



Benenden Magazine

July 2024



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Editorial



The saying goes, 'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade', and the fete committee certainly turned a truckload of tribulations into cratefuls of something very fine indeed when, in the face of high winds and rain forecast for fete set-up and the day itself, they took the very wise decision to replan the event. Hats off to the team. A wise move that prevented gazebos blowing hither and thither. In the run-up to the fete the donation system had to change and, while it was unsettling at first for some, it worked extremely well and the stall holders received good quality contributions and significantly fewer bad quality items.

Often when Plan A doesn't work out, Plan B opens up new opportunities. While change may not always be easy to consider or embrace, it's surprising how often it opens new vistas. That wise old bird Socrates one said: "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new".

On the subject of building the new, congratulations to our three new borough councillors, who answered our request to outline their vision for our village following their election last month (page 30). Plus, we were encouraged to receive contributions from two of the local candidates standing in the general election (page 29). Wouldn't it be great if whoever is successful could deliver on all they would like to achieve. The winds of change appear not just to be affecting our fete but seem to gathering speed across our political landscape. I wonder what flavour of lemonade we will be drinking after 4 July!

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.

Editors: Ruth Clark, Peter Thomas

Editorial Board: PCC Rep: Cathy Presgrave, PC Rep: Nicola Thomas,

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

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Village Calendar

July

Tuesday 2	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 2	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Wednesday 3	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Lunch at the Fish Farm, Hawkhurst, 12.30pm	p.11
Thursday 4	General Election Voting, Benenden Village Hall, 7am-10pm	
Saturday 6	Quiz Night, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 7	Summer Teas, St George's Church, 2-4pm	p.11
Saturday 13	Tabletop Curling, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 14	Summer Teas, St George's Church, 2-4pm	p.11
Monday 15	Parish Council Meeting, Memorial Hall, 7pm	
Tuesday 16	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 16	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	
Tuesday 16	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Flower Arranging, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.11
Thursday 18	Benenden's Community Shop, Volunteers' Social Evening, 6pm	p.13
Saturday 20	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 21	Open Garden, Little Walkhurst, Benenden, 12.30-4.30pm	p.9
Sunday 21	Summer Teas, St George's Church, 2-4pm	p.11
Tuesday 23	Merry and Bright, Croquet Afternoon, The Coach House, Benenden, 2pm	p.11
Saturday 27	Summer Barbecue, St George's Social Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 28	Open Garden, Little Walkhurst, Benenden, 12.30-4.30pm	p.9
Sunday 28	Summer Teas, St George's Church, 2-4pm	p.11
Tuesday 30	Mobile Library, bus stop outside Benenden Village Hall, 10-10.30am	
Tuesday 30	Mobile Library, Benenden Hospital, 10.40-11.10am	

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

Benenden Bowls Club

Thursdays, April-September, on the recreation field, practice night, 6pm

Cakes & Chaos: Café and Toddler Group

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

Parish Council



It was lovely to see so many of the village organisations represented when we hosted the Annual Assembly of Benenden recently at the Iden Green pavilion. This meeting is a great opportunity to get an update on what has been happening over the past year amongst the various local charities and groups.

Each year the parish council has the honour of awarding the KALC Community Award, and this year it went to the very deserving Grant Matthews, who most of you will know as the driving force behind the Benenden Bonfire Society for many years, along with many other volunteering roles. Please get in touch with us with suggestions for next year's award.

On the subject of volunteering, please keep a look out for requests on our website, BPC Facebook and Nextdoor for help with the maintenance of our wildflower meadow in the Beacon Field. We are achieving good progress and diversity of species is increasing, with established patches of knapweed, ox-eye daisy, common vetch, yellow rattle, bird's-foot trefoil and red and white clovers; but bristly ox-tongue and creeping thistle continue to be problematic, and help with the removal of this is where the volunteer work comes in. You can also follow our progress on the Benenden Nature Facebook page.

The Thoburn allotments in Walkhurst Road are now up and running, with mains water connection happening very shortly. There are two vacant sites available, so if you are interested please do get in touch with the Benenden Allotment Society: allotments@benendenparishcouncil.org

Like us, you may have noticed a proliferation of signs being put up on various posts and verges around the village. These are now becoming intrusive and unsightly and we would request that signs are only erected for upcoming community events in the village, and removed immediately after the event has taken place. Advertising for commercial purposes is not acceptable, so please do report these signs to our clerk.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair
nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
07593 226462 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org

For more information see our website www.benendenparishcouncil.org or find us on Facebook

Parish Council Meeting
Monday 15 July 2024,
Memorial Hall, 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: David Collard 241944 d.collard49@btinternet.com

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

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 7 July 8am Communion 10am All-age Communion 5pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 14 July 8am BCP Communion 10am Morning Worship

Sunday 21 July 8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Saturday 27 July 4pm Connect Four
at Mission Church, Sandhurst

Sunday 28 July 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

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 10am 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

Baptisms 9 June Shreya Davies
16 June Wilfred Mason

Wedding 21 June Perry Giles and Lesley Larkin

Funerals 10 June Paul Cuthbert Interment
18 June Peter Blockley Memorial Service and interment
26 June Jean Patterson Memorial Service

Church Letter



The village gathers

The village came together at the 'Benenden Fete in support of St George's Church' on Saturday 15 June, and showed great community spirit. If you came along, thank you for being there. If you didn't manage to get to it, you missed a great gathering!

Two days before, the weather forecast for the day was pretty awful; rain (most of the day and for set-up day); a risk of thunder and lightning; and 40-45mph winds for the four-hour duration of the fete. The 'gazebo village' would not have survived that; and we didn't fancy having to retrieve wayward gazebos from the bottom of The Green. We had two options: cancel or adapt ... and we weren't going to cancel! So, a different layout and format of the fete was created; moving most stalls into the church or churchyard. Regrettably some things had to be cancelled due to the reduced space. After a huge amount of rejigging, we went ahead.

6am Saturday, we woke to a beautiful morning. By 9am the clouds came up; 10am it was raining; 11am the winds started to pick up and it continued to rain. But the new gazebo village created in the lee of the church stood firm; as did the stalwart stall holders. The afternoon remained windy, but the rain stopped and the sun came out. At times it was a little cosy due to the smaller space, but we did it; the village gathered and had a wonderful time together. So huge "thanks" to the fete committee; to all the stall holders (not just for the day, but your efforts in the weeks and months beforehand); to all those who helped set-up and/or de-rig; and to you if you came along and made the community event such a success.

As well as the wonderful community atmosphere, the fete was also successful financially - despite the reduced footfall because of the weather. Takings were down on last year, but we still raised just over £12,000 for the church funds; incredible. This is a wonderful reflection of the generous spirit of our community. Some of the monies raised will go towards the running of your parish church, and some will be given by St George's to various charities. Last year we gave £8,000 to support 15 local, national or international charities. Details of the charities we will support this year will be publicised in the magazine later in the year.

Whilst speaking of the great community spirit, I want to make you aware of the efforts of one Year 6 pupil from Benenden Primary School. Beatrix Plewes wrote to me asking if she could have a stall at the fete to sell cuddly toys for the 'Children ring the bell' charity - a children's cancer charity. She raised an amazing £205 on the day. Well done, Bea; and thank you for thinking of other children and wanting to help them.

The village gathered and we had a great time. We should be grateful for the great community in which we live, and not take it for granted. Thank you all.

Revd David Commander, Rector and Area Dean

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Talking Point



Making Benenden a haven for declining wildlife

Last September saw the publication of the fourth State of Nature report by various environmental organisations, academic institutions and government bodies such as Natural England. It makes pretty depressing reading and the sad conclusion is that nature is still seriously declining across the UK, a country that is already one of the most nature-depleted in the world.

In Benenden we are lucky that we live amidst beautiful countryside and are surrounded by many interesting wildlife habitats, species-rich Ancient Woodland, fragments of unimproved species-rich grassland, historic parkland, traditional orchards and ponds. Additionally there are a large number of gardens, many of which may also comprise important wildlife habitats.

But like many neighbouring villages, we are by no means immune to the decline in nature: Turtle Doves no longer breed in the parish and neither do Woodcock; Nightingales may just about be hanging on. But the causes of these losses are often beyond our control, so what can we do at a local level? Well one thing we could do is to gain knowledge of what wildlife is actually to be found locally and record our sightings. We can share that knowledge and learn from others, ask questions, and maybe try and improve our local environment to make it more nature friendly.

To enable this to happen a number of neighbouring villages have used social media to connect similarly interested people via Facebook groups. There are active Facebook groups in Goudhurst, Ticehurst, Wadhurst and Northiam, and there is now one in Benenden: Benenden Nature.

If you want to help to create wildlife-friendly spaces and corridors in our village or just find out more about what wildlife has been seen locally, please join us to share your sightings and experiences, post your photos and ask your questions. We have already had posts on bats, birds, bees, wildflowers, trees and mistletoe - surely something for everybody!

You are welcome to join us - we are a friendly bunch. Just search Facebook for Benenden Nature.

Peter Driver



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Benenden Tennis Tournament

This year's tournament takes place at Benenden School from 24-28 July with lots of events for children and adults. The event is about having fun with your friends while playing tennis - everyone is welcome and there are players of all abilities.

Junior events

- 24 July: New junior singles events
- 25 July: Boys and girls doubles
- 26 July: Mixed doubles

For Years 3, 4 and 5 we use age-appropriate balls, smaller courts, have umpires on hand and use a point system (which is much more forgiving!) so everyone really is welcome to join in.

Adult events

Lots of fun with different divisions for different abilities. If you have older children, they can play with you.

- 27 July: Adults ladies and men's doubles
- 28 July: Mixed doubles

The cost is £20 per person/£40 per pair. If you have children competing on all three days, the discount price is £55.

There will be coffee and tea available and our famous sweet shop and, on the Thursday, a barbecue and photo stand. We also have both a junior and adult raffle - the junior one is a key highlight of the event! If anyone has anything they would be happy to donate for 7-16yr olds or adults it would be very gratefully received: please email juniorbenendentennistournament@gmail.com or arrange to give to one of us on the committee.

Finally, a big thank you to our sponsors: Burfields Wealth Management, Harpers and Hurlingham, and Hotshotz Tennis as they all help support the event. Last year we raised £10,000, 100% of which went to local charities.

If you would like to take part please register as soon as possible here:

www.benendentennistournament.com

Georgina Wixley, Laura Bellhouse,
Sophie McLaren and Harriet Taylor
Benenden Tennis Tournament Committee

LITTLE WALKHURST OPEN GARDEN

In aid of Hospice in the Weald, we are opening our six-acre garden to the public on **21 and 28 July** and **4 August** from **12.30-4.30pm**.

Come and enjoy our six-acre flower garden, woodland walk, wildflower meadow, ponds and waterfalls, and an interesting display of artifacts discovered during our excavations.

Entry is £5 for adults and £2 for under 16 and includes tea and biscuits.

**Little Walkhurst, Walkhurst Road,
Benenden TN17 4DT**

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

We were thrilled to welcome Bishop Rose to the primary school on June 6. The event was very moving, with all the children and staff circling around the wellbeing garden as she gave a beautiful blessing before cutting a ribbon to announce its official opening. In addition she gave a powerful wellbeing message, encouraging all of us to take time to notice the small details in nature and for the children to share the garden with friends, as a place to reflect and enjoy together.

The event was attended by many of our local community and parents, along with some of the contributors that helped to make this project possible. Our thanks to all those who were involved. The garden will now begin to find its own roots, flourish and welcome its own winged or crawling community. It is already home to a variety of bees and bugs and we hope that this continues to evolve for many years to come.

Rachel Tinker, Benenden CEP, PTFA Chair
chair-ptfa@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk/PTFA/



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Village lunch

The village lunch will not happen in July as the cooks are either committed elsewhere or away but we will look forward to seeing those of you who can come in August.

Sheila Hume 854627

Summer Teas in St George's Church

Following last year's successful 'Summer Teas' we have decided to run these again in St George's on each Sunday from 7 July to 25 August. You are invited to pop into church between 2-4pm to enjoy a cup of tea/coffee and some cake. There will be no charge, but any donations will go towards the upkeep of this beautiful building.

Helen Commander

Merry and Bright

May's meeting was, as usual, very well supported. Sue Fisher came along to talk about her time teaching in Africa and explained the differences between the schools in each country. We are looking forward to our garden party at Balmoral Cottage, which is very beautiful at this time of year. Wandering around the garden is so calming and you can see all the hard work that has gone into the topiary.

Our July meeting is an afternoon at the Coach House for croquet with Penny and Phil, with tea on the lawn.

A big 'thank you' to the committee for helping us make Merry and Bright a success. We could not have done it without you. Also for all our new and old members for supporting us.

Laraine Penny 241763

Julia Collard 241944



Iden Green and Benenden WI

Amanda Breach, our West Kent Federation chair, suggests the following as ways where the WI helps both the community and individuals:

- By working alongside others towards shared goals, it rewards by fostering a strong sense of belonging.
- It helps develop new skills.
- WI members can become active participants in making a positive difference in the wider world.
- Volunteering reduces stress, combats isolation and boosts self-esteem.
- WI members build lasting friendships when working alongside others with shared values and create lasting bonds.

Eleven of our WI ladies spent an enjoyable time at The Trough, having a happy lunch which included tea and cakes afterwards. We also then had the opportunity to look round Charity Farm and the farm shop.

Our garden party at a member's house on 18 June went with a swing as usual and everyone enjoyed the wonderful food and good company.

A relaxing lunch with a beautiful vista is planned on 3 July at the Fish Farm, Hawkhurst. We meet there at 12.30pm.

At our next meeting Rachel Freeman will give a talk on flower arranging. This will be on Tuesday 16 July in the Memorial Hall from 2-4pm.


Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

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Summer pilgrimage to Bodiam

Building on our experiences from previous years with walks of varying lengths which were greatly enjoyed by all who took part, we, Lyn and Revd Ylva, are organising a Summer Pilgrimage on Saturday 13 July. This is another opportunity for you to connect - with the landscape, with yourself and other people, and with the Spirit. We will do this through poetry, stillness, short reflections and through conversations along the road.

Again, our starting and end point will be St Nicholas Church, Sandhurst. We meet at 9.45am for a 10am start. Our route will take us through Bourne Lane, down through fields and woodlands to Bodiam Castle, where we will stop at the Castle Inn for lunch. Then we will be walking back a slightly different route, finishing back at the church with a cuppa and a slice of something homemade at around 3.30pm. The whole route is approximately six miles, but with many stopping points. Stout footwear, a walking pole and perhaps a raincoat are all that is needed.

For those of you wanting a shorter walk, or who might only have part of the day free, it is perfectly possible to join in the morning, then be taken back to St Nicholas either before or after lunch by relay car. It would also be equally fine to join us at the Castle Inn before or after lunch, then be driven back to collect your car at the end. If you speak to me, Revd Ylva, it can all be organised.

We would love to walk with you.

For more information, please contact:

Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 07766 711957
rev.ylva@gmail.com

Weald Table Tennis Club

We are celebrating the fact that Diccon Gray, secretary and founder of the club, and former over 60s champion has been selected to represent England Over 60s in the Home Nations championships in September in Guernsey. This is the third year running that Diccon has been selected and he will form part of a three-player team against Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Isle of Man.

If you would like to join the club, which attracts players of all standards, please come along on Thursday (7.30-9.30pm) and/or Sunday (6.30-8.30pm) evenings in the village hall.

Barry Bassett

Talking Shop

Along with the better weather, weeks of election saturation and the advent of British strawberries, Benenden's is gradually getting back onto an even keel and we are welcoming in so many customers - new ones and our treasured regulars. Thank you all for your loyalty and patience as we are gradually and enthusiastically navigating the way ahead while aiming to provide the best service we can.

With regards to the café menu, please do take the time to fill in the short questionnaire available to all customers. They are on the counter and simply ask you to write what you are happy with on the menu and what you would like to see added/returned. Depending on the results, we will strive to get the best possible choices for you.

To all volunteers, you should have been invited to a social evening for you all on 18 July from 6pm until 8pm. Details of venue are included on the new email or in the shop. We are keen to show our appreciation to you all for what you do for Benenden's and will be delighted to see you there to just relax and chat. Please do reply to the email which Lucy has sent out to help us with numbers.

Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk
www.benendens.co.uk

CHALKDOWN RDA

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Chalkdown Riding for the Disabled, Staplehurst, are currently looking for volunteers to help with their therapeutic riding sessions on Wednesday and Thursday mornings in term time. If you have equine experience, enjoy being part of a team and would like to help our riders discover the healing powers of horses then please get in touch.

All volunteers will need to provide two references and will be DBS checked.

Email staplehurst-rda@gmail.com
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EXHIBITIONS THIS SUMMER 2024

APRIL and MAY

Life and times of philanthropist John Passmore Edwards
1823 - 1911

JUNE and JULY

Revisiting the history of Cranbrook Primary School

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER

Digging Deeper - A look at headstones
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Primary School

In the few weeks leading up to half term, the whole school were treated to a performance from members of the Cranbrook Town Band, who shared their love of playing a brass instrument. Our very own Mrs Walsh joined in, demonstrating her trombone skills.

Our annual dance-a-thon was a huge success, raising an amazing £955.00 which will go towards the purchase of an outdoor classroom.

Many congratulations go to our Year 6 children, who have now taken their SATS and I was especially pleased with the maturity and confidence that they showed all week. Thank you to Mr Emmett and Mrs Walsh, supported by lots of the staff team for providing a hearty breakfast for them every day.

Year 5 had a trip to Saint Ronan's to meet the author Eve Wersocki Morris, who writes adventure books. It was a fantastic experience for the children to meet her as, despite being diagnosed with dyslexia at aged 12 and branded 'the worst speller in the class' at school, she has a First Class BA in English and is a very successful author.

Well done to all the children who took part in our sports day. They showed great sportsmanship and truly embodied all our school values. A huge thank you to Mrs Mileham and the staff for their organisation of the event and of course to the parents for their support.

As a result of our continued dedication to PE and sport, I am delighted to say that we have been presented with the 'Daily Mile' Fit for Life Award. It celebrates keeping young people active - every day our children run a mile (many laps of the playground) and we are delighted to have been recognised for our commitment.

Lindsay Roberts, Executive Headteacher
240565 office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk
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Join a spectacular evening reception
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Thursday 18 July at 6pm
Sutton Valence School

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Contact: Chris Parkinson cfparkinson@gmail.com



Beating Retreat event

Don't miss the opportunity to see the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas perform the stunning 'Beating Retreat' at Sutton Valence School at 6pm on Thursday 18 July. The evening will also include a Close Quarter Battle Kukri display and the Old School Samba Band.

The event is in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund which helps ex regular and reserve soldiers and their families who are in difficulties and need help.

To book, email cfparkinson@gmail.com and pay by transfer to ABF The Soldiers Charity at Lloyds 30-93-34 00914467 ref your surname and SVS.

Or by cheque made out to ABF The Soldiers Charity and sent to Chris Parkinson, Beech Tree Cottage, The Street, Benenden TN17 4DB.
Chris Parkinson 388402

Christian Aid Week

Thank you to all of the Benenden and Iden Green residents who kindly donated to Christian Aid Week in May. A grand total of £1,217.99 was raised for this very worthwhile cause.

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Benenden School

With our characteristically wet great British summer now firmly underway, so too are public exams for GCSE and A Level students across the country. As ever, Benenden students continue to show great determination and I have every confidence in their abilities and would like to wish them, and those across the country, the very best of luck.

Those students not in public exams have been taking part in Activities Week, when they have been off timetabled lessons to immerse themselves in a range of inspirational activities to support specific areas of learning. Three year groups have been on residential trips and themes have included space, the battlefields, code-breaking, entrepreneurship, biology foraging and many more. These are important cross-curricular weeks which enable the students to make links between their different areas of subject knowledge and to put some of their theories into practice.

Not only has the week been enjoyable and academically stimulating for the students, but by bringing together into one week a range of trips and events which are traditionally spread throughout the term, we have enabled the remaining weeks of the year to have a clear academic focus.

Looking ahead we are excited to host our traditional end-of-year events, along with some extra special centenary closing celebrations. Highlights include our upcoming family day, which comprises the Year 7 outdoor performance of *The Tempest* and the Year 8 graduation ceremony before our traditional sports day afternoon.

Two weeks later we will be enjoying our Centenary Closing Event: the Benenden Pageant, a poignant, entertaining and dramatic multi-media celebration of the past 100 years. Students are rehearsing hard for this historic occasion, which is being performed outside (we have booked good weather!).

Finally, it was touching to have been interviewed for the last issue of the village magazine, and to reflect on my time in Benenden as I now enter the final few weeks of my tenure.
Samantha Price, Headmistress



Benenden Cricket Club
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Benenden Cricket Club

Our upcoming home fixtures for are:

Saturday 29 June v Rusthall at 1.30pm

Wednesday 10 July v Goudhurst at 6pm

Saturday 13 July v Smallhythe at 2pm

Note that the 10 July evening game is planned to also feature a BBQ (weather dependent), so do come and support the club.

Barry Bassett

KALC Community Award

Grant Matthews has been named the latest recipient of the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award for his years of valuable work in the parish.

The presentation was made at the recent village annual assembly by Nicola Thomas, chair of the parish council, "in recognition of his many volunteering roles as a long-time member of the leadership team of the Benenden Scout troop, loyal volunteer in the community shop - on the committee and behind the counter - and for many years the man who kept the village bonfire burning". Those who know him will welcome this recognition of a man whose devotion to all matters Benenden knows no bounds.

The Gibbon and Buckland charity

In broad terms the purpose of the trust is to use the income it receives for the education and training of Benenden residents under the age of 25 and, in particular, to support the primary school. In 2023, the charity made the following gifts:

- Grants, each of £700, to 20 applicants in higher education and to three towards their training;
- £2,000 towards the primary school's library project;
- And the customary Bible to each of the 30 primary school leavers.

Applications for grants this year need, as usual, to be submitted by the end of September. The application forms are available from Benenden's community shop and from the clerk to the charity (email: gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com).

The trustees are currently me, David Harmsworth, David Barnes, Mary Cruse, Tony Fullwood, Julie Lewis and Janet Beattie. Mrs Rowena Hagell has recently been employed as the charity's clerk, after years of dedicated work in that role by David Harmsworth. Huge thanks are due to him.

The trust's main asset is the Gibbon School House, at the bottom of The Green. Kent County Council (KCC) have a full repairing and insuring lease of the whole building. The rent we receive is our main source of income. Following sustained pressure by the trust on KCC for a number of years, major repair and maintenance work to the listed building started in March - hence the scaffolding. The work is scheduled to continue until the summer. All the costs, including fees, are being met by KCC. We have commenced discussions with them about their intentions when the current lease comes to an end on 30 September 2024. The property can only be returned to the trust with full vacant possession.

Simon Brown, Chairman of Trustees,
Gibbon and Buckland charity

Topical health

Now we are properly into the summer season we have noticed that patients are presenting at our osteopathic clinic with the usual summer 'issues'. We have therefore formulated some 'stay summer healthy' tips:

Footwear: Completely flat, unsupported footwear puts strain on the spine and joints. No arch support in shoes can negatively affect posture. There are now several brands of more supportive, summery footwear that still look great - so choose wisely.

Airports: Pack as light as possible and use cases with wheels. Getting heavy suitcases off a revolving baggage carousel can be a recipe for disaster. Make sure you are standing square, bend your knees and pull your tummy muscles in to gently brace yourself as you lift. Try and turn with your case rather than your case not being in line with your body.

Sun loungers: Don't spend too long lying on your front, as this can really upset lower backs. Keep changing posture and enjoy a regular stroll down the beach.

Gardening: If we don't have a hosepipe ban we should see fewer issues from carrying heavy watering cans, but remember to vary your garden activities and don't spend four hours doing the same task. Also keep well hydrated.

Relax: to reduce stress keep up with breathing practice, slowly inhaling through the nose and out through the mouth as if you are blowing through a straw. Make time for whatever makes you feel good - some stretches in the garden, reading, seeing friends or exercising.

Sophie Bendall

www.cranbrookosteopaths.co.uk

Benenden Hospital

I'm excited for the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics at the end of this month. The Olympics unites sports fans across the world and inspires thousands of people to participate in more physical activities. I think that sports are integral to a thriving community, and it is so great to see how many sports clubs we have in the surrounding areas, from tennis and cricket to bowls and golf, to name a few, they provide a great social and active outlet.

I personally am taking some inspiration on becoming more active - apparently gardening is not yet an Olympic sport! I recently bought a skipping rope and will have to dust off my running shoes and get started. Sometimes it's the 'just getting started' bit that's the hardest.

I started my career as a physiotherapist, working across the Kent & Sussex Hospital, Pembury Hospital and the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead. The importance of keeping active and rehabilitation after injury or a life event is something I've always felt passionate about.

At our hospital it has been really lovely to see our physiotherapy team go from strength to strength, and we now have a wonderful physiotherapy gym equipped with a treadmill, bike, pulley machine, weights, plyo box, walking steps and parallel bars - everything needed to either get stronger, fitter, improve our core strength or recover from an injury.

I hope you enjoy watching the Olympic games this summer and perhaps be inspired and find something you love to get started with.

I attended the Benenden Fete and want to say a special thanks to the local community, who ran the tombola stand with us on behalf of the Nourish community foodbank. Our hospital was pleased to donate £140 worth of raffle prizes for the stand.

Nourish delivers food directly to local people who need help and last year they completed 7,263 food deliveries. You can support this amazing charity further here: www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk/support-us/give-money/

Claire Harley, Hospital Director

Hospice piano recital

The 16th Sandhurst RBD Memorial Hospice Charity Piano Recital will be held at a garden party on Saturday 27 July at 3pm. Well-known pianist Mark Viner will perform Beethoven Fantasie, op.77, something by Alkan (he is chairman of that society), Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, some Blumenfeld and, of course, Henselt. This will be the first visit by Mark, so I want to have a good audience on hand. Tickets are by donation (minimum £23).

Gillian Davis 850384

Nourish food bank

Well, that was another wonderful village fete. It was great to see everyone enjoying the occasion and a feeling of community at its most tangible. We had wonderful support on the Nourish stand from our collaboration with Benenden Hospital, who provided team members and financial contribution. You may have seen Claire Harley, the new Benenden hospital director mention the local events they are getting involved with in the May edition of this magazine.

Nourish continues to support our community and the wider Tunbridge Wells area throughout the year, and can only do so thanks to the generosity of your donations. Since late last year we have had additional help from some amazing volunteers who collect the donations and transport them to the Nourish warehouse. As with most things, there's a lot of work that goes into things behind the scenes and Gemma and I would like to publicly thank Chris, Tony and Wendy for the time and effort they put in to support Nourish food bank.

As a reminder Nourish has collection points at: Benenden Church, the Garden House and the Catholic Chapel. If you have a charity giving account, donations can be made at: www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk

If you'd like to be part of the local team supporting this charity contact gemma.louhunter@gmail.com

Liz Bewley

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Benenden Pre-School

We are looking forward to our Summer Fair in the pre-school garden on Saturday 29 June from 11am to 1pm. Everyone is most welcome to join us. There will be the good old-fashioned staples of hook-a-duck, bottle tombola and face-painting as well as a fantastic raffle and home-made pizzas baked on the spot. It is also an opportunity to look around the pre-school should you wish.

The children have been busy painting huge cardboard Olympic rings as a contribution to the village fete. We are looking at pictures of the various sports which take part in the Olympics as well as practising for a mini sports event of our own.

We are also growing sunflower seeds and watching the strawberries and blackcurrants ripen in the back garden. It's a busy and colourful time of year!

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor


supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

Planning Matters

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

- 24/01146/FULL Land At Reed Wood Farm, Mill Street. Retention of forestry building (Retrospective).
- 24/01343/FULL Lilac Cottage, Iden Green Road. Erection of detached garage with store and home office.
- 24/01408/FULL Hilbury, Mill Street, Iden Green. Removal of Condition 3(b) of Planning Permission WE/5/62/200 (25.10.1963) - Allow unrestricted use of property.

More planning matters at:
benendenparishcouncil.org



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Benenden allotments

After a considerable wait we have some green shoots, and no, not just the runner beans that are taking off. We have secured enough funding to start work on mains water for the allotment site, for which huge thanks to Sean Holden (KCC Combined Member Grant), the Kent Community Foundations for a grant from the Amity Allotment Fund, and Benenden Hospital for a donation. We'll need to map out exactly how we'll install the standpipes, and secure enough skilled volunteers to help, but we can now finally get on with this important part of the project.

And if you have a hankering to join us on the allotment field on a sunny afternoon, we do have two vacant plots. If you're interested in joining the Allotment Association, we are keen to sign you up. You can get your name on our waiting list by simply emailing: allotments@benendenparishcouncil.org.
Nancy Tolhurst, Chair, Benenden Allotment Association



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Cash crunch means we need support of village to help us thrive

Lord Rothermere's historical gift is no longer enough to maintain many of Benenden's finest assets, so what can the BVT do about it?

Imagine Benenden without its thriving village hall, its beautifully maintained recreation ground and children of all ages clambering around the large, state-of-the art playground. All these recreational facilities are provided by the Benenden Village Trust (BVT), which plays a central, but somewhat undersung, role in the life of the village, and now needs your support.

The trust, a registered charity, also runs the recreation field and new playground in Iden Green, where it also owns (but does not run) the Iden Green Pavilion. And it owns St George's Hall, home of the pre-school and St George's Social Club; and the lands on which sit the bowls club and the tennis club at Iden Green.

It is easy to take all this for granted, but my message is: please don't. Because providing all this enrichment of village life costs a lot of money. Inflation means it's getting ever more expensive. The trust's ageing properties need a huge amount of repairs. Energy costs are through the roof and the trust is facing a very large bill to replace the village hall's old heating system.

The result: BVT is facing a cash crunch, and that is why the trustees are asking for the understanding and support of the village as we work to bring our finances back on an even keel.

What's the problem? Well, Benenden owes its recreational assets to generous gifts from a previous resident, Lord Rothermere, in the 1920s - we'll be commemorating the 100th anniversary of his gifts at a ceremony later in the year. He also gave funds to support the running of the facilities, and for many years those funds were sufficient to balance

the books. But no more. Over the last few years, BVT has been running large deficits on its operations. This cannot carry on if the trust is to ensure that it continues to provide great recreational facilities for future generations.

On paper, the financial position looks healthier than it is. Lord Rothermere's legacy means the trust has substantial financial assets, but these are overwhelmingly what is known as 'permanent endowment' - meaning that they can't be touched. Only the income they produce can be used and that is now simply insufficient.

How do we solve this problem? We urgently need to boost BVT's income, whether by new initiatives, donations, volunteering or more intensive use of our assets.

How can you help? Well, membership of the trust is open to all residents of the parish over the age of 18 and is free. If you are already a member please come along to our annual general meeting on Monday 29 July (6pm at the Memorial Hall) and contribute to the debate on the trust's future. If you are not yet a member, I encourage you to join and make your voice heard. Membership forms are available from Caroline Levett at bvttrust@gmail.com. And if you have skills that could help us, we'd love to hear from you.

But I don't want to end on too gloomy a note. A great amount of work is going on to secure BVT's future. The trustees have been spending many hours thrashing out a comprehensive strategy to sustain the charity for future generations.

And those of you who use the village hall will have seen huge improvements in the running of the building, thanks to the super-efficiency and creativity of John Betts, our hall manager for the past year. The hall, recreation fields and playgrounds remain at the centre of BVT's charitable purpose. Let's ensure we can keep it that way.

Martin Dickson,
Chairman, Benenden Village Trust

Benenden Fete





Our fantastic fete

The gloomy weather was not going to hold Benenden back! We can all be extremely proud of the change of plans that were made to keep everyone as dry as possible browsing the stalls in and around the church. After a wet and windy start we were eventually rewarded with sunshine and The Green began to buzz with activity too. Beth Ansell's photographs here encapsulate the event perfectly.

Thank you to all who made Benenden Fete 2024, in support of St George's Church, possible.
Athena Cripps





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Event Preview



Rude Mechanicals: Bawdy panto meets magical realism

High summer is upon us and on Wednesday 24 July, as the sun sets, Venus rises into the evening sky and the waning gibbous moon casts her silvery light, the Rude Mechanical Theatre Company will be bringing their unique form of physical theatre back to Sandhurst playing fields.

Written and directed by the Rudes' founder and artistic director Pete Talbot, 'The Dressing Book' is an hilarious comedy, but also provocative, poetic and tender. Set in the late 18th century in Tunbridge Wells, it plays games with time and social status and has a twist in the tail. The play follows the social round of Maybelline Erstwhile, who records which dresses she wears for each event in her dressing book - and the men she encounters while wearing them. It opens a window on the way clothes were - and still are - a means by which men could control the separated public and private worlds of women. Has anything changed? Through a process of magical realism the action moves to the 1960s, and Maybelline's clothes, which had been her prison, now set her free.

Have a look at the website for more information about the Rudes: www.therudes.co.uk. What they do is totally unique - apparently there is no other theatre company in this country still drawing upon the centuries old commedia dell'arte style of acting - think bawdy pantomime, Punch and Judy and even the Barber of Seville, repurposed to tell up-to-date tales. Their plays are aimed at adult



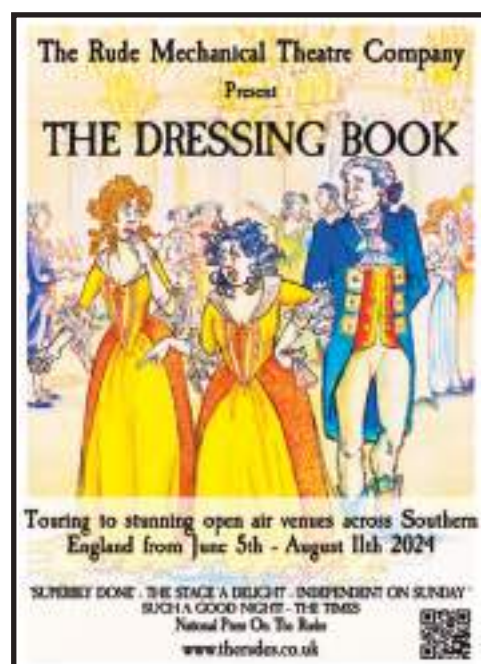
audiences but older children enjoy them.

Although they are usually available on the door, it's best to buy your tickets in advance at www.therudes.co.uk:

£24 for adults, £23 seniors, £10 children and full-time students, £58 for families (2 children and 2 adults), £84 groups of 4 adults, as well as reductions for larger groups and access/companion tickets.

Doors open at 6pm for curtain up at 7.30pm. Bring picnics, low-backed folding chairs (and warm clothes for later on). Parking and toilets are on site.

If you have a query, contact the Rudes on 01323 501260, WhatsApp on 07553 082901, info@therudes.co.uk, or try me: Shirley Wiggs 850108 shirleywiggs60@gmail.com



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General Election

Our Conservative and Labour candidates

The nation and the village will vote at a general election on 4 July. Here, the candidates for the two main parties stake their claim for your vote.

Katie Lam, Conservative

I (and my dog, Bailey) live in Sissinghurst - you may have seen me at the Benenden panto, fete, the village meeting I held here, in the café, at St George's or in the Bull. Do say hello, and please get in touch if you'd like to discuss anything (Katie@WealdOfKentConservatives.com).

Most of my career has been in finance and helping run a British start-up. I've also worked in government, securing investment for Britain and tackling terrorism. I'm a school governor for deaf children. I write scripts and lyrics for musicals!

I sent tens of thousands of letters across the Weald to ask what was important to you. If you send me to Westminster, I will work relentlessly for what you told me are your priorities:

- Fight overdevelopment: Kent is the garden of England, not the car park of England. We must save our villages, demand infrastructure, and protect Kent's countryside.
- Demand investment in our roads: The lifelines of the countryside, blighted by poor drainage, speeding, enormous lorries, and potholes. We need to invest, resurface, and calm traffic.
- Smash crime and anti-social behaviour: I would support the police to act without fear or favour. We need officers on the beat, empowered to catch criminals.
- Champion our farmers: Farmers, not officials, know best how to manage their land. We must incentivise food production, improve food security, and buy local.
- Build first-class armed forces: Prioritise military funding by cutting civil service numbers, and improve recruitment.
- Crack down on illegal migration: secure the border and smash the gangs.
- Upgrade our health system: I would do everything I can to secure more GP appointments and better hospital care.
- Tear down bureaucracy to grow the economy: reduce regulations, lower taxes, reform welfare.

Lenny Rolles, Labour

I live with my wife and daughter in Kent and grew up in rural communities like those in the Weald of Kent that I would be honoured to represent as your MP. I am committed to public service, have been a councillor for over a decade, and recently stood as the Labour candidate to be Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner.

I work for a university and previously at the RSPCA, where I helped to tackle organised criminal gangs and campaigned for legislation to protect landowners and improve the welfare of fly-grazed horses. I am a charity trustee and chair a community interest company to improve affordable housing.

Talking to people in the Weald of Kent during the Police and Crime Commissioner election made me realise that frustrations went beyond concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour. Residents told me they worry about a lack of opportunities for young people; that their children may never own their own home or afford to rent where they grew up. They were frustrated by waiting for hospital appointments, the state of public transport and potholed roads, and concerned about the cost-of-living crisis and having less left every month to get by on.

We will stand up for our hard-pressed farmers by supporting sustainable British produce. We believe that building more affordable homes and protecting nature go hand-in-hand. We will not build on genuine nature spots and will work with communities to set tough conditions for releasing green belt land for house building. We have committed to delivering a Rural Crime Strategy and support a return to neighbourhood policing.

Labour is determined to restore trust and integrity to public life and are the only party in a position to challenge the Tories in this constituency. I will never take your vote for granted and will work tirelessly for you in parliament.

To get in touch with any questions please do email me at Lenny@lennyrolles.org.uk

The other candidates are: John Howson (Lib Dem); Daniel Kersten (Reform UK); Kate Walder (Green)

Local Politics

Following the recent local elections, we have three borough councillors to represent us in the new Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden ward. Here, Tom Dawlings, Ellen Neville and Bev Palmer explain what they hope to bring to the table on behalf of the village in the coming years.



Tom Dawlings, Conservative

Thank you to my fellow Benenden residents who voted for me in the May local election. I was delighted to have topped the poll in the new ward of Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden, having been a borough councillor since May 2014 and very actively involved in Tunbridge Wells as a cabinet member, Leader of the Council and now opposition leader.

There are many people involved in organising matters in Benenden, often reporting through this magazine, which itself is one of our parish's great achievements in the last decade, together with the community shop, new playgrounds and the delivery of the new primary school. Our parish council is presently focused on ensuring that developments accord with the planning policies set out in Benenden's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and the renewal/creation of village facilities.

In addition, there are many clubs, societies and trusts working for the benefit of our

community, including two new ones: the Allotment Society (creating allotments on land bequeathed to the village by the late Pat Thoburn) and the Gardening Club. Major improvements to the facilities at St George's Church are also being planned.

In Benenden, affordable housing is not just talked about but is delivered. A decade ago Vyvyan Cottages in Iden Green were jointly developed by the parish and English Rural Housing and opened by Princess Anne. This summer the Benenden Almshouse Charities will begin building 12 additional almshouses.

Knowledge of the community and a readiness to help are prerequisites for being an effective ward councillor, which remains my aim for Benenden. That for me began within days of moving here in 2007, when I agreed to prepare and audit the accounts for the parish council, the Harmsworth Memorial Trust and the village hall. I then became involved with the preparation of the Benenden Parish Plan and later the NDP. I am also a trustee of the Benenden Village Trust.

Ellen Neville, Tunbridge Wells Alliance

Hello again to those of you that I met on my rounds and thank you to all those residents in Benenden who voted in this year's borough council elections.

Being a councillor is proving to be a fantastic way to serve my community and I am embracing the exciting (and sometimes challenging) journey ahead. No matter how long we are on the council there will always be more to learn and new ways to tackle problems. In my experience since first being elected in 2022, collaboration is key to effective decision-making and building connections across party lines.

My roadmap for Benenden started at the beginning of the year with familiarising myself with the new ward's needs. Talking to residents, community leaders and local businesses has helped identify key issues and priorities of speeding, antisocial behaviour, loneliness and isolation, planning matters and an issue very close to my heart: food poverty.

As the founder of Hawkhurst Community Fridge - a food-sharing project that reduces waste, puts food in bellies not bins, reduces CO2 emissions and champions the best of fresh Kent produce in each season - I have access to data on local demographics and challenges. A very sobering figure is that Benenden receives more food bank parcels than any other village in the borough.

My children attended the old Benenden primary school and we were part of the successful campaign for the new school. To that



end you will find me to be a strong advocate for residents' concerns in the countryside, proactive in council committees and quick to participate meaningfully in discussions that can address our issues. I have a dedicated Facebook group for discussion, information and feedback and I will be present at community events as part of my dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of residents.

Bev Palmer, Conservative

I live locally in Hawkhurst and it has been my privilege to represent the wards of Hawkhurst and Sandhurst for the last 22 years - and now the villages of Benenden and Iden Green also. Our rural way of life is particularly important to me and I am a champion for rural issues. I work to ensure that the rural voice is not



drowned out by the number of councillors representing the urban areas of our borough.

Over the years I have had considerable experience working on several different committees at the borough council, including overview & scrutiny, audit & governance and communities advisory board and planning.

Speeding traffic is a particular problem in all of our villages and I have actively campaigned for and will continue to support all initiatives to reduce speeding traffic.

I have always spoken out against inappropriate development and will continue to do so. We have to achieve a balance between housing needs and the protection of the green belt and the area of outstanding natural beauty, but also to ensure that infrastructure is in place before building commences. Any future development should also address the need for whole life housing, where residents can have homes that are suitable even if they later become infirm or disabled.

This year it is also my privilege to be the Armed Forces Champion for TWBC. I have been involved with the British Legion for over 30 years so I am looking forward to this role assisting veterans.

I will continue to campaign on all of the key issues affecting our residents and will always try to assist any constituent who needs my help, so please do get in touch if you have an issue.



Neil thanked the Kakgot villagers by sending computers and solar panels for the school. Our expedition in September aims to raise funds for Starlink Internet, staff IT training and support for the

next five years. Online learning will be a giant leap forwards for the children of this isolated community.

I met Neil 24 years ago, just after he had climbed Everest with Bear Grylls. I had recently



returned from three years leading expeditions in Africa and the Middle East and a random offer of a room in London led to Bear becoming my new housemate. He was planning his next challenge and asked me to join the 'Jetski 2000' team and attempt the first circumnavigation of mainland Britain by jetski. That summer we launched from HMS Belfast on the Thames and returned 23 days later to claim a 'first'. No-one has done it since.

Cycling off the top of the world: 'Highest bike ride' record attempt

Local adventurer Tim Maw on a truly amazing, slightly daft, fund-raising challenge in the Himalayas

In a remote region of Western Nepal, the small village of Kakgot sits beneath the Dhaulagiri range of mountains in the high Himalaya. Here, 200 children attend the Tenzing Norgay school for their education. At 4,300m it is one of the highest altitude schools in the world. Temperatures are low and there is no heating, the bare brick walls lack any form of insulation and the timber-framed windows are devoid of glazing. It is a far cry from Benenden Primary School and yet there are many similarities, among them committed teachers and a firm belief that education will bring a better future to their students.

Within these classrooms, life-saving shelter was provided for my friend, Neil Laughton, and his team when appalling weather closed in during an attempt to climb Dhaulagiri VII in 2022. Also known as Putha Hiunchuli, it is the world's 95th highest mountain at 7,246m. In September, I will be joining Neil to climb the mountain to set a new Guinness World Record for the Highest Bike Ride. Our team of six climbers will hopefully cycle off the summit and beat the German record of 2009.





Among other adventures, the 'Skycar Expedition 2009' was the most extraordinary. It followed a successful paramotor altitude record over Everest by Bear and Gilo Cardoza. Gilo had always dreamed of



building a flying car, Neil persuaded him to get on with it.

The prototype needed a field test so I was invited to join the team to contribute my African overland experience. We decided to do a fly/drive from London to Timbuktu.

Two years in the planning, the sponsored expedition left London with a convoy of trucks and motorbikes including a Channel 4 film crew. If my logistical planning was right we had everything we needed for six weeks in the desert. An experienced pilot, Neil flew the car and completed the first crossing of the Straits of Gibraltar and then the Sahara by flying car. In support, I rode my KTM motorbike as one of the rapid response team should the car fall out of the sky. Luckily it didn't and our trans-Saharan adventure was a truly spectacular wilderness experience.

Before Skycar, I had led tourists through 18 African countries in a specialist 18-tonne safari truck. The driving was always the greatest challenge, with soft desert sands or thick mud and washed-away bridges conspiring to impede progress. It was all part of the adventure -

wildlife and stunning scenery were the bonus. Campfire conversations with drivers who had worked in Asia made me swear that one day I would drive the Silk Road.

In 2001 I set off from London on a motorbike to do just that. Three days into my journey the twin towers were hit on 9/11. Undeterred, I continued through the Balkan states, Turkey and Iran without meeting hostility but that all changed in Afghanistan. I was sad to miss the Karakoram mountain range but the consolation was a longer stay in India and Nepal.

I reached Kathmandu after 101 days on the road and trekked into the Himalayas, a magical experience I vowed to repeat one day.

I did not expect it to take 20 years, nor did I think I'd be climbing a high altitude peak with a bicycle on my back, but that is how daft ideas and chance meetings lead to some of life's richest experiences. It's important to seize every opportunity for adventure; you never know where things will lead but there is no reward without risk.

Our adventures have always supported a charity; if we can reach our £10,000 target for the Tenzing Norgay School we will provide all the internet and IT equipment and improve the school building and create a better learning environment. All donations, however small, will make a big difference so please do contribute anything you can to: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tim-maw. Thank you for your support.

For more information visit www.timmaw.com or follow the expedition on our Facebook page: 'Highest Bike Ride'.

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front line of the battle to tackle this invasive species.

At just under 3cm long Asian hornets are slightly smaller than native European hornets, have yellow legs, an orange face and brown body with one yellow stripe. They are a highly effective predator and can cause significant losses to bee colonies, and potentially other native species.

The Asian hornet: See it. Report it. Sort it

The Asian hornet is a major threat to honey bees and other pollinators and the public has been asked to help fight this voracious predator and report any sightings urgently to help stop them from getting established in this country.

Last year a record number of sightings were reported in the UK when the National Bee Unit destroyed 72 nests in 56 locations - most of which were in Kent! Already this year several sightings have been reported across Kent and East Sussex which has caused concern.

While the Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is native to Asia rising numbers have been reported in Europe where it is wreaking havoc and posing a major threat to beekeeping. There are increasingly strong populations along the north coast of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands which increases the risk of them coming to the UK so, not surprisingly, the southeast is on the

Just one of them can hunt down and eat 30-50 honey bees a day and their habit of hawking (hovering) outside the hive stops the bees from collecting nectar and pollen to feed themselves.

It is crucial that any possible sightings are reported so experts can take quick and effective action to eradicate Asian Hornets. The best way is to use the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app (available for both Apple and Android devices) to record and report any sightings. You can also email: alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk to report a sighting with a photograph and location details.

It is important to take care not to approach or disturb a nest. Asian hornets are not generally aggressive towards people but an exception to this is when they perceive a threat to their nest.

For more information visit:

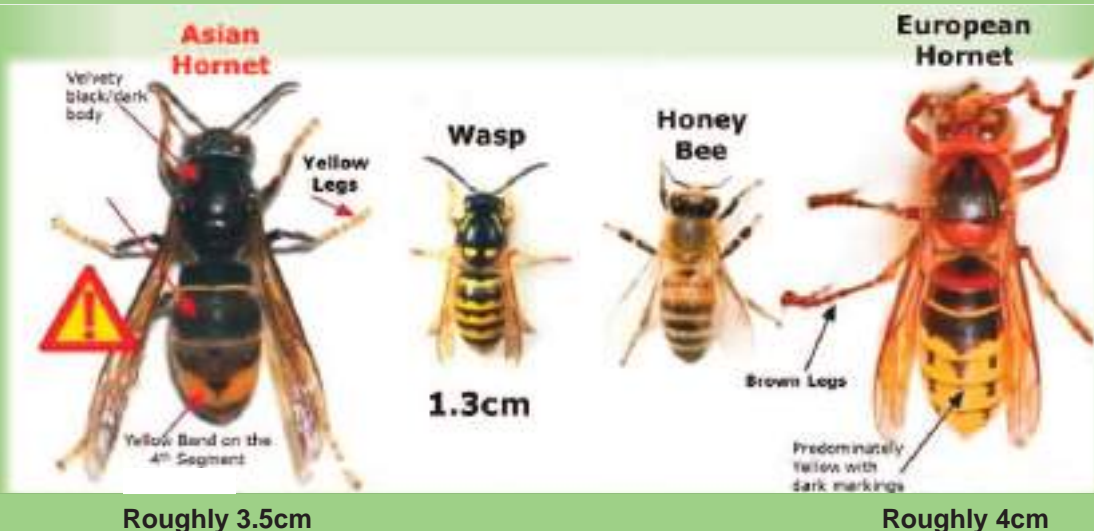
www.nonnativespecies.org

www.nationalbeeunit.com

www.bbka.org.uk

Ruth Clark

Difference in size between the non-native Asian Hornet and the UK native European Hornet, Wasp and Honey Bee



In Your Garden



How to plant for hot, dry conditions - if they ever arrive

Given that we have yet to enjoy proper barbecue weather, my thoughts this month have turned to plants that can endure summer-long heat and yet still provide us with interest, colour and ground cover.

I recently returned from a week in the Algarve, and

whilst there is irrigation in place in many of the private villas and apartments, the municipal planting is encouragingly good. A particular area of note was the Ria Formosa Natural Park, which has a diverse range of different areas from wetland through to dunes and pine woods. There is a boardwalk throughout for public use, which makes for an excellent, immersive journey - particularly when we ended up at a very nice restaurant on wooden stilts over the marshes.

We saw this entire area from the plane as we came into land at Faro airport - slightly ironic seeing as the area was developed to encourage a rich diverse range of species but has in fact been built underneath a flight path! Anyway, it works brilliantly, not only for the local flora and fauna but also recreationally. In terms of recognised plant species and self-seeders, I spotted wild carrot, gaura and various grasses, including *briza media* and *stipa gigantea*. Otherwise there were huge swathes of a tough, low-growing mounded scrub shrub, with small glaucous leaves and tiny lilac flowers. It sounds like I am describing a lavender but it clearly naturalises to stabilise the area with ease and copes well with the salt-laden air. This low-growing flow of flowering scrub is punctuated with banks of pine trees, with their crowns carefully lifted in places to allow the line of sight to continue through.

In very hot dry areas I spotted a low-growing mat-forming sedum in full flower,

which I have also spotted on cliff walks in Cornwall. Along the path edges were large evergreen shrubs such as *eleagnus*, *grevillea*, *griselinia*, *eriobotrya* and lots of *phillyrea* (the 'mock' olive). One of my favourite deciduous shrubs for coastal areas, *tamarisk* was everywhere. I have only specified this plant once for a client, in a sheltered garden just outside Sevenoaks. It worked very well and as it grows rather unruly is pleasantly easy to hack back.

For inspiration here in the UK, my go-to is Beth Chatto's dry garden in Elmstead Market, Essex. Annual rainfall here is low, averaging around 400mm per annum (compared to an average of 850mm here in Kent). The plants were watered in at the time of planting but otherwise were left to their own devices.

Here in Kent we have twice the rainfall but hotter summers (if you can still believe it), so if we were to adopt the same planting strategies we would have to think about drainage, seeing as we are largely on heavy clay. Incorporating a lot of organic matter to break up the tiny clay particles and open up air pockets is a start, but back-filling with lots of grit mixed in will help once roots start to move out and down.

A mulch is essential, gravel will ensure self-seeders find an easy resting place but a finely graded bark or some home-grown compost will be equally fine. Ensuring there is very little ground visible is a good idea, too, as plants like to grow in communities; even leaving a few areas for weeds to colonise will help to stop moisture evaporating from the soil.

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We have recommenced our regular monthly lunchtime meetings at The Bull, Benenden.

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Above: *Gratitude*: Benenden's Beacon on 80th anniversary of D-Day; The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover, officially opens and blesses the wellbeing garden at the primary school, with Rachel Tinker, Chair of Parent, Teacher and Friends Association and garden designer Robbie McClintock; physio gym at Benenden Hospital
Front cover: Capturing the moment at the windy fete. Photograph: Louise Bryant