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# Editorial



When it's my turn to write this editorial I always do the same things in the hope that the muse will descend and inspiration will follow. After hearing that Julie Burchill would drink a bottle of champagne before writing her columns, I toyed with the idea of popping down to Benenden's and buying a bottle of rather splendid and very affordable Cremant de Bourgogne, but at I I am perhaps not (I hear cries of "try it").

My technique more closely mirrors that of Joan Didion, who would spend most of the day not putting anything on paper, just sitting there trying to form a coherent idea in the hope that something would transpire. So it was a relief to know from Sue and Stuart's Talking Point (page 7) that the practice of quietly observing the world - or in my case Benenden life - may not only allow ideas to surface but may also be good for me.

But it wasn't hard to be inspired this month by the myriad village events in store for us. We kick off with the Benenden Bonfire on 8 November, a wonderful occasion and serious fundraiser but please don't forget to buy your tickets in advance as you won't be able to turn up on the day. For the musically inclined I recommend the talented Benenden School music scholars on 12 November, and the Rhythm of Life Choir's 'Winter Magic' concert in St George's Church on 22 November promises to be a real treat. Then we end the month with the Friends of St George's Quiz - on the surface a hugely popular fun and friendly event, but in reality a gripping gladiatorial contest. I love it - even though I only ever seem to contribute a couple of correct answers. The best of which was "Gormenghast" but I can't for the life of me remember the question!

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

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

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 $Contributions \ to: be needen parish magazine @gmail.com \ by \ the \ {\bf 10} th \ of \ the \ preceding \ month.$ 

Advertising orders or queries to: advertising.benendenmag@gmail.com.

Distribution gueries to: dd.rhill@btinternet.com.

Postal address: c/o Community Office, Benenden Village Hall, Benenden, TN17 4DY 07593 226462

# Village Calendar

November		
Saturday I	Fish and Chip Supper, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 4	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 4	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Saturday 8	Benenden Bonfire and Fireworks, Benenden School, 5.30pm	p.9
Saturday 8	Cyril Moore Skittles Evening for the Poppy Appeal,	
	St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 9	Hemsted Park, Blazin' Fiddles, Benenden School Theatre, 7pm	p.19
Tuesday I I	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.9
Wednesday 12	The Music Scholars of Benenden School,	
	Benenden School Centenary Hall, 7pm	p. 14
Saturday 15	Autumn Village Clean, Benenden's Community Shop, 9am	p.9
Saturday 15	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 17	Parish Council Meeting, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm	
Tuesday 18	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 18	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 18	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Winter Party, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.22
Saturday 22	The Rhythm of Life Choir: Winter Magic Concert, St George's Church, 71	om p.11
Saturday 22	Hemsted Park, The BBC Big Band, Benenden School Centenary Hall, 7.30pm p. 19	
Saturday 22	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 25	Merry and Bright, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p. 14
Friday 28	Benenden's Community Shop Christmas Shopping Evening,	
	Benenden's Community Shop, 5.30pm	p.2
Saturday 29	Axe Throwing, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 30	The Angry Whelk Fresh Fish Stall, Benenden Village Hall, 12-2pm	
Sunday 30	Advent Carol Service: The Service of Light, St George's Church, 5pm	D.22

### Iden Green Toddler Group

Tuesdays during term time in Iden Green Congregational Church, 9-11.30am

### Wednesday Coffee Mornings

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-11.30am

### Cakes & Chaos: Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11am

# Parish Council



It was lovely to read the kind words about our friend and fellow councillor, Peter Driver, in the magazine last month, and this month there is a further tribute to his life and how he contributed so much to the village, making it a better place for everyone. The parish council will carry on with creating his vision of the Beacon Field wildflower meadow, a very fitting legacy for a man who cared so much about our natural environment.

You may have noticed the recent work being carried out on our war memorial at the top of Walkhurst Road. This has been beautifully cleaned and restored by a local firm, Military Grave Restorers, who are passionate about their work as a community interest group. It's great to have the memorial looking at its best for forthcoming Remembrance Day, as you'll see from the front cover of this edition.

Speaking of cleaning, the next village clean-up is on Saturday 15 November, volunteers to meet outside the village shop at 9am to collect equipment required for this worthwhile morning of sprucing.

There has been a lot of discussion recently among neighbouring parishes around Local Government Reform (LGR). Although Kent did not make the first tranche of authorities proposed for devolution, Kent councils are working together to put forward joint proposals for submission to Whitehall by the end of November 2025. These will include options for a three or four unitary council model for Kent. From a parish council perspective, we are following progress closely and we will be looking carefully at how LGR affects parish councils in East Sussex, who are a step ahead of Kent, with a new mayor being elected for the whole of Sussex in May 2026, and a new unitary council operating there from 2028.

Hopefully this will give us a chance to learn from those who have gone through this process at a parish level and what issues we need to address (if any) before the reorganisation of council services takes place across Kent.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
07593 226462 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org
For more information see our website benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk or find us on Facebook

Parish Council Meeting Monday 17 November, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm

# Church Calendar

### St George's Church

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

Associate Priest: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 rev.ylva@gmail.com

Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 sue@undaunted.co.uk

Churchwarden: Cathy Presgrave 07500 119189 cathy.presgrave@gmail.com

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

Please inform the Rector, Associate Priest or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Sunday 2 November 8am Communion 10am All-age 7.30pm All Souls' Day Service

Communion

Sunday 9 November 8am BCP Communion 10.45am Remembrance Service

followed by an Act of Remembrance,

War Memorial

Sunday 16 November 8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Saturday 22 November 4pm Connect Four

at Mission Church, Sandhurst

Sunday 23 November 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

Sunday 30 November 8am Benefice Communion 10am Benefice 5pm Advent Service of Light

All-age Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst

Morning Prayer 8am Mondays and Fridays

### Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

### Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The I0am Morning Worship is broadcast on our YouTube channel: search 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

### The Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

### From the Parish Registers

Wedding 10 October Gabriele Griggs and Thomas Mellor

Marriage Blessing 11 October Mark and Loretta Czapiewski

Funerals 20 October Jean Epps Funeral and burial

4 25 October Peter Driver Interment

# Church Letter



### A time of remembrance amid the storms

November, the month of remembrance, is upon us, seemingly in the blink of an eye. As the late autumn weather settles in, the changing of the clocks plunges us into darkness too early and we batten down the hatches as the named storms approach, we turn to a month of reflection and remembrance for loved ones who have died, and for the fallen servicemen and women.

In the benefice, we will have a very important service - All Souls' Day - which falls on Sunday 2 November at 7.30pm at St George's Church. It is a very moving service where we bring to mind our loved ones who have died and light a candle in their memory. Then, the following weekend, we have our Remembrance Sunday Services: 10.45am in St George's followed by the laying of wreaths at the war memorial and 10.50am in Sandhurst, with the Act of Remembrance taking place at the war memorial, followed by a church service in the Mission Church. It is a special time for our local communities to honour and remember with gratitude the lives lost in the two World Wars and conflicts beyond.

Back in September, Revd Ylva and I led a local pilgrimage/mindfulness walk around Benenden's beautiful countryside, taking in the fields, ancient woodland, and pathways, and reflecting on certain aspects of the landscape through poems, scripture, and exercises to calm the mind and enliven the senses. We are so lucky to live in such a stunning part of the country, and with that in mind, may I encourage you to don your walking boots, wrap up against the elements, and go out to explore your local area, even if it is just down a leafy lane and back. The benefits of getting out in the fresh air are numerous, not least the energising effect that moving the body has on your mental wellbeing.

This time last year, I had just returned from Spain after completing the Camino Inglés - or the English Camino. We walked from Ferrol in northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela over six days, seven intrepid pilgrims on a quest to follow a route that had been trodden for centuries by fellow seekers along the path. Along the way, we encountered the most beautiful scenery, the kindness of strangers, the delicious Spanish cuisine and a shared sense of purpose, but each of us had a different reason for being there. I have been asked on several occasions about the impact that the Camino had on me. I learned a lot about myself and my resilience, but most of all, I learned how to trust the journey, to trust that God would guide me and be with me throughout the challenges and joys of life. I wait expectantly to see where He takes me next!

Oh, by the way, Revd Ylva and I are planning more pilgrimage/mindfulness walks for next year, so watch this space.

Lyn Hayes, Authorised Lay Minister

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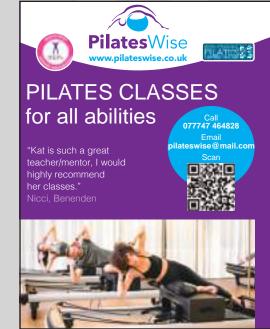
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Benenden Village Hall

Benenden Village Hall

Thursday 9am Bloomsburys, Biddenden

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# Talking Point



### When time speeds up, try slowing down

One of the summer highlights for us is sipping a glass or two of Benenden Bacchus with a packet of crisps outside the Bull, watching the sun setting at the end of The Street. It feels like yesterday that we were doing just that with a group of friends, chatting about up-and-coming holidays. Yet somehow it's suddenly November and we're dusting off the wellies for the annual Bonfire and Fireworks. Where did the time go and why does this year feel like it's flown by even more quickly than previous years? Is it just us feeling that time speeds up the older you get?

For our great-nieces and nephews, the school term stretches endlessly ahead, and Christmas feels an age away for them. We remember the long school summer holidays that seemed to last forever. These days the end of July and August flashes by. Psychologists explain this through the idea of "proportional theory", which makes sense. Time feels faster as each moment becomes a smaller fraction of our life. When you're ten years old, a year is ten per cent of your life; when you're 50, it's only two per cent.

We think it's more than that, though. We've certainly been guilty of getting so immersed in work commitments, juggling deadlines, supporting elderly parents and trying to keep up to date with housework and admin that the days blur together and the weeks fly by. Have we just allowed ourselves to get embroiled in the 'busyness' of life. We've noticed recently that when you meet someone and ask, "How are you?" so many people will include in their response how busy they are. Perhaps in our hurry to fit everything in, we forget to be present in that moment.

Neuroscientists have found that when we take the time to stop and let our minds wander or daydream, our brain's 'default mode network' lights up. This enables us to process memories, emotions and ideas, so slowing down isn't wasted time; it's how we make sense of time itself. Research shows that people who consciously incorporate pauses into their day report feeling they have more time - not less.

If you're thinking, 'this is all very well, but I don't have the luxury of time to rest', you'll be pleased to hear that in his book 'The Brain at Rest', Dr Joseph Jebelli frames rest not as downtime that sacrifices productivity, but as something that enables better performance. He sees it not as an indulgence but as a biological necessity.

We love the French concept of flânerie - the art of strolling without purpose, simply observing the world, curious and unhurried, allowing life to unfold for a while rather than rushing to the next thing. We feel it's an attitude that has a lot to teach us in an age obsessed with speed and productivity. The irony being that by resting more we'll get more done and our perception of time will slow down.

Stu and Sue Roberts



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### News and Events

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in any of the following areas: organisation
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We are an ambitious team committed to achieving high standards in primary education for the local children we serve today and to expand our federation over time so more local children get the best educational start in life. We meet six times a year and you will also need a minimum of five to six free hours a month to get involved. Training in schools' governance will be given.

For more information on schools governance: www.nga.org.uk/about/become-a-governor-trustee/ Please contact me if you are interested.

Caroline Stern @1010federation.org

### Village Autumn Tidy

The next village tidy is on Saturday 15 November. Equipment (litter pickers, hi viz jackets, bin bags) can be collected from outside the village shop from 9am and volunteers can take part at any time for any length of time between 9 and 11am. Litter collected and bagged should be left at the village hall and equipment returned to the shop by 11am. Volunteers will receive a voucher for a drink and cake to be used at the café.

For more information email: clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org



### Village lunch

All Benenden villagers are invited to join us for lunch in the village hall at 12.30pm on Tuesday I I November. If you would like to come and haven't written your name down already, then please ring Genevieve by Thursday 6 November if possible. It costs just £5 and lifts can be arranged. We look forward to seeing you.

We are hoping as many as our regulars as possible will be able to make the Christmas village lunch which is on Tuesday 2 December at 12.30pm in the village hall. Please note this is on an earlier date in the month so as not to clash with other social calendars. We look forward to seeing you and as ever, anyone from the village is welcome. Please ring Sheila by Thursday 27 November if you would like to come and haven't written your name down already. Genevieve Greenwood 240526 Sheila Hume 854627

Wednesday coffee mornings

We would love to see more people at the coffee morning in the Memorial Hall every Wednesday between 10-11.30am, to catch up and make new friends. We look forward to seeing you soon for a hot drink and a biscuit. Gilly Walton 242855 gilly.walton@gmail.com





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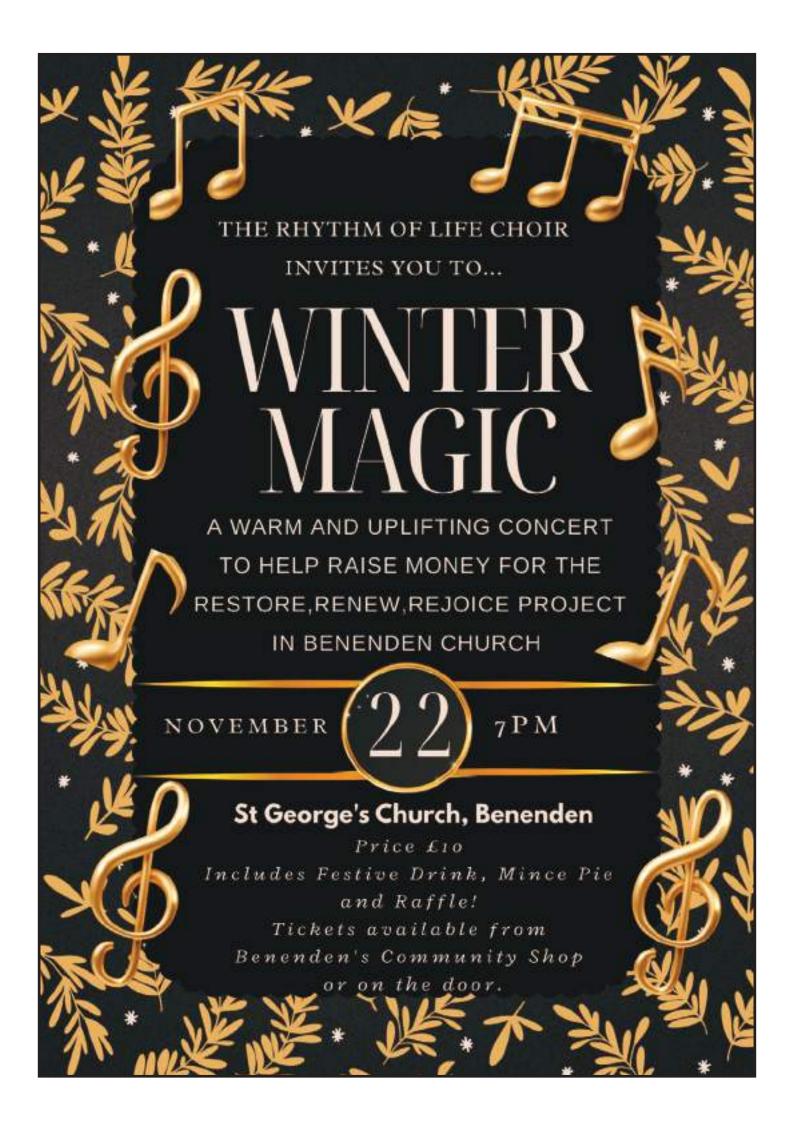








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01580 240755 m.moore131156@gmail.com Mick Moore

### Poppy Appeal collection

We are once again arranging a limited house-to-house collection for the Poppy Appeal. From 25 October boxes will be placed in the community shop, Benenden Hospital, the St George's Club, the primary school, Benenden School, the Bull and the Woodcock.

During the mornings of Saturday I and Saturday 8 November, we shall establish a collection with a wider range of poppy items and our allocation of the 2025 enamel badges outside the community shop.

Royal British Legion, Benenden Branch

### Remembrance events

On Sunday 9 November, the annual Remembrance Sunday Service will take place at St George's Church, starting at 10.45am. All those with service medals are invited to wear them.

After the service the Royal British Legion standard bearer and escorts will lead the Benenden School Combined Cadet Force contingent to the war memorial for the laying of wreaths and the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille.

The main road will not be closed so that all present are asked to cross carefully and gather in Walkhurst Road.

On Tuesday 11 November, Armistice Day, the senior pupils of the primary school will gather at the war memorial at 10.55am to remember those parishioners who fell in the two World Wars. We invite local residents to join this commemoration.



### Benenden Primary School

Forest school is well and truly up and running at Benenden Girl's School - and a huge thank you to the school for access to this lovely setting. The children have already made dens, built hedgehog houses, made necklaces and cooked on the fire. This is in addition to climbing trees, playing hide and seek, and a more spiritual activity called 'silent spotter'.

The Year 5 children spent three action-packed days and nights at Bewl Water, taking part in activities including canoe rafting, giant stand-up paddle board, and crate stacking. I was privileged to spend the evenings with the class and saw them grow their friendships and be brave in all sorts of situations.

You may have spotted some of our Year 6 children taking part in Bikeability, where they have been learning to ride safely on the roads - another amazing set of skills that they will take into adulthood with them.

The children in Key Stage I are well into preparations for the Nativity, and the choir are busy practising a selection of Christmas songs ready for the events around the village. Alison Brook, Headteacher 240565 a.brook@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk

In association with the Friends of St George's Church

# THE MUSIC SCHOLARS OF BENENDEN SCHOOL

Wednesday 12 November 2025
7pm to 8.30pm
in Benenden School Centenary Hall
with bar open from 6pm

Attendance Complimentary with a retiring collection for the Friends of St George's Church

### Merry and Bright

The sun was shining for our visit to the Pilot for our fish and chips and everyone enjoyed it. A new person joined us. She had never been to Dungeness and was amazed at the views, also saying this will be good for her as she has no car to venture out in. She was so impressed she wanted to join straight away. It made me feel all our hard work is worthwhile.

This is what our club is all about: friendship, company and places to visit, plus some talks on interesting things. For those who are on their own, it's a nice place to come along to have company for a couple of hours a month.

We have only two meetings left this year, plus our Christmas party. We have decided there are no membership fees to pay until 2026, just pay for the tea. On 25 November there is a visit from a Guide Dogs for the Blind representative. Our Christmas Party is on 16 December.

We would all like to meet you. Feel free to just pop along to see if we are for you. Transport can be arranged.

Laraine Penny, Chair 241763 Julia Collard, Secretary 241944

### Benenden Film Night

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, hailed as one of the greatest western films, will be showing on Saturday 6 December in the village hall. The event, the latest of Benenden's film nights, raises funds to support the hall and other village recreational facilities. The evening includes a delicious meal (provided by WOW Catering), pay bar and raffle.

Loosely based on facts, the film stars Paul Newman as Butch and Robert Redford as Sundance, leaders of a wild west outlaw band. the Hole in the Wall Gang, who go on the run after a train robbery goes wrong. The 1969 Oscar winning film played a major role in Robert Redford's rise to stardom and his recent death has focused attention on it afresh. It's a buddy movie, full of sharp, witty dialogue as the outlaws try to outrun a relentlessly pursuing posse of lawmen. It also features Katharine Ross (star of The Graduate and The Stepford Wives) as the love interest and includes one of Burt Bacharach and Hal David's best-known songs, Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head.

The evening is organised by Benenden Village Trust, the charity which runs Benenden village hall, the recreation ground and the playground. The hall has been an integral part of village life for the past 50 years but it loses money and its ageing structure needs constant repairs and improvements to keep it fit for modern life. The recent Storm Amy ripped ridge tiles from the roof and exposed a serious leak round a window frame. Funds from a previous film night have helped provide a new space heating boiler.

So do contact your friends and come along. Cowboy hats and boots optional; please hitch horses to the car park fence. Tickets cost £25 each and will be on sale throughout November at www.ticketsource.co.uk/benenden-village-trust or from the village hall Monday to Friday mornings. See the advertisement opposite. Martin Dickson, Chair, Benenden Village Trust

# **BVT Film Night**



# Sat 6 Dec doors 6.30pm film 7pm

### Tickets £25, inc supper:

- ! www.ticketsource.co.uk/benendenvillagetrust or scan this QR code
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Village Hall Fundraiser, pay bar and raffle





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### Paws of Praise

St George's Church was packed recently for a Paws of Praise Service. Over 30 dogs brought their owners and families to this special service, but not to be outdone, two rats even came in their cages and sat in the front row.

All creatures, great and small, were thoroughly well behaved. There were plenty of wagging tails as they enjoyed the service about respecting our Earth and the animals with whom we share our lives, and the planet. David Commander thanked them for their enthusiasm and participation with dog biscuits at the end of the service.

### Benenden Pre-School

Pre-school welcomed 14 new children in September and we are getting to know them and their families. They are settling in well, exploring all the toys and resources inside, as well as in the garden, and getting used to our routines.

Our first curriculum goal is for children to settle in and become confident learners. Children thrive as they develop self-assurance and really enjoy playing alongside others. As they grow in confidence their involvement deepens, they begin to play collaboratively and develop imaginative role play.

We make home visits to new starters where possible. These are beneficial in helping staff, particularly the child's key person, to get to know each child and their family in their own space and an opportunity for parents to ask questions. While all staff care for all children, it is mandatory for a member of staff to be allocated as a key person to each child to foster a secure relationship, ensure tailored care and learning and to serve as a point of contact for parents.

I must also add that the children who returned for their second year of pre-school are very welcoming and caring towards their new friends.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

# Friends of Benenden Primary School

We have had an exciting few weeks filled with books, imagination and community spirit. The school recently held its first ever readathon - an event that not only encouraged pupils to dive into the wonderful world of reading but also raised an impressive £600 for school projects and resources.

Pupils from every class took part, setting personal challenges and logging their reading minutes throughout the week. Teachers and parents were amazed by the children's enthusiasm and commitment, with many students squeezing in extra chapters before bedtime or waking up early to read "just one more page".

To make things even more exciting, special prizes were awarded in several categories. The 'Most Minutes Read in a Week' award celebrated those who simply couldn't put their books down, while the 'Most Books Completed' prize recognised the speedy pageturners of Benenden. A third award, for the 'Largest Range of Text Types', highlighted those who explored everything from poetry and comics to non-fiction and novels.

The readathon has not only raised funds but also reminded everyone of the joy and adventure that books bring.

As the excitement settles, preparations are already in full swing for the school's next big event: Benenden's first-ever glow party, taking place in November. Pupils can look forward to a fun-filled evening with glow sticks, dancing, UV face paint, and tattoos. The glow party promises to be a dazzling celebration to round off the term in style - a well-earned reward after all that reading!

With such enthusiasm and creativity, it's clear that Benenden Primary continues to shine brightly, both in literacy and in spirit. Evie Banfield and Jane Mason friends@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk/PTFA/





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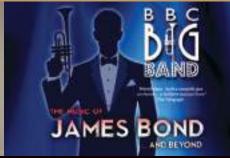
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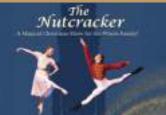
9 November

The BBC
Big Band
22 November

Jess Gillam

11 December









Lost in Music

12 December

The Nutcracker

13 December

Faulty Towers
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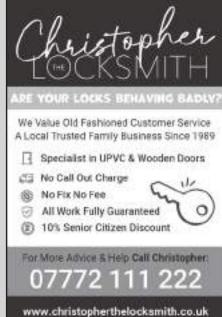
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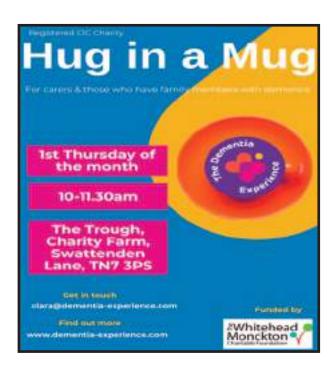
Café opening hours: 8.30am-3pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am-2pm on Saturday. Closed on Sunday.

info@benendens.co.uk

Tel: 01580 279808







### Talking shop

This glorious autumn has been enjoyed by very many of our café customers, who have taken advantage of the clement weather to sit outside and enjoy their refreshments. In less pleasant weather, the autumn-themed decoration and lighting have made the interior much more user friendly and happily the café is being well used. There's nothing quite like the buzz of a busy café.

As the festive season approaches, we will be raffling our hampers, selling some mince pies and cream teas and holding a Christmas shopping evening on 28 November from 5.30-7.30pm. Do come along and see what you can find that may not be available in the high street. Mid-month Hannah will be selling beautiful willow rings and other decorative bits (rosehips, dried flowers, pine cones etc) for us to create our own Christmas wreaths.

For our volunteers we are planning a Christmas sing-song with hot treats and mulled wine on 9 December from 6-7.30pm. This is always a popular evening. Please bring along anyone you know who might be interested in joining our volunteers. The shop needs volunteers to exist and it's a lovely way to meet people and make you forget your own preoccupations for a while. Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk www.benendens.co.uk



### Christmas Lunch

We will be holding our annual lunch in the Memorial Hall for anyone who will be on their own on Christmas Day. We meet from 12.15pm and aim to sit down to eat dinner at Ipm. Traditionally we watch the King's Speech (the real one, not the film!) at 3pm.

If you would like to join us please contact me or you can pop a note through the rectory door. Lifts can be arranged. The sooner we have an idea about numbers the easier it is to organise the catering. We don't charge for this lunch, but any donations received are forwarded to the Catching Lives charity in Canterbury that supports homeless people.

If you have provided food items in the past we will be contacting you again; however if you would like to offer help in any way this year please also contact me.

Helen Commander 240658 helenjcommander@gmail.com





In October, Amanda Taggart gave us an inspiring insight into the history of the house and gardens at Great Dixter. While familiar to many of us, a visit must be amongst our trips in 2026. Our social afternoon was a friendly get-together and we were impressed again by Anna Millen's floral talents. She demonstrated making autumnal and Christmas wreaths and using dried flowers.

We look forward now to our winter party in the Memorial Hall on 18 November at 2pm. We'll be entertained by singers Doreen Hulm and Beverley Hone and enjoy singing along to familiar songs.

Christmas is fast approaching and our Christmas lunch is in the Bull, Benenden, on 3 December. Non-members are welcome at all our meetings.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk



### Planning Matters

For full details of the Parish Council's comment please see minutes of meetings.

- 25/02184/REM Broughton, Rolvenden Road.
   Approval of Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale) following
   Outline Permission for (Demolition of existing structures and storage uses and erection of a detached bungalow)
   (23/00188/OUT refers).
- 25/02332/FULL Land At Hinxden Farm,
   Hinksden Road. Demolition of remaining
   parts of existing hopper hut and construction
   of new building for holiday accommodation
   with associated amenity/parking areas,
   pedestrian track, refuse and cycle store.
- 25/01906/FULL Land Adjacent Rothermere Close, Walkhurst Road. Variation of Condition 3 of Planning Permission 19/00822/HYBRID -Amendment to the shape & design of the approved attenuation pond.
- 25/02016/TPO Vicarage Coach House, The Green. TREES: 2 no. LIME (G1) - Crown lift up to 5m above ground level. The Parish Council supports this application.
- 25/02129/FULL 13 Rothermere Close. Single storey rear extension & installation of 2 no. rooflights. The Parish Council supports this application.

More planning matters at: benendenparishcouncil.gov.uk



www.chalkdownstaplehurst-rda.co.uk





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### Benenden School

It has been a busy and rewarding first half of term for all our students. They have taken part in a wide range of activities, from volunteering in the community and attending an A Level fair to enjoying a lively ceilidh with Tonbridge School, raft building, numerous sports fixtures, creating recyclable fashion, ten-pin bowling and trips to Rye.

A particular highlight was receiving an uplifting update from the Rosewood School in West Malling, which supports children with medical and physical needs. Last year, Benenden students raised funds for Rosewood through a sponsored musical challenge, and it has been wonderful to see the results of their efforts: the school has purchased new musical instruments that are already enriching children's lives. It was a proud moment for our students to see how their charitable work has made a real difference.

Students have also shared their interest in the school's heritage with the local community, including giving a talk to the Iden Green and Benenden WI. Most recently, a group of students and staff joined an archaeological dig in Hemsted woods, uncovering the crater of a World War II V-I flying bomb along with remnants of the rocket itself.

Rachel Bailey, Headmistress

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### Letter to the Editor

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

### Memories of school lunches

I noticed in the September issue of the magazine that the Gibbon and Buckland school house is going to be sold. I remember when I went to the primary school by the church on The Green that every day we used to line up, hold hands two by two, and walk down to it to have our lunch. Mrs Clarke, a lovely lady who lived in Iden Green, was the cook and served up some gorgeous food for us. It was so good that most of us went up for second helpings. The headmaster and his wife lived next door. Susan Downes

### Benenden Almshouse Charities



### Historic housing ready for the move into a bright new future

Most parishioners will be aware of the new development in Walkhurst Road. You may also be aware that this involves the construction of 25 new homes. What you may not be aware of is that 12 of these new units will be almshouses for Benenden Almshouse Charities.

The origins of the charity date back to the 18th century and it has been providing homes for local residents for nearly 300 years. In 1960 the Gybbon's and Sharp's Charity, which owned the former workhouse, Feoffee Cottages, and the Thorn House Charity, which owned Thorn Cottages, merged to become the Benenden Almshouse Charities. The charity has nine existing units, of which six are at Feoffee Cottages, which adjoins the new development. The remaining three, Thorn Cottages, are opposite the tennis courts in Iden Green.

The charity is run by local trustees for local people. As almshouses, the units are the only form of social housing that are exempt from the right to buy. Consequently, the new and existing units will be available in perpetuity for the benefit of the village. The charity is a registered provider of social housing and its scheme provides that the selection of occupants is based upon the criteria of need and parish residency. The charity has no

endowments and its sole income is its monthly maintenance contributions from the residents.

The difficulty the charity has faced is the age and nature of its existing housing stock. Eight of the nine units have only one bedroom and the remaining one has two bedrooms. The units are cramped with poor services and in need of a total upgrade. After much deliberation, the trustees decided that the only sensible way forward was to look to develop new almshouses, not only to supplement its housing portfolio, but also to provide the opportunity to remodel the existing accommodation. The new units would provide flexibility so that this can be done with minimal disruption to the current occupants.

The project to provide new almshouses started in 2018. After a long planning process, consent was granted in March 2021 for 25 units on the land fronting Walkhurst Road and adjoining Feoffee Cottages - 12 of these units will be almshouses and the remaining 13 units private homes. Following planning consent, the charity started the process of trying to find a suitable development partner. A number of acceptable offers were received and terms in principle were agreed. The sale of the private housing land provided the necessary capital to construct the new almshouses. However, due to a downturn in the economic climate and house sales, together with substantial inflation in building costs, the charity found itself with

a substantial shortfall in funds to proceed with the development.

In autumn 2023, the charity commenced another, more selective, search, for a development partner. This resulted in an agreement to sell the land with the benefit of planning consent for private housing to Canham Homes Limited and simultaneously entering into a building contract with them to construct the new almshouses. Work started on the development in February this year with completion of the almshouses due in March 2026 and the private housing a few months later.

Of the 12 new almshouses, four will have a single bedroom (two of which are being constructed to higher accessible standards), six will have two bedrooms and the remaining two houses three bedrooms. They are laid out in a courtyard type setting and will be fully fitted out with kitchens, bathrooms, and modern services. The units will each have individual airsource heat pumps and are being constructed to high insulation standards. Each property will have a small garden area and there will be a communal car park. The centre courtyard will feature a planted communal area. Advertisements for applicants to occupy are likely to be placed in this magazine later in the year.

The existing trustees are very aware of the additional management requirements involved in an increase in its property portfolio from nine units and ten bedrooms up to 21 units and 30

bedrooms. They are currently looking at its management structure and placing a number of regular service contracts. Once the project has been completed, several trustees have let it be known that they wish to stand down. As a result the charity is looking for suitable replacements.

In future it is envisaged that a manager will deal with the everyday running of the charity. That manager will report to trustees who have specific responsibility for such matters as administration, finance, property and maintenance, as well as the wellbeing of the charity's residents. Trustees' meetings take place only three or four times a year and the workload of the individual trustee should be limited.

The almshouses movement is both an historic and a forward-looking organisation with special relevance at a time of housing need and shortage. This is a particularly exciting time in the history of Benenden Almshouse Charities and we welcome enquiries as to what we do and what being a trustee involves.

Benenden Almshouse Charities is a local charity for local people. Its housing stock is a great asset for the village. It has no debt and is in a position to expand if that is considered a suitable way forward. Anyone who feels they can contribute and would like to find out more about becoming a trustee should contact the clerk to the trustees at benendenalms@gmail.com Robin Dalton Holmes, Chair, Benenden Almshouse Charities





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# **Energy Matters**

# Power and energy: making sense of the numbers

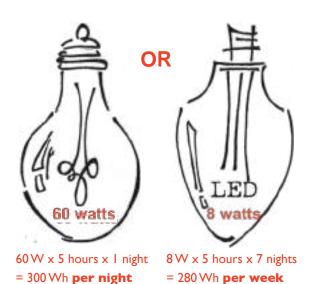
Energy bills, fuel deliveries, and appliance ratings are full of numbers and units. Some are in kilowatts, others in kilowatt-hours, and many people still think in gallons of oil or cubic feet of gas. It can all be a bit confusing. Tim Dwyer aims to clear things up for us.

Power or energy: what's the difference?

A common confusion is between power and energy. Power tells us how fast energy is being used. It's measured in watts (W), or more often kilowatts (kW) for bigger appliances (I kW = I,000 W). One watt is tiny - just enough for a small LED light. Energy is the total amount of power used over time. It's measured in watt-hours (Wh) or kilowatt-hours (kWh) (I kWh = I,000 Wh).

A useful way to picture this is to think of water in a jug. Energy is like the amount of water the jug holds - it just sits there until it is poured. Power is the flow when the jug is tipped. The more it is tipped, the faster the flow (power) and the quicker the jug's contents (energy) are used up.

Take the example of a 2 kW heater running for three hours. Multiply power by time and you get energy, so 2 kW × 3 hours = 6 kWh. This same calculation works for almost everything in the home: boilers, heaters, light bulbs, kettles, cookers, computers and more.



A great way to use this simple calculation is to compare energy use. For example, a 60 W old-style bulb left on for five hours in one evening uses about the same energy as an 8 W LED bulb, giving the same light, running every evening for a whole week.

#### Old and familiar measures

Energy bills show kilowatt-hours or kWh (sometimes called units) but for those of us who prefer the old measures:

- I kWh ≈ 3,412 British Thermal Units (BTUs)
- I litre of heating oil ≈
   10.35 kWh (I gallon ≈ 47 kWh)
- I cubic metre of natural gas ≈
   II kWh (I cu ft ≈ 0.3 kWh)
- A cord of seasoned softwood (128 cu feet) ≈ 5,000 kWh

So, for example, a 1,000-litre oil tank holds about 10,350 kWh of energy. That's roughly the same energy as boiling 100,000 kettles or charging 1,000,000 mobile phones!

### **Efficiency matters**

It is not only the amount of energy supplied that matters, but also how efficiently it is turned into something useful. That 60 W bulb and the 8 W LED bulb can give the same light, but the LED is far more efficient. A modern condensing gas boiler, working at around 90% efficiency, delivers more heat to the radiators from the same fuel than an older boiler at 75%. Some technologies can even deliver more useful energy than they consume. With a heat pump, for instance, one unit of electricity can give you three or four units of useful heat - a topic that will be explored later in this series.

By understanding the difference between power and energy, and remembering the role of efficiency, it becomes much easier to compare fuels, make sense of bills, and see which appliances really make the biggest difference.

### Coming next:

Where the energy goes in our homes



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## Spotlight



### Royal British Legion Industries: providing vital support and independence

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RBLI was founded in 1919, originating in the aftermath of World War I, to support and care for some of the many thousands of soldiers who returned home suffering from tuberculosis (TB). Our village in Aylesford, Kent, was soon established, quickly becoming recognised as the leading national centre of

TB care at the time, thus creating a community for veterans to receive care and support.

Today RBLI is proud to be the home of the UK's largest veteran village, supporting over 300 armed forces veterans and their families. Alongside housing and welfare, RBLI empowers

veterans with employment support and career development through our award-winning Lifeworks programme.

Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company (BBMC) is our social enterprise, based in Kent and Surrey (and there's one in Scotland too, SBMC). They provide real job opportunities, where more than 70% of employees are disabled military veterans or civilians. These remarkable individuals may be living with visible challenges like amputations, or less apparent ones, such as PTSD or learning difficulties. At RBLI's social enterprises, they're not just given jobs they're empowered with the tools and opportunities to transform their own lives.

In Aylesford and Scotland, SBMC and BBMC focus primarily on producing motorway, rail, and commercial signage. BBMC are the sole provider of track-side signage for Network





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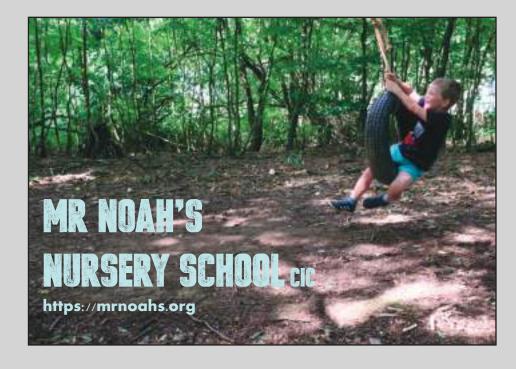
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# Community Foodbank Short term emergency food and support for local people in crisis. Please text FOOD35 £3 to 70070 to buy a meal for someone in crisis Please look at the website for details on how to apply for food. Nourish does cover the Benenden area, meaning deliveries can be made to your home. For information call 01892 548892 www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk



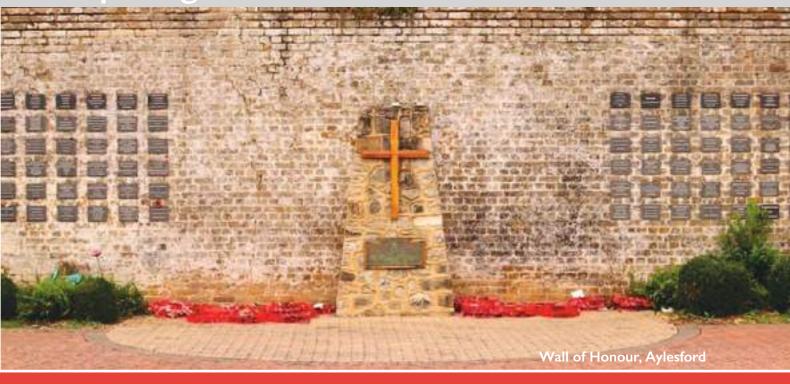
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### Spotlight



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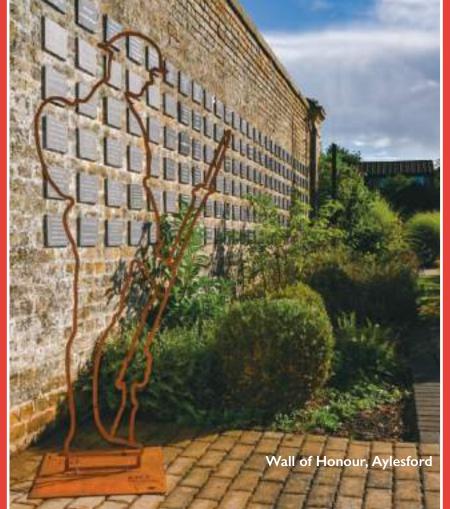
Every item in our online shop is made or fulfilled by veterans and people with disabilities who we proudly employ. You'll find a variety of products, including our popular Tommy range, which you will often see popping up in villages all over the country as we approach Remembrance Day in November.

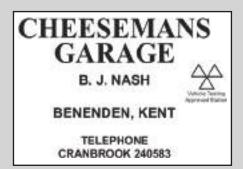
You may also wish to remember a loved

one or commemorate someone who served with a memorial plaque on the Wall of Honour in our historic Garden of Honour.

Throughout the year, large-scale commemorative and military events are held in this garden, which is open 24/7 for anybody to visit.

Your support not only recognises the sacrifices made by ex-service personnel but also enables RBLI to continue to support them for years to come. With new developments such as the Centenary Village and ongoing investment in veteran-specific services, RBLI continues to be a place where veterans can live, work, and thrive, no matter their journey. Jenny Skinner, RBLI rbli.co.uk britainsbravestmanufacturing.org.uk







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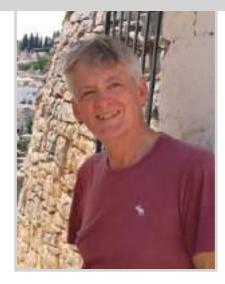
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### Last Word

Peter Driver
9 August 1954 18 August 2025
The parish lost a
good friend in Peter
Driver recently. He
was diagnosed early
this year with a rare
form of bile duct
cancer, and although
he gleefully told us
that while the



treatment was likely to be unpleasant, at least he'd save a lot of money on haircuts, there was to be no happy ending and he passed away at the age of 71.

Peter and his wife Theresa settled in Iden Green in 2012 and he became a stalwart of the local community, an active member of the parish council and a prominent advocate of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, also engaging with characteristic good humour in the uphill battles for improved broadband and reduced traffic speeds. He was the instigator of the excellent Benenden Nature Facebook page and became a valued contributor to this magazine, on the subject of bats, assorted flora and fauna, and whatever else we chose to throw at him. He never felt he'd be up to the job, but he always was.

Having been born in Borough Green in 1954 and attended Maidstone Technical School, Peter became an apprentice with British Telecom, where he climbed poles and fixed telephone lines and equipment at the exchanges, although he and his friends apparently spent most of their lunch breaks pursuing all manner of extracurricular projects, fixing up cars, raising ducks, sledging in the snow and hang-gliding - with varying degrees of success and personal injury.

Eventually he graduated to a position with BT International in London, which took him as far afield as South Africa, Russia, Greece and Turkey - sometimes for weeks at a time - before, having spent 40 years with BT, he took early retirement and turned his hand to varied part-time jobs, including postman and apple juice delivery man.

Peter had started hanging out with Theresa and her two-year-old son, Jamie, in 1976 and the three soon became inseparable. The couple married in 1978 and in 1981 their family was completed by the arrival of Kate. Many years later Jamie met Jo, and Kate met Dan and had children of their own, Pete's much loved grandchildren Miranda, Lily, Frankie and Lyra.

Peter had been diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2010 but took it like he took every other setback, concerned but not unduly so.

He was 'watched' by doctors throughout, the prostate was removed in 2018 and he got the all clear a few months later, having never let the illness interrupt his enthusiasm for life.

He loved the parish and always said he felt like he'd finally come home. He threw himself into village activity, all the while engaging his great passions for music and nature. He loved birdwatching from a young age and in later years he took an interest in butterfly and bumblebee conservation, which led to him initiating a project to turn the Beacon Field in Benenden into a wildflower meadow. His newest passion was bats, and even during his recent cancer treatment, when he was feeling well enough he'd be up in the middle of the night with his detector, trying to identify them by their different sounds.

Having cancer never held Peter back. In 2014 he rediscovered a love of cycling and set himself the challenge of cycling from Lands End to John o'Groats, but it was to friends and family in Benenden that he always loved to return. His compassion, though, wasn't limited to people he knew; he wanted the world to be a better, fairer place and for over 15 years he and Theresa sponsored a young girl in India, keen to give another child a chance of a better life.

Peter instilled in his family a love of nature and music and books which they will no doubt pass onto their own children one day, and so his legacy lives on. We will miss him, but his memory will continue to inspire good deeds carried out with inexhaustible good humour.

**Peter Thomas** 

### In Your Garder



# Keeping up with the gardening greats

I recently gave a talk to the Northiam Horticultural Society entitled 'Planning a Mixed Border'. It's a hot topic and deservedly so, as most garden sizes can accommodate one and it is modular i.e. you can scale up or down according to your planting area and plant choices can be flexible - depending on client requirements and environmental conditions such as soil type, aspect and rainfall.

The main elements should include height from trees, spread from shrubs (both deciduous and evergreen), foliage and form and finally colour - plus I always throw in something scented. Over the years any number of plants can be added (or even removed), seasonal tweaking keeps the creativity turning over, whilst the trees act as towering sentinels, spreading their branches far and wide over their lower storey, needing only timely maintenance to keep them in check.

We are all aware of Christopher Lloyd creating the very famous Long Border at Great Dixter and Fergus Garrett's impossibly perfect eye at continuing the planting ethos, but a mixed border is essentially what it is. Hidcote and Wisley are also worth researching online for border inspiration as is the new RHS Bridgewater garden near Manchester. Tom Stuart-Smith is in charge of the masterplan and there is some incredible planting there to view (he has also designed and planted all the borders around the large glasshouse at Wisley).

Andy Sturgeon has executed some admirable rooftop gardens at the newly developed Battersea Power Station, although sadly they are accessible only for residents. There is a lot online, though, about the project, including information from Deepdale Trees, one of the suppliers who provided trees such as pinus nigra, beech, parrotia and fastigiate hornbeams.

Andy is one of my go-tos if I need ideas for evergreen plantings and also integrating grasses into a scheme, and his designs transfer very well into a domestic setting, although he is raising the bar in the UK now for public access areas too.

Finding a balance between newer trends in horticulture and what actually transfers well into a client setting can be tricky. I get that many designers and horticultural pioneers would prefer us to let our gardens stand throughout winter and I myself lean more that way in my own garden. I do like a composed picture of bare branches, berries, evergreen shapes and tall bleached perennial stems in winter, but most of my clients do not.

In practice however, if I was having to plant hundreds of bulbs in a bed in November, for example, I am not able to do this unless I cut all the herbaceous plants back. I also find emerging bulbs in spring should be able to do so without being disturbed by a late-winter cut-back, so the timing for this is critical. In some cases it cannot be done all in one go if there is a lot to

do, especially where there is only a sole gardener in charge (rather than a team) whose work needs to be staged in order to get the garden ready for spring.

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### **CHALKDOWN RDA**





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Above: Embracing the new: Primary school children at Forest School; the Pet Service at St George's Church; Merry and Bright lunch outing to Dungeness

Front cover: In commemoration: Detail of Benenden's war memorial designed by the sculptor Albert Toft. Photograph: Ruth Clark