

Benenden
Magazine
June 2017





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Editorial



The evolution of the village and its buildings seems to be the prevailing theme in this month's magazine. On pages 18 and 19 we have a fascinating piece from the inspecting architect of St George's Church. He outlines the dramatic changes that took place after the devastating 17th century storm and fire and how the medieval church was redesigned along 'ultra modern' neo-classical lines - think Hawksmoor and Wren. Then in the 19th century along came Lord Cranbrook who tore out these 'pagan-inspired' features, reverting to the 'Christian values' of medieval ecclesiastical design.

Our current Rector is doing his bit to evolve the building, as he explains in his letter on page 3. He's also initiating the forward-looking 20/20 project to understand what it is that users of the space in the church really want.

Perhaps less welcome changes are on the way as the proposed Walkhurst Road development was given planning approval in the face of concerted village opposition - see page 15. Local councillors - parish, borough and country - have all expressed concern about the perceived urban bias of the Tunbridge Wells council in general and the planning committee in particular along with their clear lack of responsiveness to local views and democratic forums.

It makes the ongoing process of producing a comprehensive neighbourhood plan all the more vital. Such a document will carry greater weight with the planning authorities, enabling the village itself to determine how it develops in the future.

Elsewhere the magazine is bursting with news of current and forthcoming summer activities - fetes, fun-days, BBQs, concerts and much more. Enjoy your June and, whatever you do, heed The Garden Gnome's advice on page 36 and don't let the garden take over your life!

Kent Barker, Co-Editor

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Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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

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

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 4 June Pentecost	8am Communion	10am All-age Eucharist and Sunday School	5pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 11 June	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 18 June	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Sunday 25 June	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Praise Service at Mission Church

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The Roman Catholic Chapel

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Baptism 21 May James Reynolds

Weddings 27 May Harriet Hicken and William Baker

27 May Janet Vickers and Mick Kellie

Funerals 13 May Ruth Collingwood Interment

31 May Nancy Hoare Interment

Rector's Letter



Embrace opportunity

The Church may not change quickly but, down through the centuries, it has always embraced new technology, new ways of doing things - it just does so without rushing as so much of other society does. Examples of those changes made by previous generations in your parish church include: moving away from candles to electric light; larger windows and different stained glass images; also heating - who was the person who thought it might be a good idea to put some form of heating in the church? Or what about seating for all? Originally, there would have been very little seating in church. The stoup bowl, for crossing with holy water when entering the church, is over by the south door indicating this was probably the main entrance at one time. Or how about the building of a bell tower? I suspect the vast majority would not



want to return to how everything was when our church was originally built.

We naturally continue to evolve - for all the church family: the young and the not so young. Recently, eight rear pews have been put into storage, under an Archdeacon's Licence, to make the space at the back of church more flexible in its use. This was enjoyed by over a 100 people for a social after the Archdeacons' Visitation service, and is enjoyed every week by families and children. I would encourage you to come and see; to come and use the space; and to embrace the opportunities that it can bring as we evolve.



Revd David Commander, Rector



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Just a Thought



Toe in the water

The other morning I was ploughing up and down Benenden School's swimming pool when I started thinking: 'This is a fine and functional pool like many other indoor pools I've used. But where else have I swum that's a bit more exotic?'

I started off, as a small child, from the pebble beach of Herne Bay. It took me ages to learn to swim as I would get to the water's edge, inch in slowly then splash around with the help of a parent until I reached a certain shade of blue when my mother would haul me out. Even when I could swim I had a dreadful screw kick as I always turned my head away from the waves.

Cold water was not a deterrent as such, and I have wonderful memories of swimming in a stream and associated pool, at 6,000 feet up on Mulanje mountain in Malawi with my young family and some friends and their children. The air was clear, the sun shining and warm, we had left our cares behind and the water was decidedly fresh.

However it must be said that swimming in warm water is definitely a good choice, especially if it is the sea, although it's not without its danger. I remember snorkelling one day and being carried away as I entered that fascinating underwater world of corals, colourful fish, sea anemones, amazing starfish. Finally, as I put my foot down to reach for the bottom I scraped my knee on some coral and realised I had been in all of two feet of water and getting sun burnt!

Many years ago I helped take a party of secondary school girls from Uganda to the Kenyan coast and the very first thing that they did on arrival was rush to the water's edge, dip their hands in the sea and taste it. What they had been told in class really was true - the water was salty.

Eventually it was time to take my own children to swim in the sea. We went to a warm, sandy beach where my elder son was frightened of the six inch waves, and my younger one sat eating the sand and so neither made it into the sea at all. They subsequently loved the outdoor pool at the sailing club though.

As for my daughter's introduction to swimming - we had temporary accommodation in a house with a pool and on return from boarding school the boys ran off to jump in to this pool. My daughter toddled off after them with great glee and also jumped in. Tim claimed later that, for a very brief moment, he wondered whether to go first for his watch, which had slipped off to the bottom, or for his sister who was going the same way. It was some years before she would willingly put her head under the water again.

And then of course there's skinny dipping ... memories anyone?

Sue Fisher

Village Calendar

June

Thursday 1	Planning Committee Meeting, Benenden Village Hall, 8.30am	
Saturday 3	Skittles, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 5	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Coffee Morning, Jocelyn Gregory's Farm, 10am	p.15
Thursday 8	Hospice in the Weald, Tea at Three, Harmsworth Court, 3pm	p.17
Friday 9	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Friday 9	The Friends of St George's, Magic and Music, Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm	p.9
Sat 10-Sun 11	South East Open Studios Exhibition, Balmoral, Benenden, 11-6pm	p.17
Saturday 10	Cornhole tossing, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 17	Little Charlie's Big Chance, Quiz, Fish and Chips, Benenden Village Hall, 7pm	p.25
Saturday 17	Barbecue, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sat 17-Sun 18	South East Open Studios Exhibition, Balmoral, Benenden, 11-6pm	p.17
Sunday 18	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.21
Monday 19	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 20	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.15
Tuesday 20	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Summer Garden Party, 5pm	p.15
Friday 23	South East Open Studios Exhibition, Balmoral, Benenden, 11-6pm	p.17
Saturday 24	Benenden Village Church Fete, The Green, 12-4pm	p.9
Saturday 24	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 25	South East Open Studios Exhibition, Balmoral, Benenden, 11-6pm	p.17
Sunday 25	Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra, Benenden School, 3pm	p.15
Tuesday 27	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	

July

Friday 14	St Michael's Hospice, Fund Raiser Quiz, St George's Club, 7.30pm	p.17
Wed 26-Fri 28	Youth Drama Workshop, Benenden Village Hall	p.13
Saturday 29	Jazz and Blues at the Pavilion, Open Air in Iden Green, 6pm	p.17

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

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

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 3 June, Domestic Waste, Iden Green, crossroads, 8-11am

Saturday 17 June, Garden Waste/Compostable Waste, Iden Green, crossroads 8-11am

Parish Council



We recently held our annual Parish Assembly in which local organisations, including the Parish Council, local charities and other bodies including the Community Shop, the Harmsworth Memorial Trust, the Village Hall and Iden Green Pavilion and others report on activities over the past year.

Our local Councillors, newly re-elected Seán Holden (KCC and also TWBC) and Tom Dawlings (TWBC) reported on their activities on our behalf. I am pleased to report that they are kept very busy! One activity on which the Parish has been working with the Borough is the Environmental Services regime, including the Civic Amenity Vehicle (Saturday dustcart). We were unhappy with the new arrangements, but have arranged a new timetable to be trialled from July. Details will appear in this magazine and on our notice boards.

It is amazing just how much is going on in our small village involving so many dedicated members of the community. The meeting was very appreciative of all their efforts and also of the professional work of our Clerk, Caroline Levett, our Village Hall Administrator, Lorraine Jones, and our Parish Lengthsman, Terry Baldwin.

We are now hoping that the community will actively support our latest ambitious project in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. If you would like to be involved but were unable to attend the inaugural meeting please let me know. Progress on the Plan will be reported in future editions of this magazine.

I have to report that, following the resignation of Peter Ellis, the Parish Council currently has a vacancy. If you are interested in joining our team please let our clerk or me know. We can advise on what joining the Parish Council would involve.

Thinking further ahead, we will have a full Parish Council election (for all nine members) in less than a year now (May 2018) so we all have some time to think on this and hopefully we will have several candidates for this election. A contested election is good for our local democracy and confers greater legitimacy on the Council and its members.

Peter Davies, BPC Chairman
01580 240723 chairbenendenpc@gmail.com

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

Parish Council Meeting
Monday 19 June 2017, Iden Green Pavilion,
7.30pm

Planning Committee Meeting
Thursday 1 June 2017, Benenden Village Hall,
8.30am

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News and Events

All the fun of the Fete

Saturday 24 June, The Green, 12-4pm

The Met Office predicts warm and settled weather for 24 June - so fingers crossed for a glorious sunny Benenden Church Fete on the Village Green.

This year's Fete contains all the traditional ingredients that will make the event a perfect afternoon outing for the whole family. Everything kicks off at 12noon when the BBQ and Hop Inn will be serving lunch and drinks and the Ukulele Band serenades visitors. Teas will be served in the Church and at the top of the Green, so all afternoon you can eat delicious strawberries and cream between browsing the Plant, Bric-a-Brac, Jewellery, Chic Boutique, Cake, Tool and Book stalls. In the centre arena, the Primary School children will be dancing around the Maypole and competitive grown-ups will be competing to become Village Tug of War Champions.

The play area (for children and 'young at heart' adults) contains a Bouncy Castle, Treasure Hunt, Coconut Shy, Face Painting, 'Ring the Bell' test of strength, and the ever-popular Wet Sponge challenge. The Cow Pat Bingo - featuring live cows and steaming cow pats - promises to keep us on tenterhooks all afternoon!

The Fete is a true Village occasion because it involves so many of us to plan it, donate to it, build it, run it and support it. Thank you everyone and, let's say it again, fingers crossed for a glorious day on the 24 June.

If you have donations for any of the stalls including Plants, Bric-a-Brac, Jewellery, Chic Boutique, Cakes etc, please leave them at the rear of the Church or in the case of books, in the Church Porch.

Deborah Jenkins

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Call for cakes

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Please call me for arrangements:

Helen Jewsbury 07938 004262

Benenden Women's Club

Phil Harrison from Northiam entertained us on Thursday 11 May with a presentation of photographs including a selection from some of the most renowned photographers in the world. Phil also demonstrated the art of capturing the most interest in a photo, and showed us a selection of his own work. It was an interesting and informative evening.

The next meeting on Thursday 8 June has been cancelled since the Pavilion will be used as a polling station on that day. Our next meeting will therefore be on Thursday 13 July when we shall be visiting Hannah's garden at 7.30pm. All are welcome, and if transport is required please contact me on 242852 or Janet Beattie on 240973.

Ruth Barwick

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BENENDEN PLAYERS

FREE 2-DAY **DRAMA** WORKSHOP

9-11 yr olds – Weds 26th & Thurs 27th July

12-14 yr olds – Thurs 27th & Fri 28th July

**2-day drama master class
for youngsters in Benenden
and Iden Green in Benenden
Village Hall.**

Each age group will spend
a day with Hannah Miles
Watson looking at different
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concentrating on Pantomime.
How to be big and bold but

stay believable. Then both
age groups will unite on one
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'Play in a Day' with the world
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**Booking essential as only
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Youth Drama Workshop

Group 1, Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 July,
Benenden Village Hall;

Group 2, Thursday 27 and Friday 28 July,
Benenden Village Hall

Looking for something for your children to do in the summer holidays? For the first time, Benenden Players are holding a free 2-day Summer Drama Workshop in July for 9-14 year olds living in the Parish.

We have split the age groups into two categories:

Group 1 for 9-11 year olds

Workshop Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 July

Group 2 for 12-14 year olds

Workshop Thursday 27 and Friday 28 July

Each group will spend a day with Hannah Miles Watson looking at different styles of performance, concentrating on Pantomime. The children will learn how to be big and bold but stay believable.

Then both age groups will all come together on one day to experience a unique 'Play in a Day' with the world-famous Strangeface Mask Company.

If you have seen a Strangeface performance you will know how hilarious, weird and wonderful the masked characters are. The masks are spellbinding, often grotesque and always extraordinary in the way they can leave characters permanently agape, watchful or wary.

During the day, the youngsters will learn what makes a good mask, before making their own and exploring the masks using exercises, improvisation and finally a mini play.

We are very pleased that funding provided by the Benenden Bonfire Society has made this possible.

Spaces are limited to 15 in each group. To book your free place please sign up at Benenden's Community Shop as soon as possible. For more information please call: Ruth Clark 07767 261883



Viscount De L'Isle MBE
President ABF The Soldiers' Charity in Kent
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Benenden Pre-School News

While our pre-schoolers have been immersed in painting self-portraits, sowing sunflower seeds and learning to count in Chinese, their fathers were persuaded to join forces with the Primary School parents in wielding a cricket bat for our "Benenden's Big Bash" charity cricket match versus the Cricket Club on 13 May. The sun shone down on the cricketers and crowd, who, entertained by an excellent bouncy castle, fantastic face-paintings and Lucky Dip, also tucked into delicious burgers, cakes, sweets, Pimm's and ale. The final result an extremely diplomatic draw (each team scoring 138 off 20 overs), it was a memorable day, and we'd like to thank you for all your support, donations and time. Hopefully a match to add to the village calendar annually.

The following week saw Grandparents' Morning - always a very happy occasion, with eager children showing their grannies and grandpas their favourite toys and books, and conducting a sing-song at the end. June brings us school photographs, and a summertime Teddy Bear's picnic.

www.benendenpreschool.co.uk

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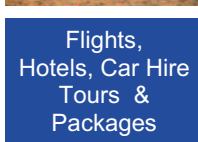
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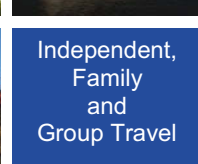
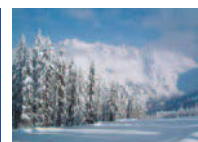
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Walkhurst Road houses approved

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Planning Committee has given the go-ahead for the controversial Walkhurst Road housing development. By a 9-4 vote, councillors approved plans for 12 dwellings on a green field site opposite Harmsworth Court.

The committee meeting, which lasted nearly two hours, heard from six objectors, including Benenden Parish Council, and one supporter representing the developer. Submissions that the development was unsuitable for the location and would lead to light pollution and traffic congestion in the lane were rejected. While the council accepted that the houses would have a "negative impact" on a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this had, in the words of one committee member "to be balanced by the need for housing". Another member argued "it could be of benefit to the village and help to sustain the shop and the pub". But members who voted against the proposal argued the density of homes was too high for its location, and that the proposal had been "railroaded through" against the wishes of local people.

The decision comes after TWBC lost a costly appeal against a 62-house development in Hawkhurst. Government targets mean that Tunbridge Wells has to find space for nearly 16,000 new homes in the Borough. The Council stands to receive £36,000 in New Homes Bonuses from the government as well as nearly £1,000 a year in council tax from the Walkhurst Road development.

Kent Barker

Bodiam Sunday bus service returns

The Campaign for Better Transport has secured local support for reinstatement of the summer Sunday bus service between Hastings and Hawkhurst via Bodiam Castle - route 349.

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Iden Green and Benenden WI

What an entertaining and knowledgeable speaker Mr Willaby was at our April meeting on his subject, 'The Seas around the World'. He talked about the diverse way they behave, the sea creatures, and the way man has used the stars to navigate the seas and explore taking cultures to different islands and countries.

The Weald District Annual Conference was held at Benenden in April, and was well attended by the WIs from the district, with Barbara Dunn as speaker.

Dates to remember:

Monday 5 June, Coffee, Plants and Raffle,

Jocelyn Gregory's Farm, 10-12noon

Tuesday 20 June, Summer Garden Party (in a Member's garden to be confirmed), 5pm

Any enquiries to the Chair:

Elisabeth Spicer 752232

Village Lunch

Tuesday 20 June, Benenden Village Hall,
12.30pm

All welcome - £4 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. Please contact Kathleen on 01580 240081 if you haven't already put your name down but would like to come. We look forward to seeing you.



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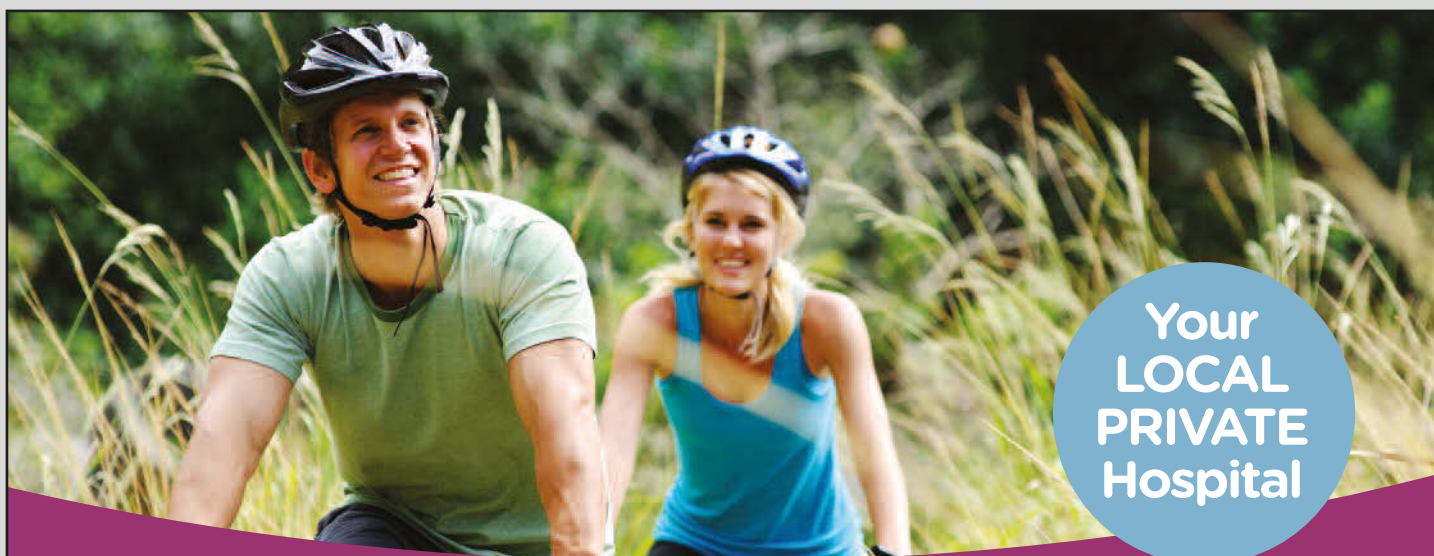
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Hospice in the Weald

The Benenden and Sandhurst Friends group raised over £10,000 last year. Thank you so much for your support, without which this would not have been possible.

On 6 May we organised a Wine Tasting evening, 'Grape Varieties of the World' in Tenterden. Tracy Claridge brought eight different wines to taste and, in his light-hearted way, educated us about them. We served lasagne and lemon dessert, which warmed us on a cool evening. Together, with a 'heads and tails' quiz, we raised £843.80 for the hospice. Many thanks to those who helped and those who bought tickets, but especially to Tracy for giving his time, expertise and finding such delicious, interesting and varying wines.

Future events:

Thursday 8 June - Tea at Three, Harmsworth Court, 3pm

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June - serving teas at Charlotte Molesworth's Open Studios, Balmoral, The Green, Benenden, 11-6pm

Sunday 18 June - Open Gardens, Mockbeggar Lane, Biddenden, 1-6pm

Friday 18 August - Open Garden and Jazz music evening, Moonrakers, Mockbeggar Lane

Saturday 21 October - Concert in Benenden Village Hall to include a rock choir, jazz music and classical music, to include a hot meal - more details to follow.

Thursday 7 December - Sheila Hume - Christmas Wreath making - more details to follow.

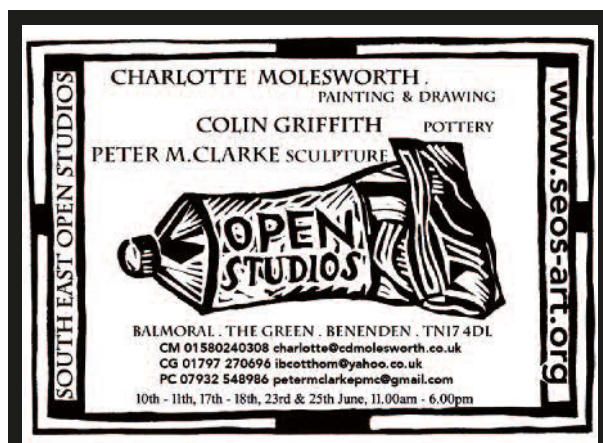
We look forward to seeing you at some of these events throughout the year.

Jenny Stevens, Friends Co-ordinator

Open air Jazz and Blues at the Pavilion

Saturday 29 July, Pavilion, Iden Green, 6pm
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Hospice Fund Raiser Quiz

Friday 14 July, St George's Club, Benenden,
7.30pm

For St Michael's Hospice in St Leonards, Peter Ellis and Andy Irving are once again donning their lycra, hopping on their bicycles and aiming to complete an Olympic 100 miles in one day as part of the RideLondon festival on 30 July. You can help their fund raising by taking part in the 'Fun and Fabulous Hospice Fund Raiser Quiz' on Friday 14 July, in St George's Club, Benenden. Entry is £5 a head and teams of 2-6 max. There will be a Bar, Raffle and a prize for the winning team. To book please call: Ruth Clark 07767 261883



Benenden History

Stripping St George's of Paganism

I have had the great privilege to be the inspecting architect for St George's church for a number of years and an important part of my role is to encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of the church building.

As Benenden appears in the Domesday Monachorum the original parish church will have a pre-conquest origin. I suspect the first church would have been relatively small consisting of an aisleless nave and chancel. Nothing of this survives today as far as we know.

In this short article I want to concentrate on looking at the standing church building and in particular how two events have impacted on what we see today.

The first was the great storm of the 30th December 1672, which caused a fire that destroyed the church and its magnificent steeple - as well as a number of other buildings. I understand the spire was over 100 feet in height but no contemporary drawings survive. Brooklands on the Romney march is a smaller version. From all accounts only the external walls of the church survived the fire and a Timothy Townsend from London was commissioned, in 1673, to rebuild the church at a cost of £3,920 14s 0d.

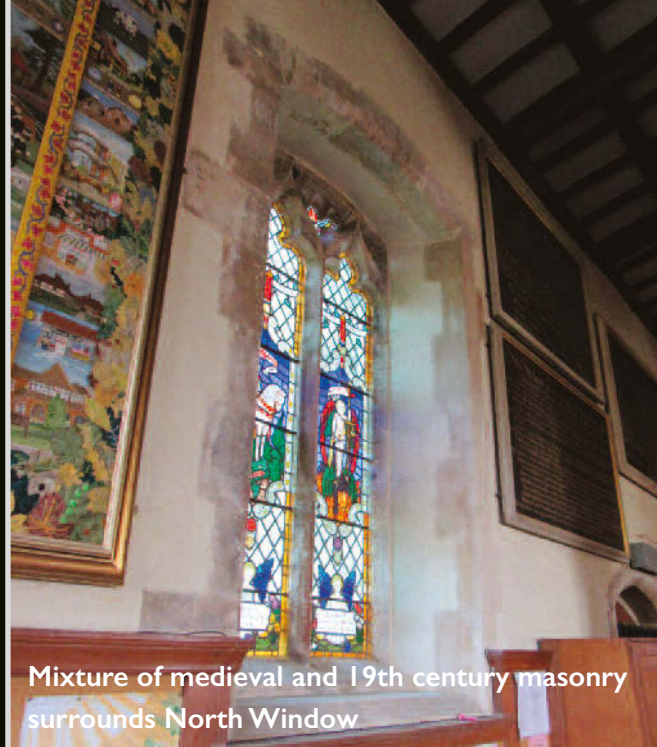
Unfortunately Mr Townsend died before he could complete the work but a drawing from the 19th century shows us what was built. The nave had 12 classical Ionic-form columns with flat plaster ceilings here and to the aisles. The interior was full of box pews, a western gallery and a large triple-decker pulpit. Although the church

Medieval masonry below capital of tower arch,
19th century capital and above

was re-consecrated in 1679, the tower which is said to have been largely built was not completed until 1718 and the bells arrived in 1719. That the interior of St George's was very different to that which we see today reflected the way the church was used by the people of Benenden in the late 17th century, responding to a very specific way of worship where the word was the central focus.

The second great event was a reordering and rebuilding of the church paid for by Lord Cranbrook the 19th century politician. His work reflected a new thinking in church use and design where the sacrament of communion was central to worship. People at that stage believed medieval-inspired building was essential to reflect Christian values rather than the classical, pagan-inspired architecture of the 17th and 18th centuries. Lord Cranbrook engaged the Scottish architect David Brandon to remove all traces of the 17th century rebuilding to give us the building we see today. His work rebuilt the nave arcades with new roofs to the entire church as well as the floors, pews and most of the current fittings. In addition he rebuilt a significant section of the outer wall of the south aisle, most of the parapets on the church and undertook other repair work. Brandon was providing for the people of Benenden a church building to reflect the new ideas of worship so there is a strong east-west orientation focused on the high altar as opposed to Townsend's church where the focus of worship, the pulpit, had been on the south arcade of the nave.

Despite this comprehensive rebuilding however, significant elements of the great 15th century church still survive. Most of the outer north aisle wall and north-east chapel survive as



Mixture of medieval and 19th century masonry surrounds North Window

do the walls of the chancel, Lady Chapel and the north and south porches. What is of great interest is however the fact that the bottom sections of the tower-arch appear to also be medieval and in Kentish ragstone not Wealden sandstone from which the rest of the tower is built. This could perhaps suggest that the western tower was not completely constructed after the fire of 1672 but repaired and rebuilt? The short answer is we will never really know.

What is clear is that the last 350 years have seen immense changes at St George's. These changes have been inspired by a desire to provide a building that reflects how the people of Benenden use their church and ensure it is relevant to them. It also reminds us that with any building that is centuries old the only constant is change and without evolution great buildings will die.

As a footnote, on the question of classical versus gothic form for churches, the renaissance which stems from Italy, saw classical architecture as inspired by ancient Rome and Greece. It aimed to link back to this time of learning. One way was to use classical architecture which becomes increasingly prevalent from the 16th century onwards - albeit in a very British form. Wren was far more scholarly about the process but his work is in fact Baroque so has passed the period of the classical revival. Hawksmoor takes the process a lot further stripping the baroque down to an elemental form, almost brutal and produces a series of churches which are very English, a further step on from Wren who was following fashions in France and Italy. To me Hawksmoor is the master.

John Bailey, Church architect



14th century porch



15th century Lady Chapel and rebuilt 19th century stair turret

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News from Benenden School

It has been a particularly enjoyable start to the term. Across the first weekend back we hosted our third annual Arts Festival, which featured around 50 events and activities. These included music concerts, drama performances, a modern dance show, performance theatre around the site, and a host of workshops teaching skills in art, cookery, floristry and even wine tasting! For the second year running the festival featured the Great Benenden Bake-Off on the Sunday morning, kindly judged once again by Marcus Wareing of 'MasterChef: The Professionals'. The event was immensely enjoyable and Marcus was impressed by the high standard of cooking on display under such intense pressure!

During the same weekend we also held a successful fundraising ball in aid of the new School Hall and Music School, which we plan to establish by 2020. We are currently working on the designs ahead of submitting plans for consideration by the planning department and look forward to sharing our proposed designs with the local community as soon as we can.

When I last wrote, we were about to launch into our first ever 'Phone Fast', during which the girls (and some staff, including me) went without our mobile phones for three days. The Phone Fast was introduced to help raise awareness of the risks that social media presents to the wellbeing of young people. The feedback from girls was so favourable that we will now make a Phone Fast a regular occurrence.

That time of year has arrived already: we are now approaching exam season, with some of the language orals and art practical exams having already taken place, and the formal exams will start within days of my writing this. We are also looking forward to our Anglican Confirmation at St George's, at which more than 30 girls will be confirmed. Another proud moment for the School will be our Combined Cadet Force having its annual inspection and dinner.

Samantha Price, Headmistress



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**Sandhurst
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Village Activity and Fun Day

Saturday 2 September, The Green, Benenden,
3-6pm

A family fun afternoon for all the Parish with food, a bar and music and masses to do, watch and participate in whether you are 3 years old, 93 years young or somewhere inbetween!

Full details in the July Magazine.

A date for your diary!

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Benenden CE Primary School

This month, we leave it to the children to report what's been going on at the school. Here's what they had to say:

On Monday 8 May, Year 4 and Year 5 children spent a morning at Saint Ronan's School to undertake some science activities. We worked in two groups, spending half of the visit identifying native trees in the woodland and half of the time collecting, classifying and drawing the different living things to be found in the school pond.

These activities supported work we have been doing in our science lessons recently. We all enjoyed the visit, especially eating our lunch in the woods. We also had to build secure dens, large enough to hold at least two people, out of branches and sticks found on the forest floor, as a team-building exercise. It was great fun!

Joe Clifford, Year 5

This year's Tag Rugby tournament was held on Tuesday 2 May. We had to play five matches and we came joint second overall in our category. Mrs Knox, our Headteacher, came to watch and was pleased to tell us that she thought our behaviour was impeccable and that we were a credit to the school.

Jessica Penny, Year 6

(Well done to Jessica for being selected as player of the tournament by the chairman of Cranbrook Rugby Club!)

The School Council decided to raise money for 'wet playtime' games. We held a Bring and Buy sale on the playground during afternoon break time on Friday 5 May. We raised nearly £90 by selling people's unwanted items, drinks and biscuits. Thank you to everyone who brought something, or bought something!

Cody Walsh, Year 6, Head Boy

Benenden Cricket Club strive to maintain the tradition of idyllic village cricket, which has been enjoyed on our glorious village green since 1798.

We offer sociable and competitive cricket. New players and supporters of all ages, abilities and both sexes are made very welcome.

For more information please visit:

www.benendencecc.play-cricket.com

If interested in playing, please contact our Club Captain, Richard Brunt on:

07834 572838 or email bruntrichard@btinternet.com



Benenden Cricket Club

Our home matches in June are:

Sunday June 4 v Bells Yew Green 2pm

Saturday June 10 v Hastings and

Bexhill Barbarians 2pm

Thursday June 22 Benenden Bulls v

Goudhurst Gentlemen 6pm

Sunday June 25 v Primrose Hill Elephants 2pm

Richard Brunt, Club Captain

9th annual Richard Beattie Davis musical events

Saturday 29 July, Sandhurst, 3pm

Daniel Grimwood will be performing at this year's garden party event. The interesting programme will consist of Ravel, Myaskovsky, Henselt, Blumenfeld and other rarities. Daniel has recently appeared in a re-run of the series 'Revolution and Romance' with Suzy Klein on BBC4. You can still catch it on iPlayer.

Tuesday 12 September, Sandhurst, 3pm

Malcolm Binns, piano recital, works by Chopin, Bach/Busoni, Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Both events are in aid of Hospice in the Weald.

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Clive Turner

Planned Giving and Gift Aid Secretary
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Joanne Grief

Joanne passed away on Thursday 16 February 2017 after a courageous battle with cancer for 10 years. She leaves behind her husband David and three children, Cecilia, Dominic and Florence, also her mother Joyce, who lives in Cranbrook.

Joanne was born 6 August 1960. We moved as a family to Benenden in September 1997 and lived all our time at Crit Hall.

The children went to prep schools locally at Bedgebury, Bodiam and DCPS, Joanne was very active in all three schools and was well known to all the staff and many parents.

Joanne was devoted to our three children and managed all their lives in great detail; one of our recent highlights was the marriage of Cecilia in September 2015, organised with impeccable skill by Joanne, the wedding took place at Lympne Castle.

Joanne was the co-author of a very successful cookbook, "Celebrating 30 years of The Hospice in the Weald", it was first published in 2010 after many years of hard work and contains many recipes from people in the village and across the world, and she raised over £20,000 for the Hospice. We are going to produce a reprint in Joanne's memory and again the proceeds of this will go to the hospice. Joanne herself was a great cook, she took many courses and was a masterful chef. Both Florence and Dominic continue with those skills having been inspired by their mum.

Joanne was a well-known figure around the village and was always willing to help, she was particularly interested in the development of the village shop and was very keen to give her time there but due to her declining health this was never to be.

There is a celebration of Joanne's life at St George's church on Saturday 15 July at 12noon. All that knew Joanne are welcome.
David Grief dgrief@essexcourt.net

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General Election Round up

The country goes to the polls, yet again, on Thursday 8 June, when our Village Hall and Pavilion will be transformed into local hubs of democracy for another General Election. Benenden voters will be asked to help elect the MP for our Maidstone and The Weald constituency, either returning Conservative Party candidate Helen Grant for a second term - following her win with an increased majority in 2015 - or favouring one of her six rivals.

A defeat for Grant would be a shock - she is quoted at a best price of 1-100 by the bookies, with the Greens 200-1 outsiders of the five main parties - although so were wins for Brexit and Donald Trump, so nothing should be taken for granted. But the 55-year-old won 22,745 votes at the last election - a majority of more than 10,000 and a swing of +4.5%.

The full list of candidates is printed below - in alphabetical order to avoid accusations of bias.

Emily Fermor (Lib Dems)

Former pupil of Invicta Grammar School, read history at Magdalen College, Oxford and takes over from Jasper Gerard, who visited the village in the 2015 campaign. Won the Coxheath and Hunton seat on Maidstone Borough Council this year, defeating the Tory candidate by one vote. Now a Public Affairs consultant who is keen to protect countryside and wildlife.

Helen Grant (Conservative)

Elected as the MP for Maidstone and The Weald at the 2010 general election and held her seat in 2015. Born in London, brought up on a council estate in Carlisle, former U16 judo champion, qualified solicitor and Minister for Sport and Tourism from 2013-2015. Married with two sons.

Stuart Jeffery (Green)

Anti-Brexit campaigner still calling for a second referendum; strong environmental campaigner; volunteer and fund-raiser on behalf of local homelessness charities. Lives in Maidstone.



Yolande Kenward (Independent)

Few details available apart from rather bizarre Facebook page. Strong views on freemasonry, the collapse of the NHS, children's rights and immigration. Stood as an independent in Maidstone South at the recent County Council elections and won 82 votes.

Allen Simpson (Labour)

Former Maidstone Grammar School pupil, now head of Corporate Banking Public Policy at Barclays Bank. Married and divides his time between Maidstone and South London. Polled 5,268 votes in fourth place in 2015.

Pamela Watts (UKIP)

"Libertarian" who polled 430 votes as UKIP candidate for Marden and Yalding in the 2016 Maidstone Borough Council elections and 647 in Maidstone Central in the recent County Council election.

2015 General Election result

Helen Grant (Conservative) 22,745
Jasper Gerard (Liberal Democrat) 12,036
Eddie Powell (UKIP) 7,930
Allen Simpson (Labour) 5,268
Hannah Patton (Green) 1,396
Paul Hobday (National Health Action) 583
Robin Kinrade (Independent) 52



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Talking Shop

ASPARAGUS - HAVE YOU BEEN TEMPTED YET?

Anyone visiting Benenden's Shop recently can't fail to have noticed the wonderful bunches of asparagus on the counter by the till.

Normally the asparagus season begins around the second to third week in April and continues until around 21 June. Because of the unseasonably warm weather in early spring this year, the season started in March and we have been blessed with an early treat.

Alan Brooks, local produce supplier, kindly sources the asparagus from Friday Street Farm in East Sutton and delivers it, fresh from the field, to Benenden's. The farm has been growing asparagus for 20 years and supplies local businesses as well as high class restaurants. It is an expensive vegetable compared with others, due to the fact that it has to be harvested by hand. However, it has the real advantage of being a delicious eating experience all on its own as well as in many recipes. It is rich in vitamin B folate, which reduces the risk of neural tube defects in babies when eaten during pregnancy and helps to reduce homocysteine which can clog blood vessels to the brain and heart. Perhaps most interesting, however, are the recent studies that indicate that asparagus can add 'hangover cure' to its impressive list of benefits. It is high in amino acids which stimulate two enzymes to accelerate the breakdown of alcohol. So good news all round!

Recent cold nights in April have slowed the growth of asparagus but with warmer weather (hopefully!) round the corner, we would want to see it adorning the counter in the shop for a while yet. Make the most of its short season- you won't regret it!

Bev Beveridge

Jane's Kitchen

This salmon recipe is ideal if you are entertaining because it looks the height of sophistication but will not break the bank.

PANCETTA WRAPPED SALMON WITH GRIDDLED ASPARAGUS AND LIME CREME FRAICHE

Serves 4

Preparation 10min, cooking time 15min

2 bunches English asparagus, woody ends removed

2tbsp olive oil

4 skinless salmon fillets

8 pancetta rashers

100ml crème fraîche

2tbsp mayonnaise

Grated zest of 1 lime

Juice of ½ lime

METHOD

- Pre-heat oven to 210C/200Fan/Gas mark 7. Place asparagus in a shallow roasting tin and toss with ½ of the olive oil. Season well and roast in the oven for 5min.
- Meanwhile season each salmon fillet, wrap in 2 pancetta rashers and brush with the remaining oil. Once the asparagus has been cooking for 5min remove from the oven and place the salmon parcels on top. Return to the oven for a further 8-10min until the salmon is just cooked and the pancetta is crisp.
- Mix together the crème fraîche and mayonnaise, then stir through the lime zest and juice. Season and serve with asparagus and salmon.

Jane Drysdale 291027

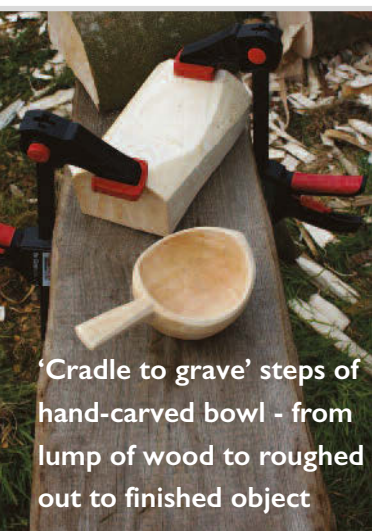
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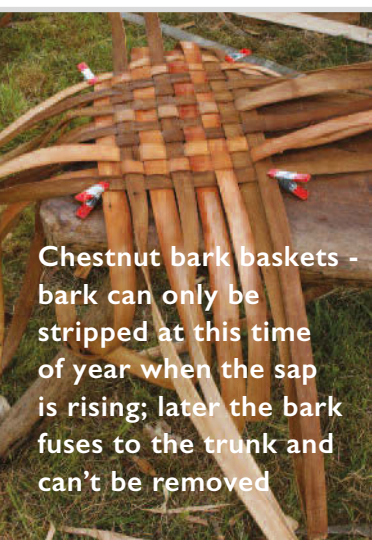
Tent pegs



Frame for a bark basket



'Cradle to grave' steps of hand-carved bowl - from lump of wood to roughed out to finished object



Chestnut bark baskets - bark can only be stripped at this time of year when the sap is rising; later the bark fuses to the trunk and can't be removed

Local Enterprise ... Enterprising Locals

JOHN BURBAGE -
THE ASSOCIATION OF
POLE-LATHE TURNERS AND
GREEN WOODWORKERS



John and friends at his
APT&GW Spring gathering

Twice a year, in spring and autumn, Benenden hosts a gathering of the APT&GW in White Chimney Wood, owned and managed by John Burbage. The Association of Pole-lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers has 1,000 members nationally and promotes traditional green-wood crafts (as opposed to seasoned wood), many of which have been practiced for hundreds if not thousands of years. Membership is only £20 per year and more information can be found on the website: www.bodger.org.uk. There is even a Bodgers Ball where 500 craftspeople meet to exchange ideas and demonstrate their skills.

The craftspeople who gather at White Chimney Wood include: spoon and bowl carvers, hurdle and rake makers and chair makers, to name but a few. White Chimney is Kent's centre for these activities and both highly-skilled and novice practitioners are welcome. New members are helped by the more experienced and meetings here, and up and down the country, are about sharing skills. These gatherings are not about selling, that is left to more mainstream events like the Kent Show and wood fairs where professional craft demonstrations can be seen.

John Burbage has been turning on a pole-lathe since 1994 having seen someone demonstrating the craft. He found that it combined his two loves - woodworking and woodland. No power is used, all the wood is local, and selectively taken timber is worked while still green so no third parties are needed to convert it. There's no noise, no dust and very little waste, just a few woodshavings.

John has cleared rhododendrons from about 25 of the 40 acres of ancient woodland. He has planted another ten acres with 10,000 trees to replicate the mix found in the original wood. Woodland in the past was managed to produce the various timbers needed for traditional crafts - chestnut for hurdles, hornbeam for charcoal etc. Without the demand for these different woods our ancient woodlands are deteriorating, unmanaged and with biodiversity lost, as the stronger species gain the upper hand. It is John's mission to bring the ancient woodland back to productive, biodiverse, life.

Minnie Garnier



Blacksmithing - it isn't possible to buy the tools needed so they make their own with a charcoal fired forge, using their own wood



Ladder making from single lengths of chestnut in the style of the last long straw thatcher in Kent



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Foot Notes

Hyde's Hikes: Benenden - Hole Park

Distance: 6.4 miles

This walk has a mixture of woodland, parkland and orchards it is especially beautiful in spring when the blossom and wild flowers are in bloom.

1) From Benenden Village Hall Cross the road and walk down Walkhurst Rd turning right to take footpath WC349 just over the stream. Follow the path with the stream on your right as it twists and turns, ignore paths joining from the left and right through to Mount Le Hoe.



Stepneyford Lane view

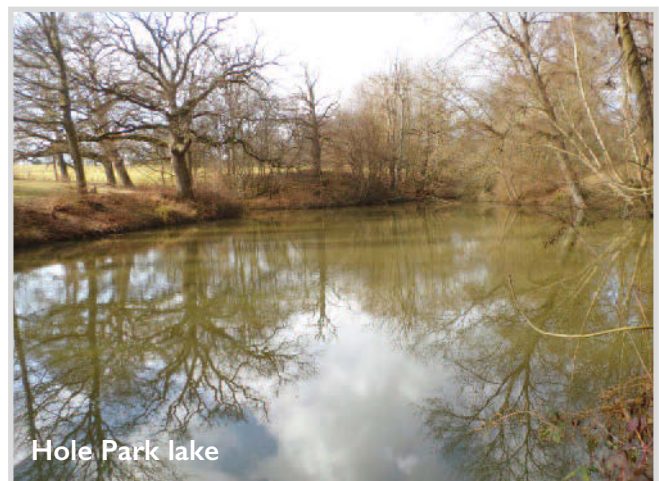
2) Turn right onto footpath WC346 through the gate and follow the path along the field edge, over the stile the footpath goes straight ahead passing a small pond on your right. The next stile is damaged but the gate slightly to the left is easily passable. Proceed straight ahead to cross a wooden footbridge and the route goes up the hill to Stepneyford Lane.

3) Turn right along the lane and take the 2nd footpath on your left to enter Hole Park, the paths and gates through the estate are all well marked and maintained and an example to other landowners. Follow the path through the commercial units and cross the drive to the right of the house. Through the pedestrian gate and the path goes diagonally left downhill in front of the house. The path goes through a gate and across a bridge between the two ponds. The path then goes uphill slightly left to meet the driveway from the house.

4) Turn right on the path, across the cattle grid and up past the gatehouse, cross the road and carry on ahead into Sandhurst Lane, passing Kemsdale House.

5) Turn right onto the High Weald Landscape Trail and follow this through the orchards to Dingledean Farm, note the footpath around Dingledean Farm has been re-routed and now passes to the left of the pond, the new route is well marked.

6) Follow Woodcock Lane ahead across the junction of Ramsden Lane and turn right following the High Weald Landscape Trail through Willerd's Hill Wood into Strawberry Wood, following the trail back to the village.



Hole Park lake

Jim Hyde, Parish Footpath Co-ordinator

Bird Notes

One of the delights of spring is hearing the first chattering song of a passing Swallow and then looking up and seeing that fork-tailed aerial bird swooping over catching whatever miniscule prey it can find. We only have one species of swallow breeding in this country, though it is very closely related to our Sand Martin and House Martin. These birds are collectively called hirundines. Early naturalists used to include swifts in this group until it was later realised that they were not close relatives at all although they look similar and enjoy a similar aerial lifestyle.

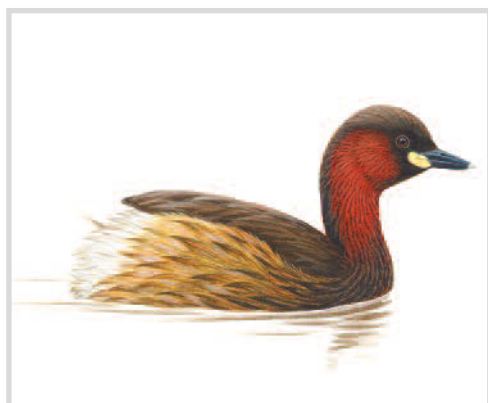


It is only in the last few years with my visits to Costa Rica and Namibia that I have realised just how many swallows and martins there are in the world. What is the difference between a martin and a swallow? The answer is not a lot but generally the English name martin refers to a hirundine with a squarish tail rather than a forked one. However this is only a general categorisation as our Sand Martin is called a Bank Swallow in America!

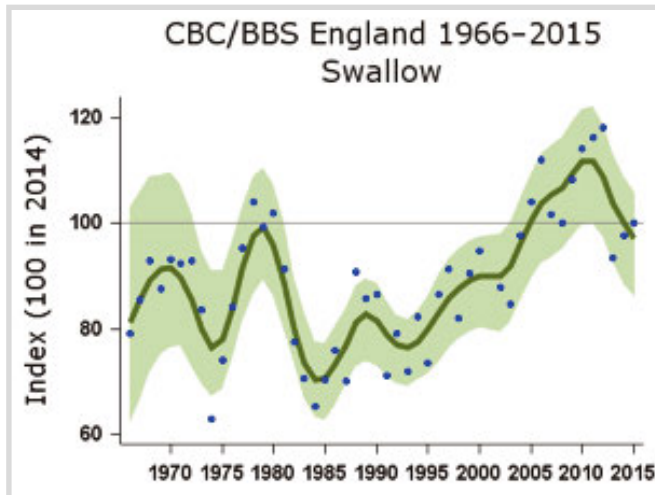
There are about 75 different species of hirundines in the world and with only three breeding species in this country I can perhaps be forgiven for being surprised at this global number. To differentiate 'our' Swallow from all the others in the world you will have

probably noticed that the newer guide-books refer to it as Barn Swallow. Europe can add two further breeding species, the Crag Martin and Red-rumped Swallow, both of which have been recorded in the UK. I was lucky enough to see a red-rumped Swallow at Rye Harbour in 2010. For the record, three American hirundines have been recorded in this country, namely American Cliff Swallow, Tree Swallow and Purple Martin. All are very rare visitors.

The Barn Swallow is one of the most widely distributed birds in the world. It breeds right across N America, Europe and Asia and winters respectively in South America, Africa and India. It is really only absent in Australasia. During my recent trip to Namibia I saw them virtually every day. The fortunes of the Barn Swallow have been a little changeable but overall a pretty good compared to many of our summer migrants. The graph below illustrates the picture well. When, in the 1980s, the population fell it became an amber-listed species and only came back to green in 2015. It was



interesting looking at these figures as I would have painted a far bleaker picture on its fortune. Readers of my bird notes might remember the pairs nesting in a watermill in Biddenden which I used to monitor. There were two to three pairs regularly raising 10 to 12 young. In 2007 they had a disastrous breeding season only raising four young and since then they have never returned. The other site I keep an eye is a small colony on the side of the church hall in Newenden which used to have about six pairs but is now down to a single pair.



By courtesy of the British Trust for Ornithology

The BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) 2008/2013 Atlas suggests there has been a slight decline in the South East which has been more than compensated by increase elsewhere particularly in the western half of the country. According to the Atlas, the Barn Swallow was recorded in 95% of the 10 x 10km squares which makes it the most widely distributed summer migrant. It is only missing in central London and some of the remote hills in Scotland. The highest densities are in Ireland and is probably related to agriculture where it favours pasture,

particularly cattle, rather than arable. The UK population is estimated just short of 900,000 pairs. The other interesting fact that emerged from the BTO nest record scheme is that the first egg-laying date has advanced a huge ten days since the 1970s. Coupled with the fact that departure dates have also been extended, the Barn Swallows now have a longer breeding season enabling extra broods. This is probably the main driver for the population being marginally on an upward trend.

I keep a watch on a local mere (within the parish boundary) and as it is off any official footpath it is relatively undisturbed. This year I found three Lapwings one of which was settled on the ground and I believe it could be on a nest despite surrounding ground looking very marshy. I have seen Lapwings here before but not breeding. I hope this turns out to be a nest and it would be some record for the parish to have breeding Lapwings again. A Little Grebe was also on the mere where they have bred previously. Linnets, Yellowhammers and a male Reed Bunting were also present making this spot a real haven.

Last year the territory of one of the local Nightingales was scrubbed, causing much distress to various neighbours who enjoyed its wonderful song. The parish used to have a good number of pairs and I am concerned we have none left. I would love to hear from any reader if they hear a Nightingale this spring.

I have one further request. The BTO are doing a survey on House Martins and I would be grateful to hear of anyone who has a House Martin's nest on their property.

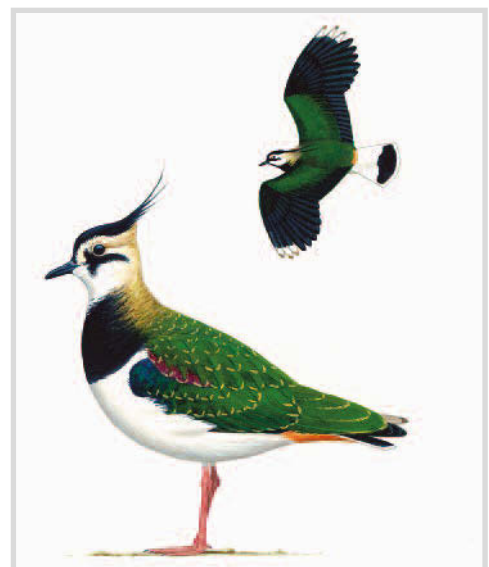
Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com

Anticlockwise: Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*;

Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*;

Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*;

Illustrations: Stephen Message www.message-wildlife-art.co.uk





The Garden Gnome

Once more into the breach dear friends ... the grass is knee high, the pond invisible behind a wall of what was supposed to be a charming rustic bank of willowherb and buttercups, and the hedge ... well, who knew that hawthorn could grow

three feet in a week? This, combined with the new giant tussocks and rampant brambles, makes reaching the chickens at the bottom of the garden a trial of strength and ingenuity like something out of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. So with my trusty machete - well pruning saw - between my teeth I am to be seen hacking my

way through the undergrowth to the amazement of the cows in the next door field.

It's all my fault of course. I should never have gone away for a week just at the moment when nature puts on its goggles, says "Poop, poop" and steps on the gas. When I waved goodbye to my garden a mere ten days ago all was in order. The lawn was smooth and green, inviting a gentle game of croquet, the flower beds were tidy, with trimmed edges, showcasing modest hellebores and the last of the spring bulbs nodding sagely in the breeze. You could even see bare earth between the plants.

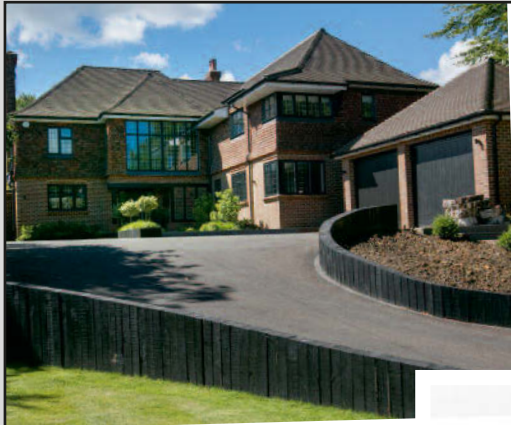
While I was away, having been bone dry weeks, it, of course, went and rained. That's a mean trick to play. Everything drank in the rain and doubled in size, including the mare's tail and the ground elder. Yes I've got both those but I thought they were under control. Now the ground elder is on the verge of flowering and apparently all set to take over the world. And while I wasn't looking, an entire regiment of balsam has popped up in the vegetable garden. Now while I know bees and small children love it, I had decided it no longer had a place in my garden and I ruthlessly exterminated it. While I was away it obviously decided now was the moment to sneak back.

Now I find blowsy roses, last seen neatly attached to their supports, having escaped from their moorings canoodling with a forest of lupins, which I swear were half the size last year. And stealing out and up are the tenacious tendrils of the World's Worst Weed - convulvulus - striking dread into the heart of even the most rugged gardener. I have poisoned, dug up, pulled out and sworn at it for years and every year it emerges undaunted and dares me to do my worst.

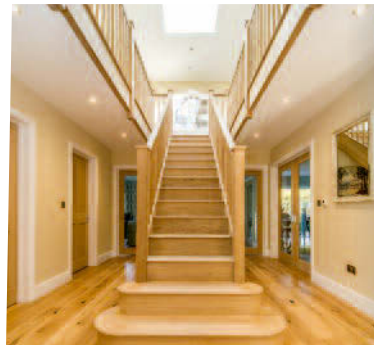
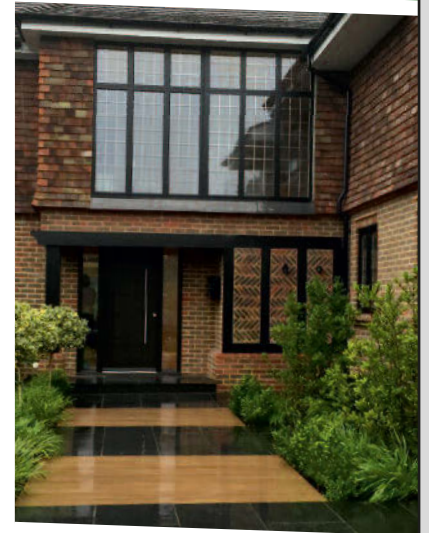
I don't know where to start, I'm tearing my hair out ... it has given a whole new meaning to the saying (going) nuts in May.

MG





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Above: Benenden's Big Bash cricket in full swing, The Benenden Amenity and Countryside Society spring walk at Sissinghurst; Robin Dalton Holmes receiving a Community Award Scheme presentation from Parish Council Chairman Peter Davies
Front cover: At the gathering of The Association of Pole-lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers, turning a bowl from green sycamore felled only a week before. Photograph: Minnie Garnier