

Benenden Magazine

December 2017



The Bull at Benenden wishes you a
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

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Benenden's

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Editorial



I've never quite understood why the aphorism "may you live in interesting times" was said to be a curse. I'd have thought just the opposite. The curse would surely be to live in dull times where there was little or nothing happening around you? Of course London friends assume that must be the situation in a small rural village like Benenden. Well, they only have to open the Benenden Magazine to see how far from the truth that is.

What with the panto rehearsing, councils and societies meeting, decorations going up all about, and just about everyone preparing seasonal activities of one sort or another, there seems hardly a minute to draw breath.

But perhaps we should pause and take serious note of what's happening over housing development around here. On page 22 and 23 we outline the very real threat to our countryside from planners and developers. It underlines the vital importance of producing our own Neighborhood Plan which is discussed on page 21, and by our Parish Council Chairman Peter Davies in his column on page 7.

Should this all seem too depressing, then we have some light relief in the form of a mega Christmas quiz on pages 18 and 19. If you want to compete for a £10 Benenden's gift token, then you have to promise to complete it unaided. In any event why not try answering without help it before you succumb to the lure of Google!

Lastly, all here at the Magazine wish you Season's Greetings and a great 2018.

Kent Barker, 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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Editorial Board: PCC Rep: Tracy Claridge, PC Rep: Kent Barker, Treasurer: Charles Trollope,

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

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

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

Church Calendar

St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 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 3 December 8am Communion 10am All-age Communion and Sunday School 5pm Advent Carol Service: Service of Light

Sunday 10 December 8am 1662 Communion 10am Morning Worship 5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church

Wednesday 13 December

2pm Primary School Nativity

Friday 15 December

5pm Saint Ronan's School Carol Service

Sunday 17 December 8am Communion

10am Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 19 December

7.30pm Parish Carol Service

Christmas Eve 8am Communion

10am Morning Worship

3pm Crib Service

11.30pm Communion

Christmas Day 8am Communion

10am Family Worship

10.45am Communion

Sunday 31 December 8am Communion

10am All-age Communion

at St Nicholas, Sandhurst

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion (except Tuesday 26 December)

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

Wedding 4 November Amber Stoten and Edward Douglas

Marriage Blessing 18 November Lauren and Christopher Allery

Funerals 13 November Pat Thoburn

20 November Jean Ayres

Rector's Letter



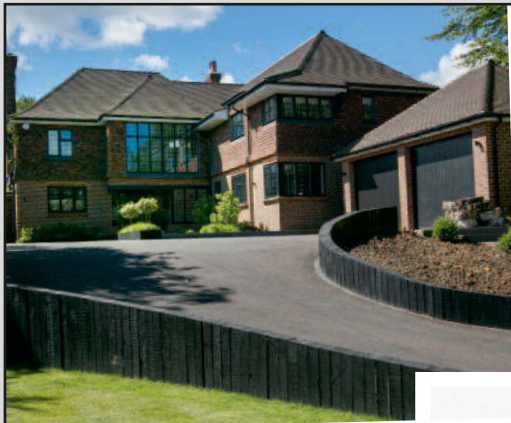
Another year draws to a close

With December, the year draws to a close; and another year goes by. A year with, I trust, many happy things to look back on; things that bring a smile to your face as they come to mind. Mixed, I have no doubt, with some hard things that you've had to deal with this year, and perhaps some events that are painful to think back on. I hope that the balance has been towards the happier things of life for you this year.

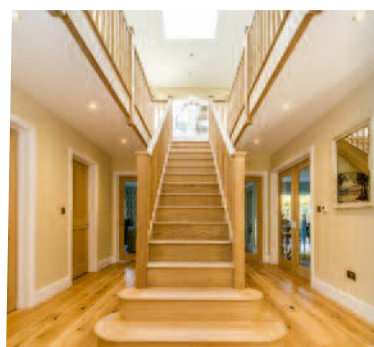
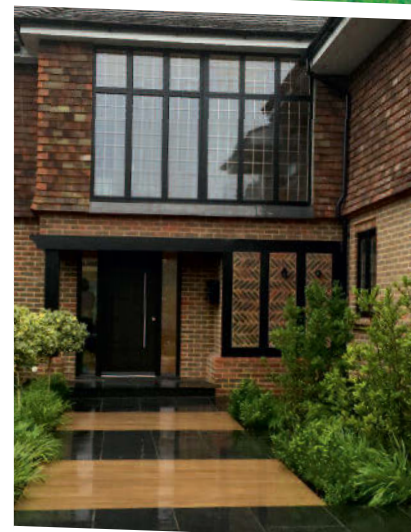
On this yearly cycle of life, the Church now moves into Advent and then on to Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation for us; preparing ourselves for the celebrations of Christmas, hopefully as we remember - amongst all the wrapping paper, presents, food, drink, and family time - the reason that many are having time off work ... we are celebrating the birth of an incredibly special baby about 2,000 years ago; a baby who Christians believe, as a man (and as God) came to help us and save us. Advent is also, for the Church, a time of preparing ourselves, more deeply, for the return of Jesus again - whenever that may be. Perhaps it will be in thousands of years, or maybe hundreds of years; or perhaps it will be in your lifetime; or tomorrow. None of us know; but we should be prepared - that is what Advent is about.

The years also move on; this year we are celebrating five Christmases together. I cannot believe where that time has gone. There are plenty of things to share together in the run up to Christmas and over Christmas; I hope we'll meet up at some of them. It all begins with our candle-lit Advent Carol service on Sunday 3 December; then an Advent evening together with Revd Rosemary at the Mission Church in Sandhurst on Monday 4 December. The Primary School Nativity on Wednesday 13 December; the Parish Carol Service, with the church illuminated by the candelabras, on the evening of Tuesday 19 December. We've then got a choice of four services on offer on Christmas Eve: 8am Communion, 10am Morning Worship, 3pm The Crib Service (come dressed as a nativity character - whatever your age!) and 11.30pm for the first Communion of Christmas. On Christmas Day you can then join us for Communion at 8am, or 10am for Family Worship - which then runs into another Communion if you'd like to stay. However, it doesn't end there! If you'd prefer not to be on your own for the rest of Christmas Day, you're welcome to come and have Christmas lunch at the Memorial Hall (but please sign up for this - for further details see page 9); or drop into the Hall for a drink when you're out for a walk. Alternatively, you can catch me in The Bull, of course! We have a great community spirit in Benenden; come and join in with it. I wish you a blessed Christmas.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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Just a Thought



Belonging

The ageing grandmother had been persuaded to move to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren. She loved seeing them and watching them as they grew. And she could chat to her daughter face to face instead of just on the phone. But now they were on holiday. She knew no-one else locally and no longer drove a car. She mustn't sit looking out at the rain thinking of those she had left. She would restart her quilting hobby and join a group. There must be people with a fellow interest in Egyptology. She had her free bus pass. She might even join a local church.

Home and part of the community again, if only for a short while. It was great working abroad but good to be back. The career woman felt an inordinate degree of pleasure in seeing familiar faces in passing cars, as she made her way to the local shop; in recognising people walking their dogs; and being greeted by those who knew her face even if they had forgotten her name. It was different overseas. Both the ex-pat community and the local people were usually friendly, but everyone knew that she was only passing through. How much to invest in getting involved - on both sides?

Two excited toddlers were racing round the play-park on their scooters whilst their mum was checking her smartphone. There were three texts from other mothers, two WhatsApp messages and a general call from 'mumsnet'. One was asking if she would like to join a group picnic, another a request to help a new mum with child-minding. She was already booked with others to sort contributions for the local charity shop. Housework? Shopping? Or being with others?

The young, fit, teenager had been approached as a possible member of the Black Dog gang. His friend had already joined. But he would rather continue belonging to the football team where he had been doing well. However, there were problems with a change of team coach and the loss of their practice slot on the local field, so things were looking rather shaky. Surely he needed to belong to something.

The little boy sat at the end of the table eating his sandwiches looking on as the others in the reception class were busily chatting and exchanging morsels of their mothers' carefully balanced packed lunches. He had started school well enough but then was away for a fortnight with illness. On his return he found that his little friend had found someone else. Now he just wished that someone would choose to sit with him.

The desire to belong is universal and Christmas is the season when we are particularly aware of this. A time when most individuals would wish to feel that they belong to a family, a group, or that they are part of a community, or at least have their existence noticed. Maybe it is up to those around to make the first move.

Sue Fisher

Village Calendar

December

Friday 1	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 2	Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.13
Saturday 2	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 3	Advent Carol Service: The Service of Light, St George's Church, 5pm	p.9
Monday 4	Advent: On the Way, Revd Rosemary Kobus van Wengen, Mission Church Sandhurst, 7.30pm	p.9
Wednesday 6	St George's Church Coffee Shop Christmas Special, Memorial Hall, 10am	p.13
Friday 8	Christmas Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.13
Saturday 9	Bingo, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 11	Planning Committee and Transportation Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7pm	
Monday 11	Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 12	Merry and Bright Christmas Party, Memorial Hall, 3pm	
Wednesday 13	Benenden Primary School Nativity Service, St George's Church, 2pm	
Friday 15	Christmas Draw and Meat Raffle, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 16	Christmas Music Quiz, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 18	Preparing the Church for Christmas, St George's Church, 10am	p.9
Tuesday 19	Parish Carol Service by Candlelight, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.9
Saturday 23	Mince Pies, Mulled Wine and Tennis, Iden Green Tennis Club, 9.30am	p.25
Christmas Eve	The Crib Service, St George's Church, 3pm	p.17
Christmas Day	Drop In and Christmas Lunch, Memorial Hall, 12noon-5pm	p.9
Boxing Day	Christmas Quiz 2017, deadline for entries	p.18

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 2 December for Garden/Compostable Waste

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

Saturday 16 December for Domestic Waste

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

Saturday 30 December no service

Parish Council



As mentioned last month we are actively progressing our Neighbourhood Development Plan. We had a well-attended, productive meeting on 11 November on future housing needs, and how they may be satisfied. We are now seeking volunteers to join a series of work groups covering these and other key issues which will be further developed in our Plan. Any help would be appreciated, even to walk around and photograph. There are five active working groups covering the following areas:

Housing Supply planning policy, site identification, demand, numbers and types of dwellings, - family houses, smaller homes, affordable, social, rent or shared equity. Flats, bungalows, extensions. A Community Land Trust could be considered.

Design and Built Environment architecture, landscaping, site layout, lighting, garaging and parking, special factors such as the two designated Conservation Areas (central Benenden and Iden Green), smaller settlements in the Parish, impact upon listed buildings, whole life issues - building homes that will still be appropriate as people age. Access to local services and facilities.

Transport and Infrastructure roads, pavements, traffic management, speeding and HGV routing, signage, public transport, infrastructure, services and utilities, including local roads and facilities - schools, doctors surgeries, hospitals cinema, railway stations.

Business and Local Economy traditional local businesses such as farming and forestry, the needs and future development of our larger businesses (Benenden Girls' School, Benenden Hospital), the development and growth of smaller local businesses, new start ups, home working. Identifying potential economic development sites and issues. Protection of our pubs, post office, and other businesses which offer key services to the community. Business Rates.

Landscape and Green Environment AONB open spaces, recreation, footpaths, Hemsted Forest and other historic woodlands, historic landscape, ghylls and smugglers' trails. Sustainability issues, relating specifically to the green environment and future generations. Landscape character assessment.

Please let me know if you could help the work of one of these groups.

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 11 December 2017,
Memorial Hall, 7.30pm

**Planning and Transportation
Committee Meeting**
Monday 11 December 2017,
Memorial Hall, 7pm



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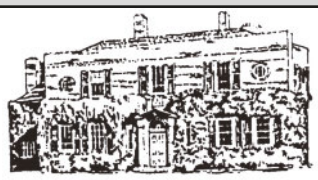
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News and Events

Alone on Christmas Day?

Does the thought of spending Christmas Day on your own fill you with dread and worry? If it does, then please either drop into the Memorial Hall anytime between noon and 5pm for tea or coffee, sherry, glass of wine, soft drinks, mince pies, nuts, dates, biscuits, cakes - and/or sign up for lunch on the form at the community shop. A three-course lunch will be served only to those people who sign up beforehand or call Lesley Attwood on 243318. We do need to know numbers please.

Lunch will be turkey roll with stuffing and gravy, roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables. Followed by Christmas pudding, brandy butter and cream or fresh fruit salad and cream, then Cheddar, Stilton, and Somerset Brie, accompanied by red and white wine, with The Queen's speech at 3pm.

Once we have an idea of numbers, we will start the preparations. Please could any star bakers/cooks out there please volunteer their services and create some festive goodies? Please state on the form in the village shop what you would be able to make? Any excess will go to Catching Lives, Canterbury, or Nourish, Tunbridge Wells. Any profit will go to Catching Lives, Canterbury.

Drop in anytime. There will be cards, chess, cribbage, magazines and newspapers to read, maybe a quiz, who knows, we could even talk to each other! Please tell us if you would like to be collected by car. Any volunteers on the day would be most welcome.

Tracy Claridge, Lesley Attwood
and St George's Church 243318

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE

The Service of Light

St George's Church
Sunday 3 December
5pm



Advent Evening

at Sandhurst Mission Church
Back Road TN18 5JU



Monday 4 December
7.30pm

Refreshments
from 7.15pm

On the Way:
an illustrated Advent talk
by Revd Rosemary Kobus van Wengen

Parish Carol Service

This year's Parish Carol Service by Candlelight at St George's will be held on Tuesday 19 December at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

Preparing the church for this service, which includes setting out well over 400 candles, and for Christmas generally, will take place on Monday 18 December from 10am. If you can spare an hour so on that morning to take part in this enjoyable task, we would love to see you.

Dick Hill 240517

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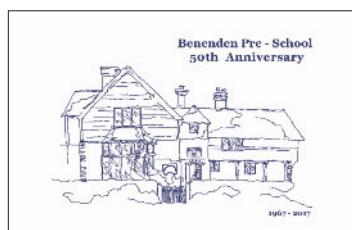
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STEP INTO CHRISTMAS AT BENENDEN'S

Well it's here again. The season to cluster around the fire roasting chestnuts, to deck the halls and sing carols. It's also the season to elbow through the crowds to get the latest must-have toy for the kids only to find it's already sold out. You can guess where to come for some consolation: our wonderful village shop. It may not always be a haven of tranquillity, but you are always assured of a warm welcome. This year we are offering a range of Christmas goodies to tempt you and make it unnecessary to go further for some of your festive shopping. Benenden's has a range of hampers which can be bought empty and filled with shop products of your choice. You choose; we pack and present it for you ready to give as a special gift. Anyone who tried the mouth-watering mince pies last year won't be disappointed - we have more to tempt you with! We have an range of Christmas cards and Hannah's beautiful fresh wreaths can be ordered from the shop. When you have had enough of shopping, there is our café where you can buy a range of superb teas and coffees, accompanied by scrumptious cakes. If you are a little more peckish or don't fancy cooking, try lunch. Do join us if you can and all you volunteers out there; please don't forget to sign up for a session or two over this busy time.

Bev Beveridge

St George's Church Coffee Shop Christmas Special

Wednesday 6 December, Memorial Hall,
10-11.45am

Do come and join in our celebrations for Christmas. We will be having a raffle and would be grateful for contributions such as boxes of chocolates etc. Looking forward to seeing you.

Deidre Butler 01227 730538

Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra

Conductor Michael Hitchcock

Leader Rob Eastwood

Saturday 2 December

St George's Church at 7.30pm

Rossini Overture

The Italian Girl in Algiers



Bruch

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Soloist

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1053542



Voluntary Car Service

Peter and Gilly Walton have announced with regret they will cease to run the Hospital Voluntary Car Service after Christmas. The valuable service provides transport for people without cars to attend doctors and hospital appointments.

The Waltons hope that someone new will be willing to run the scheme. This would generally involve taking phone calls and ensuring that a driver is available. The coordinator would not necessarily have to be a driver. Gilly and several current drivers will continue. As she says, she enjoys chatting with passengers on the journey!

Even if you don't want to run the scheme but could offer your services as an occasional driver do contact:

Peter or Gilly Walton 242855

Christmas Village Lunch

Friday 8 December, Benenden Village Hall,
12.30pm

All are welcome. It's just £4 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. To book a place please call Sheila on 01580 240838 or Kathleen on 01580 240081. We look forward to seeing you.



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Benenden CE Primary School

Visit to "our" Cathedral

Early in November, 32 Primary School children from years 5 and 6, along with four members of staff and the Rector, left bright and early for a visit to Canterbury Cathedral.

The coach trip was followed by a walk through the shopping precinct to the Cathedral precinct, and then

into the Cathedral itself - where we still had 32 children! We were the first of nine other CofE Primary Schools to arrive. When the other 250 children had appeared we were welcomed to by Revd Nick Papadopoulos, Canon

Treasurer of the Cathedral. He said, "When your parents or brothers/sisters ask where you've been today, don't say 'I've been to the Cathedral', but say 'I've been to our Cathedral', because that is what this place is. It is ours; so please enjoy being here, in your Cathedral."

Once we'd been welcomed, we split into groups of nine or ten and explored various parts of our Cathedral, and entered into many different activities around the beautiful building.

Some of the children went to a "senses" prayer station set up in the crypt, others designed stained glass windows and learnt about their shape and symbols. Some visited the archive room and made a "charter and seal" while another group, dressed up as monks, was given a tour with some of history including a gory bit about Archbishop Thomas Becket's demise.

After a packed lunch, and a bit of exercise to burn off energy, we gathered back in the nave for worship, led by some children from other schools and by Archdeacon Stephen; this included actions, songs, prayers, and a reflection on a piece of scripture by two schoolchildren.

It was a good day; and judging by some of the comments I heard afterwards the children enjoyed it too. Moreover, the good news: we still had the same 32 children when we got back to Benenden!

Revd David Commander





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Bonfire Night

We hope you really enjoyed the 2017 bonfire and fireworks in Benenden.

This year we introduced advanced ticket sales, both on line and at Benenden's village shop. Please consider the advance ticket option next year as it helps us track numbers and cater more accurately.

A focused campaign asking those attending to be considerate in their parking or better still car share or walk where possible seems to have worked and we hope you agree there was less congestion.

A 'proper' bonfire was lit followed by an incredible firework display supplied and fired by locally based Wizard Fireworks.

Barbecue food and an array of drinks were enjoyed by visitors using locally sourced food from Ward & Sons Butchers and Chaney's the Bakers of Cranbrook. Harveys and Larkins Breweries each generously donated a barrel of beer as did Mark and Lucy from The Bull. Our thanks to all these suppliers. Once again we were supported by Benenden Hospital Trust, our thanks to them.

While all the burgers and sausages went, there was a little homemade chilli left at the end so the committee feels the food quantity was just about right considering we never know exactly how many will want to eat.

Benenden Bonfire Society would like to thank the more than 60 volunteers who helped throughout the day and of course everyone who came along to this annual village event.

The aim of the Benenden Bonfire Society is to distribute monies to youth groups and/or causes within the Parish. A breakdown of expenditure and income will be in next month's magazine as well as the application process.

Last year the village Scout Group, the Benenden Players and St George's Sunday school were beneficiaries and while they are not precluded new applications are encouraged.

Benenden Bonfire Society Committee

Everyone is invited to ...

The Crib service
at St George's Church
on Christmas Eve
at 3pm



It would be lovely if everyone - young and not so young - could come along dressed as a character from the Nativity story: Mary, Joseph, Shepherd, Inn Keeper, Wise-men, Angel, Star, Cow, Sheep, Donkey ... anything appropriate you can think of! This will enable us to bring to life the story of the nativity in a way that will be meaningful and fun for all.

We look forward to seeing you as we create the nativity tableau together.

David and Helen Commander

Hospice in the Weald

Thank you very much to everyone who has supported Hospice in the Weald this year. Our local group has raised an amazing £13,221 since March, which is incredible and we couldn't have done it without a great deal of support.

The most recent event was the concert in the Benenden Village Hall where we had three different types of music: the Maidstone Rock Band, a classical trio with Sarah Andrew, her husband Tim and friend Diana, concluding with Blue Jasmine jazz group. The evening was thoroughly enjoyable and raised over £3,500. Grateful thanks are due to Tracy Claridge, who generously donated £150 of superb wine for the raffle, from which we made £575.

Everyone knows someone who has benefited from the marvellous care that the Hospice provides and we are delighted to have been able to support them. I would like to thank my hard-working, devoted committee for their dedication and support over this year. We have faced some challenges, but none of us is in any doubt that it is all totally worthwhile.
Jenny Stevens, Friends Co-ordinator

Christmas Quiz 2017

RULES

To enter the competition you MUST provide the answers before midnight on 26 December by email to benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com and you must declare that you have not:

- a) used Google or searched the internet,
- b) used any reference books,
- c) had any help from others.

If you do NOT wish to enter the competition, cheat as much as you like.

The answers will be on the Parish Council website on or around 27 December and should be published in January's magazine. There are 95 questions, but a possible 100 correct answers. A £10 Benenden's voucher is the prize for first correct entry. Have fun! KB

QUESTIONS

1 Keep the Faith

A) WHERE WOULD YOU FIND

- i La Sagrada Familia
- ii The Church of Santa Croce
- iii San Marco
- iv St Chad's Cathedral
- v Paddy's Wigwam

B) WHO OR WHAT IS OR WAS

- i The five parts of the Pentateuch
- ii Five of the Deadly Sins
- iii The Five Pillars of Islam
- iv The last Pope (2005-2013)
- v Last Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-2012)

2 Listen to the Music

A) WHERE WOULD YOU FIND

- i The Garnier
- ii The Scala
- iii Drottningholm Palace Theatre
- iv Snape Maltings Concert Hall
- v Bayreuth Festival Theatre

B) JAZZ UP YOUR (POPULAR) MUSIC

- i What's the biggest ever selling Jazz Album
- ii Biggest ever selling Pop album (47.3 million copies)
- iii Biggest ever selling British single
- iv Which Beatles single spent longest at number 1 in the UK charts
- v What was the day the music died

3 Keep it Local

- i When was the great fire of St George's Church (nearest decade)
- ii Name of the house which is now Benenden Girls' School
- iii What did Capt John Maridor DFC do
- iv For what was Capt Collingwood Ingram of The Grange particularly renowned
- v For what 17th Century act is Edmund Gibbon still remembered in Benenden

4 Nearly 50

A) IN MAY 1955

- i Who
- ii Defeated whom
- iii At what
- iv By how many (10 either way)
- v When was the next one

B) IN JANUARY 1959

- i Where was the revolution
- ii Who won it
- iii Who lost it
- iv What iconic medical student helped
- v Where did he die

C) IN WHAT YEAR DID

- i Rationing end
- ii National Service end
- iii A dog ride in space
- iv Buddy Holly die
- v ITV start

5 On Your Bookshelf

A) NAME

- i The Lone Pine Five author
- ii Five find outers and dog author
- iii Harry Potter author
- iv Who were the Famous Five (5 names needed)
- v Who was the leader of Billy Bunter's Famous Five

B) WHO OR WHAT ...

- i Who wrote A Song of Ice and Fire
- ii What TV series did it become
- iii Who wrote A Homage to Catalonia
- iv Who wrote the 2012 Booker Prize winner Bring Up the Bodies
- v Who wrote the science fiction novel Brave New World

6 Brush Up Your Shakespeare

IN WHICH PLAYS ARE THESE THE FIFTH LINE

- i Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths
- ii That will be ere the set of sun
- iii From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
- iv Then would the warlike Harry like himself
- v O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound

7 Broadcasting

A) IN WHAT YEAR DID WE

- i Lose 405
- ii Gain 625
- iii Gain Five Live
- iv Gain '5'
- v Lose our Home and our big 'L' but gain Four and One

B) REALITY CHECK

- i Who won Bake Off 2017
- ii Who won Strictly Come Dancing 2016
- iii What Benenden resident is associated with Four Rooms, Antiques Road Trip or Posh Pawn
- iv What is or was Scarlett Moffatt famous for
- v What show is Deborah Meaden associated with

8 Sports

A) CRYPTIC OR JUST OBSCURE?

- i What is "up" in Fives
- ii What diminished game might 12 reds leave you
- iii In what five are two forwards, two guards, and a centre
- iv In what are one or two laid face down and the rest face up, one at a time
- v In what would the addition of a (male) member make four five

B) WHO WON

- i Football Premier league 2016
- ii Football FA Cup 2016/17
- iii Rugby World Cup 2015
- iv Cricket. Ashes 2015
- v Wimbledon 2017

9 Silver Screen

A) NAME THE BRITISH FILM STUDIOS WHICH MADE

- i Carry on Up the Khyber
- ii Passport to Pimlico
- iii Blue Murder at St Trinian's
- iv Dam Busters
- v A Hard Day's Night
(one point for the 5 studio names - 2nd point to match film to studio)

B) GONGS

- i What won the Best Film Oscar 2017
- ii What Outstanding British Film won a BAFTA in 2017
- iii Name one of the only three films ever to win 11 Oscars
- iv How many times has Brad Pitt won best actor Oscar
- v Which Katherine has won the most ever best actress awards

10 Who in 2017

- i ... privately accepted their 2016 Nobel Prize
- ii ... got all the money by replacing Kevin Spacey
- iii ... wouldn't have the Freedom of Dublin if Bob Geldof got his way
- iv ... May have lost 13 in June making them 8 short
- v ... as Prime Minister joyfully unseated a President
- vi ... ensured the Pen was not mightier
- vii ... never called whom 'short and fat?'
- viii ... after increasing 30, eats more vegan food
- ix ... confused a prisoner's holiday with a training exercise
- x ... lost a job after meeting a prime minister on holiday

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News from Benenden School

We have just finished our two-week half term and, as ever, there were plenty of activities going on during the holiday. Most notable was a trip to Russia in which sixth formers enhanced their History lessons through visits to, among other sites, the Kremlin, the Gulag museum as well as sleeping on an overnight train to St Petersburg.

Closer to home, it was an honour for our Combined Cadet Force to represent the School at the village Remembrance Parade and Service. This is always a poignant occasion and we are incredibly proud to be part of it.

Our Chapel Choir has just performed Evensong at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, which came hot on the heels of some of our musicians performing at a dinner in Hong Kong during half term.

We have more exciting musical highlights to look forward to, with our Carol Concerts fast approaching followed, in January, by a very special concert in which our Symphony Orchestra will be accompanying internationally acclaimed violinist Tasmin Little at the Drapers' Hall, London. Tasmin is one of the best-known music scholars at the English-Speaking Union and the concert is a joint celebration of the ESU's centenary and Benenden School's 95th anniversary. We would be delighted to see some of our Benenden friends at the event: full details are at www.benenden.kent.sch.uk/esu

Meanwhile, we are in the final rehearsal stages for this year's School production, *The Sound of Music*, which the girls will perform four times over three days at the end of November. We are also preparing for our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Day, when we will welcome children from state and independent schools from across the South East to hear from experts in the industry.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

A Draft Vision for Benenden

"The Parish of Benenden in 2035 will be a thriving, peaceful and rural place to live, work and rest. Its village feel and historic beauty will have been preserved through sympathetic and managed growth. We will have retained our existing major employers. Farming and other small businesses will be encouraged. We will offer everyone the chance to be part of an inclusive and vibrant community.

We will support:

- Locally led development with a mix of well-designed, high quality, sustainable and affordable housing alongside other homes that enhance the existing built and natural environment.
- Infrastructure enhancements; managing traffic growth, improving connectivity and expanding community facilities and recreation.
- A balanced community; with small businesses and home working providing employment; pubs, clubs and shops providing an active social scene, and quality of life retained through existing green spaces, footpaths and dark skies."

The words come from different people at the recent Neighbourhood Plan Visioning Workshop, collected together and put as a strategic objective. At the follow-up Housing Workshop, 23 people strongly agreed with the wording, and 19 simply agreed. No one disagreed, strongly disagreed or felt neutral.

So does the vision look like a description of YOUR ambition for Benenden Parish?

In response please email your views to: paul.tolhurst@btinternet.com



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our future**

Wealden Land Grab

It was high noon 22 April 1889. Thousands of pioneers lined up on the banks of the Canadian River between the Oklahoma and Indian territories. It was the start of what became known as the Great Land Rush. If you worked a plot of up to 160 acres for five years, it was legally yours for the cost of just ten dollars.

Now it may not be on quite the same scale, but people are beginning to think we are witnessing a massive new land grab in Kent a century and a quarter later. For generations we've believed that agricultural land was protected from major building projects, and that an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was sacrosanct. Now we're starting to see new estates springing up on greenfield sites.

In Benenden only one has so far received planning permission - the Walkhurst Road development of 12 houses - outside the Limit of Built Development (LBD) and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), but another application is expected for an estate of eight houses in Iden Green on a working orchard (also outside the LBD and within the AONB). Meanwhile rumours abound after surveyors were seen in a field across from Wards the Butchers on the Benenden crossroads. Is a planning application for an even bigger estate in the pipeline?

The experience of our neighbours in Hawkhurst and Sissinghurst does not bode well. The biggest proposal for 120 houses in Hawkhurst may have been withdrawn for now, but an estate of 62 houses will be built following the loss of a planning appeal. Tiny Sissinghurst - less than half the population of Benenden - is reeling from the loss of another



Housing development in Sissinghurst

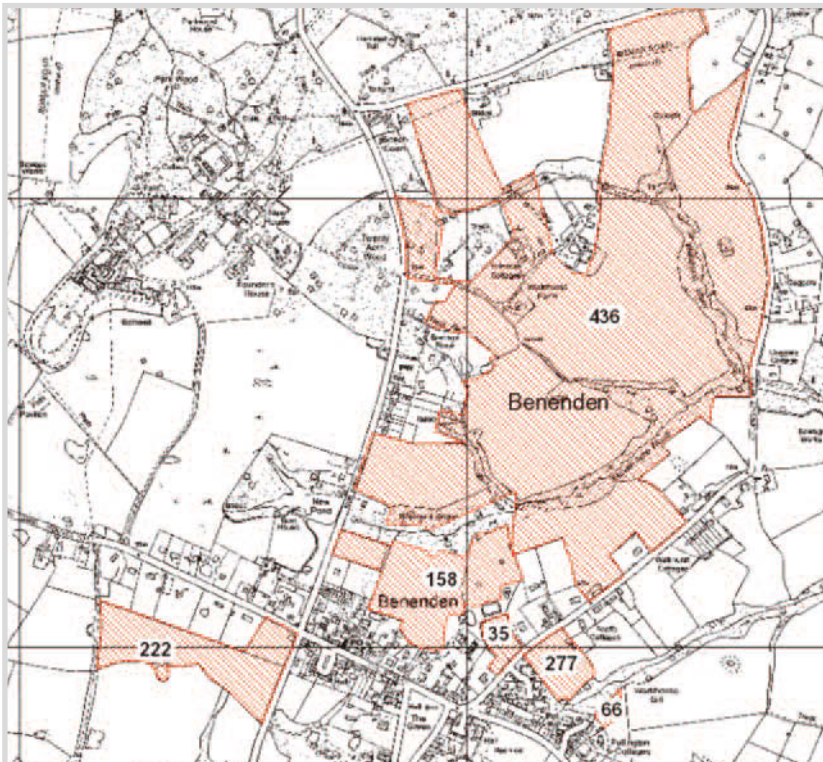
planning appeal and awaits the bulldozers to begin construction of 60 new houses off Common Road. The site is 3.5 hectares of the 'best and most versatile agricultural land', again, outside the LBD. Here the former hop garden is not in the AONB, but even the planning inspector conceded that harm to the landscape would be 'reasonably substantial'. Cranbrook is still waiting to see if it will have a 180-house development at Brick Kiln Farm foisted on it in the face of unanimous opposition from the Parish Council.

Both planning appeals were lost on the grounds that TWBC had failed to identify sufficient sites for the 13,000 new homes the Government says they must build. Arguments against the development did not "significantly and demonstrably outweigh those matters that are in its favour, particularly the delivery of housing", concluded the Sissinghurst Planning Inspector. What this means for Benenden - and pretty much any other villages in the Weald - is that all bets may be off when it comes to protecting the countryside and preventing large and totally unsympathetic developments.

Well, that's not quite true. There is one piece of fairly powerful ammunition that we have up our sleeve. Or rather WILL have. And that's a Neighbourhood Plan. The same Localism Act of 2011 that told local authorities they had to identify a supply of sites to provide five years worth of housing also established Neighbourhood Planning. This, according to the government "gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their



Housing development in Sissinghurst



Land identified for possible housing development, north Benenden

local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like”.

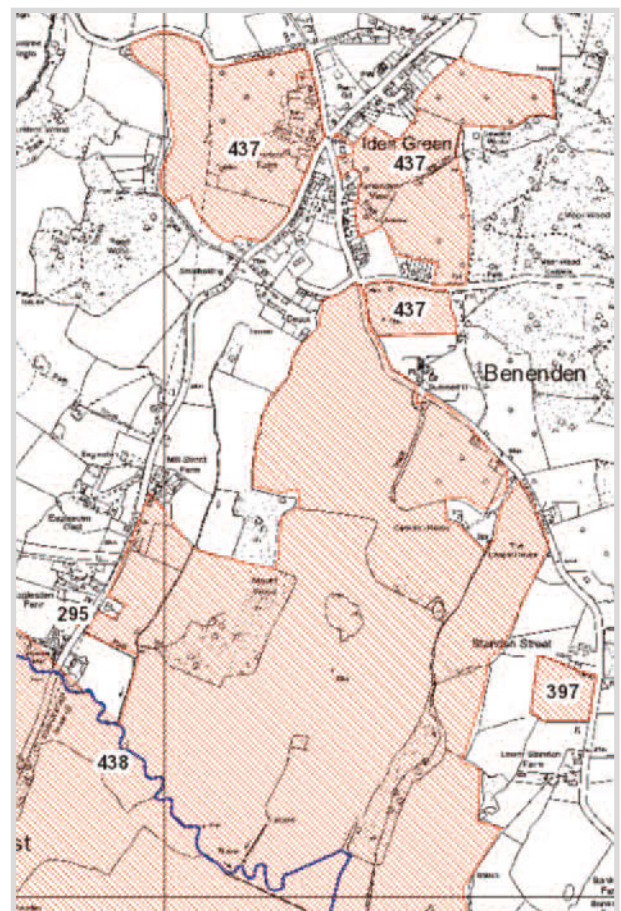
In theory this should give villages like ours the ability to determine the sort of development we want. The Parish Plan survey showed that what we wanted was ‘small groups of fewer than five houses’ (49.2% against 8% who favoured larger estates) and 60% wanted more affordable housing. But as we have seen, permission has already been given for one estate of 12 houses in Walkhurst Road, eight are proposed for Iden Green, and possibly far more on the crossroads site. And what’s to stop a major developer proposing 60 or more on a field next to you?

The Borough Council recently conducted a ‘Call for Sites’ - an exercise in which landowners were encouraged to identify possible areas for housing. As you can see from the maps this includes huge swathes of the local countryside. There’s nothing to say that planning permission WILL be granted on any or all of those sites. But equally there’s nothing to prevent a major developer proposing it ... or a planning inspector taking the same line as in

Hawkhurst and Sissinghurst.

Frankly it’s up to you to stop or control the current land grab. It’s not the Parish Council or any other group who is working to draw up the Neighbourhood Plan. It’s individual volunteers. At the first three meetings in the village hall I would estimate the average age of those attending to be rather over 60. That’s fine so far as it goes, but where are the younger people who will, by definition, have a rather longer stake in the future of the village? As the poster says: Your Village Needs You. And, ultimately if you want to have any control over future development, **YOU** need to sign up to help with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Kent Barker



Land identified for possible housing development, south Benenden and Iden Green

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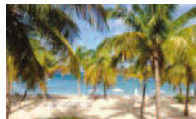
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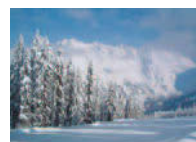


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Village Hall highlights

'Tis the season to be jolly! Season's greetings to all from Benenden Village Hall.

The big news for this month is that our new stage curtains are installed and looking splendid. If you know of any good cause which could make use of the old stage and window curtains, please get in touch.

Our Christmas tree is arriving on 1 December. It was donated by Hole Park Estate and given to us by our wonderful Primary School. I love the decorations the school children make for the tree, and always prefer them to shop-bought baubles. Especially this year as my son's will be proudly displayed too. He started Reception in September and no doubt it will have a tractor on it (but if you squint you can pretend it's a sleigh)!

The hall will be decorated over the Christmas period when the normal bustle has quietened down a little. More improvements are in the pipeline.

If you are planning to book the hall, you can check availability on our website. All confirmed bookings are shown on the calendar, and you can even direct message me via the contact page. Check out the site at benendenvillagehall.org.

Finally, anyone missing a pink 'My Little Pony' or a cuddly warthog? They're currently keeping me company on my desk, but I'm sure they'd prefer to be back with their owners.

Until next month, take care, and enjoy the festive period.

Lorraine Jones 243123
enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org

Cranbrook Choral Society Christmas Concert

Saturday 16 December, St Dunstan's Church,
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For more details contact
Ellie Cochrane, IGTC Chairman
eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com
www.idengreentennis.net

Benenden Pre-School News

This term the children at Benenden Pre-School have continued to enjoy the beautiful autumn season with lots of fun in the garden collecting up leaves, as well as learning new skills such as leaf threading. They have also been experimenting with colour mixing using food colouring and paints.

As always December will be very exciting for the children as we get closer to Christmas and they will be looking forward to some crafty Christmas activities over the next few weeks before they finish off the term with a Christmas party in the village hall.

Benenden Pre-School are also excited to announce that the 'Father Christmas in the Woods' experience will be taking place again this year on Sunday 17 December. The children and their families will have an opportunity to meet Father Christmas and enjoy a special festive walk through the beautiful woodland at The Paper Mill in Benenden.

To find out more about the event please email:
events@benendenpreschool.co.uk.



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www.helengrant.org

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





Benenden Collection goes to Battle of Britain Museum

The family of a Benenden flying ace, Wing Commander Ronald Gustave Kellett, has donated a series of his artifacts from World War Two to the Battle of Britain Bunker Museum in Hillingdon.

Wing Commander Kellett, DSO, DFC, AE, served near the bunker during the Battle of Britain in 1940 as the British officer commanding 303 Squadron, a Polish fighter squadron at RAF Northolt.

By the end of October 1940 he was credited with having destroyed five enemy aircraft, two 'probables' and one damaged which qualified him as a Battle of Britain Ace, one of nine such pilots in his squadron. He



served in both the RAuxAF and RAF from 1933 to 1953 and married in 1939 living in Benenden from 1948 until his death in 1998. There is a memorial plaque to him and 303 Squadron in St George's Church.

The donated items include medals awarded for distinguished acts of valour and courage: the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and Virtuti Militari (not shown), correspondence, flight logbooks and photographs - including one when

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he met King George VI.

The Kellett family said they wanted to keep all the items together. With five siblings and 14 grandchildren they were concerned the collection would be split up and possibly lost.

Victor Kellett, Jonathan Kellett and Judy Williams still live close to their parents' old home, in Dingleton. Of the two sisters, Louise Pemberton lives in Hastings and Jan Dryburgh is shortly moving to Worthing.

Judy Williams said: "We are pleased future generations will be able to admire father's items and that his legacy will be kept alive at the bunker."

Illustration from left to right: Daniel Stirland, Senior Curator, Battle of Britain Bunker Museum (opening in spring 2018), Louise Pemberton, Victor Kellett, Jan Dryburgh, Jonathan Kellett and Judy Williams

The village Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Our interim total has reached over £4,485 including the Remembrance Sunday church collection. We are hugely grateful to all those who have contributed so generously and to the many who gave their time to undertake house-to-house collections which helped to realise this magnificent result.

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What Child Is This - the story of a carol

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

The son of a surgeon, William Chatterton Dix was an insurance executive whose fame largely rests with his contributions to the Christmas carol repertoire. Born in 1837 in Bristol, he was bequeathed the middle name of Chatterton in honor of Thomas Chatterton, a poet whose biography was penned by his father. Although the better part of his professional life involved marine insurance, Dix always nurtured a great love for poetry and hymns.

His interest in both was accentuated at the age of 29 when a near-fatal illness and severe depression confined him to bed for months. It was during this period that Dix wrote most of the 40 hymns credited to him, including As With Gladness Men of Old and more notably his carol gem What Child Is This?

The lyrics for What Child Is This? were initially part of The Manger Throne, a six-stanza poem penned by Dix, who later took three of its stanzas and adapted them to the popular 16th-century tune of Greensleeves. In 1871 both text and tune, the latter arranged by the well-respected John Stainer, were published in Bramley & Stainer's Christmas Carols, New and Old, a widely circulated compilation.

The beautiful Greensleeves folk melody dates from Elizabethan times, perhaps even earlier, and reputedly it had less respectable lyrics sung to it in several settings. One of the earliest references to it was in 1580, and it was twice mentioned in Shakespeare's comedy play, The Merry Wives of Windsor. In the 1642 New Christmas Carols black-letter edition, a variant tune of Greensleeves was used in the carol The Old Year Now Away Is Fled. Strains of the melody were also heard in John Gay's 1728 satirical ballad opera The Beggar's Opera.

The providence of history is such that Greensleeves might be less well known if it



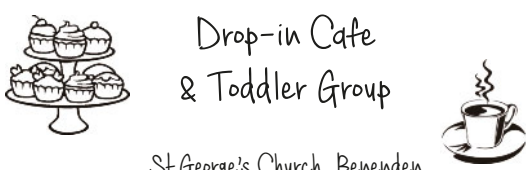
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were not for the strange illness that befell William Chatterton Dix. His effort to string religious pearls from the tune and his lengthy The Manger Throne ultimately proved successful. Also because of his reverential treatment of the Nativity theme, the beloved What Child Is This? has become a perennial Christmas favorite for churches, concert halls, and carolers at home.

© Ronald M. Clancy

www.christmasclassics.com

Pat Thoburn

Patricia (Pat) Ann Thoburn died at home at Pypne Manor on 26 October, aged 90, surrounded by her family. A large number of family and friends attended a Commemoration Service which took place on Monday 13 November at St George's, on a marvellously sunlit day, prior to committal in the churchyard.

Pat's parents had acquired Pypne Manor, Benenden, a 15th century Wealden Hall House, in the 1930s. She was an artist and keen gardener and frequently hosted visits by gardening societies and enthusiasts. We hope to include an appreciation by Christopher Neve, a lifelong friend, in the January edition.

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New school: final boxes to be ticked

The new Benenden primary school is inching ever closer to being a building rather than just a twinkle in the eye of the village, but it may be that we won't see the men in hard hats until the new year.

Contrary to school gate rumour, planning permission for the project doesn't run out until 21 January - five years from the original decision date - meaning we still have a little bit of breathing space; in the meantime there are a few obstacles remaining, albeit hopefully small ones.

Of the 16 pre-commencement conditions needing to be discharged before work can begin, 12 have been dealt with, leaving a tantalisingly small number to be ticked off. According to the Kent County Council website, those remaining are as follows:

Application TW/0275/2017 Details of sustainable energy measures (condition 8), cycle parking facilities (condition 10) and lighting scheme for the carpark and general areas (condition 11).

Application TW/0271/2017 Application to vary condition 15 of planning permission TW/12/1442 to ensure that the off site traffic calming measures are approved and implemented prior to the first occupation of the new primary school.

These appear to have target dates for decision by the end of November, meaning by the time you read this, the arrival of the shovels may have moved appreciably closer.

Full details can be viewed at www.kent.gov.uk.
Peter Thomas

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

With no meeting in December, our next meeting will be on Tuesday 16 January 2018, Memorial Hall, 2-4pm. It is an Open Meeting so anyone is welcome to attend.

Elisabeth Spicer 01797 252456

Youth Liaison

Benenden Parish Council is looking for a Youth Liaison volunteer to work with the council. The role would be to help involve young people in village activities, and to find out what provision they would like to see. The first task would be to assess how popular the weekly Streetcruizer bus is proving and to ask if and how the service could be improved. Please contact the Clerk or Parish Council chairman if you would be able to help.

Letter to the Editor

Please write to the Editor,
c/o Community Office, Benenden Village Hall,
Benenden TN17 4DY or email
benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com

AN HOUR WELL SPENT!

On Saturday 18 November, I joined the litter picking team - as I usually do. This time there were a few volunteers in Iden Green so I selected to walk from the Iden Green crossroads up the hill towards Sandhurst. Whilst driving past I had noticed some litter so thought this could do with clearing. Well - the result was amazing and quite shocking. Between Iden Green crossroads and just beyond the village sign there was so much rubbish/litter that I struggled to carry it back. It was mostly empty cans but also sweetie packets, biscuit packets, poly bags and the odd bottle (including one empty vodka bottle!!). Who does this? Surely no one from our community, but then does the litter dropper feel it is ok to do this in an area where they don't themselves live?

Jane Davies, Iden Green

King of Grapes still reigns in a new Germany

The last we saw of our wine man Tracy Claridge, he was leaving Champagne and pointing his taste buds in the direction of Wehlen on the Mosel to start a journey into the heartland of Riesling. Here is how the trip went.

It was in May that I set off from Reims with my old Aussie winemaking friend Bill Shrapnel and his wife Jane to drive the 300km from Reims, via Luxembourg, to Wehlen, north of Bernkastel on the middle Mosel. The roads and weather were kind to us, and we arrived at the Gasthaus S A Prum mid-afternoon.

The gasthaus and winery are right on the river, opposite the famous Wehlener Sonnenuhr (sundial) vineyard - the sundial, now a famous landmark in the town, was built in 1841 by the vineyard's owner Jodocus Prum. The slopes are steep, the work strenuous, but the Prum family have been cultivating vineyards since 1156; since 1971 the estate has been managed by Raimund Prum, who has made it one of the most prestigious estates in Germany.

Riesling is known as the 'King of Grapes' and, according to Jancis Robinson MW, "is one of the world's greatest white wine grapes, capable of making particularly geographically expressive and long-lived wines at all sweetness levels". At Prum, two wines stood out for me: the Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett 2016 and the Graacher Himmelreich (Kingdom of Heaven) Riesling Eiswein 2007.

Mosel Kabinetts are usually low in alcohol, as low as 7.5% and perfect on a hot summer's day as an aperitif: off dry, honey and green apples all rolled into one, crisp, with refreshing acidity. I prefer them young, but they will last quite happily for five years. It's all

about your personal taste.

When young, it is all about the primary fruit. As it ages, the wine oxidises slowly, and some Rieslings can display a hint of kerosene on the nose and the palate, which is either a sign of quality or a heinous fault, depending on which winemaker you listen to!

Eiswein is only produced when the grapes freeze, but sometimes this does not happen until the grapes are no longer healthy enough. The grower takes the risk, the sugar levels rise, the grape shrivels, the acidity rises, and when the frost comes, the grapes are picked frozen and pressed in that condition; the water in the must has turned to ice, and the must is super sweet with high acidity.

Only 200 half bottles were made of a wine that is rich and honeyed yet still fresh and long on the palate, and will last for 20 years quite happily.

From Wehlen we headed south to Schloss Marienlay in Morscheid on the Ruwer (more a stream than a river but capable of producing great wines when the climate is right), the HQ of Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, www.kesselstatt.com.

We tasted about 20 wines and I knew it was a mistake for me to be driving in my own car, as I could not resist buying a range of their most sublime Rieslings. The wines ranged from Trocken (dry) to Auslese (late picked selection) and they are light in alcohol, but with seemingly higher, racy acidity which settles down with time.

We then headed west to Saarburg, on the Saar. I had asked Raimund Prum where he felt the finest example of German Riesling existed, and Weingut Forstmeister Gertz Zilliken (www.zilliken-vdp.de) was his answer. From the road, Heckingstrasse 20 looks nothing more than a modest house, just over the



bridge in Saaburg, but underneath you will find a simple cellar, where virtually everything is done in oak barrels.

From uncomplicated, fresh estate bottlings to sweet, late harvest wines that will only begin to mature and develop ten years after harvest, Zilliken Rieslings are, quite simply, among the finest Rieslings the world has to offer. The Zilliken family

concentrate on timelessness over trends, from their traditional labels to their wines, both dry Rieslings and their more famous 'noble' offerings. Again, I had to put some in the boot, to be enjoyed over the summer. They are delicate, elegant, mouth-wateringly refreshing and highly dangerous!

Next we headed for the Rhine, crossing the river at Bingen to meet up with German wine specialist Peter Hoffman, now retired from the trade, at Rudesheim. We stayed at the Zwei Mohren hotel, which I can thoroughly recommend, right on the riverbank and after unpacking, we headed straight out for a trip down memory lane.

Unbeknown to us, both Peter and I had worked in the Rheingau about the same time in 1977 and 1978. This was my first time back, which is crazy as I loved my time there and made many friends. No time to lose, we headed for Kloster Eberbach, possibly the finest Cistercian monastery still standing.

In 1977-78, the monastery was part of the State Wine Domain of Hessen, and I was fortunate to work there sometimes, attend many tastings, and act as a tourist guide. It is a magical place and it had been 40 years since I was last there. I confess there were tears of joy streaming down my face and into my glass of fine Rheingau Riesling. Thankfully I

did not have to adhere to the strict rules of the Cistercians!

Leave we must, however, and headed for Weingut Josef Spreitzer, in family hands since 1643. They have 21 ha of Riesling, with a tiny amount of Spatburgunder (Pinot Noir), in the Oestrich einzellage (single vineyard sites) of Lenchen, Jesuitengarten, Wisselbrunnen and Doosberg.

The main difference between the Rhine and Mosel Rieslings is the alcohol content. Here we are looking at 11.5-12.5%, the wines are bigger, less elegant and delicate, richer, nonetheless delicious, and for me the trocken (dry) wines from this region work better with food. The star of the tasting was the 'Alte Reben' (old vines) Oestrich Winkeler Jesuitengarten

halbtrocken 2016 (medium dry) - rich minerality, honeyed, big and fruity, more for the back of the car.

The purpose of the trip for Bill and Jane was to try and find the best examples of Riesling and take back to Australia all the knowledge gleaned along the way. The German wine scene has evolved in recent years, with producers presenting a more dynamic, modern image to the world, from contemporary labelling and drier wine styles (especially Riesling), to greater communication of Germany's own gastronomic credentials and the related role of wines, as well as how this translates to other global cuisines. Along with a younger generation of outward-looking winemakers, global warming has played its part too, allowing both the drier Rieslings and Germany's rising star Pinot Noir to express themselves more generously across diverse vintages.





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Bird Notes

For 25 years I have been surveying our local bird populations on behalf of The British Trust for Ornithology, and my information is included in the table which shows the results for the last 20 years as compiled by the BTO from data collected in the Southeast of England.

Using this table I have chosen a list of birds that are frequently encountered in the parish of Benenden and compared their population trends over the last 20 years. It makes some very interesting reading. The top gainers are Buzzard +1092%, Greylag Goose +126% and Blackcap +107% and the top three losers are Turtle Dove -95%, Willow Warbler -78% and Starling -65%.

The recovery of the Buzzard population is one of the most dramatic avifauna events in recent years. The Buzzard historically suffered from persecution and more recently their recovery was adversely affected by organochlorine pesticides and by myxomatosis disease in rabbits, their main prey item. No-one expected this dramatic recovery and there must be other factors, such as better habitat with the growth of woodlands. The increase in Greylag Goose numbers is all down to a growing feral population on the local water bodies; the truly wild population is not doing so well hence the amber conservation concern grading. The Blackcap is normally regarded as a summer visitor but with climate warming it is increasingly over-wintering here and will visit bird tables. It is not a trans-Saharan migrant and not affected by conditions south of the Sahara which other members of the warbler family have to tolerate.

Top of the losers list is the Turtle Dove, which is a trans-Saharan migrant and probably does suffer adverse conditions in its wintering quarters, but it also suffers from hunting pressures along most of its migration journey, not least in the Mediterranean, Malta being a particular key stop-off point. We are lucky here in Benenden as we still have a small population on the boundary with neighbouring Sandhurst. I did hear more birds singing, or perhaps I should say "purring", in Bedgebury this year than I have for some time so I am always hopeful the trend might reverse.

The loss of the Willow Warbler in the Southeast is connected to climate change and as the population in this region declines, the northern population is increasing. In the UK overall the population shows a decline of 11% with Scotland up 19%, Yorkshire up 1% and East Midlands down 52%. Northern Ireland is up an astonishing 72%. This is a warbler that was heard in every little copse/woodland until about five years ago when the steep decline began. It was once common in Sissinghurst Castle Woods but has been absent now for a

POPULATION TRENDS FOR SOUTH EAST ENGLAND 1995-2015

SPECIES	% CHANGE
Mute Swan	-1
Greylag Goose	126
Canada Goose	32
Mallard	33
Stock Dove	35
Grey Heron	-18
Sparrowhawk	-20
Buzzard	1092
Moorhen	-28
Coot	29
Lapwing	-57
Woodpigeon	23
Collared Dove	-6
Turtle Dove	-95
Cuckoo	-70
Swift	-55
Green Woodpecker	25
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	84
Kestrel	-32
Magpie	8
Jay	-9
Jackdaw	72
Rook	4
Carrion Crow	21
Goldcrest	32
Blue Tit	-5
Great Tit	11
Coal Tit	-9
Marsh Tit	-40
Skylark	-29
Swallow	15
House Martin	-60
Long-tailed Tit	-23
Chiffchaff	57
Willow Warbler	-78
Blackcap	107
Garden Warbler	-40
Lesser Whitethroat	-29
Whitethroat	50
Sedge Warbler	-12
Reed Warbler	-21
Nuthatch	48
Treecreeper	-5
Wren	12
Starling	-65
Blackbird	1
Song Thrush	-6
Mistle Thrush	-56
Robin	14
Duncock	5
House Sparrow	-31
Pied Wagtail	-17
Meadow Pipit	-45
Chaffinch	-18
Bullfinch	-28
Greenfinch	-52
Linnet	-32
Goldfinch	66
Yellowhammer	-41
Reed Bunting	-32

Gains of 5% or more = 21

Losses of 5% or more = 30

Red = birds of conservation concern

Amber = birds of conservation concern

few years. Hemsted Forest has always been a good spot but the numbers have declined in line with the rest of Southeast. However this year I counted a few more singing birds than for a while so, like the Turtle Dove, maybe the decline might be reversing, or least plateauing out.

The decline in the Starling is pretty similar across the whole of the UK and is probably linked to its main food source the crane fly larva, which in itself is dependent on unimproved grassland. The wonderful display known as 'murmurations' of winter flocks of Starlings is one of nature's most extraordinary sights. However to a garden bird watcher it is sometimes not so popular as a small flock can demolish an expensive fat ball in minutes!

Readers will have noted that there are some omissions in the table, the most noteworthy being the Nightingale; the reason being that it is not recorded in sufficient numbers to be included. In the UK as a whole it is down 48% on the same time basis. The Nightingale has had an interesting population change locally over the years. Taking TQ83, a 10 x 10km square which includes Benenden, there were only 15 territories recorded in a survey in 1980 but in 1994 this increased to 68 and stayed relatively constant in 1999 with 62 but in 2012 the number dropped dramatically to 36. About half these territories were in our parish. From my local knowledge I would guess we are now back to 1980 levels, as I certainly no longer receive calls from parishioners as I once did excitedly telling me their Nightingales are back. I know one very good scrubby habitat that used to be a good territory was cleared recently, much to the dismay of neighbours. With the Neighbourhood Plan in full swing trying to identify sites for another 200 or so houses the demise will only hasten, not only for the Nightingale but many other species as well. Houses not only take up valuable habitat but humans and dogs will increase pressure on local areas such as Hemsted Forest, where we have lost the Tree Pipit and Woodcock as breeding birds, and this year, sadly, there were no Nightjars recorded. It's also a fact that more domestic cats equals fewer wild birds.

Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com

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Above: Benenden School's CCF cadets join the Remembrance Day parade; Helen Grant conducts Question Time with the Primary School for UK Parliament week; Benenden Bonfire and Fireworks, photographs: Stuart Kirk Photography
Front cover: Time spent in 'our' Cathedral joining with children from local Primary Schools. Photograph: David Commander