

# Benenden Magazine

March 2018





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# Editorial



People may have heard the doleful news that the Woodcock Inn is closed 'until further notice'. We are not certain exactly what is happening. It's not been possible to contact landlord Nigel Roberts and the Brewery that owns it, Green King, has been unforthcoming. But it looks as if it may well be the second pub that the village has lost in two years after the recent closure of the William IV/Kitty Fisher.

It may be part of a national trend. The real ale group CAMRA says 1,500 pubs a year are shutting their doors. But it's also a bit of a local tragedy. However good The Bull remains, greater choice for drinkers and diners as well as an element of competition must be a good thing.

It's hard to escape the conclusion that the major brewery chains are very largely responsible for the situation. Sky-high rents and unreasonable restrictions on beers offered, and other drinks sold, make it extremely difficult for tied house tenants to make a go of small rural pubs. But will companies like Greene King sell freeholds to create free houses? Just ask Nigel.

The one glimmer of hope is that smaller niche brewers are opening up and prospering - a local success story, Old Dairy, is profiled on pages 32 and 33.

Also not to be missed in this packed edition of the magazine is Ernie's Pollard's extraordinary story (pages 18 and 19) of our former church spire - so tall it could be seen from boats passing in the English Channel.

Enjoy the magazine and remember, spring is just around the corner.

Kent Barker, Co-Editor

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# Village Calendar

## March

Friday 2	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 3	Chinese Night, St George's Club, 8pm	
Sunday 4	Hugh Rowlands, Organ Recital, St George's Church, 6pm	p.13
Saturday 10	Community Orchard Pruning, Standen Fruit Farm, Iden Green, 10am	p.15
Saturday 10	Darts, St George's Club, 8pm	
Sunday 18	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.21
Monday 19	Planning and Transportation Committee, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Monday 19	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 20	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.17
Tuesday 20	Iden Green and Benenden WI, A Bad Spate of Weather, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17
Saturday 24	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Coffee Morning, Memorial Hall, 10am	p.17
Saturday 24	Friends of St George's Church, Spring Concert, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.9
Saturday 24	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8pm	
Tuesday 27	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	

## April

Saturday 7	Neighbourhood Development Plan Village Exhibition, Memorial Hall, 10-4pm	p.15
Saturday 14	Village Spring Clean, Benenden's Shop and Iden Green Pavilion, 9am	p.3
Saturday 14	Grierson Galleries Art Show, Benenden Village Hall, 10-5pm	p.29
Sunday 15	Grierson Galleries Art Show, Benenden Village Hall, 10-4pm	p.29
Tuesday 17	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Super Natural Reports, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17
Monday 23	Friends of St George's Church, AGM, St George's Church, 7pm	
Saturday 28	Sew with Mary and Mel, Iden Green Pavilion, 10am	p.27
Saturday 28	Spring Celebration Barn Dance, Benenden Village Hall, 7pm	p.13

## 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



# Parish Council



Here at the Parish Council we need as much help as we can get and we are extremely grateful that we have two very able and enthusiastic Borough Councillors to fight our causes on our behalf. We have Tom Dawlings (TWBC Borough Councillor), who amongst many other issues is presently doing a sterling job helping us put together our Neighbourhood Development Plan, and Sean Holden, who also fights our corner at TWBC as well as in the hallowed corridors of KCC in Maidstone.

You may have seen Sean on the local TV news lately, calling for a ban on lorries in parts of Kent. Sean says lorries are breaking up roads and creating potholes, claiming that a 40-tonne truck had the same impact on a road as 10,000 cars. Locally, Goudhurst and Sissinghurst probably suffer more damage from lorries than we do here in Benenden, but I think most of you will agree that we would like to see less heavy traffic passing through our villages if at all possible.

We mentioned in the January issue that we are looking for a Youth Liaison volunteer to work with the Parish Council. This role would involve finding out what activities young people would like to see in the village, encouraging them to join in and giving feedback to the council. Obviously parents with school-age children would be best placed to help us with this - do please get in touch with our Clerk if you are interested in helping.

Our Neighbourhood Development Plan is coming along at a very brisk pace and there will be a Village Exhibition from 10-4pm on Saturday 7 April in the Memorial Hall. Each Working Group will display updates on progress. Please see Paul Tolhurst's current update on page 15 for further details.

And please do think about putting your name forward to the Clerk for the election for Parish Councillors in May. We will be putting details of this on our website soon, but in the meantime please do contact our Chair, Peter Davies, myself or our Clerk if you have any questions.

Finally, our village spring clean will be on Saturday 14 April - please come along to the village shop or Iden Green Pavilion at 9-9.30am. Our village is beautiful - and this task helps to keep it so. There will be free coffee and cake at the community shop for all litter pickers.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Vice Chair  
01580 240364 [nic.jthomas@btinternet.com](mailto:nic.jthomas@btinternet.com)

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk  
01580 240371 [clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org)  
For more information see our website [www.benendenparishcouncil.org](http://www.benendenparishcouncil.org) or find us on facebook

Parish Council Meeting  
Monday 19 March 2018,  
Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm

Planning and Transportation  
Committee  
Monday 19 March 2018,  
Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

# Church Calendar

## St George's Church

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

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 [TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk](mailto:TLClaridge@TLClaridge.co.uk)

Churchwarden: Julia Collard 241944 [Julia.collard@btinternet.com](mailto:Julia.collard@btinternet.com)

[www.benendenchurch.org](http://www.benendenchurch.org) 850849 [benendenchurch@gmail.com](mailto:benendenchurch@gmail.com)

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

Sunday 4 March	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion and Sunday School	5pm Choral Evensong 6pm Organ Recital
Sunday 11 March Mothering Sunday	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 18 March	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Palm Sunday 25 March	8am Communion followed by breakfast	10am Morning Worship	5pm Praise Service at Mission Church 7.30pm Reflective Service
Monday 26 March			7.30pm Reflective Service
Tuesday 27 March			7.30pm Reflective Service at Mission Church 7.30pm Reflective Service
Wednesday 28 March			7.30pm Reflective Service
Maundy Thursday 29 March			7.30pm Communion
Good Friday 30 March		10am An Hour at the Cross	
Holy Saturday 31 March			7.30pm Reflective Service
Easter Sunday 1 April	6.15am Sunrise Service, at St Nicholas Church, Sandhurst followed by breakfast 8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	5pm Choral Evensong

## Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

## Iden Green Congregational Church

Elder: Tobin Bird 240027 [www.idengreen.org.uk](http://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](http://www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org)

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

## From the Parish Registers

Funerals 7 February Phyllis Wheeler Interment  
21 February Keith Hammon Funeral and committal Kent and Sussex Crematorium  
28 February Irmgard Potter Funeral Kent and Sussex Crematorium

# Rector's Letter



## I encourage you to use your church this Lent and Easter

We are very fortunate at St George's to be able to keep our church open every day of the year (apart from a few days around Christmas). Anyone can pop in for a few minutes of peace and quiet, away from the hectic pace of a busy life. Like most things that we take for granted, we do not appreciate it until it is not there. Regrettably, when it's not being used for services, we've had to close the Mission Church in Sandhurst for the time being - due to the thoughtless actions of a few individuals. I encourage you, through this Lent, to take the opportunity to use and enjoy the quiet, spiritual space at St George's church; it is open from 8.30/9am until about 4.30/5pm. Thank you to those who unlock and lock the church every day; to those who keep it clean and tidy, and to those who provide beautiful flowers to decorate the church.

The time of Lent (preparing ourselves for the celebration of Easter) is, ironically, a busy time within the church. Again, though, I encourage you to get involved in as many of the services through Lent and Holy Week as you can. On Sunday 4 March, during the 10am All-Age Communion service, we will be raising awareness of safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in our community and in the church setting in particular. The issue is a sad reflection on our society, but not a new one, as we see so often in the press or on the news. Ian Malaugh will be helping us become more aware of our personal responsibilities for safeguarding those unable to protect themselves. The following Sunday 11 March is Mothering Sunday. This will be marked in the 10am service. Sunday 25 March is Palm Sunday. You are very welcome to join us for breakfast at the Memorial Hall before processing up to church for the 10am service.

Following Palm Sunday, we enter Holy Week. There is a Reflective service, in the benefice every day at 7.30pm. (All are at St George's except Tuesday's is at the Mission Church.) On Maundy Thursday there is also a lovely service at 11am at our Cathedral in Canterbury. If you've not been before, why not try it this Lent. Good Friday we spend an 'Hour at the Cross' together, remembering the crucifixion; on Holy Saturday there is another Reflective service at 7.30pm. Then we can celebrate together on Easter Sunday, the 1 April this year; we start early with a sunrise service at 6.15am at St Nicholas Sandhurst. (That is not an April Fool! Breakfast is served afterwards as well.)

This world needs more of the joy and love that is expressed in the celebration of Easter Sunday. I encourage you to come and be part of it. God bless.

Revd David Commander, Rector

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# Just a Thought



## The Rainbow

On a recent flight I was looking out of the window and saw the shadow of the plane racing across the clouds below. But what was extraordinary was that this shadow was encircled by its own complete rainbow - magical. It set me thinking about the effect of rainbows.

The young boy had proudly herded his family's twenty-five goats and ten sheep for three years. He took them over the barren rocks, through the spiny bush and across the open grassland in search of good pasture. But then one year the rain did not come and then another year and another. His parents grew more and more desperate. He wandered further but the animals began to die as the rains failed again. He had heard that even the towns were in trouble as the reservoirs emptied and long queues formed for water. He gazed disconsolately towards the distant shimmering hills. Then he looked again more intently. Dark clouds seem to be gathering and moving closer from the hills and they did not burn up on their way. Then suddenly he saw it - a rainbow. A sign of rain at last.

'We are beginning our descent, please fold up your tables and put your seats in the upright position.' Finally! He was both nervous and excited as he looked out of the window glimpsing the unfamiliar land between the clouds. The family couldn't afford for everyone to fly to him but, if he (a nervous flier) was willing, they could bring him to them. It had been so long and his grandchild had been a baby when he had last seen her. 'Don't worry Grandpa, I'll wear something bright so you can spot me,' she had promised. Passport and Immigration, Baggage-reclaim and Customs and then he was out. Now he was confronted by a wall of people, all scanning the emerging passengers. But, there in the middle of them, was a young girl wearing a lovely rainbow-coloured jumper and a huge smile.

The little toddler had been unwell for a week with an upset tummy, and her brother, a couple of years older, hated seeing her ill. He wondered what he could do to help. So he went off into the kitchen where he often helped his mummy. He collected a tomato from the fridge, a satsuma and a banana from the veg basket, two green grapes from the bunch on the sideboard, and a packet of blueberries from the latest shopping. Then he stopped to look around searching for the last thing he needed. 'Ah, that will do!' he thought, 'a piece of beetroot.' By this time his mother had come downstairs and seen all the food lined up on the counter. 'Goodness me what are you doing?' she exclaimed. 'These are the colours of the rainbow,' he explained earnestly, 'and if she eats them they will all go into her tummy and make a rainbow. Then she won't be sick any more because rainbows make you feel better.'

Sue Fisher

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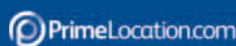
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# News and Events

## What a Pantomime!

Wow, that was exhausting, but exhilarating ... It was lovely to stand in the foyer and see so many friends and family coming along to enjoy yet another Benenden Players panto. We sold out on most performances; meaning some 850 people came along to join the fun.

And from your hugely supportive reaction it seem that after 19 weeks of rehearsals, the show went down well. Among the notable firsts for the Players include the youngest ever mini-dame, the 'hunt the Queen' video, a flash-back to the Generation Game (cuddly toy anyone?), and of course probably the only ever pantomime cactus. Some lovely dance sequences included the free-style efforts of Ant and Geck, Pearly Puss and her kittens, a smouldering tango, and an entrancing UV piece. The junior Players shone as ever, and Bev's writing again proves that panto can be bang up-to-date; with fake news, strong female leads (and the odd pop at the salaries for male TV stars). Not a stereotyped Mexican in sight: Tequila!

Each year we re-invest any profits in improving the kit we have available. This year every cast member had their own headset so you could hear all the fine singing all the time, additional lighting meant that the men in those huge false eyelashes and fabulous make-up, and the women too, were able to shine. And despite explosions, magic flash-bombs and glitter everywhere there were no fire-alarms this year. With a cast of 35 children and adults, and a crew of 25, plus 12 helpers shanghaied from friends and family across the five performances it is a huge team effort, but so rewarding when all that hard-work is appreciated. Panto runs on a strange mix of ginger biscuits, tea, and regular visits to The Bull. Watch out for auditions in early September and join in!

Nancy Tolhurst

*See review page 25*



## Spring Concert

Saturday 24 March, St George's Church, 7.30pm

To celebrate the coming of Spring a varied programme from Mozart to Gershwin will be performed by Sarah Andrew, Tim Rundle, Zoë Harmsworth and Quentin Thomas (oboe, bassoon, cello, piano and organ).

This concert promises to be highly enjoyable music played for pleasure by friends in a lovely setting. They have strong local attachments: Sarah and Tim live at the Papermill and, with Zoë and Quentin, are no strangers to performing in Benenden, but never before in this combination.

Sarah has held posts as a leading bassoonist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and she now teaches at the Royal College of Music. Tim was with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra before joining the Philharmonia Orchestra in 2011. Zoë gained her Cello Diploma at the Music Conservatory of Cuneo while working in Turin. She met Quentin when they were music scholars at King's Canterbury; Quentin's diverse career has included degrees at the Guildhall and at the National Film and Television School; he is Director of Music at Oundle School.

Refreshments during the interval are included in the £10 ticket price (under 18s free).

For further details please contact:

Clare Harmsworth 240683  
fosgspring2018@gmail.com



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## Ducky end to quackers drains row

Benenden residents, the local media, and KCC officials were doubtless astounded to see a paddling (yes that is the collective noun) of plastic ducks outside the Bull at Benenden last month.

It was part of an extraordinarily effective media campaign from landlords Mark and Lucy whose fuming frustration finally forced them into furious action. For months they'd been complaining at the procrastination of Kent County Council's Highways department in dealing with a blocked drain immediately outside the pub. It meant pedestrians, including primary school children, had to walk out into the middle of the road to get round the pond-sized puddle that formed whenever it rained.

Even the good offices of the Parish Council and Benenden's KCC Councillor Sean Holden

had failed to resolve the problem.

Amazingly, within hours of the press release with its ducky photo being sent out, a quack-crack team of council operatives arrived with an underwater CCTV camera. A spokesman with a commendable grasp of syntax and grammar told the Benenden Magazine: "the crew found that the system of manholes the gullies outside The Bull outfall into were totally full. The crew thoroughly cleansed the whole system and water is now able to flow away."

Cllr Holden welcomed the news but added: "I asked Highways for the camera more than two weeks ago. Their not telling me it was coming led Lucy and Mark to put out an excellent news release which makes KCC look negligent and stupid. I hope officials learn from that."

Asked for his response in a noisy bar, we think Mark from the Bull said "I'm delighted the situation has finally been sorted out. The problem is that now I'll have to share my bath with those d.... ducks again".

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## News from Benenden School

I write at the end of a week in which the country has been celebrating 100 years of women having the vote, and I feel indebted to the school's founders, who were amongst the first women eligible to vote in 1918 and who had the vision, independence and means to found Benenden in 1923. I feel proud that almost 100 years on, Benenden is now amongst the most forward-thinking, innovative schools [for girls] in the country.

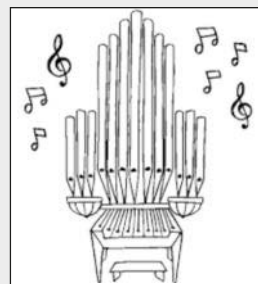
When I look around Benenden, I see young women who are confident, motivated and skilled to become the leaders of tomorrow. There is no doubt that they are growing up in a world where they see no limits to the aspirations of women, and whilst recent headlines about BBC pay imbalance and sexual harassment issues in Westminster and Hollywood are reminders that there is still some way to go to achieve gender equality in the workplace, there has been enormous progress in every walk of life and this will only continue with the next generation.

To that end, we will soon be announcing details of another event as part of the Dads4Daughters movement, which is aimed at ensuring greater gender equality in boardrooms and workplaces across the country.

From a varied programme of recent events the following have stood out. The Burns Night Reeling for parents and sixth form girls was a great success. This was followed by Cultures Week, run by the girls and offering a fascinating celebration of the diversity we are proud of at Benenden. Last week, girls were skiing in Flaine at the British Schoolgirls' Ski Racing Competition, and at the weekend we hosted our bi-annual Careers and Higher Education Convention for hundreds of Benenden girls and students from visiting schools.

There are many highlights to look forward after half term, among them the Ballet Show, Lacrosse Nationals, an exhibition of girls' artwork at the Smallhythe Gallery, Tenterden, and welcoming Dr Ben Broadbent, Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy at the Bank of England, for a sixth form lecture.

Samantha Price, Headmistress



*Hugh Rowlands*

### *ORGAN RECITAL*

*Sunday 4 March 2018*

*St George's Church, Benenden*

*6pm*

*following Choral Evensong at 5pm*



## Local Bridge Players

Would you like to join us? A knowledge of basic Acol is necessary, improvers welcome, both clubs are friendly and provide tea and biscuits.

Rubber Bridge is held on Thursdays, 2-5pm, in Memorial Hall, Benenden.

For more information please contact:

Lesley Attwood 243318

Anne Tylden-Wright 850281

Chicago is held on Mondays, 2-5pm, in Mission Church, Back Road, Sandhurst.

For more information please contact:

Eve Willard 01797 253431



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## Neighbourhood Plan

Working groups get off the mark

All five working groups have met and are getting on with their priority tasks. The Business and Local Economy group is surveying local businesses and you may have seen members of the Landscape or Housing Groups prowling the lanes and hedgerows.

On 7 February we met Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Planning Department. They gave us some insights on their own plan development, and agreed to help us with technical training. A draft of their Local Plan - to run until 2033 - is expected to be published on their website by early June. Discussions will continue with Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning teams and others. Formal public consultation is planned between November 2018 and January 2019. March 2019 is the target for the plan approval.

TWBC's 2017 Call for Sites has been closed with 14 identified in Benenden. Our Housing Supply Working Group has determined criteria to assess each location for development suitability. TWBC will undertake their site assessment over the next few months while our involvement will add local knowledge.

We plan to circulate an explanation of the process and criteria to all those on our email circulation list, and the Housing Supply Working

Group will make a presentation at our planned Village Exhibition on 7 April in the Memorial Hall.

We have decided not to undertake an additional local Call for Sites as the outcome of the TWBC call appears to exceed our housing planning needs. This may change depending on outcomes from the site assessment process, so we will review if necessary.

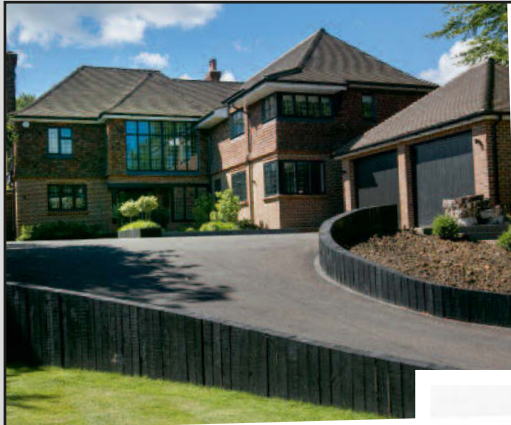
We are also working on the Neighbourhood Plan website which should be ready well before the Village Exhibition.

Congratulations to Hawkhurst, who have had their Neighbourhood Plan passed at a local referendum with over 90% approval. There is still a great deal of work to be done on ours and we would like more people involved. Above all please put 7 April's Village Exhibition in your diary; we want your views as we go along.

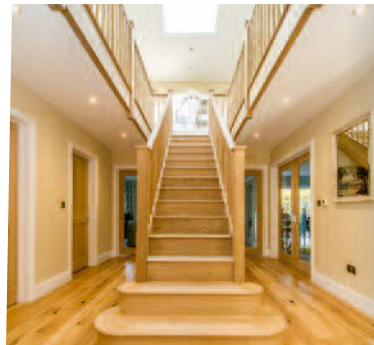
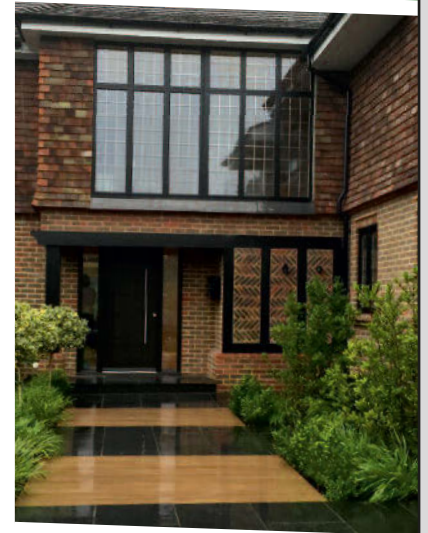
Paul Tolhurst, Steering Committee Chair  
[paul.tolhurst@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.tolhurst@btinternet.com)







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## Benenden Pre-School News

The pre-school is going through an exciting time, looking to the future, and investigating the possibility of becoming a Trust and the opportunities this would bring. Part of the difference is the pre-school would need Trustees, who would be committed for three years or more, which would enable long term planning and direction.

We would like to hear from anyone who might be interested in potentially becoming a Trustee (no commitment at this stage!), or would like to learn more about it.

If so please email the Chairman at:  
[chairman@benendenpreschool.co.uk](mailto:chairman@benendenpreschool.co.uk)

## Iden Green and Benenden WI

In February our speaker Mr Antonisz entertained and informed us about our own antiques. It was an open meeting with husbands attending.

The early part of the year seemed plagued by members with coughs, colds and flu. This is gradually passing, so now it feels good to plan future activities we can all look forward to as the weather improves.

Dates to remember:

Tuesday 20 March, A Bad Spate of Weather,  
2-4pm

Saturday 24 March, Coffee Morning, 10-12noon

Tuesday 17 April, Super Natural Reports, 2-4pm

All meetings and Coffee Morning are in the Memorial Hall. For further enquiries:

Shirley Fidler, Chair 752232

## Village Lunch

Tuesday 20 March, Benenden Village Hall,  
12.30pm

All are welcome. It's just £5 a head. If you need a lift please let us know and we can arrange it. Please call Genevieve Greenwood on 01580 240526 if you haven't already put your name down but would like to come. We look forward to seeing you.

## Talking Shop

### CAFÉ REFURBISHMENT

Long have we celebrated Benenden's community shop with its wonderful design, friendly atmosphere and welcoming café. Little did we realise when the café was first laid out, how popular it would become and what demands would be made on it.

Now we find we need to look again at how it works for staff and volunteers who frequently find themselves having to squeeze past each other during food preparation. The menu we now provide is a far cry from the original tea/coffees, hot pies and cakes first envisaged and so we have decided to change things around a bit to facilitate the preparation of this. All being well, the work should begin in March so don't be surprised to see a little upheaval and, at times, a reduced menu, to allow space for some gallant workers.

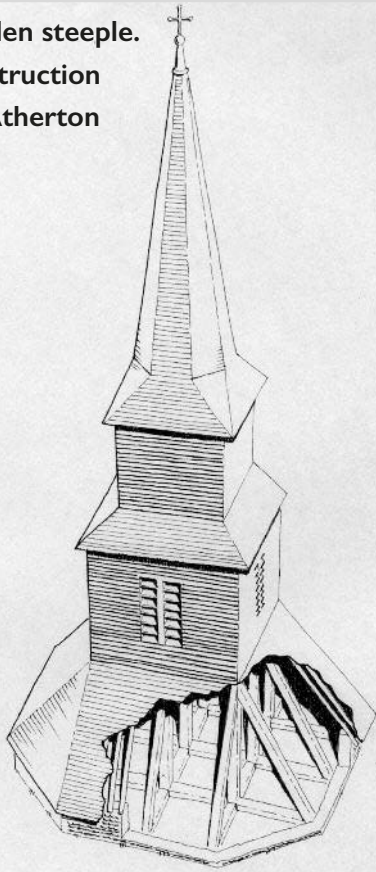
The general aim is to create a food preparation area on the right. New work surfaces will be constructed around that end and the tall freezer in the corner will go to the back of the shop to be accompanied by another tall freezer, replacing the chest freezer presently there. In the café an under-counter freezer will be installed for regularly used frozen products. The sink end will then be freed up to accommodate dirty crockery and will allow the dishwasher to be loaded without having to fight for space with the person preparing food.

This of course will improve general hygiene and facilitate high standards of cleanliness. We are planning to have two microwaves to aid the speedy preparation of food during busy periods. To minimise disruption, much of the work will be done after the café has closed and any new cabinets will be pre-made and simply fitted when a space is clear. The general appearance of the café will remain very much as it is.

As always, we appreciate your support and understanding - and, of course, your custom.  
Bev Beveridge



**Benenden steeple.  
Reconstruction  
by Jill Atherton**



## Local History

# The Great Steeple of Benenden

Ernie Pollard looks at the extraordinary bell tower that graced the village church before a disastrous fire almost 350 years ago.

In 1659 the Kentish historian Richard Kilburne wrote of Benenden: "The Steeple of this Church standeth off from the same, and is of rare and remarkable workmanship on the inside thereof, the same standing very high, having a long spire or shaft, and the foundation thereof (for a small part only of the height of the same) being of stone, and all the rest to the top of Timber of exceeding great bigness ..."

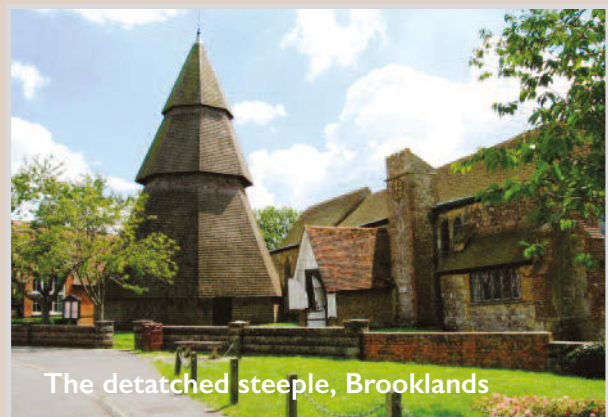
In 1893 Granville Leveson-Gower surveyed the church and said bluntly that Kilburne was wrong and was thinking of Brookland church - a view shared by other antiquarians of the time. Then, in 1896, out of the blue, some long-lost churchwardens' accounts were returned to Benenden from

Scotland. They recorded the collection of taxes in the parish and their expenditure on the maintenance of the church.

Remarkably, between the accounts for 1671-2 and 1672-3 was some urgent writing - a message to later generations:

"Munday the 30th day of December 1672 between Twelve and one in the morning Arose a Storm of Lightning Thunder a hard gale of wind, and some rain out of the south west, which set fire to the steeple at Benenden, whereby the said Steeple, with the Rooffe and all the Timber worke of the Church was consumed in 4 or 5 howers time, the five large bells melted; also five houses adjoining the Church Yard Gate on the North Side burnt to the Ground; the Steeple was built all of Timber from the ground: the Lower Story was compiled of nine trees or peeces of Square Timber 16 inches Square which stood upon great Sells of a bigger Square; the middle post being larger considerably than the other Eight and each out-post had a Shore of the same bignes as their post ... [the construction of the steeple is then described in some detail and the writer concluded] ... the Steeple stood on the North west Corner of the Church about 16 or 20 foot distant, the height of the Steeple from the ground according to the best Information was 132 foot. The five melted Bells were Cast 1619 Simon Henden (churchwarden) on the fifth bell: on the fourth Bell between the Crown Rings this verse: 'in me concordia'."

This was certain proof that Benenden once possessed a great timber steeple standing detached from the church. A suggested date for its construction is the 13th or early 14th century. The Kentish



**The detached steeple, Brooklands**

steeple most resembling it is not the detached steeple at Brookland, but the attached steeple at High Halden about six miles north-east of Benenden. The High Halden steeple is much smaller, about 75 feet high, and has six main posts compared with the nine of Benenden (including its central post) and lacks the second stage, the lesser square. Timbers of the High Halden steeple have recently been dated,



The church and steeple before 1672.  
Reconstruction by Jill Atherton



suggesting that it was built in the period 1470 to 1490. However, the present steeple there may be a rebuilding of an earlier one.

So Benenden lost its steeple as well as the roof and interior of the church in the fire of 1672. The tombs of many leading families of Benenden, the Moores, Guldefords, Sharpes and Gibbons, were lost. Houses

as far away as Devon and Cornwall.

In 1673 a London master mason, Timothy Townshend, was commissioned to produce plans and estimates for rebuilding. The interior of the church was rebuilt in 1677-78 in neo-classical style. A tower was planned, but there was not the money to build it and it was not until 1691, 19 years after the fire, that further moves were made. There was a presentation to the Vicar-General of Canterbury, a petition to the magistrates and a vote in Benenden church on how £147, realised by the sale of the melted bellmetal, should be spent.

A form was pinned up in the church in April 1691, offering four options on the use of the bellmetal money. The form has survived and is now at Canterbury, the voting was as follows: Votes for the use of the bellmetal money: For church repairs 14; For rebuilding a steeple 49; For the poor 0; For church and poor 0.

The clear wish of the parishioners was for a new steeple. They may have had the lost steeple in mind, but sadly there was money only for today's more modest stone tower which was finally completed, after another long delay, in 1715.

For more information, please refer to [www.benenden.history.pollardweb.com](http://www.benenden.history.pollardweb.com).

Our thanks to leading archaeological draughtswoman Jill Atherton for her remarkable reconstructive drawing.



The steeple, High Halden

to the north of the church were burnt to the ground. A new church was needed but would the old, detached steeple be recreated?

**Rebuilding the church** A trust was set up to collect money. Briefs (royal mandates) were issued for collections from other parishes and sums were received in 1673 and 1674 from Chislet, Patricksbourne and Smarden in Kent and from other parishes



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Rev'd David Commander, Rector  
01580 240658 [revdavidcommander@gmail.com](mailto:revdavidcommander@gmail.com)

## Letters to the Editor

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

### SUCH A CARING COMMUNITY

Dear Editor,

Tracy Claridge wrote last month about the Benenden Christmas Day lunch. After comprehensively thanking everyone who helped produce such a wonderful meal and occasion he said "Apologies if I have left out anybody".

The person who, naturally, had not been mentioned was Tracy himself! We all owe a huge vote of thanks to our special Tracy. He's the vision behind the whole idea, and the organising dynamic which made it happen.

My son Martyn and I can testify to the joy and happy fellowship which was apparent as we all enjoyed the delicious fare. It was good to spend Christmas Day with new friends and we appreciated the helpers giving up their own family time to make this happen. The Spirit of Christmas was truly amongst us and we were encouraged by the Queen's remarks that others were doing the same up and down the country.

We are thankful that we live in such a caring community and here is to next year's lunch courtesy of Tracy and his team.

Aurea Gregory

### WINDY WALKING

Dear Editor,

Having picked up the January 2018 Benenden Magazine in Sandhurst church, I thought my husband and I could follow the suggested walk round the Dungeness Shingle and we did so today, when it was a reasonably calm day ... Do not attempt the walk if there is a WIND.

Well, we were warned - it was indeed a tough walk across shingle, particularly the final two miles along the beach. I'm not sure I'd want to take all the family unless to test their strength of character as well as mental and physical abilities.

We walked 9.1 miles rather than the 8.7 indicated in the magazine, because of the instruction to follow a non existent path across the shingle, aiming 20 degrees to the RIGHT of a distant water tower. If we had aimed 20 degrees to its LEFT, we would not have done the extra distance.

It certainly was a memorable walk and ending at the cafe at the RHDR was ideal.

I'm not sure we will ever do this walk again, which was as bleak as you probably get anywhere in England, but we are looking forward to walking others you have already published.

Yours sincerely,  
Margaret Sargent



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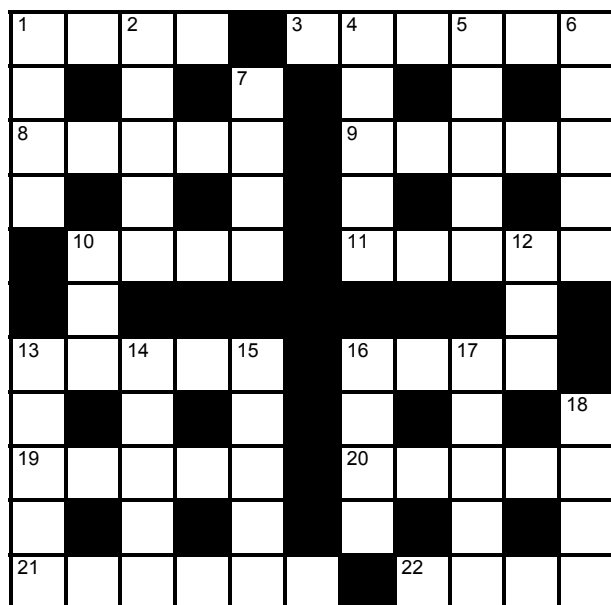
Produced by Helen Grant MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA





# MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

## CROSSWORD No2 (Easy)



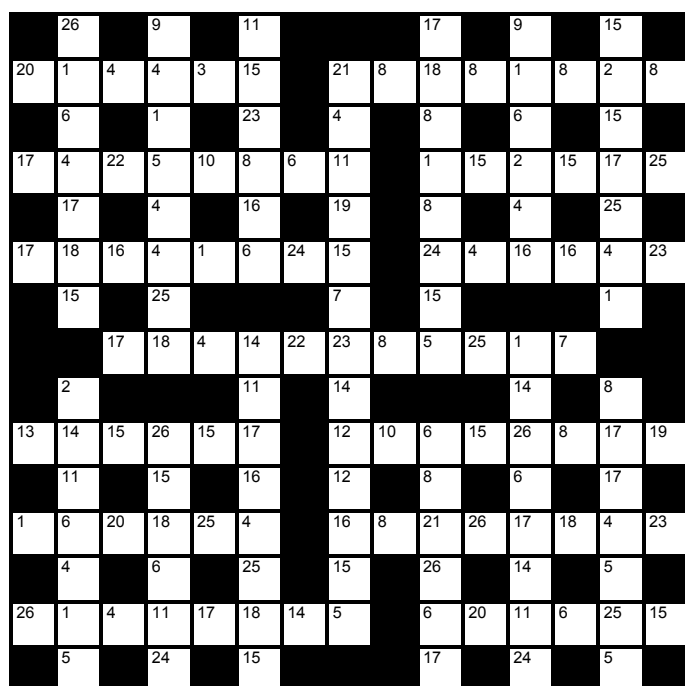
### Across

- 1 Love wine mixer (4)
- 3 Relative relief beyond North East (6)
- 8 A long way to travel for Wells's partner (5)
- 9 Victory depended on this ropey old stuff (5)
- 10 In the middle before noon identification (4)
- 11 Confused Middle Eastern enemy (5)
- 13 Game Castro's comrade joins with one of Hitler's (5)
- 16 Access George fed (4)
- 19 Colour in cheeks distressed unprincipled fellow (5)
- 20 Substantial cooker mess leads to anger (5)
- 21 Brexiters don't like the study of religion and tiny 7 Down; got it! (6)
- 22 Punishment for unruly snakes? (4)

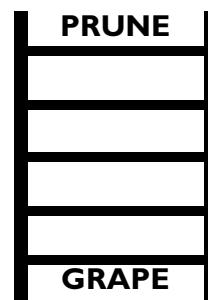
### Down

- 1 Old neckwear sounds rather uncomfortable (4)
- 2 Remus concocted cure from 22? (5)
- 4 Dark energy a bit thin (5)
- 5 Tall tale sounds a bit ropey, too! (5)
- 6 Now mother, commonly, turns out to be one (5)
- 7 Cross a stream to direct westerns? (4)
- 10 Good for and after burning (3)
- 12 A cardinal point between two? Rather woolly (3)
- 13 Marie a dog, in other words (5)
- 14 Disturb regal Nimrod's creator (5)
- 15 A minute piece of German bacon? (5)
- 16 Blood from a stone beyond the force of gravity (4)
- 17 To help sweeten Chinese gangsters, perhaps? (5)
- 18 Short demonstration of French army medics? (4)

## CODEWORD No2 (Tricky)

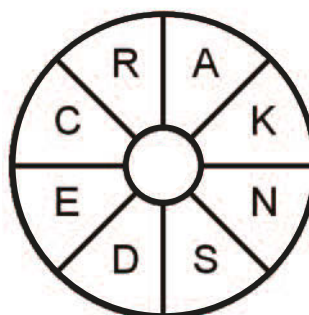


## STEP CHANGE



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

## NINE FROM EIGHT



Find the missing letter at the centre of the wheel to create a nine-letter word. Clue: Took part in school Sports Day?

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



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## Panto review - Regal dogs' dinner collars audience

Some might think it a risky undertaking to write a new pantomime from scratch, but if you're going to do it you might as well throw everything into the mix. That's certainly what Bev Beveridge has done with the Benenden Players' latest offering, Raiders of the Lost Monarch. Instead of Indiana though, we take Lindy-Anna Jones straight from the Welsh valleys - the always adroit Bonny Sullivan. We add to the pot a bit of 101 Dalmatians in the stellar form of Debbie Katis - Cruella's sister Nutella Brazil. Then Rub up a Genie in the form of Grant Matthews. Throw in Tintin's Thom(p)son twins - the underused Michael Patrick and Bob Barrow. Mix with Pearly Puss - a fine feline Tilly Milnes apparently exiled from the cast of Cats. And, give or take a Mexican restaurateur - Ian Aldridge, a depressed talking cactus - Cameron Rance, a clutch of journalists, a comic rail announcer and a man from the ministry - a suspiciously accented Pierre Gautier, and you've got quite an eclectic feast.

Only missing from the above cast was Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth herself. No, wait a minute; she was there (treasonably demoted to a 'Royal Highness' at one point). Nutella had abducted her with a pair of Corgis from which to make fur coats (the Corgis not Her Maj - do keep up!). Playing her was last year's star Katelyn Malaugh who hardly had a line until the very end - which was a pity.

Also waiting until late in the day to strut his stuff was the irrepressible Mark "The Bull" Barron-Reid. Whenever he hits the boards almost anything can happen - and often does. Out of the window goes any semblance of accent, or it would appear, script. But who cares, as his 'ad libs' can be funnier than Bev's book. Once he's singing and dancing the stage lights up - his 'James Brown' duet with Pierre Gautier was electrifying, his Tango with Debbie Katis was 'Strictly' awful! Quite why he needed a Peaky Blinders haircut is anyone's guess. His character, Blowsmelt, filched from James Bond,

came complete with a hand puppet cat that was as animated as almost anything onstage.

Perhaps the lesson might be that a bit less could be a bit more when it comes to constructing a panto. Certainly a bit less dialogue and a bit more singing and dancing! And as for the dialogue, perhaps a tad more rehearsing - you can forgive the youngsters for fluffing a few lines and cues, but some of the grown-ups really should do better - even on preview night. Bev and her Players have set the bar high in previous years and this mashup was, in the main, very enjoyable and very funny. But one has to say there were a few longeurs before Debbie or Bonnie or Mark or Tilly rode to the rescue.

A few final plaudits - the band, the sound effects, the sets and the costumes were, as ever, all great. The younger members of the cast were wonderful, but the break-out performances, as Ant and Geck, came from Archie Bunch and Seth Williams.

What WILL the Players do next year?

Kent Barker

## Village Hall highlights

With the stage extension taken down, the props and background put away, and the euphony of sounds from this year's pantomime a fading memory, you might assume that the Hall will now be quiet. But oh no, it isn't! During March we're bursting with clubs, classes, private parties, quizzes, and our first wedding reception of the year.

The highlight is a new weekly Flamenco class on Thursdays from 1 March at 7pm with Isabella Beeler. Please contact Isabella at [beeler.isabella@gmail.com](mailto:beeler.isabella@gmail.com).

There's a Rotary Club quiz on Friday 16 March for Hospice in the Weald. Form your own team of eight or join another table. Plenty of prizes plus an Easter Bonnet competition. Tickets £12.50 to include lasagne and pudding. Please contact Jacqueline at [hcjschalburg@gmail.com](mailto:hcjschalburg@gmail.com).

Lorraine Jones 243123  
[enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org](mailto:enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org)

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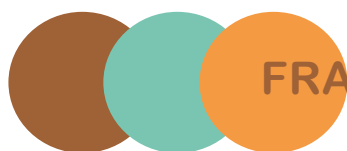
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## Art Show for Benenden

Saturday 14 April, 10-5pm and Sunday 15 April, 10-4pm, Benenden Village Hall  
Grierson Galleries has announced its first outside Art Show, which will be held at Benenden Village Hall on 14 and 15 April. This will be a first for both the Gallery and Benenden and will explore the diversity of art from many artists, some of whom live in the village. We will have 25 stands of eclectic works from genres ranging from portraiture, to acrylics, wildlife, landscapes and ceramics.

Grahame Grant and I opened Grierson Galleries two years ago. It is housed in a beautiful space in Sevenoaks High Street and we currently have a small presence in Cranbrook in the windows of Kingsfords Solicitors on the High Street. However we are planning to open a full branch in

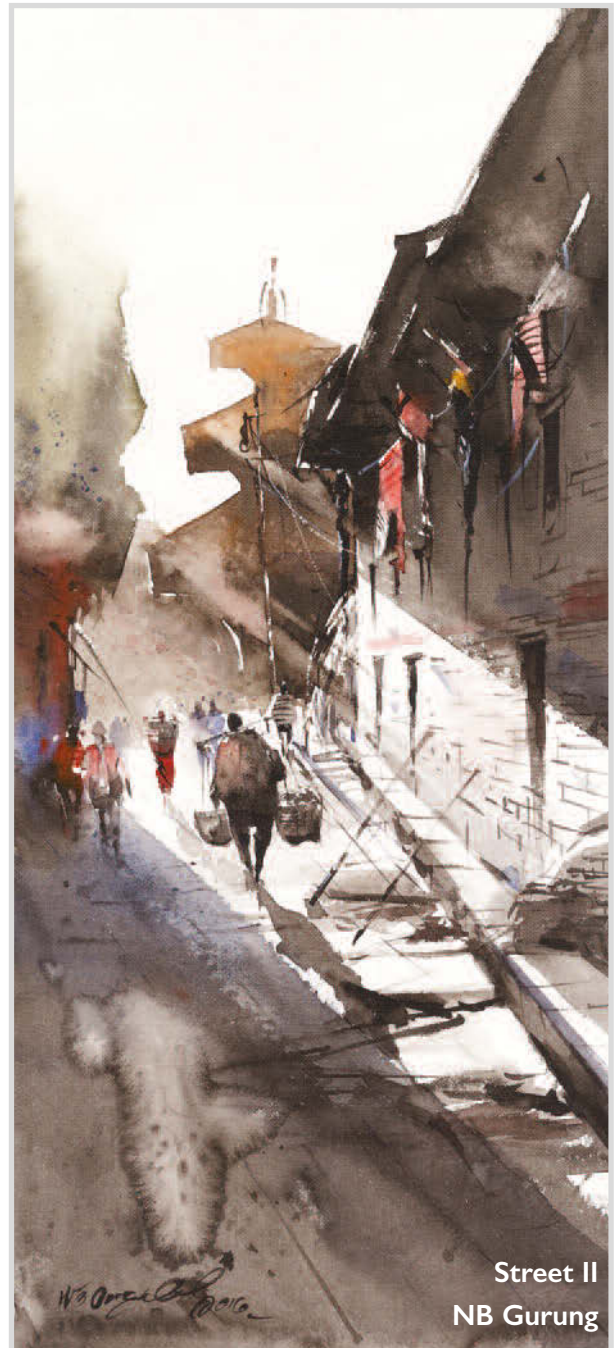


Annie Watsham  
Grahame Grant

Cranbrook in the near future.

We have lived in, and run businesses from, Cranbrook for nearly 18 years. We love our town and surrounding area and feel that a Gallery that offers more than just paintings hanging on a wall would be a welcome addition. Over the past two years we have built up a considerable portfolio of wonderful artists and faithful supporters. We offer space for events; run a 'try before you buy' scheme; provide an oil painting restoration service by Cranbrook-based Nick Hampshire, and hope soon to organise artist workshops.

We aim to support artists who are local as



Street II  
NB Gurung

well as those further afield - the furthest away currently being the amazing NB Gurung who lives and works in Kathmandu, Nepal.

We are delighted to be working on this event with a local firm of solicitors and an estate and letting agent and we look forward to welcoming everyone along - come and see some extraordinary art and meet the artists, each with a great story to tell. We look forward to welcoming you all along on what is going to be a wonderful weekend. Free entry, refreshments available.

Annie Watsham

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## From the Community, for the Community: Church Fete news

Saturday 16 June, 12noon-4pm

An Auction of Promises is just one of the new features being introduced at this year's St George's Church Fete on 16 June. Members of the Benenden community are invited to donate their talent (or time) in the form of a 'promise' to be auctioned (in the established 'silent format') at the Fete. The highest bidder on the day 'wins' the promise with payment going directly to the Church.

We are looking for all kinds of 'promises' - if you can you offer an evening's babysitting, an hour of IT advice, a yoga lesson or something someone would value contact Paul Hewitt phewitt1203@gmail.com or 07703 532744 to pledge your promise.

For the second year running, the Fete will run from 12noon-4pm on the Village Green. The earlier starting time is popular. A peal of bells will officially open the Fete which will be packed with ever popular traditional stands, displays and activities including: jewellery, plant, bric-a-brac, chic boutique, cake, tool and book stalls; dancing and a fancy-dress dog show in the arena; children's bouncy play area alongside face painting, coconut shy; and other treats. Currently we are waiting for our busy local bovine celebrity - Glitter the Cow - to confirm that she can perform in the cow pat bingo!

YOUR FETE WANTS YOU. If you would like to get involved either on the day or beforehand, even for an hour or two, please contact:

Tracy Claridge 240454  
tlclaridge@tlclaridge.co.uk

## The famous Bric-a-Brac stall

Saturday 16 June, 12noon-4pm

Last year's bric-a-brac stall raised over £1,000, so we are raring to go again.

We have garage space for storage and have begun collecting, so now is your chance to turn out your attics and cupboards.

We cannot do it without our valiant volunteers. Shifts on the day to suit you and allow time to visit the rest of the fete.

If you are able to come aboard again or help for the first time, please contact:

Maggy Hoyt 240700

## Benenden Volunteer Drivers - new co-ordinator

A warm welcome to the new co-ordinator for Volunteer Hospital Drivers. Since Monday 5 February, the co-ordinator for the Hospital Car Service is Lesley Attwood on 01580 243318.

This volunteer service is to enable Benenden village residents to attend a doctor's surgery or a hospital for a pre-arranged appointment. It is NOT an emergency service.

If there is no reply from Lesley please try again later or for urgent requests you can call Peter or Gilly Walton on 01580 242855.

For genuine emergencies please do not call our village volunteer service. Instead call the emergency services on 999; this is the emergency numbers for Ambulance, Police and Fire brigade.

Peter Walton

14	U	15	E	16	L	17	C	18	H	19	K	20	G	21	M	22	X	23	P	24	D	25	T	26	B
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CODEWORD No2

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Across: 1 Rose, 3 Nephew, 8 Fargo, 9 Oakum, 10 Amid, 11 Yemen, 13 Chess, 16 Gate, 19 Rogue, 20 Range, 21 Eureka, 22 Asbo Down: 1 Ruff, 2 Serum, 4 Ebony, 5 Hokum, 6 Woman, 7 Ford, 10 Ash, 12 Ewe, 13 Curie, 14 Elgar, 15 Speck, 16 Gore, 17 Tongs, 18 Demo

CROSSWORD No2

MINDBENDERS Answers

## Food & Drink

### American takes the bull by the horns at Old Dairy

Peter Thomas visits one of the Weald's finest breweries

The Old Dairy name may not be quite as apt since our local brewery moved to its new home in the heart of Tenterden, but at least the smell is better. The old milking parlour at Hole Park was atmospheric but it still had a lot of cows in amongst the mash tuns and there was little to recommend the fragrance.

The former WWII Nissen hut that now houses the operation has the whiff of nothing

less delightful than fermenting ale and the steam trains from the Kent and East Sussex Railway station next door. It's light and airy, although in the middle of February it could also be described as draughty and a bit parky.

Luckily, when you've flown in from the northern wilds of Minnesota, a British winter holds no terrors, so head brewer Wes Lynch is able to focus on maintaining the reputation of this multiple award-winning business whose reach

extends from our own community shop to some of London's finest watering holes.

Many of you will be familiar with Old Dairy's traditional British beers, but there's also now a flight of funky craft beers, under the Cattle Shed brand, and three gold medals in the recent CAMRA London and South-East Area awards (for Red, Snow and Copper Top)



suggest that the brewhouse is safe in Wes's hands since he took over last July from Glenn Whatman.

"Glenn was from Tenterden and lived here all his life," says the 28-year-old native of Duluth, "but I've focused my life around beer, fell in love

with British brews when I was at university over here and now Kent is my adopted home.

"Being from the States, though, I hope I can add something to what we do here, and the Cattle Shed range is my chance to play around with new recipes."

Wes first arrived on these shores in 2010, on an exchange year studying English at Birmingham University, where he met his Kentish wife Lucy before returning home to Castle Danger Brewery on the shores of Lake Superior. A masters degree in brewing and distilling at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh took him to the Charles

Wells outfit in Bedford, before the lure of the Weald brought him here a year ago.

The range at Old Dairy these days is eclectic; some are even available in cans, to appall the traditionalist; but the core range remains and thrives, many of them flavoured with Bullion, Fuggles and Challenger hops from Ross Hukins' farm in St Michaels.

"Uber Brew is new this year," says Wes, "a real success, a session pale ale, citrusy with new world hops from US and New Zealand. There's nothing wrong with having a beer that tastes great and you can drink it all day!"

From Minnesota to the shelves of the village shop, it's a long and rewarding journey for some of the great beers of the Weald.







### Tasting the Old Dairy brews

A careful tasting of Old Dairy beers revealed their breadth, complexity and unique signature. They seem to combine both a sense of place and the spirit of adventure. Here are some of the cream of the crop:

**Working Class Hero**, a homage to the brilliant Belgian beer aristocracy will certainly satisfy those who prefer the fuller, yeasty and more powerful drinks of the continent.

Those who want their pint to taste like it's from Kent will enjoy the familiar territory of **Gold Top** and **Red Top**. Gold Top's generous flavours and lemon verbena lift made it my favourite beer of the evening and certainly one that might kindly complement a Thai curry.

Whilst we still seem to be very much in the grip of frosty mornings and unfriendly nights, the range of winter beers are as timely as they are powerful. With names that milk their dairy identity, for those old enough to remember that milk got delivered in foil topped glass bottles, **Silver Top** and **Snow Top** both bring those black treacle, dried fruit and Christmas pudding flavours that make stout such a distinctive winter tippie. The inspired Imperial Porter, named **Dark Side of the Moo** (no udder brewery puns their names quite so well) was deceptively fragrant and a winner for anyone like me who mourns the departure of porter from the pub pumps.  
Alfred Nicol



## STOUT AND HEARTY IRISH STEW WITH PARSLEY DUMPLINGS

Serves 4

No claims whatsoever to authenticity ...  
Preheat the oven to 340°F/170°C/Gas 3  
**FOR STEW**

1.4kg middle neck of lamb on the bone, cut into portion sizes (ask in Wards Butchers - they know everything about Irish Stew)  
2tbsp seasoned plain flour  
350g onions, peeled and thickly sliced  
225g carrots, peeled and thickly sliced  
2 large potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced  
285ml Old Dairy Silver Top cream stout  
1.2litre lamb stock (Knorr concentrated tubs)

3 or 4 thyme sprigs

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### FOR DUMPLINGS

175g self-raising flour

Plenty of chopped parsley, flat or curly

75g shredded suet

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### METHOD

- Dip the lamb in seasoned flour and place a layer in the bottom of 3.5litre casserole, followed by a layer of onion, carrot and potato, season with salt and pepper. Add more meat and layer again until everything is in. Pour over the Silver Top, and top up with hot lamb stock so everything is covered. Add thyme sprigs. Put lid on and into the oven.
- Now go and walk the dog. After two hours come back in and make the dumplings.
- Mix flour, parsley and seasoning in a bowl. Mix in suet with a wooden spoon. Now add a couple of tablespoons of warm water and mix using your fingers. The dough needs to come away cleanly from the sides of the bowl, so add a little more water as required. Shape into about 12 walnut-sized dumplings and place on top of the stew. Cook for a further 30mins at 370°F/190°C/Gas 3 with no lid. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with buttered savoy cabbage.

Nicola Thomas

## Bird Notes

In the middle of January we went to the island of Fuerteventura, one of the Canary Islands just off the coast of North West Africa. They are volcanic islands with little vegetation and larva fields. The habitat does not support many species of birds but as is often the case there are some species that have adapted to the harsh conditions. It was some of these species I was hoping to see. Our accommodation was well off the beaten track close to one of the nature reserves.

On the first day, in a temperature of only 16 degrees and a stiff breeze, we walked for several hours into the reserve. The landscape reminded me of the terrain on Mars as seen from the rovers that have landed there. Apart from a distant sight of a large bird we saw very little and it became obvious that bird watching was going to be pretty challenging. As we were just finishing our walk we suddenly heard a lovely bubbling flight call and we looked up to see four or five



Spectacled Warbler,  
*Sylvia conspicillata*

Black-bellied Sandgrouse. With black bellies and white underwings contrasted against rusty brown upperparts, these grouse-size birds with pointed wings looked fantastic and certainly worth the wait. A small flock of sparrows also got up and landed in an evergreen bush. When we managed a closer look it was quite clear they were no ordinary House Sparrows. These had chestnut coloured heads not unlike our Tree Sparrows but the males had very bold black arrow shaped spots on their flanks, giving a very distinct appearance. They were Spanish

Sparrows and a new species for me.

The next day we met with an English birdwatcher who had emigrated to the island some years ago and who guided us to the best places. The weather at the start was not brilliant as the wind had strengthened and it was drizzling. We were well wrapped up and the terrain now reminded me of the bare mountain tops of the Cairngorms! Despite the conditions during our first stroll around a clump of bushes our guide heard the alarm call of a warbler. This little bird soon appeared on top of a rock, giving us excellent views. It looked like a very strongly coloured Whitethroat with a blue/grey head and dark lores contrasting with a white eye ring, which is why it is called a Spectacled Warbler.

It was during one overcast period whilst closely watching some heathery looking scrub that I noticed a long neck appear followed by another with a black stripe running down the side of its neck. This long-legged, long-necked bird was well camouflaged as its upper parts were heavily barred and matched the surrounding vegetation. This was a Houbara Bustard and top of my list of birds to see. Their courtship display is a most extraordinary sight. The male bird throws its head so far back that it is totally buried



Houbara Bustard,  
*Chlamydotis undulata*

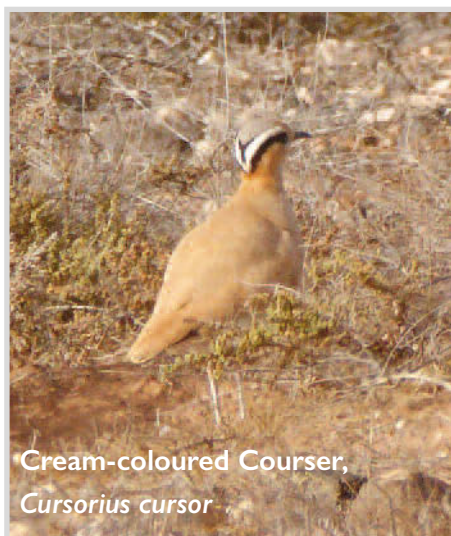


in his back feathers while the brilliantly white breast feathers arch up, completely covering the remainder of the body. He then races around like a headless chicken. I was looking forward to witnessing this ridiculous, somewhat bizarre spectacle. Although we were right in the middle of the courtship season the birds were not displaying. Our guide explained that due to the lack of rain the birds might not breed and hence did not display and unfortunately despite the fact that it was raining it was not enough to encourage display that day or for the rest of the week.

Our next stop was in a ravine where we were hoping to find Fuerteventura's only endemic bird living on the insects that dwell in the dampish environment. Fortunately, with little vegetation and a bird that likes to catch insects from a good vantage spot, it was not too long before we found our quarry. The Fuerteventura Stonechat breeds only on this island and looks exactly like a cross between a normal Stonechat and a Whinchat.



Fuerteventura Stonechat,  
*Saxicola dacotiae*



Cream-coloured Courser,  
*Cursorius cursor*



Cream-coloured Courser,  
*Cursorius cursor*

Although we had found many of the local rarities we were determined to find one of the more sought-after species. Our guide earlier in the week had taken us into one of its favourite habitats but due to the inclement weather we did not locate it. Later in the week the sun shone but the wind had risen to 40mph and birdwatching from inside the car seemed a very attractive idea. Our quarry was cream/yellow in colour, well camouflaged in its sandy-coloured rocky habitat. We spent a very long time scanning the landscape for movement. Then a long legged wader ran across the road in front of us with its blue/grey head held high. What a wonderful moment this was and we watched a pair of Cream-coloured Coursers running about searching and feeding for about 40 minutes, following them in our car which acted as an excellent moving hide. They occasionally took short flights showing off their black primaries and black under wings; a really dapper bird.

Fuerteventura's commonest bird was a rather plain-looking pipit called a Berthelot's Pipit named after a French naturalist who lived in the islands. It only breeds in the Canaries and Madeira but its long legs and tail gave it a wagtail appearance and being the only bird to watch on many occasions, I became rather fond of it.

Charles Trollope 240821 cetetal@btinternet.com



## Out of sight, out of mind

You dutifully put out your recycling for collection or take it to the bottle-bank. But have you any idea what happens to it then? Iden Green environmentalist HETTY GARNIER, believes there is an unseen problem, and it may well be OUR plastic that is polluting the oceans.

The UK is at last beginning to take notice of the issue of waste and the damaging environmental effect it is having. Inspired by the pollution seen on Blue Planet 2, plastic has captured news headlines and become a prominent public concern. Manufacturers, retailers and government ministers are rushing to see how we can reduce waste and deal with what we do produce. But this deals with the symptoms, not the cause, of the problem which is the sheer volume of waste we produce.

We should want to recycle as much as possible, but we also cannot be content to do no more than just dump our paper, plastic and glass in our green boxes. The journey of waste goes well beyond the point of disposal, yet we rarely think about what happens next. Once out of sight, they are out of mind, but these materials do not cease to exist when they leave our homes.

Once collected, mixed recycling is usually sent to a sorting plant where it is separated into different waste streams. In order for the material to be of further use, the recycling has to be free of contamination - it must consist of just one type of material - or it cannot be processed into new products.

The majority of this segregated recycling is shipped abroad to places such as Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan. These countries have little waste management infrastructure but need cheap materials, hence they import our recyclates in huge quantities to support manufacturing. However, it is not the case that all our rubbish is transformed into new goods, considerable quantities are mishandled and end up in the ocean. This explains why 95% of ocean plastic is fed into the sea from just ten rivers across Asia and Africa.

So we are partly complicit when it comes to pollution as we are responsible for sending our waste to places not necessarily set up to handle it reliably. Plus it is exceptionally hard to track the final destination of exported materials, so often we do not know where our food wrappers or plastic bottles will end up.

China has been the single biggest market for the export of our waste and recycling for the last decade. However, recent policy reforms and economic restructuring in the country have resulted in a dramatic decline in demand for the type of low-quality recycling we currently produce in the UK. A complete ban has even been issued on certain low-grade recyclates. Waste exporters are becoming increasingly desperate to find new markets - almost invariably in developing countries.

We must stop exporting our waste problem to other, generally poorer, countries or pollution levels will inevitably increase. Next month, I will suggest some ways in which this can be done and how you can help do it.



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Above: All the colour, vibrancy and creativity of the village pantomime. Photographs: Hayley Daley

Front cover: Raiders of the Lost Monarch: a showcase for our many community talents. Photograph: Hayley Daley