

Benenden Magazine

March 2017





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Editorial



We've had quite enough of winter. Time for spring to spring and to lift the spirits with new green shoots. The snowdrops bravely made their appearance accompanied by freezing weather and even snow. The daffodils, perhaps wisely, slammed on the brakes and have waited for a little more warmth in the sun. The birds with characteristic bravado pressed ahead with pairing up and are starting to fly by with nesting material. There is no more rewarding time to have a bird table.

So before I start waxing lyrical about baby bunnies, can I draw your attention to the very practical appeal for litter-collecting volunteers in Peter Davies's letter (p3)? I go through frequent bouts of outrage as to why some people - drivers, bikers or walkers? - seem to have an irresistible urge to throw away cans, food packaging and sweet wrappers, even most recently a large chunk of an engine, on the verges as they pass through our particularly beautiful and unspoilt part of the country.

And while on the subject of the countryside that surrounds us, we will be doing a discussion piece on access to the countryside and would like to hear the views of farmers, walkers and residents so please contact us with your comments, opinions and photos at the email address below.

Minnie Garnier, Co-Editor

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

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Village Calendar

March

Thursday 2	Planning Committee Meeting, Benenden Village Hall, 8.30am	
Friday 3	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 4	Bingo with Ploughman's mid way, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 5	Michael Bacon, Organ Recital, St George's Church, 6pm	p.21
Tuesday 7	Lent Course, 7 Fuggles Court, Benenden, 8pm	p.7
Wednesday 8	Lent Course, The Mission Church, Sandhurst, 7.30pm	p.7
Thursday 9	Benenden Women's Club, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	p.15
Saturday 11	Village Spring Clean, Benenden's Shop and Iden Green Pavilion, 9am	p.3
Saturday 11	Skittles, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 18	Games Night with Fish and Chip supper, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 18	Tongswood Chamber Choir, Passiontide Music, St George's Church, 6.30pm	p.21
Sunday 19	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.11
Monday 20	Friends of St George's, AGM with John Bailey talk, St George's Church, 7pm	p.9
Monday 20	Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 21	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.15
Tuesday 21	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.23
Saturday 25	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 28	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	

April

Tuesday 4	Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm	p.7
Wednesday 19	Benenden Engineering Society meeting, The Bull, 8pm	
Sunday 30	Benenden Engineering Society visit to Crossness Pumping Station	

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Mondays at Benenden Village Hall, 7-9pm

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 11 March, Domestic Waste, Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-11am

Saturday 25 March, Garden Waste/Compostable Waste, Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-11am

Parish Council



Well it's spring again! We can walk around the Parish see that with the buds and bulbs and the new born lambs and natural countryside, it's a wonderful place! Except ... we also see the detritus of others, the discarded rubbish, fly tipped stuff and broken glass along our verges and lanes. What sort of person is it, that could have a can of something, and then just chuck it out of the car window?

The Borough Council does a good job, collecting the rubbish, and teams will clear up what the fly tippers have left for us. The Council will also clear up dead animals such as foxes and badgers within 24 hours if they are notified of such a need. However these services will be under increasing scrutiny. A new rubbish collection contract will be developed over the next year or so which will probably last for seven years.

The Parish Council will fight for the preservation and improvement of the Civic Amenity Vehicle service (CAV), otherwise known as the Saturday Dustcart. We are also pressing for the new regime to include a doorstep glass/bottle collection so we could also do away with the unsightly horrors in the Village Hall car park.

Of course, we also do our bit locally. We have Terry Baldwin, our Parish Lengthsman, to do odd jobs, repairs and maintain facilities in our Parish. But we also need to do some work as individuals. The Parish Council is organising a village Spring clean up day on Saturday 11 March. We will provide safety hi-vis clothing and equipment such as litter pickers for volunteers. We will meet at 9am on that day at the community shop, and in Iden Green in the Pavilion car park, for a blitz on kerbside litter. All volunteers will be given a voucher for a hot drink and a cake at the community shop café, for which the Parish Council will pay.

Another issue recently raised by local residents has been that of 'cold calling'. This can be by phone or in person at the door. In both cases beware! For doorstep callers, we can provide 'no cold calling' stickers and the Council is looking into the possibility of having central Benenden and also Iden Green designated as 'no cold calling' areas. If you experience problems in this regard please contact me.

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 20 March 2016, Memorial Hall,
7.30pm

Planning Committee Meeting
Thursday 2 March 2016, Benenden Village Hall,
8.30am

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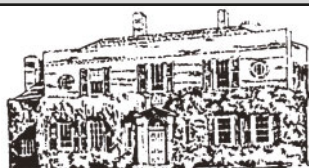
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Just a Thought



Trunks and Chests

I have always been fascinated by trunks and chests. To me these sturdy containers speak of travel and change and new circumstances or they tell of history and different lives and different times. We have a large cedar chest, now filled with sleeping bags and other bulky paraphernalia, in our lobby. It still has that lovely smell and conjures up pictures of planks of cedar being carried down Mulanje Mountain on the heads of Malawian foresters and of our times climbing that same mountain.

Under the stairs is another chest this time made of solid oak and inherited from my in-laws. This one is full of paperwork that we promised ourselves would be sorted some time but it never seems to rise very far up the priority list. Much the same can be said for the trunk in the loft which contains my father's bits and pieces. I tried sorting through this once. I found some letters and photos that I had sent to him when I was young, which brought a lump to my throat, but mostly it was full of photographs of people I did not know and letters from people I had never heard of. Then I came across some love letters and the broken heart of rejection. I had no wish to intrude further and firmly closed the lid.

One more thing from my father - he had a small chest that, being a sailor, he treasured and which he always claimed was originally owned by a seaman in Nelson's navy. Now what stories that chest could tell - it sets the imagination swirling. There is another such up in the church. This one is wooden and has 1693 carved on the lid - William and Mary reigned in England and Louis XIV in France then. I wonder what this receptacle has contained in its time and what stories it could tell. The clasps do not seem very strong so perhaps the contents have been somewhat mundane; all the same I would love to know. What changes in fortune and historical events has this chest seen in the last 400+ years, both local and further afield.

I think that there may be a trunk in several peoples' lofts that hold very mixed memories - the school trunk. How many little boys (it usually seems to have been little boys) have stood with trembling lip as the school trunk full of sets of underwear, shirts, socks, trousers and sports kit (carefully named), has been loaded on to car, train or even boat with weeks or maybe months of separation ahead.

One thing I do know is that I set out for Africa with one tiny trunk and when I finally returned I had a husband, three children, an excess of chests and too many memories to fit in any container at all.

Sue Fisher

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.

Wednesday 1 March

8pm Ash Wednesday
Service with Communion

Sunday 5 March

8am Communion

10am All-age Eucharist
and Sunday School

5pm Choral Evensong
6pm Organ Recital

Sunday 12 March

8am 1662 Communion

10am Morning Worship

5pm Evening Prayer
at Mission Church

Sunday 19 March

8am Communion

10am Sung Eucharist

4pm Messy Church

Sunday 26 March

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

Funeral 26 February Kenneth Potter Interment

Rector's Letter



Easter is around the corner!

And so the year rolls on; the first two months are behind us, and now we move into the season of Lent once more (and the colour purple - which will mean something to some of the children in Primary School who've just visited St George's and done colours and seasons!) Last month I wrote about my need to sometimes remove myself from all the day-to-day stuff of parish ministry, and "go up the mountain and pray" - to stay in touch with God. Lent is a very good time for us all to do this, metaphorically speaking; giving ourselves time to sit, think, reflect and look forward ... looking forward to the joy of Easter Sunday. However, Easter Sunday can only be truly celebrated in depth and fullness if we are prepared for it by reflecting upon the darker parts of our lives and what Jesus went through for us and because of us. (Sorry if this is sounding too overtly Christian for some - but that's what priests do!)

Wednesday 1st March is the start of Lent; we begin the season with an 'ashing' service at St George's at 8pm - using last year's Palm Crosses, burning them to create ashes, which are used in this reflective service. For our Lent Course, over a period of five weeks, we are exploring 'Receiving Christ'; what it is to receive Christ in our lives: firstly as Children of God; then in the Stranger; in Holy Communion; through Prayer, and finally, in Ourselves. The course will be held on a Tuesday and a Wednesday evening; starting Tuesday 7 March at 7 Fuggles Court, Benenden at 8pm (telephone 241944), then Wednesday 8 March at The Mission Church, Back Road, Sandhurst at 7.30pm. Please come on the evening and to the place that suits you best. I would encourage you to spend just a few hours of your life exploring how we can receive Christ; how it makes a difference; then be ready to celebrate - really to live - Easter this year.

Your parish church is not a museum to the past; it is a living space, filled with people who get things wrong in life, but want to live life more fully. Come and join us. We have recently put up a display at the back of church which shows some of the changes that are taking place; come and see it. Also, put this date in your diaries, particularly if you on the church Electoral Roll: the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) is on Tuesday 4 April at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall. If you are interested in what is going on in your church, this is the annual meeting to find out, to join in, to ask questions, to bring new ideas ... to hear all that your church has done, and is doing, and to be an active part of it. Come and join us; start this Lent.

Revd David Commander, Rector

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News and Events

Parable Inn Musical

Sunday 19 March, St Dunstan's Church,
Cranbrook, 2.30pm

Imagine you're in your local pub, sitting in your usual spot with a drink in your hand. Suddenly the door bursts open and you see a stranger standing there, carrying someone who is swathed in bandages and clearly at death's door. What do you think? How do you react?

This is the scenario that I was musing over some 40 years ago, inspired by Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, and specifically the scene where the Samaritan brings the injured man to an inn. Picturing it from the onlookers' viewpoint, I soon started to wonder who these people were anyway, sitting around in an inn with nothing better to do.

The answer came quite quickly and the kernel of Parable Inn was there: a play with songs which brings together ten of the best-known parables, reimagining them in a country pub in present-day England (actually somewhere on Romney Marsh, so not all that far from Benenden). Weaving the plot posed some problems, and the project was abandoned until, years later, I revisited the idea and finally realised the identity of that injured person who is rescued by my version of the Samaritan ...

The resulting two-act play, with music by Gerald March, was first performed in my church in Folkestone in 2001. Our then vicar, John Tapper, who was one of the original cast, is now putting on a 'concert version' with live music at St Dunstan's Church, Cranbrook with proceeds going to African International Christian Ministry. I will be there and it would be lovely to see any old Benenden friends who are able to make it!

Joanne Hill



PARABLE INN

A Musical
for all the Family

Sunday 19 March
2.30pm

St Dunstan's Church
Cranbrook

THE SHOW RETELLS TEN OF JESUS' MOST FAMOUS PARABLES IN A FORM OF A CONTINUOUS STORY, WITH SONGS AND DRAMA.

Author: Joanne Hill

Music: Gerald March Producer: John Tapper

ADMISSION Adults £5, children £1

Tea and cakes will be served during the Interval
All profits to charity, split between our mission in Uganda (AICM) and St Dunstan's Church

TICKETS available on the door or

Uber Sports Shop, 45 High Street, Cranbrook or
Clare, Administrator (Mon, Wed & Fri 9.30-12.30pm) 715861

The 21st Annual General Meeting of The Friends of St George's Church

Monday 20 March, St George's Church, 7pm

Following the business part of the evening refreshments will be served and at 8pm John Bailey, architect to St George's, will give an illustrated presentation entitled "A 19th Century vision for St George's Church, Benenden". Everyone is welcome.

Benenden Pre-School News

Every year, in the week before the spring half term, Benenden Pre-School picks a "theme". The chosen subject for 2017 was space - a fascinating topic that unleashed a meteor shower of galactic activities, from creating fruit rockets and moon-shaped biscuits (and eating them, naturally) to daubing colourful Milky Ways on shiny tin foil. Princess Leia popped by, as did an astronaut in his fiery space missile - costumes Brian Cox would certainly approve of. And even better, all this cosmic celebration was in order to raise funds for an excellent local charity, HypoHounds (www.hypohounds.co.uk). www.benendenpreschool.co.uk

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The first hour is the craft stuff.
Then we have a short time of informal worship.
Finally we'll sit down and eat a meal together.

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

Rev'd David Commander, Rector
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Mother's Day Flowers

Hannah from Hannah's Garden
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are holding a workshop for
6-13 year olds to come and make
a posy for Mother's Day

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Review of Benenden Players' Seriously Twisted Panto

'Welcome to the House of Fun' they sang, and there was more than a bit of Madness about the Benenden Players' latest production Pinocchio with a Twist. The House in question was Trumpo Towers, and most 'fun' was seeing Theresa May, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn shut away there behind bars, as the always outrageous Mark Reid (Donnie Trumpo of the 'Publican Party - geddit!) sat on his throne while Hilary Clinton preened his hair. Yes, the Panto had gone all political - to the evident delight of the audience.

But don't worry, for traditionalists we still had a fairy godmother (Debbie Katis always a 'star' turn) the Dame (ever-green Ian Malaugh) and an arguably typecast Grant Matthews as the soft-hearted Ogre, Shreck. What, you may be wondering, has all this to do with Pinocchio? The answer is not much. But who cares. As ever the titular story was little more than a skeleton for the wonderfully creative Bev Beveridge to dress with a fresh suit of colourful clothes.

All our favourite village thespians were there: Peter Ellis as misogynistic toy-maker Gepetta, Michael Patrick as a camp Jeeves, and Angela Patrick as Donny's glamorous mum. As

usual, though, it was the younger actors who stole the show. Too many to name them all, but Sasha Angel, Tabby Middleton, Rosa Westcott and Billy Powell (Risotto, Pepperoni, Scampi and Pesto) as well as Kitty Hind, Orla Morris and Seth Williams (Theresa, Boris and Jeremy) led from the front. I loved the four rabbits forever chomping away and, particularly, the pair of beetles Deathwatch and Woodworm (Lucy Freeman and Holly Adamson) always seeking wood to feast on. If anything writer and director Bev could have made more of this delightfully comedic leitmotif.

No Panto would work so well without the tireless production staff, especially the band and, particularly good this year, the gloriously flatulent sound crew (you'll have to work out for yourself what happened to Pinocchio whenever he told a lie - it certainly wasn't an elongating nose - indeed you wouldn't want an elongated nose in the circumstances!) Hats off also to Peter, Grant and Mark for maintaining their various accents - albeit with just a little slippage while ad-libbing and singing! Finally a big hurrah for the most un-wooden Katelyn Malaugh as Best (real) Boy, Pinocchio. I can't wait to see what next year brings.

Kent Barker



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Benenden CE Primary School welcome special visitors before Christmas

The last week before Christmas is always an exhausting affair in a primary school. Ours was made even more so when on Monday 12 December, we received a call to say that Ofsted would be visiting for the next two days. It was not a surprise - indeed we had been expecting the call - nevertheless staff were thrown into chaos, having felt no sane inspector would wish to visit so close to Christmas! Once we reached the final week, the consensus was that we would now have to wait until the New Year for a visit.

The last week of term is always tough, but this one was exacerbated by the fact that Benenden Girls School were doing a kitchen deep clean and providing all of our pupils with packed lunches, rather than their normal delicious hot meals, which are eaten in the Gibbon building. This would mean all of the children - with the exception of early years - would be in the main school, and on the very small playground, for the whole lunch hour. How should we manage the sardine-like conditions outside? Should we postpone the Nativity play, long planned for the following day? And how quickly could staff plan two days of exciting and stimulating lessons to wow the inspectors when both they and the children were on their knees?

When the lead inspector Mrs Margaret Coussins arrived, it was immediately apparent that she understood the Benenden predicament. The report is littered with references to the "very difficult surroundings" and the "restricted accommodation" but also how "teachers do extremely well to provide motivating, inspiring classrooms in very cramped conditions".

Both inspectors saw very good teaching, children engaged with their learning, and strong relationships throughout the school community. They listened to pupils, parents, governors and

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staff and put together a report which I believe accurately reflects our school. The report lists some heart-warming quotes from parents: "My son has blossomed into a confident boy at this school." Another wrote that her children have been, "nurtured, loved and taught to be the confident, achieving, happy children they are today."

It also recognises the hard work and dedication of the staff and governors, the latter a group of very busy, but highly committed, volunteers all committed to providing an excellent education for our pupils.

Above all, the report recognises the ability of our children to make Benenden the happy and thriving school it is, through their love of learning, their positive attitudes and the embodiment of our Christian values of trust, forgiveness and friendship.

The report judges the school to be good in all areas - and it's absolutely right to say so. We are now planning how the next Ofsted visit can judge us as outstanding, so watch this space!

If you wish to read the whole report, it can be found on our school website on www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk or on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports
Gill Knox, Headteacher

MEET YOUR MP Helen Grant

Helen Grant, MP for Maidstone and the Weald, holds regular surgeries around the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you, please e-mail Helen at helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk or telephone **020 7219 7107**.

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



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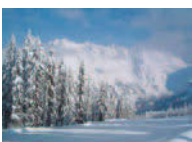
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We are based at Grove Mills, Hawkhurst and we currently offer two days a week, Tuesday and Thursdays from 9.30-3.30pm for up to 12 people each day. In April, we hope to offer another day which will be on Wednesday. The activities offered include music therapy, art, yoga in a chair, word games, ball games and generally having fun! Our experienced specialist team of staff and volunteers offer a person-centred approach. The cost for attending is £45 inclusive of lunch, all refreshments and activities. Financial assistance may be available from KBCC in some instances. Help with transport may be also be available at an extra cost.

We are in urgent need for Volunteers to help with transport. If you have an hour or two to spare to help collect someone from your area to bring them to us, we would love to hear from you. All mileage costs will be reimbursed.

Please contact Tina Stirling 07885 541390 or email tinastirling@talktalk.net if you would like to know more about our Day Service or would like to volunteer.

Village Lunch

Tuesday 21 March, Benenden Village Hall,
12.30pm

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



Benenden Women's Club

Thursday 9 February saw us spending a relaxing evening with wine and nibbles in the Iden Green Pavilion. We discussed the itinerary for the coming year with many excellent proposals submitted such as a visit to a vineyard, photography, flower arranging, 60s music. Sam Caddick has sadly bowed out as President, but Judy Williams kindly offered her services and Ruth and Janet will continue in their roles.

We shall next meet on Thursday 9 March in the Iden Green Pavilion at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

Ruth Barwick

Hospice in the Weald - Mama Mia singalong at The Kino

Thursday 2 March, The Kino, Hawkhurst,
8.15pm

A Mama Mia singalong organised by the Rotary Club of Cranbrook and Hawkhurst raising funds for Hospice in the Weald. Tickets £15 each to include a glass of fizz and canapes. Prize for the best 70s or Abba lookalike/fancy dress. Raffle with superb prizes. To book tickets contact: 752222 or 754378 hcjschalburg@gmail.com



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News from Benenden School

At the time of writing, the School is taking its Half Term break. The first few weeks of the Spring Term have been, as always, fulfilling and extremely busy, with a myriad of events, a series of visiting speakers and plenty of fun activities for the girls.

Particularly memorable events include the Chapel Choir singing Evensong at Westminster Abbey, the Lower School production of Princess and the exchange visit from our US partner, Miss Porter's School - not to mention the snow, of course, which has no doubt been the girls' highlight!

The Upper Fifth, Six One and Six Two have all been hard at work with their Mock exams and I have been delighted to see so very many well-deserved university offers being achieved by our Six Two students.

When we return after Half Term we will be taking part in an initiative called Dads4Daughters, in which fathers of girls around the country will be asked to engage with a national drive, led by St Paul's Girls' School in London, to work towards ensuring greater gender equality in the workplace going forward. We will be asking fathers of Benenden girls to consider whether their workplace culture is one in which they would want their daughters to work, and a place where she will be given the same opportunity to rise through the organisation as a man.

We will also be holding a Phone Fast, in which girls will go three days without their mobiles and social media, as part of an exercise to help pupils reduce their reliance on digital technology. This initiative has caught the imagination of the media and in recent days we have been featured in the Sunday Times and on BBC Radio 5 Live, and Meridian TV want to visit the School to film a piece about the Phone Fast.

This all helps to build a sense of excitement around the Phone Fast itself, which will hopefully help the girls adjust to the digital detox when it comes. I will be joining the girls in going three days without my mobile and will report back as to how it goes!

Samantha Price, Headmistress

Local enthusiasm for dance

The Charlotte Hudson School of Dance offers classes in Benenden Village Hall as well as in Rolvenden and Tenterden.

Formerly Langley School of Dance, which had around 15 ballet pupils at Benenden, the school has now expanded to over 100 pupils of all ages.

Classes are held in ballet, tap, modern, street jazz and acro, with local performances, exam opportunities and annual shows. More classes are being introduced to Benenden in April as currently many classes are full. School holiday workshops are also held throughout the year.

Charlotte, 24 is the proprietor of the school and took over in January 2016. Originally from Nottingham, Charlotte trained in Kent at The Centre Performing Arts College in Rochester. Whilst there she gained qualifications with the ISTD, IDTA and Acrobatic Arts. She is now the regional representative for the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) in Kent.

In the past year the school has had children gain brilliant marks in ballet exams, perform at the Benenden Village Fete and then in December 2016 held its first show. 55 children participated and all danced confidently on stage, and they are now looking forward to performing at the Sinden Theatre in early 2018!





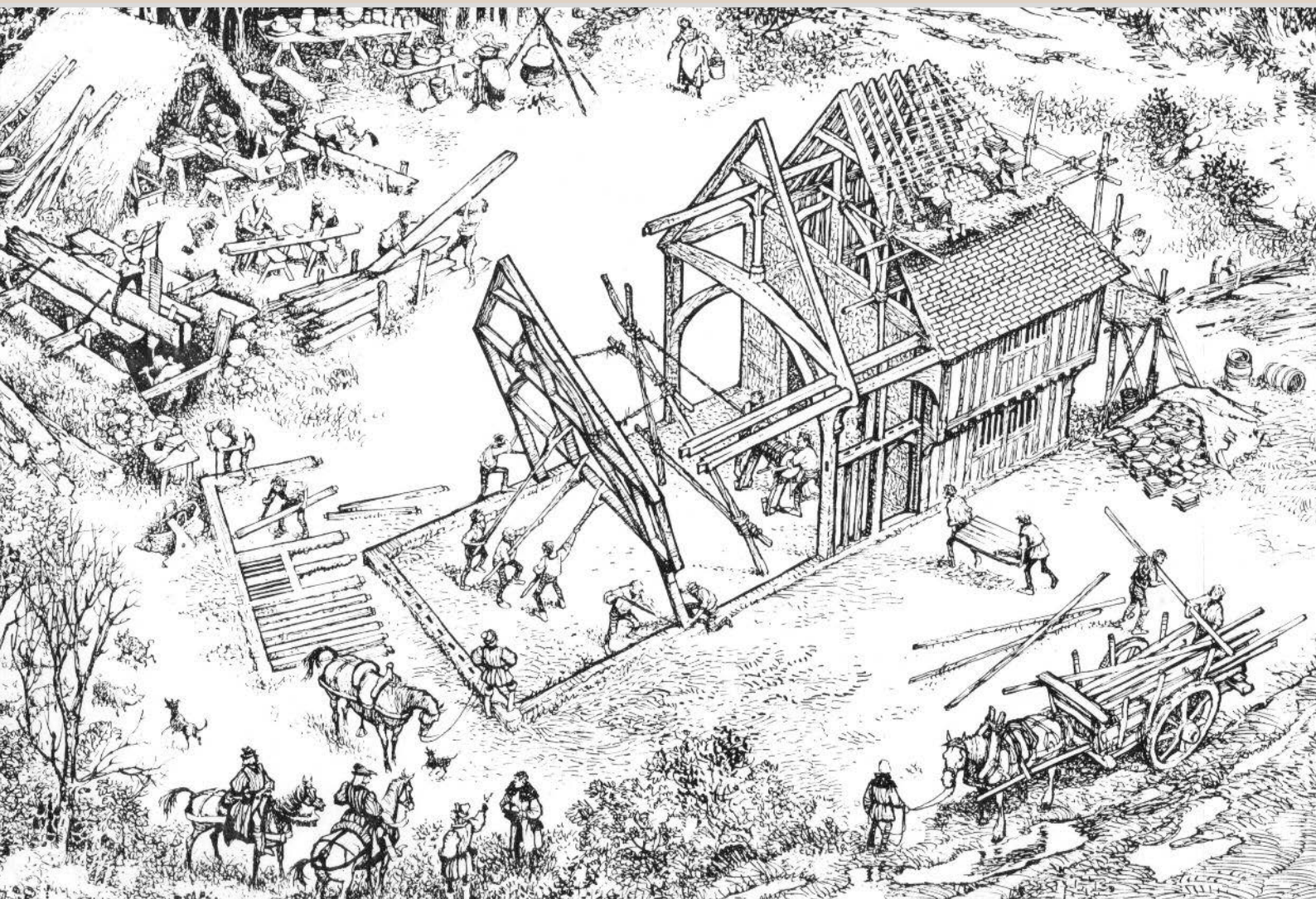
Benenden History

Building Benenden's Wealden Hall Houses

If little is certain about the Yeomen who commissioned the dozen or so Wealden Hall Houses in our parish, probably even less is known about their designers or builders. What's remarkable, though, is just how similar they are in construction, style and detail.

Great halls, rising from floor to roof, were not uncommon in medieval architecture, but they were generally confined to the big manorial houses often, or even usually, built of stone or brick. The open-halled timber-framed Wealden house seems to have been a radical departure from this tradition, bringing the style to much smaller domestic buildings and the new 'middle class' owner.

A key factor may have been cost. Chimneys certainly existed in the 14th and 15th centuries, but were expensive to build. Much more economical to have an open hearth in the centre of the room. But a low ceiling would mean the space quickly filled with smoke hence the need for a hall. Now smoke could rise to the rafters and dissipate through roof-tiles or smoke-holes. There are many examples where you can still see beams blackened by this process.





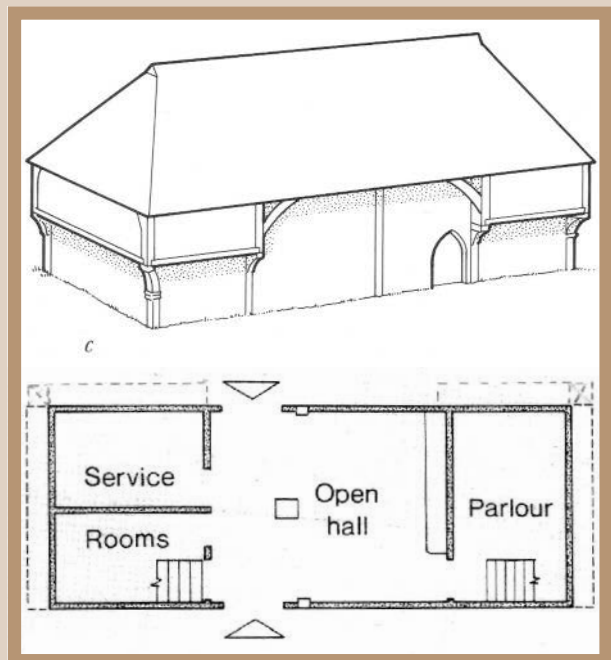
There was, of course, a rural tradition of barn-building and the cruck frame would have been well known to local carpenters. But somewhere in the mid to late 14th century someone decided to design a house with the first floor jettied out over the lower. The Clergy House at Alfriston is one of the earliest examples, but the style remained prevalent for nearly two centuries, arriving in Benenden probably between 1370 and 1410 with the construction of the Old Manor House on the cross-roads. It quickly became an iconic feature, with the recessed centre and jettied ends and sides. Pympe Manor, Dingledean, The Moat, as well as Paper Mill and Watermill Houses are the clearest examples.

The original internal lay-outs were also almost identical. The hall would generally have a cross passage with a back door opposite the front. Both ends had floors accessed by separate ladder stairs leading to first-floor rooms open to the ceiling. Often one end on the ground floor would be divided into two rooms, each with an entrance door from the main hall. And in every case the roof would be supported by a massive cross-beam holding the characteristic crown post. Mortise and tenant joints secured by wooden pegs were the norm, and a 'dragon beam' supporting the overhang at front and side was usual.

The dense local Wealden oak forests would have provided the timber, and copious carpenter's marks suggest that much of the framing would have been pre-fabricated and then assembled on site and winched into place (see artist's impression). It's probable that the oak would have been 'green' for ease of sawing and shaping, and that shrinkage while seasoning would have helped solidify the joints. The wattle and daub infill between the beams was some combination of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung and straw. There's a debate about whether the Wealden Halls were originally thatched or always had tiled roofs. Tiling, even with easy access to local clay, would almost certainly have been more expensive than thatching. Glass was also a luxury in medieval England and the windows would have been covered by wooden or parchment shutters. The grooves for sliding these across the opening can often still be seen.

What is certain is that the original proud owners would have been living in extremely draughty and smoky abodes, and it wasn't until all the Hall Houses were 'modernised' in the 1600s that glass lead-light windows, a chimney and a floor breaking up the central hall made life a good deal more comfortable.

Kent Barker



opposite top: The Old Manor House, Benenden;
below: Reconstruction by Peter Jackson

above clockwise from top left: Wealden Hall House
as they would have looked in the 15th century;
Main beam and crown post, Watermill House, Iden
Green; Typical layout, with cross passage in main hall

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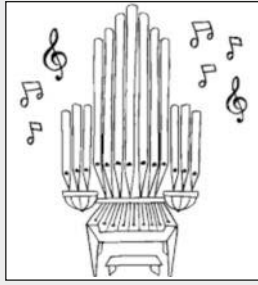
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Letter to the Editor

Please write to the Editor,
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Benenden TN17 4DY or email
benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com

SPEEDING - A PERSONAL VIEW

I have just read the article about speeding drivers through Iden Green and surrounding areas ... I feel very strongly about the speed in which drivers travel through our hamlet and indeed other villages and such like areas. It concerns me a lot at the disregard for the safety of residents by passing through drivers. I have a three-year-old daughter and I think of her when I drive through other villages and get so angry and upset by ignorant people who think it's ok to speed through here ... think how would they feel if it was their home village, child or grandchild's school and a thoughtless driver injured or worse still killed a loved one. This is what I remember every time I drive and it makes me slow down.

I am forever glaring at speeding drivers, shouting at them to slow down and even had an argument with an older gentleman (I use the term gentleman very loosely) for nearly running me over ... I have even had drivers overtake me in Iden Green ...

I don't claim to be a perfect driver ... resulting in points on my licence and attending a speed awareness course which has had an impact on how I drive ... it struck a chord with me and makes me think twice. I know not everyone is the same and doesn't react in the way in which I'd hope they would but something does need to be done.

I'm a busy mum with my own business and another job too along with the normal duties and responsibilities of parenthood, however I feel the safety of our children and residents is very important and would happily make time to help with a speed awareness campaign.

So if there's anything I can do to help let me know, I'll do it! I don't see why an accident or death needs to happen before actions are put in place and feel that that's the most stupid comment anyone can make. All life is valuable and all life matters. Believe me I know the heartache the loss of a loved one can cause and the impact on the lives of those involved in road traffic incidents can have not only on the victims family but also the driver who was responsible or involved. Let's work together to try and change the way in which people think and drive through our villages.

Clare Steward



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Iden Green and Benenden WI

We arrived at our afternoon meeting on Tuesday 21 February expecting to see a cooking demonstration, only to find the speaker was unable to come. Fortunately, one of our local speakers, Mr Chris Parkinson, very kindly, and at very short notice, stepped into the gap. His talk on Parkinson's Law was both informative and amusing and gave us food for thought concerning large and small organisations, politics and economics.

Last month, we voted for our future meetings to be held in the Memorial Hall, 2-4pm, on the third Tuesday of each month. We hope this change will suit new members also. Please do join us if you can, you'll be made very welcome.
Maureen Lake 241605

Save the date: Benenden Village Fete in support of St George's Church

Saturday 24 June, 12noon-4pm

Please note new time, to include lunchtime bbq stall. Can you help either beforehand or on the day? If yes, please contact:

Tracy Claridge [TLClaridge@](mailto:TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk)
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Jane's Kitchen

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HOT CHEESE QUICHE

Serves 8

FILLING

500g ready-made shortcrust pastry block
or ready rolled sheets

50g butter

1.5tsp mustard powder

190g grated cheddar cheese

40g grated parmesan

4 egg yolks

1 pint full cream milk

TOPPING

4 egg whites

Small amount grated cheddar

1.25tsp cayenne pepper

METHOD

- Pre-heat oven to 180C, 165Fan, Gas mark 3.
- Line a 25cm quiche ring with shortcrust pastry.
- Cover with grease proof paper and fill with baking beans, place in oven for about 30min.
- Take out of oven and remove beans and grease proof paper.
- Put back in the oven until the base is firm.
- Make up the cheese sauce by melting the butter, add mustard powder and whisk until smooth, then gradually add the milk and bring to the boil stirring all the time.
- Turn off the heat, stir in the cheeses and egg yolks. Pour into the pastry case.
- Whip egg whites till stiff, spread over quiche, sprinkle grated cheddar over and the cayenne.
- Bake in oven until topping is brown and crisp.

Jane Drysdale 291027

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Benenden Tennis Tournament

19-23 July, Benenden School

The Benenden Tennis Tournament is a well-established annual event that has been running for over 80 years. Over the years Benenden Girls School has kindly lent their facilities for us to use.

What began as an annual tennis gathering to bring players together to enjoy a friendly competition has grown into a fundraising event. The Committee run five days of tennis; there are usually 100 children on each of the junior days spread over eleven courts; and at the weekend we hold the Men's, Ladies' and Mixed section. Players of all levels and ages are welcome to participate, many come to catch-up with old friends.

We are blessed with very generous donations and sponsors from local businesses and individuals for which we are exceedingly grateful. This means that we can hold the competition at no cost and therefore all monies raised can be then given to local charities, many of which are children based.

During the tournament we have a lavish refreshment tent serving tea, coffee and lots of mouth-watering home-made cakes, plus a very busy sweet stall which the younger competitors enjoy. We also hold raffles on most days with lots of wonderful prizes again all very kindly donated.

Last year we raised £9,850 which was distributed amongst 17 charities, five of which are within Benenden. For details see web-site: www.benedentennistournament.com

Entries to this year's tournament can be made online at the above address, email and phone numbers also on the site.

The Committee would be very grateful of any offers of raffle prizes - please contact Anna on annamcdl@gmail.com; also from 19 July gifts of cakes are most appreciated.

We would also like to encourage people from the village or nearby to join us, watch a bit of tennis over a cup of tea and soak up the tremendous atmosphere.

Penny Cunningham

Wine Column

The Science of Tasting Wine. Use your nose more for starters!

My dear sister Lesley gave me a book at Christmas, titled The Science of Tasting Wine by Jamie Goode. Jamie is a wine columnist for a plethora of newspapers and wine magazines, as well as being the owner and author of his website www.wineanorak.com. Well worth a look.

I confess that I do not understand half of it, maybe more. I have always been very interested in how we smell and taste, not just wine, but food, and the air we breathe, subconsciously most of time. I breathe in and out through my nose, only gulping for air when exercising, or 'catching my breath' sometimes. I notice the air when I step off the train at Charing Cross. I notice the air when I come home to Benenden. Most of you can become wine tasters if you really want to. As long as your nose and mouth are working properly, it should be possible. If I blindfolded you, and wafted in aromas of toast, roast beef, roasted coffee beans, bad eggs, freshly mown grass, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, off milk, mature cheese, you would all be able to identify them immediately. Why? Because over the years, you have experienced these aromas time and again. Use your nose more. When you next go for a walk in this beautiful countryside we live in, just stop and take a deep breath. You will be amazed.

Wine tasting is purely a question of practice and interest, committing to memory the parameters of wine, grape varieties, methods of production, oak and non oak ageing, terroir, as Alfred talked about last month, sugar, acidity, tannin ... I could go on but column space does not permit me this time. I will be elaborating more next time around, or maybe Pinot Grigio ... with a twist, the alternative wine panto!!

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

The Village Debates

Time to move out of the Dark Ages?

When I moved out of south London five years ago, it's fair to say that high on my wish list wasn't a picturesque country village that could replicate the kind of light pollution I had become used to in the SE postcodes.

Yes, I wanted lights twinkling in the windows of the village pub; but I could do without the all-pervasive, late-night orange glow that gives the impression some communities might be visible from the moon.

Then again, I'd become quite used to being able to see where I was going once I'd left the pub, so to walk from the saloon bar into pitch blackness was a bit of a culture shock - and not at all like neighbouring fully-lit Sissinghurst at chucking-out time. On the one hand, I wanted views of far-distant galaxies, unimpeded by superfluous illumination; on the other, I wanted not to trip over on the way home.

The Parish Plan of 2015 suggested I was not alone in my dilemma. The figures said that almost 27% of residents thought "non-intrusive street lighting" was an option worth investigating for the centre of Benenden, although almost 57% thought it wasn't - with more than 30% fielding strongly against it.

There are issues of visibility, crime-prevention, road safety, carbon footprint and pure old-fashioned rural charm to be considered here - as well as the matter of intrusive lighting from businesses and liberally glazed extensions; so what's the view from The Street and from the council chambers?
Peter Thomas, Co-Editor

JUST TAKE YOUR TORCH

In the heart of rural Kent we are blessed with good neighbours, plenty of peace and quiet, beautiful views and, mostly, undisturbed views of the night sky. From time to time people make the argument that street lighting would make the village safer at night - but safer from what?

Certainly in an urban setting, street lighting helps reduce both the fear and the reality of crime, but what have we to fear in Benenden - bats, owls and the occasional fox.

As I write this we can see Jupiter in all its glory. I recall some three or four weeks after we had moved to Kent from London bounding out of bed at 3am thinking I was late for work because it was so bright outside, when in fact it was merely the moon that had woken me. I would be saddened to lose any more of the majesty of the night sky to unnecessary lights.

Like any decent parish councillor, I will always oppose anything that will damage the character of our special village and that is why I will use a torch if I need to at night.
Peter Ellis, Parish Councillor, The Street resident

SHINING A LIGHT ON CRIME

I venerate gazing at stars in a clear night sky as much as anyone, and I agree that light pollution is a major problem in our towns and cities - but does that mean we should have no lighting at all in Benenden and particularly in The Street?

It's pretty difficult for anyone, let alone the elderly or disabled, to cross the village green or to walk from St George's to the shop after 5pm in the winter. And just because there haven't been any serious accidents or assaults doesn't mean there never will be.

Plus we do have lighting - but the wrong sort. Those awful penetrating security lights with motion sensors are arguably worse environmentally than some subtle, low-level or pavement LEDs would be.

I was pretty disappointed at the furore over our proposal to have some highly directional and tightly regulated winter floodlights at the Iden Green Tennis Club a few years back - the contention that they would prevent foxes mating seemed risible. So I'd argue for a balanced approach and suggest we could try out a few pavement or low-level lights for pedestrians, allow sports floodlights up until, say, 9pm and find a way to restrict or moderate security lighting.

In any event they could all be switched off by midnight so people could stargaze and foxes go about their business with impunity.
Kent Barker, Co-Editor

COUNCIL SHOULD SAVE THEIR CASH

I'm one of the only people that commutes in the village on a daily basis in the dark and the only benefit I can imagine from having street lighting would be to help me avoid the mess left by the person who lets their dog foul the pavement between the pub and my house on a regular basis. Other than that I don't know why anyone would want the expenditure.

There aren't that many late-night customers at The Bull any more and very few that walk here. Most people that drive would either park in the pub car park or the village hall car park, so the only issue is a very short walk for very few people, which I don't think would justify the cost. These days most people don't even have to carry torches because they have them built into their mobile phones, so there's barely any inconvenience.

One worry would be that if we did get lighting, would it be the next step in the process of developing the village into a larger place that isn't like the village I think most of us want to live in? When we do get more

houses perhaps you'd need to have lighting for

their benefit, but I don't think

The Street needs it, and certainly not because of the threat of crime in the village. Realistically, how much crime do we have?

You wouldn't have lights down Walkhurst Road, where they might actually be needed, so why have them where they're not needed?

The Bull is lit up until 12.30 or I am with car park lighting and front lighting, and how many people are out and about after that?
Mark Barron-Reid, Publican, The Street resident

TECHNOLOGY WORTH WATCHING

We have no street lighting in Benenden, apart from that at the hospital. Over the years, local opinion has been that we don't want it and don't need it. However there have been accidents at the crossroads in Benenden and more minor ones at the crossroads in Iden Green. It is quite common in villages not to have lighting all over but just at vulnerable junctions.

The problem with street lighting is that it is expensive, causes light pollution and needs an agreed regime with regard to timing. Some places have their lights on all night. Local people should also be aware that, as we don't have street lights, our Council Tax in Benenden is lower than in other villages.

However lighting technology has moved on in recent years, and light pollution need not be the automatic result of having street lights. KCC is embarking on an ambitious programme of converting all existing lights and those newly installed to more modern LED technology. I would suggest that we should monitor this and see what they look like in practice before making any final decision.

Peter Davies, Chair, Parish Council

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Benenden Parish Council 2017

Parish Councillors are elected for four years, although there may be a by-election or co-option in the event of a vacancy occurring. The next full Parish Council election is scheduled for May 2018.

The Council meets monthly (except August) on the third Monday of the month in either the Memorial Hall, Benenden, or the Iden Green Pavilion. Planning meets on the first Thursday of the month, usually in the small meeting room, Village Hall. Meetings are open to the public. Agenda and minutes can be seen on the Council's website benendenparishcouncil.org. Agendas are posted in advance on the various Parish notice boards.

The Parish Council is currently the sole trustee of the Harmsworth Memorial Trust, which owns the Village Hall, the St George's building on the crossroads, the recreation fields and other land in the Parish.

The Parish Council works closely with the KCC and TWBC on issues which affect the Parish on matters such as roads, refuse collection and recycling, and also environmental issues. Let us know of any problems and we will pursue.

The Council comprises nine members plus officers. This is the team:

CLLR

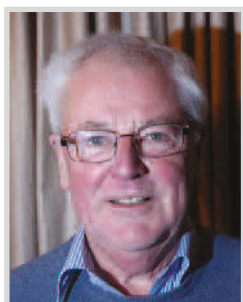
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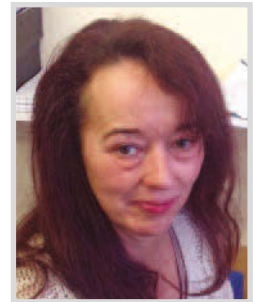
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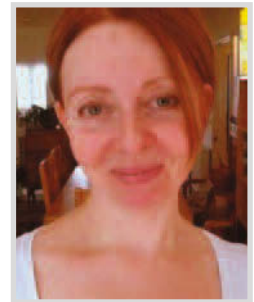
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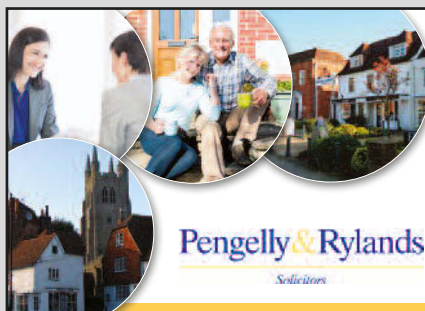
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JAN NIGHTINGALE - HOLISTIC THERAPIST

I'm no stranger to the so-called 'alternative' healing arts. But when I drove my car into the drive of Cogger's Cottage I had no idea of what exactly was in store. The wonderful gingerbread house was an unusual and intriguing location for therapeutic work. Jan Nightingale welcomed me and took me up to the treatment room where she introduced me to her wonderful heated massage couch.

Jan was first drawn to the healing power of the hands when suffering from severe back pain. As a farmer's wife and full time mother of four she was struggling with debilitating pain, which often left her unable to stand or walk. Close friends with very similar spinal problems had opted for surgery but Jan decided to visit an osteopath. She described the experience as 'A complete epiphany.' She 'literally skipped out of the surgery.' I recalled a similar experience when my first chiropractic treatment gave instant relief following a year of sciatic pain.

Jan recalls becoming 'almost evangelical' about this form of therapy. 'It works, it can benefit so many people and save them from so much suffering.' And significantly she found that people learn to manage their own bodies better with strengthening exercise and posture adjustments.

As her children grew up, Jan enrolled at the Maidstone School of Complimentary Therapy to study anatomy, physiology and holistic massage. With her diploma in hand she found herself in demand working both from home and as a visiting therapist. She also began to work part time with an osteopath doing soft tissue work to prepare clients for osteopathic adjustments. She found that many patients had less need for 'crunch and click' techniques after regular massage released muscle tension. Jan considers her work shadowing the osteopath as a valuable apprenticeship. She then undertook various postgraduate courses at the Jing Foundation in

Brighton including 'Advanced Holistic Medical Massage'. It's interesting that her fellow students included doctors and osteopaths looking for ways to extend and develop their healing skills.

Jan's regular clients are extremely diverse and include cyclists, runners, triathlon contestants and builders. The current age range goes from teenagers to those in their 80s. I thoroughly enjoyed my first treatment with the talented Ms Nightingale. It included techniques of deep tissue massage and myofascial release. I awoke with surprisingly few sore bits, feeling freed up and decidedly more energised. And like almost all her first time clients I shall certainly be going back for more.

(jan@nightingaleholistics.co.uk)



Suzie McFie



Bird Notes

Namibia Part I. Windhoek - Skeleton Coast - Dunes

Landing in Windhoek at 35C from freezing snow covered Iden Green was some transformation.

Whilst drying off after a welcome dip in the pool at the guesthouse we saw our first birds. The first on the list was the highly coloured yellow and black Southern Masked Weaver. Nearby was the outrageously deep red coloured Southern Red Bishop. Then a bird with a very, long, thin tail landed in the shrub nearby and I recognised a Shaft-tailed Whydah, a typically extravagant African bird to sport such long feathers. A finch with a large robust bill and a red and yellow forehead was an Acacia Pied Barbet. (You have to marvel at these lovely names). This was a fantastic start for our trip which truly whetted the appetite for what might be ahead.



top: Big Daddy Dune
325 metres high
above: Double-banded
sandgrouse, *Pterocles
binctus*

Our Namibian guide picked up us the next day and we drove south west towards the Namib desert. The habitat around Windhoek is semi scrubland with a good variety of birds. It became very apparent our guide had the most fantastic eyesight, (he liked to call himself “eagle eyes” and was justified to do so). The brakes would come on and back we would reverse to have pointed out to us a little well camouflaged bird in a tree. It would take me sometime to locate the bird even after it was pointed out. How he saw it at 40mph and driving at the same time I will never know. The highlight of the morning was a beautiful male Short-toed Rock Thrush with deep orange/red breast and grey head with a white cap.

Occasionally we would stop and listen and during these sessions our guide would whistle the call of a Pearl-spotted Owlet. The local birds would immediately come and investigate and the shrubbery nearby was suddenly alive with birds. Dusky and Marico Sunbirds were the first to come followed by a Brubru a small shrike-like bird with black and white plumage and chestnut coloured flanks.

As we motored south west the habitat changed into savannah and here the birds changed into the more grassland species. The call of a Black Korhaan (Korhaan is the African name for small bustards) was heard and needless “eagle eyes” soon spotted it. It has a black head with a large white ear patch red beak and bright yellow legs a handsome looking bustard. It was not long after that we saw its larger and rarer cousin the Ludwig’s Bustard. (Baron von Ludwig was a German pharmacist from Stuttgart who moved to Cape Town in the early 1800s and had various plants and birds named after him.) This largish bustard was well camouflaged with a blackish neck and chestnut coloured nape but when in flight its black and white wings gave it away as did its size as well coming in at 16lbs! The savannah gave way to a rocky gorge where we found two species of wheatear. Firstly a Capped Wheatear, a smart wheatear with a handsome black breast band, prominent white eye stripe and dark brown back whereas the second bird, a Mountain Wheatear, was almost entirely black with a prominent white wing bar.

From the gorge we entered the Namib Desert, a vast flat plain with very little vegetation but surprisingly here we saw our first Oryx (a large antelope with prominent ‘V’ shaped horns who frequent arid areas). They looked very fit despite the lack of food. There seemed to me about one dried tuft of grass about every 5 square meters which seem to keep them going. Mountain Zebra were also present in these arid areas. Our night was spent in a thatched chalet overlooking the desert where we enjoyed fabulous sunsets and sunrises. From our front we stepped out into the desert itself.

The next day we entered the Namib-Nauluft National Park soon after dawn and drove to Sossusvlei (translated means dead-end marsh) into which the once Tsauchab river drained. We visited the famous Dune 45 (named as its 45km from the entrance) and walked up its flank in the finest richest red sand I have ever seen. The red colour is due to the high iron content. Some of the younger visitors ran down the steep side and as the sand is so fine they left no sign of their tracks. The tracks upwards would also soon be smoothed over by the hot and persistent desert wind to leave the dune in a virgin condition. From the top of the dunes we heard the haunting calls of Ruppell’s Korhaan (Ruppell was another German naturalist/explorer) we were able to see the bustard at close quarters when a pair with one young passed in front of our car. From dune 45 we drove passed “Big Daddy” Dune at 325 meters high one of the biggest in the park and then left the road into the sand itself to see the Dead Vlei which is the old marsh. The trees sticking out from the saltpan itself look very stark and are about 1000 years old.



top: Ludwig's bustard, *Neotis ludwigii*
above: Oryx, *Oryx gazella*



Lucy with her mother Lady



Lady in foal



Farming Forum - Benenden's Biggest Pets?

A century ago there would have been scores of Shire horses in Benenden, used for all types of farm work and for pulling wagons and carts. Today there are just four - owned and maintained by Jan and Al Perkins at their farm in Woodcock Lane.

When Al was made redundant from the Surrey Docks in 1987 the couple left London and trained in Agriculture at Hadlow College, buying a few acres of land in Benenden.

For nearly 20 years they farmed cattle, sheep and turkeys but, as retirement approached, Jan got Al a Shire horse 'so he'd have a hobby'. Before she could turn round there were a dozen of the huge beasts churning up the fields and costing a fortune in feed and vets bills. But they also won prizes. Al is particularly proud of Prince William who got a first place rosette at Edenbridge a few years back.

And foals used to fetch a reasonable price - up to £2,500. But now that's dropped to between £500 and £1,000 - which is almost exactly the cost of having a mare covered by a stallion. So they've stopped commercial breeding and now have just four Shires left - three mares and a stallion - though Lady is in foal and should produce later this month. They're a Clydesdale and Shire mix which makes them slightly bigger than pure Shires and means they have higher and finer feathering (hair on lower legs).

With a son and a grandson as Farriers and their daughter a riding instructor, Jan and Al had perhaps hoped the family would take over breeding the huge horses. 'They're not really interested' says Jan, 'though my granddaughter has done dressage with them and might possibly take and school Lucy for future competitions. But ultimately they're just very expensive pets' she says. 'That's as maybe,' says Al, 'but I'm not giving them up while I can still move.'

Kent Barker



Al and
Prince William, Edenbridge

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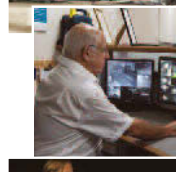
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Above: Pinocchio with a Twist - Village Panto Trumpets its arrival. Photographs: Haley Daley
 Front cover: A Winter Swim - not all it's quacked up to be. Photograph: Imogen Macdonald