serve it with a cake slice, we washed it down with their moreish IPA, a true session ale and a hint of what was to come at the local John Harvey pub. But that's another story; let's just say I think we proved beyond reasonable doubt, or any recollection, that the Players can organise a drinks party in a brewery!

Harvey's long history has not been without its bumps in the road, but not all dips are bad: it was the company's 60-year slump spanning the turn of the century that probably saved it from being hoovered up by the likes of Watney or



Whitbread who swallowed dozens of regional brewers to build their pub estates.

But there was one inarguably bad dip - the one the whole brewery took when, in 2000, a bad flood affected the whole works. "It was awful," recalls Miles, "even after the water was gone the mess and stench was terrible. Our insurer said we'd be out of action for at least three months, we were brewing again in nine days. It was marvellous how everyone rallied around - including other brewers."

Speaking of cooperation, one of the most remarkable stories of the many Miles reels off is that of the yeast Harvey's uses for all its beers. Yeast is the simplest of organisms - one solitary cell - and yet when it dines on the sugars that have been released from the malt it creates the alcohol, the CO₂ for carbonation and about half the flavour of the beer. It is important. But it is also fickle. When Harvey's original yeast supplier stopped trading in the 1950s Miles's father brought in yeast from several local brewers, but none reacted just right with Harvey's brew. Eventually, on a tip off, he ordered a churn from a Tadcaster brewery the alchemy was perfect and in 2017 that same yeast, re-born with every brew, celebrated its 60th birthday.

Harvey's heartbeat is continuity and tradition: hops only from Sussex, Surrey and Kent, a barley selection dating back to the 19th century and, of course, the precious water that has spent 30 years seeping through Downs chalk before finding the brewer's aquifer 60 feet below their spire.

Speaking of water, this is thirsty work. Pint of Harvey's please.

Nick Snow



The road to Rioja

The last village wine tasting was Weird and Wonderful and very successful, with a full house at Benenden School enjoying a broad spread of strange grapes and unusual bottles from uncharted regions. The New Zealand Gruner Veltliner and the Calabrian Guardavalle vied for attention with the Turkish Kalecik Karasi and Apostolos Thymiopoulos's excellent Greek Xinomavro, all accompanied by a very fine coq au vin.

For our next tasting, all in aid of charity, we'll be heading back to a more traditional heartland, that of Rioja in northern Spain, but even with this tried-and-trusted crowd-pleaser we'll be adding an extra layer of interest. Luis Marculeta, the UK representative for the long-established Rioja Vega from Navarre, will take us through a full range of the region's styles, from fresh, new-breed whites to oaky, old style reds, via all ages and variations in between - and a sticky to finish. It promises to be a great night, with Spanish meats and cheeses included.

The tasting is on Friday 29 November, at the Iden Green Pavilion, with tickets at £15, to include drinks on arrival, eight tasting wines and food. Tickets, from the community shop, are limited to 42 and likely to sell quickly.

Luis Marculeta at Iden Green Pavilion



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Bird Notes

‘Beast’ versus Birds

The British Trust for Ornithology has recently published their results for the 2018 Breeding Bird Survey. You may remember that we experienced ‘The Beast from the East’ in late February and early March and not surprisingly it took its toll on some of our smaller resident species. Our smallest species the Goldcrest suffered a 38% drop followed by Long-tailed Tit 22% and Wren 21% between 2017 and 2018. Fortunately these species have large clutches and their numbers can recover fairly quickly. That is of course if we do not have another cold winter. Even our larger resident species were not immune with the Robin for example declining 15%, Song Thrush 18% and Blackbird 4%. Another two resident casualties are the Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail with a 38% and 25% drop respectively, both species relying on ice-free water. The Little Egret, a recent colonist probably here due to climate change, fared poorly in the cold with a drop of 21%.

Our summer visitors did not fare much better and may have suffered from the continual northerly winds during their migration to the UK from Africa. Sand Martin, one of the earliest migrants, was 42% down followed by declines in Spotted Flycatcher 24%, Willow Warbler 23%, Swift 20%, Whitethroat 18%, and House Martin 17%. The much talked about Turtle Dove whose long term trend is down 94% had another poor year being 47% down on the previous year. At this rate it will cease to be a UK breeder in the very near future. I find this figure surprisingly poor and does not reflect what I am finding locally (Standen Street/Sandhurst border and Bedgebury Forest) where my records show that numbers are holding steady.

2018 was not all gloom and doom and quite a few birds bucked the trend. Two resident red listed species: Corn Bunting and Marsh Tit, showed a 26% and 18% increase year on year respectively which is a welcome return in their recent fortunes. I had two Marsh Tits regularly coming to my black sunflower seed feeder for most of the past winter whereas I usually just get an occasional visit.

On the summer migrant front, birds bucking the trend include the Cuckoo up 22%. Not only did it arrive in good numbers it also arrived on cue and did not seem to suffer the same migration problems as other summer migrants. Perhaps their larger size enables them to cross the Saharan desert more efficiently. It might also be the route they take. We now know through satellite tracking where they winter which is right down towards the southern half of the African continent mainly in The Congo area. Conditions down there may have been much more favourable last year making them fit for their long journey. We do not know the certain reason why but it provides a welcome break from the long term decline of 41%. Two other red-listed summer migrants surprisingly bucked the trend namely Nightingale +37% and Wood Warbler +28%. Both these species have serious long-term declines of 62% and 63% respectively.

It will be interesting to read this year’s figures next year. Some species, particularly Swallows and House Martins, had very drawn out arrival dates and numbers appear to be well down on previous years. It is important to realise that our summer visitors spend over half their time on the African continent and it is difficult for us to know what challenging conditions they face there both habitat wise and climate wise.

Autumn border, Christ's College, Cambridge
Pink cleomes and white anemones

In Your Garden

A feast for the senses

Autumn is one of my favourite times of the year. Of all the seasons, I find it is the one that has the sights, the smells, the sounds and, of course, the tastes. Working in the garden in October has huge merits: the ground has loosened up our Wealden clay nicely so an autumn planting of shrubs can finally take place. This is when the heaped-on layer of compost put down in the spring has incorporated well into the soil, giving off an earthy hint that makes even weeding a pleasure.

Nearby, I will have started a bonfire, crackling away gently and burning the pernicious weeds I have just unearthed, not to mention the huge pile of hedge clippings my contractor left behind for me to deal with. The smell of woodsmoke lives with me for the rest of the day. The twittering of a resident robin, keeping me company as I work, is rewarded with the odd worm which I flick towards him; that and the mad panic of a blackbird chasing off an intruder are sounds I always associate with autumn.

Dahlias are still going strong if they are regularly dead-headed, and their jewel-like colours really shine in this gentle light. They mix very well with grasses and any deciduous shrubs that are now turning vibrant red, orange and yellow as they recede into dormancy. This is also when evergreens make a huge difference

to the colour palette - and early to mid autumn is one of the best times to plant them.

I also grew some cleomes from seed this summer - a huge success now that they are planted out in the borders amongst tall anemones and the last of the roses. I have been feeding them with liquid seaweed and it's worth the TLC.

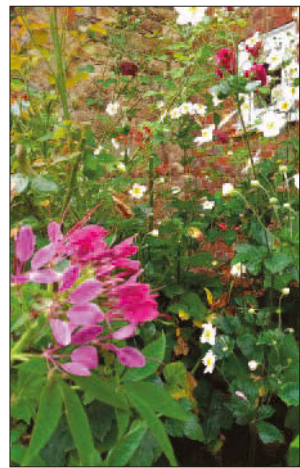
The apples have been great this year - I've been making purées with Bramleys and eaters, topping with whipped double cream and some grated dark chocolate (a classic recipe from my childhood). The tomatoes that are still green I will make a chutney with; the pumpkins and gourds are being stockpiled for Halloween - I always have a display by the front door and on my kitchen windowsill - and I have just sown some salad seeds, the quick-grow type that you can eat after 28 days, which is a good way to avoid plastic-wrapped salad, and at a fraction of the price.

Make sure you spend some time outdoors this autumn, and savour all that our gardens can offer.

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Above: Strength of community shines through: some of the stars from the Benenden Players' revue;
a Harvest lunch to savour; Phil Middleton, winner of the BODS annual conker competition
Front cover: Green Woodpecker. Painting by Stephen Message