



Benenden  
Magazine  
September 2022



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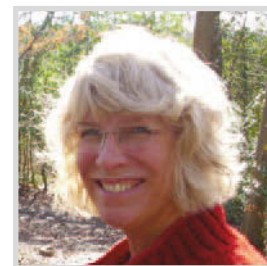
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# Editorial



The rain finally came and The Green, which had sadly faded into beige over interminable blistering weeks, thankfully started to nudge back to its natural hue just in time for a Saturday cricket game (see front cover). What a summer! Nothing quite like it since '76, when I was researching fish in an ever-diminishing reservoir and water was rationed from standpipes in some parts of the country. But it was thrilling to see how, after just a little rain, gradually everything started to recover and hopefully will continue.

The weather, of course, has been the 'hot' topic of conversation in the village café where I volunteer every Monday morning. From builders and decorators sweltering in the heat, to villagers sharing cooling tips. It's also the best place to get recommendations for articles in this magazine - and recruit (aka gently cajole) new contributors. While delivering a flat white to one table, I'll often get a suggestion or three from another. The village's involvement is hugely appreciated by the editorial team, creating and sharing a monthly snapshot of village life. Sending a copy to my father in America gives him a window on my world in a way I just can't explain in words, while an occasional copy to my daughter serving overseas gives her a welcome taste of home (her American colleagues were entranced by the concept of an English village fete).

While our much-missed Tracy Claridge was ill, he asked me if I would deliver the magazine to the homes on his route, a task he had carried out happily for many years. I have continued and it's been lovely to meet new people and chat on the doorstep about Tracy and, yes, gather new suggestions for future editions.

Autumn is on its way, kicking off with the wonderful Jazz and Blues picnic at Iden Green Pavilion on Saturday 3 September (page 9). The rhythm of the village year continues.

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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# Village Calendar

## September

Saturday 3	Jazz and Blues at the Pavilion, Iden Green, 2.30pm	p.9
Saturday 3	Skittles, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 4	'Allo 'Allo Auditions, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.9
Tuesday 6	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Evening, Memorial Hall, 7pm	p.11
Saturday 10	Friends of Kent Churches, Ride + Stride for churches, 10am	p.11
Saturday 10	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Wednesday 14	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Lunch at the Castle Inn, Bodiam	p.11
Saturday 17	Chinese Supper Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Monday 19	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7.30pm	
Tuesday 20	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Sloe Seduction, Iden Green Pavilion, 2pm	p.11
Saturday 24	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.15pm	

## 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, 6.30pm

## Cakes & Chaos: Cafe and Toddler Group

Fridays during term time in St George's Church, 9-11.15am

# Parish Council



I am delighted to announce that Cathy Presgrave has agreed to join the parish council, bringing our team back up to its full strength of nine members. You may already know Cathy: she has been living in Benenden for over two years now and her parents lived here before for quite some time. Since arriving, she has embraced village life and among the roles she has taken on are serving on the Parochial Church Council and running the Auction of Promises stall at our wonderful village fete, as well as recently joining the shop committee, while volunteering at the shop twice a week. Cathy is a very welcome addition to our team, and no doubt you will be hearing from her on this page shortly.

In other news you may have noticed that we have now had a large area of the Beacon field harrowed (see back cover) as part of our wildflower meadow project, and we have been kindly allocated five bags of green hay by Great Dixter. Green hay is harvested wildflowers and grasses just as they are shedding seed and still 'green'. It entails taking freshly cut hay from a local donor site and, on the same day, strewing (spreading) it onto a suitable receptor site (our field). It is a cost-effective method for us to obtain seeds that are of local provenance, and provenance doesn't get much better than Great Dixter's wildflower meadow.

We will need volunteers to help with strewing this hay, so please keep an eye out on our social media pages and Nextdoor, as we will be requesting help at quite short notice in the next few weeks.

The saga of the restoration of our wells was very well documented in last month's issue and thank you to those who have responded and donated funds since then. We still have a long way to go, however, and any donations to our fundraising page here [www.wonderful.org/fundraisers/7Aq67#charity](http://www.wonderful.org/fundraisers/7Aq67#charity) will be very gratefully received.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair  
[nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org](mailto:nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org)

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

Parish Council Meeting  
Monday 19 September 2022,  
Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm



# Church Calendar

## St George's Church

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 [revdavidcommander@gmail.com](mailto:revdavidcommander@gmail.com) (day off: Thursday)  
Curate: Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie 01233 820100 [rev.ylva@gmail.com](mailto:rev.ylva@gmail.com) (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday)  
Churchwarden: David Collard 241944 [julia.collard@btinternet.com](mailto:julia.collard@btinternet.com)  
Churchwarden: Sue Fisher 241907 [sue@undaunted.co.uk](mailto:sue@undaunted.co.uk)  
[www.benendenchurch.org](http://www.benendenchurch.org) 850849 [benendenchurch@gmail.com](mailto:benendenchurch@gmail.com)  
Please inform the Rector, Curate or Churchwardens if you, or anyone else, is ill.

Saturday 3 September

4pm Connect Four  
at Mission Church, Sandhurst  
5pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 4 September	8am BCP Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am All-age Communion
Sunday 11 September	8am BCP Communion	10am Morning Worship
Sunday 18 September	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 25 September	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship
Morning Prayer	8am Mondays	

## Mission Church, Sandhurst

Rector: Revd David Commander 240658 [revdavidcommander@gmail.com](mailto:revdavidcommander@gmail.com) (day off: Thursday)  
Morning Prayer 8am Tuesdays  
Mid-week Communion 10am Tuesdays

## Iden Green Congregational Church

Pastor: Tobin Bird 240027 [www.idengreen.org.uk](http://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'.

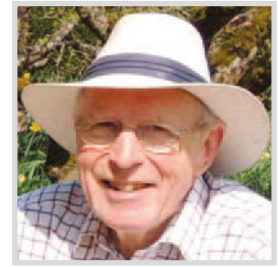
## The Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph TN17 4EL

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Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

## From the Parish Registers

Baptism	13 August	Flora Orford
Funerals	11 August	Lorna Elliott Funeral, and committal Kent and Sussex Crematorium
	19 August	Derek Hyde Funeral and committal Kent and Sussex Crematorium

# Church Letter



## Hanging on and letting go

What will this September mean for you, I wonder? Now I'm long retired, one month can slip into another all too quickly, with routines that provide a lot of continuity - until something happens that changes the course of life.

When I was a teacher, September was very much the start of my year, rather than January. That will be true for many: the moment of starting school, moving on a school year, changing school, starting work or college. Parents have to cope with both their children's and their own issues around leaving behind one life and starting another. For me, this September will mark the moment at which two grandchildren leave school, and in one case home and country. Nothing traumatic, but still new starts that mean a readjustment, mostly for them and their parents, but for us too - letting go of what has been and moving forward into the unknown. For all of you facing big changes, I wish you confidence in yourself and kindness from others.

For all of us this September there are changes in store: a new PM, a new government, and immensely difficult decisions for them and for us all about some of the very basics of life, as the gap widens between income and expenditure. And that's against the backdrop of drought, climate change and international tensions.

For some, it will coincide with other personal events that are calling for, or forcing, a change. Expected changes can be difficult, but unexpected changes are really challenging. If you are facing one of these, I hope you will be able to access help within our community to cope with what may be a very hard combination of both hanging on and letting go.

Faith - Christian faith - encourages us to hope for change, to look forward to signs of new life, to believe that there is healing for wounds created by things that have happened to us and by our own mistakes. That faith can be very hard to come by in the face of all that is wrong in the world and the way people behave towards one another. Jesus knew that; he spoke of faith the size of a tiny mustard seed as faith enough when faced with the need to move mountains. Farmers and gardeners will be sowing seeds in faith that they will grow over winter into plants next spring. Every small act of kindness could be the seed that turns into generous love. Every small decision made because it is morally right can move the world in the right direction.

As you face your own life situation this September, I wish you courage and faith enough to let go as needed and hang on to all that is good.

David Harmsworth, Reader Emeritus



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# Talking Point



## Collective action is about respect, not money

What's the point of collective action, most topically of unions and strikes?

My first job was in the textile industry in factories. I never saw any action taken about pay but every day was about fairness and respect. The first six weeks at work were on a group graduate training course of amazing depth and variety, but each afternoon we'd have to spend a couple of hours on the sewing machines until we as a group could make six dozen pairs of shorts on a shift. Why? So, we knew how hard it is to do what we were asking people to do every day of every week. How important a bent needle is and getting it fixed immediately. Why your breaks were crucial and that a queue for tea was the end of the world.

Leaders knew we were talented people who could do anything - so keeping our feet on the ground was a lesson we needed if we were to lead. In Leicester and Maltby the factory boss was a guy called John Leake, who brought home to me a deep lesson. Everyone in the factory loved him and would walk over hot coals for him. I asked them: why? The answer was so simple. Every morning he was there he would walk in through the factory floors saying good morning to everyone and he would stop and talk to someone each day. And that was it. Demonstrating respect for the people who made his wages.

In Leicester, a trade union rep taught me another simple lesson. They were restructuring some ancient and inefficient working practices. Supervising the department as a young graduate, I was standing talking to the factory manager and when I turned round, the whole floor had quietly walked up behind us, just to make a point. It wasn't about change or training or money etc. They didn't feel fully heard at a time of change, and without being heard they couldn't make the minor adjustments which allowed them to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

My actions did not reflect the pressure they felt from the changes they were going through. I was thinking and talking task not people. Collectively they brought that home by withdrawing their labour for two minutes. I was initially embarrassed, defensive, confused even. The union guy and his wife both worked in the department and over beer they enlightened me as to why they had to go that far. They'd tried conversations at work, at the bar, formally. I didn't do anything differently until I felt the 'jolt'.

As we go into a period of 'discontent', of requests for pay 'rises', please think about the framing of the media coverage and political coverage with its biases in either direction. Try framing your analysis through this question of respect and fairness: "Have these people been treated with respect and what is it that is not being listened to, such that they have to resort to collective action to give someone a jolt?"

The question for society, the question we should each ask ourselves is how can we pre-empt the need for collective action or resignation? Who are we not listening to and why?

Peter Massey

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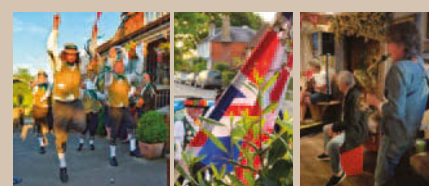


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## Auditions for 'Allo 'Allo

The Benenden Players have decided to try something a bit different in 2023 and instead of a panto we will perform 'Allo 'Allo on 27 and 28 January in the village hall. Auditions will be held on 4 September in the Memorial Hall from 2pm until 4pm and just to reassure you, we have a relaxed, friendly approach to our productions so if you haven't performed before, don't worry! All are welcome. Due to the subject matter, the parts are suitable for adults only. There are eight male roles and five females needed. Please come and have some fun with us.

Bev Beveridge

## St George's Harvest Lunch

We are delighted to be holding our Harvest Lunch after the I am Harvest Festival service at St George's on Sunday 2 October. This year we have opted for a cold bring-and-share buffet. I will be placing a list of dishes that we require in the church nearer the time (to include sandwiches, sausage rolls, quiche, crisps, salads, cakes etc.). You can then add your name and contact number next to your contribution. Any food donations for the lunch will be very gratefully received.

As always, it is good to have an idea of numbers for catering purposes. If you are able to attend, or have any questions, please email me. It has been decided there will be no charge for the lunch this year due to the current economic climate, but we would greatly appreciate a financial donation to the church from those who are able.

Cathy Presgrave

[cathy.presgrave@gmail.com](mailto:cathy.presgrave@gmail.com)



## Grants for students and school-leavers

The Gibbon & Buckland Charity, which started in 1602 with the gift of the school house at the foot of The Green, still gives some support to the primary school, but uses most of its income to give student grants. These are available for any young person under the age of 25 who is resident in, and has been resident in, the parish of Benenden for not less than three years and is either in further education or in other ways getting prepared for working life.

Trustees will also give consideration to applications for grants for gap-year projects of educational worth. If you could benefit, or know someone who could, please ask for an application form at the community shop, or from the clerk to the charity at [gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com](mailto:gibbonandbuckland@gmail.com). The latest date for applications is 30 September.



## The Cranbrook and District Probus Club



PROBUS is a local, national, and international association of retired people who come together in non-political, non-sectarian, non-profit, autonomous clubs which provide regular opportunities for members to meet others in similar circumstances, with similar levels of interest, make new friends, and maintain and expand their interests.

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

Currently there are vacancies for new members. If you are retired and would welcome friendly, relaxed company at a lunch, with interesting speakers, then please contact the Hon. Secretary on 01580 211814 for more information.

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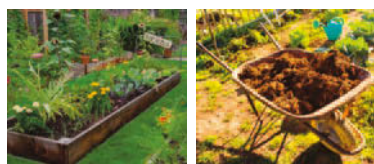
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## Iden Green and Benenden WI

Our August meeting was blessed with cool, calming rain which provided the ideal conditions to meet in the Iden Green Pavilion to hear Sue Duckworth give her presentation on 'Hopping in Kent'. She gave a comprehensive talk covering interesting snippets from the people who went hopping, how they travelled, their working day, processing the hops, and finally the pubs which sold the final product.

We are fortunate that our lovely ladies have agreed to arrange another evening meeting at 7pm onwards on Tuesday 6 September in the Memorial Hall. An entertaining social evening is planned including craft and a raffle. We would be pleased to see anyone who is interested.

Arrangements are well in hand for our eagerly anticipated lunch visit to the Castle Inn at Bodiam on 14 September. This is for members but guests are welcome by invitation.

Katherine Hook is coming to our Tuesday 20 September meeting in the Memorial Hall at 2pm to talk about her method of 'Sloe Seduction'. There will also be a bring and buy stall to raise money towards the restoration of the village wells.


Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

## Merry and Bright Club

Our annual garden party at the end of July was a great success, where we enjoyed a delicious cream tea with fresh strawberries. A big thank you to Anna, who hosted it in her fabulous garden. There are no meetings in August and September due to holidays, but we will be back again in October for our Halloween tea. Meanwhile our committee is working hard planning next year's meetings with lots of fun surprises. Watch this space - 2022 has been a good year and we hope 2023 will be even better.

Laraine Penny 241763

Joan Hagens 240672



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- Visit your church to pick up a sponsorship form and list of participating churches.
- Find some sponsors for however many churches you can call into (or sign the list outside).

Safety on the roads is paramount. We recommend high visibility vests.

For more information contact Alison Prall  
240417 alisonprall40@gmail.com

## Benenden Pre-School

At the end of last term, the Pre-School children very much enjoyed a visit from the education team of the National Fruit Show, who are based in Marden and offer free education programmes for school children of all ages.

The session started with a beautifully illustrated story through which the children were introduced to a year in the life of an apple tree. This was followed by a tasting session. Children noticed that apples came in different shapes and sizes and sampled slices of varieties such as Rockit, Cox and Gala, as well as dried apple and fruit 'leather' made from apple and raspberry.

The children then printed with apples and paint: it's always magical to find the hidden star in an apple cut in half crossways as opposed to from the stem down. To finish the morning, they juiced their own apples and drank the results, noticing that pure fresh juice is darker than that bought in the shops. It was great fun, highly educational and very Kentish.

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor

supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

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## Helen Grant

MP for Maidstone  
and the Weald

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## Talking Shop

Benenden's community shop committee held its AGM in the Memorial Hall on 11 August and we were all pleased to hear that, thanks to the hard work of staff and volunteers, the shop is flourishing. The report and accounts were both approved and chairman Peter Traill informed us that four members of the committee have stood down: Peter Nuttall, Sally-Ann Marks, Deborah Jenkins and Martin Pexton.

We thank them all for their efforts but with very special thanks to Deborah, who has done a sterling job for many years as company secretary, and Martin, without whose efforts it is hard to know how the community shop would have come to be. Martin's sound financial governance has steered the shop through its conception to what it is today and we are extremely grateful. Two vacancies now exist on the committee for anyone who feels they can contribute.

Peter went on to thank our wonderful cohort of volunteers, without whom the shop could not manage, and in gratitude the proceedings morphed happily into a volunteers' social evening. Aided by wine and nibbles it soon took on a far less formal atmosphere and many laughs drifted out onto the village green as dusk fell. We are fortunate to have a great bunch of people who volunteer in the shop and café and find all kinds of pleasure in doing so. However, there is always room for more and we would welcome any newcomers who fancy a chance to enjoy our shop, become a barista and meet loads of lovely people.

We will be at the 'Welcome to the village' event on 22 October in the church so it would be great to see you there. Alternatively, just pop into the shop at any time and fill in a form - it's that easy.

Bev Beveridge [info@benendens.co.uk](mailto:info@benendens.co.uk)  
[www.benendens.co.uk](http://www.benendens.co.uk)

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Benenden Bonfire and Fireworks

**Saturday 5  
November**

**More details in  
the October issue.**

## Newcomers' lunch

We are planning to reintroduce our newcomers' lunch on 22 October in St George's Church from 12-2pm. This is an opportunity to meet people in the village, to find out what is going on and if there are areas of interest to you, both in church and in the community.

As always it is good to have an idea of numbers for catering purposes. In my absence Sally-Ann Marks has kindly offered to coordinate and would be happy to hear from you via her email address:

[sallymarks100@hotmail.com](mailto:sallymarks100@hotmail.com)

Helen Commander

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## Village Hall

With September bringing the start of the school year, it feels like an opportunity for new beginnings, and at the village hall we're looking for a fresh face to join our small team.

Although we will continue to be eternally grateful for the great job that Karen our caretaker has done over the past few years, she's now ready to pass the torch to someone else, and we're hoping we'll find that person among the talented community of Benenden.

Benenden Village Trust is looking to appoint a friendly and reliable person as village hall caretaker to contribute to the smooth running of the hall on a part-time basis (average seven hours a week at £12.36/hour plus contributory pension scheme). The successful applicant will be self-motivated, dependable and trustworthy with good communication skills. Flexibility is required to meet variable needs, consistent with the day-to-day use of the hall, some relatively short visits, including weekends and evenings as necessary. Working with the hall manager and the cleaner, responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring that the hall is presented clean and fully operational; liaising with hirers; opening and closing the hall for non-regular hirers; and monitoring the security of the building.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact me.

Holly Clayson, Manager 07419 989830  
[enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org](mailto:enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org)  
[www.benendenvillagehall.org](http://www.benendenvillagehall.org)

## Planning Matters

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

- 22/02088/LBC Forge House, The Street. Listed Building Consent: Repairs and alterations to dwelling including Insulate floors, repair walls and ceilings, new wiring, new boiler and heating system, Alterations to external door.
- 22/02150/FULL Forge House, The Street. Change of use from storage to office and renovation of 'The Old Forge'.
- 22/01065/FULL Hopehouse Hens, Standen Street. Stationing of a mobile home & timber shed for an agricultural worker for a period of three years (Part Retrospective).
- 22/01692/FULL Under Mount, Cranbrook Road. Demolition of existing single-storey side extension; Erection of two-storey side extension; Addition of two rear-facing gabled dormers; Erection of new entrance porch; Extension and conversion of existing garage; Addition of outdoor swimming pool; Associated landscaping.
- 22/02099/FULL Old Eaton Oast, Goddards Green Road. Erection of a Summerhouse.

More planning matters at:  
[benendenparishcouncil.org](http://benendenparishcouncil.org)

## Village lunch

There will be no village lunch in September as so many of the cooks are away, but we will be back as usual on Tuesday 18 October in the village hall at 12.30pm. Please contact me if you would like to come and don't have your name down. We'll look forward to seeing everyone then.

Sheila Hume 854627



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## Benenden School

Earlier this month I had the pleasure of attending the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where a company formed of 14 Benenden Six Ones (Year 12s) spent eight days performing their original production, *In the Small Hours*.

Written by the school's resident professional playwright Owen Thomas, *In the Small Hours* incorporated creative contributions from each of the participating performers, including material drawn from extensive improvisation. The resulting play is set on Halloween 1972, in an unnamed private school where a group of students have gathered to exchange ghost stories at night, brought to life with atmospheric storytelling, eerie soundscapes and striking visuals.

The students worked tirelessly to adapt the script into something wholly immersive for their audience through their imagery. The company, known as The Wyrd Sisters, was rapturously received by fringe audiences. One audience member even wrote: "I was unsure how 'scary' a fringe show could actually be, but the ending literally sent shivers down my spine!"

The students have shown total commitment to putting on an exceptional show through their rehearsals this year, and it is testament to their effort, determination, creativity and talent that they have received such a positive reception at the world's largest arts festival.

On the subject of the arts, we are delighted to be able to welcome the village to a fabulous concert from the highly regarded Philharmonia Orchestra, to be held in our spectacular new Centenary Hall on Sunday 2 October. We are pleased to be offering this concert, free of charge, to the local community as part of our opening events programme for the hall. Not only will this be a unique opportunity to enjoy a concert from the Philharmonia but you will also be able to explore this stunning new facility. Tickets are free but require booking in advance using the dedicated link on our website: [www.benenden.school/philharmonia](http://www.benenden.school/philharmonia)  
Samantha Price, Headmistress



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## A Horticultural Society?

We were wondering if anyone else would be interested in setting up a Horticultural Society in the village? We are lucky to live in this beautiful part of Kent and many of us have lovely gardens and enjoy growing flowers, vegetables and fruit. If there is enough interest, we could set up a meeting to see how to take this forward. The idea might be to arrange about four meetings a year with a speaker, and possibly one Horticultural Show every year where villagers could show their finest produce.

It would be great to get the involvement of children and young people, with classes for them in the show as well as open classes for flower arranging, cookery and maybe craft too. Please email either of us if you are keen to take part and we will gauge the amount of interest. Best wishes and good luck with the rest of the growing season (and fingers crossed for some rain soon).

Sally-Ann and Ronald Marks  
[ronmarks1946@gmail.com](mailto:ronmarks1946@gmail.com)  
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## Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

The PTFA ended the school year with the introduction of a new committee and we are all very excited to continue the hard work and great efforts of our predecessors. We look forward to welcoming a new year of children and parents and are planning some new fundraising activities for the school and local community to enjoy.

Following on from the great efforts to raise money for outdoor playing resources, we are also eager to begin our fundraising efforts to landscape a reflection garden and give the children more opportunity to become involved in outdoor gardening by introducing the planting of fruits and vegetables in the school's raised beds that run outside each classroom. Over the summer, we applied for the Free Tree Programme from Kent County Council and if successful we will have an assortment of trees to plant in the school grounds in the autumn.

Should you wish to help and support our outdoor efforts with seed, plants or tool donations please do get in touch.

For more details on activities or how to support, please scan QR code, visit our go fund me page

[www.gofund.me/80bf4556](https://www.gofund.me/80bf4556)

or visit our website

[www.benenden-](http://www.benenden-)

[cep.kent.sch.uk/Parents/PTFA/](http://cep.kent.sch.uk/Parents/PTFA/)

Rachel Tinker, Benenden CEP, PTFA Chair



## Bell ringing

July saw a burst of activities and achievements in and out of the tower. It was great to welcome Year 5 from the primary school to our annual presentation of the bells and ringing, with each pupil having an opportunity to handle a rope and several interested in taking up ringing. In Frittenden, Levi Hockney passed his handling test and was elected to Association membership - for which, congratulations. For the very first time, a band of three pupils from the primary school (Will, Millie and Christopher) rang, with one parent and instructors, for the end-of-term service. In late July there was the annual ringers' barbecue and steam-up on the Limes Barn Railway, of which the final length of track had just been laid after four years of building; there was a good turnout too of visiting steam locomotives and drivers, with rides for all. This also marked 40 years of Rod's service as ringing master at St George's.

This was closely followed by the first quarter-peal with all three ringing members of the Dellow family, being the first quarter for both Will and Mum Katie, with Ben ringing his first on an 'inside' bell - a fine effort by all three. And, as a result of the above Year 5 presentation, two members of the Bellman family (with a name like that, you can't not become a ringer!), Dolly and dad Douglas, are now under training and making excellent progress in the basics of bell handling. And all this among the rush of post-covid weddings to ring for - no fewer than 18 this year!

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## Topical health

Last month I talked about the useful acronym 'DR ABC' - danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation - to remember the initial stages of giving first aid, starting with 'DR', avoiding 'danger' and trying to get a 'response' from the potential casualty.

The next element is 'airway'. Checking if someone's airway is clear, and doing something about it if it is not, may be enough to save a life. Look for obstructions like a ligature, a pillow or perhaps items of food, false teeth or vomit, then clear or remove it quickly. If they are lying on their side or their back, you can protect their airways by placing one hand on their forehead and the other under their chin and tilting their head back.

If you are still concerned about their 'breathing', you can assess it by listening for breath sounds - feeling for breaths on your face while doing this - and looking to see if the chest is moving. If there is nothing in ten seconds, call for help and start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

If the casualty is breathing, you should next assess their 'circulation'. This is about checking for signs of bleeding, e.g. obvious blood around or under the casualty. Some bleeding may be contained in a large bruise or swelling, such as in the thigh, and may not be obvious to a first aider. If the person's airway is clear, they are breathing and there is no obvious bleeding, they should be placed in the recovery position. A rapid assessment such as this should take only a few seconds but keeps you safe and provides the basis for treating the casualty. In future issues I'll provide advice about CPR, the recovery position and what to do when someone is choking.

Peter Ellis

## Benenden Hospital

National Eye Health Week (NEHW), from 19 to 25 September, is organised by Vision Matters. The aim is to promote good eye health and how essential regular eye tests are for all. Cataracts are when the lens, a small transparent disc inside your eye, develops cloudy patches. Cataracts get worse with age, so your vision progressively deteriorates. It is estimated that 30% of people 65 years or older have a visually impairing cataract in one or both eyes.

At Benenden Hospital we have created a dedicated Eye Unit which helps thousands of patients struggling with impaired vision due to cataracts get fast access to diagnosis and treatment. Our expert ophthalmic consultants are supported by a team of experienced eye healthcare professionals.

I'd like to share a comment by Alan Tompkins, whose deteriorating eyesight was making it difficult for him to do daily activities, until he opted to have cataract surgery: "The first treatment I had was the removal of a cataract from my right eye. Then, I went back and had a cataract removed from my left eye. The clinical and nursing staff were very supportive throughout the whole procedure. Having my cataracts removed has changed my life immensely. I hadn't realised how poor my eyesight had gotten. Immediately, I could see colour which I hadn't been able to see for a long time."

I hope you're continuing to take care of your eye health as we approach the end of summer. Thank you to our fabulous Eye Unit team for their hard work.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse



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## A walk for Anna

Combined, David and I are 150 years old (73+77) and walking over 100 miles along the South Downs Way to raise money for Mind, the national mental health charity. We plan to do this walk in September to mark the ten years since our daughter, Anna, took her own life. She hugely enjoyed riding this route, so it seems an appropriate thing to do, although I think it will be quite a challenge for us as we fight our aches and pains.

Mental illness can affect anyone. We have supported Mind over the past ten years, seeing at close hand how much they do. We aim to raise £10,000 to help continue their vital work. If you would like to donate you can do this online at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Anna-Sargent10](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Anna-Sargent10) or I can happily collect cash donations.

Margaret Sargent 850311  
[margaretsargent48@gmail.com](mailto:margaretsargent48@gmail.com)

## Volunteer drivers needed

Some time ago a group was set up of drivers who were willing to take Benenden residents who do not have their own vehicle and for whom other means of transportation are either impractical or unaffordable, to local hospital or doctor appointments. I have volunteered to coordinate this scheme and get it up and running again.

The key ingredient for this is, of course, volunteers willing to give their time occasionally to drive patients to and from appointments in return for a contribution towards fuel. If you would be willing to participate in this vital local initiative, please let me have your contact details, preferably via email. As soon as we have a viable pool of drivers in place, I'll let everyone know in this magazine how to access the scheme.

Mick Moore 240755  
[m.moore131156@gmail.com](mailto:m.moore131156@gmail.com)

## Do you love to sing?

Covid has taken its toll on choirs all around the country and Cranbrook Choral is no exception. We would love to welcome more singers, across the voice ranges. Whether you have sung in a choir all your life or never before, why not come along to a rehearsal or two to get the feel of the evening? If you would like to join you can pay your subs after a couple of weeks.

You don't need to be able to read music - although this helps - as there are many audible aids to help you learn big pieces, follow the music and learn your part. All you need is a singing voice, enthusiasm and a smile. It has been shown in many studies that singing, particularly choral singing has an overall beneficial effect on your well-being. Come and try it for yourself. You will leave feeling upbeat and energised.

Term begins at 7.25pm on Tuesday 6 September to prepare for the November concert.

Christiane Morris 07798 686214  
[www.cranbrookchoral.org.uk](http://www.cranbrookchoral.org.uk)

## Hospice in the Weald Musicals

Welcome to our 14th season of Richard Beattie Davis Memorial Musicals. The September Hospice recital will be at 3pm on Tuesday 6 September, when Sasha Karpeyev will be playing with François Pineau-Benois, our first violinist who is coming over from Paris. Sasha tells me that they are exploring the 'Belaieff' composers, which thrills me - possibly inspired by Richard's book 'The Beauty of Belaieff', the definitive study of the Russian music publisher. They will be playing Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Glazunov and more.

Tickets will only be sold in advance. Please contact me for reservations:

Gillian Davis 850384  
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Moustached vs non-Moustached, 2013

## Benenden Cricket Club: Leather on willow, just for the fun of it

Cricket is a strange game, quite different to all other games, and this can be bewildering for those unaccustomed to it. To begin with, you may be surprised to learn that there are no rules in cricket - instead we have written laws. Also, to my knowledge, it is also the only game where enjoying a cup of tea is built into the action.

One defining feature of cricket is its quest for fair play, epitomised by the saying 'hitting with a straight bat'. Unlike many other team sports, the stronger side plays until they are just one run ahead and then stop play. Americans find this immensely strange, but we cricketers are a strange bunch. We like to play, just for the fun of playing.

Benenden used to play on Sundays with a league side (where the game is taken extremely seriously) and on Saturdays with a friendly side. Just the Saturday side exists today, but during the middle of the summer we also hold a few midweek games, in which anyone can take part. These have rules all of their own and are designed on the T20 (20-20) or recently the 100 format, which are much shorter to play, with the sole aim of having fun.

First, we adopt an age batting order rule, so that the youngsters bat first, as we feel that they need to have an interesting game to want to play again. We also have a reverse age-order bowling rule, so that the oldest in one team bowl against the youngest batters

of the opposition. You can't be out first ball (where's the fun in that?) and everyone needs to bowl at least one over. We also only play for 100 balls, with wides and extras counting as penalty runs, instead of repeating deliveries, which ensures that an entire game lasts no longer than two hours.

Most interesting, though, are the teams. Back in 2013, when my company won the contract to supply camera equipment for the last Poirot series starring David Suchet, I arranged a celebratory T20 game of the 'Moustached vs non-Moustached'. Those who weren't naturally hirsute (Benenden played as the Moustached), were given stick-on toy moustaches to wear.

Earlier this year, we played the TW Royals, but Benenden could only field five players. Happily, the Royals brought 15, so we mixed up the teams. Selecting the teams by birthday meant that two random teams emerged of the 'January-June born' playing against the 'July to December born'. The most important facet of our attitude to these games is that we play simply for enjoyment. It is always nice to win but it is even nicer just to play!

We are always on the search for new players of all standards, so if you would like to play cricket on The Green, as has been done since 1798, please call me.

Our home fixtures for September on The Green:

Saturday 10 September v Sissinghurst at 1pm

Saturday 17 September v Kilndown and  
Lamberhurst at 1pm

Saturday 24 September v West Farleigh at 1pm

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## Kent's beautiful buildings: an artist's final journey

Exhibition pays tribute to  
Roger FitzGerald's love  
of the county's architecture

Grierson Galleries is extremely proud  
to host an exhibition of original  
artworks by Roger FitzGerald, from  
17 September to 15 October at The  
Old Brewery, Dorothy Avenue in  
Cranbrook. Roger, who sadly died in  
July, was a friend and had exhibited  
with us over many years.

We will also launch Roger's fourth  
and final book: 'Buildings of Kent', the  
result of his travels across the county.  
Roger's final exhibition and book  
launch shows him experimenting like  
never before: applying charcoal, ink  
and collaged elements to the paper  
along with his favoured acrylic paint -  
using tools as diverse as razor blades,  
rollers and pieces of card. The results  
are impressionistic and playful.

The book tells two stories. The  
paintings, sketches and text display  
the architecture of Kent and its  
relationship with the history and  
geography of the county. In the  
background is a second, more  
personal story. In February last year,  
Roger was diagnosed with  
pancreatic cancer. He had long held  
an ambition to write this book and  
was undaunted by the prospect of  
doing so while undergoing  
treatment. Excursions around Kent  
were fitted in around

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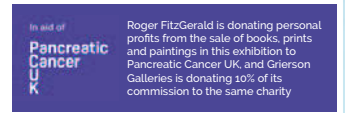
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Saturday 17th September 2022  
Exhibition runs until October 15th 2022

Grierson Galleries is extremely proud and honoured to host  
this incredibly special exhibition and book launch. Roger  
was both one of our artists who'd exhibited with Grierson  
Galleries over many years, and a friend. He sadly died in July  
of Pancreatic Cancer.

This is the exhibition of his last 30 works of Buildings of  
Kent and the launch of the accompanying book. Roger was  
passionate about Kent and its architecture and these works  
convey this passion. A mix of ink, charcoal and collage.

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chemotherapy and the ensuing fatigue. Drawings  
were completed in hospital during his final weeks.

The book ends with a painting of Margate that  
was left unfinished in Roger's studio before he  
sadly passed away, aged 63. At this point, the book  
was largely finished, with some  
unfinished text then completed by  
his son James in line with his wishes.

This book holds tremendous  
emotional significance for Roger's  
family, as a symbol of his  
determination in the face of a cruel  
disease, and Grierson Galleries is  
honoured to be putting on such a  
special exhibition. Original works,  
Giclée limited edition prints and Roger's books  
will all be on sale at the event. The exhibition will  
raise money for Pancreatic Cancer UK - the  
charity that supported Roger and his family after  
his diagnosis.

Annie Watsham 720559  
[annie@griersongalleries.com](mailto:annie@griersongalleries.com)  
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## St Malo to Nice on two wheels and tired legs

Following our earlier article where I wrote about our crazy Bike to Hike challenge, we have now completed the bike leg. It was amazing! We gather that Benenden is full of cyclists and that there might be some interest in hearing more about the ride.

On 21 May, a group of three women and seven men with an average age of over 60 set out for Portsmouth to catch the ferry to St Malo, and so our adventure started. To say the group was inexperienced is an understatement. To illustrate this, on day one, when we had ridden the 83 miles, half of the group announced that they had just cycled further than ever before. It just shows that if you put your mind to something, you really can do anything - and what a sense of achievement you get.

The route we planned came straight out of a book called *France En Velo*. What a find it

was, with a mass of useful information. We spent all our time on D roads, often with very little traffic, going through the most beautiful parts of France. And after the roads of Kent and East Sussex, what a joy those roads were. For the technically minded, I was also able to purchase GPX files of the daily routes from someone who had obviously got bored during lockdown. These coupled with Garmin devices were invaluable.

The first three days were long (averaging over 80 miles) but relatively flat and so a great introduction for our legs. The route took us east along the coast and then, with our last look at the sea and Mont Saint-Michel in the

distance, we turned south for Nice. First lesson was: watch Sunday nights in France - everything is shut!

I would recommend doing this route north to south. The scenery just got better and better and the wind

seemed to be more with us than against us. A key feature of the ride were the great French rivers: the Loire, the Dordogne, the Lot and the Rhone. A river was always a welcome sight as it meant relatively flat roads and an opportunity for wild swimming. We also took a great interest in vineyards and had a lot of







fun sampling the local vino, as well the local food such as foie gras, canard, or mushrooms. My favourite stop of the first week was Brantome, with its morning market and amazing abbey on the banks of the river.

After seven days of cycling

Clark' to look after you and the bikes. He was amazing. Good planning and preparation really pay off. We did all the organisation ourselves to maximise money for the charities. Learning to ride in a peloton really helps when people are getting tired. Team tops are a real plus: easy to spot and very bonding. Our daily Instagram posts were a great hit and helped the fund raising. For those that like stats, we rode just over 1,000 miles and

climbed 58,000ft in 15 days. We had only two punctures but I took the prize for mechanical failures!



and a much-needed rest day in Gramat, we hit the second week - much hotter and much hillier. Start

times got earlier and energy levels over dinner were definitely lower. Day 12 was a killer: 93 miles and the first of the long difficult climbs. The last 20 miles into Sault was billed as the best 30km of cycling in France. All uphill and in 30 degrees? I don't think so!

Day 13 was a rest day with the option of going up Mont Ventoux, one of the most famous Tour de France climbs. Four of us couldn't resist the temptation, but I think probably most people's highlight of the trip was the Gorge de Verdon, the second biggest canyon after the Grand Canyon. A long climb up was rewarded with the most amazing views as we rode along the top of the gorge casting condescending looks at all the car and motorbike riders.

What did we learn? Always have a 'Giles



As you read this we have just finished the hike leg: just under 200 miles from Chapelle Abondance to Modane on the GR5. It was very different and equally challenging. We climbed 58,000ft - the equivalent of climbing Everest from sea level twice!

However, I think we must be doing something right, because our funds raised is approaching £50,000 for our two charities: Power for the People and Chalkdown Riding for the Disabled Association.

If you would like to support us, click on the link [www.sponsorme.charitiestrust.org](http://www.sponsorme.charitiestrust.org) and search for Bike to Hike. Thank you.

James Stewart







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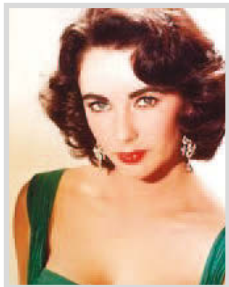




## Meet the neighbours: from rag and bone man to screen goddess

Mark Hollander, a relative newcomer to the village, discovers the great and good who called this area home for a while

**Queen of the silver screen: In the years before World War II, Elizabeth Taylor (1932-2011)**



spent weekends and summer holidays on the Great Swifts estate (now Oak Hill Manor) near Cranbrook. She stayed in a 16th-century gamekeeper's lodge (Little Swallows) belonging to her godfather Colonel Victor Cazalet, the cottage being named after the

family of swallows that lived outside Elizabeth's bedroom window. "It was so beautiful,"

Elizabeth once wrote, "like a little house out of a Walt Disney film nestled against a lovely wood that was almost like a bird sanctuary."

**Harry H Corbett OBE (1925-1982)** is best remembered for playing the aspirational rag and bone man Harold Steptoe - son of the curmudgeonly Albert - in the long-running BBC sitcom of the '60s and '70s, *Steptoe and Son*, which at its peak drew 27m viewers (half of Britain's 53m inhabitants at the time). Prime Minister Harold Wilson wished to reward the staunch Labour campaigner Corbett with an OBE, but the middle initial 'H' was lost in the administrative process and the 'gong' was accidentally given to the Sooty and Sweep puppeteer Harry Corbett instead. Both were eventually included in the same New Year's Honours list in 1976.



**Jo Brand (1957-), Benenden bellringer:** The comedian, presenter and author moved to Benenden aged four and went to the primary school. Her best friend's father was the vicar, leading to Jo becoming a bellringer. After school she worked as a nursing assistant for adults with learning

disabilities and as a psychiatric nurse for ten years. In the mid-80s she became an important part of the alternative comedy scene, before moving on to more mainstream TV.

One of Britain's first pin-up girls: Dying when just 25, **Kitty Fisher (1741-1767)** was one of England's most famous courtesans and packed much into a short life. Originally a milliner in London, she was gifted with a flair for publicity and became renowned for her affairs with men of wealth. Her life, appearance and dress were regularly the subject of scurrilous commentary in broadsheets, and portraits of her painted by Joshua Reynolds including *Cleopatra Dissolving the Pearl*. Prints from these engravings were sold to thousands of her fans. In 1766, she married John Norris, son of the MP for Rye and lived at her husband's family house, Hemsted (now Benenden School). She died four months later and is buried at St George's in her best ball gown.



The newscaster of his time: 6ft 5in **Andrew Gardner (1932-1999)**, who lived between

Hawkhurst and Benenden for many years, was one of the UK's most popular newsreaders between 1962 and 1977 and was regularly the voice of state occasions and royal weddings of his time. Andrew was one of the original anchors of *News at Ten* and presented the first transatlantic programme beamed from the early Telstar satellite.



The local boy who was awarded the Victoria Cross: Grew up in Cranbrook, **William Addison (1883-1962)** volunteered as a chaplain at the

outbreak of the World War I. Serving on 9 April 1916 at Sanna-i-Yat, Mesopotamia (now Iraq), he was awarded the UK's highest award for gallantry, carrying a wounded man and several others while under heavy rifle and machine



gun fire to the safety of a trench, after binding up their wounds under heavy rifle and machine gun fire unaided.

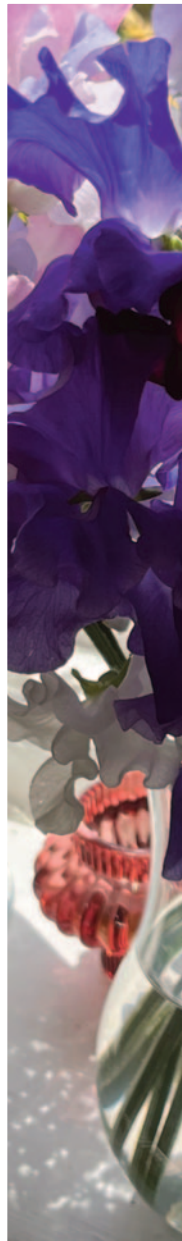
# In Your Garden

## Good time to sow seeds of optimism

I decided this month to hop, skip and jump out of this bleak and omnipresent situation of water shortages and lack of rainfall and look to the future with a round of seed sowing. As I write we have just experienced a welcome downpour, but we will need a few more months' worth to get the groundwater levels back on track. It is all rather depressing stuff.

On a happier note, for some gardeners an autumn sowing marks the beginning of the gardening year. We are conditioned by the horticultural retail industry to consider the start of the gardening year to be March, and certainly by Easter, but the reality is our garden plants are almost six months into their growing cycle by then. There is a flurry of activity underground throughout winter months while roots establish a strong growing system. Soil bacteria are alive and kicking too, so that once warmer spring weather arrives, plants are good to go.

Having successfully started off my sweet peas in autumn for a number of years now, I feel it's worth trying your hand at sowing some other hardy annuals at the same time - either in small pots or trays to leave outside until spring or direct sow into their final positions. Ammi majus and visnaga is a good group to try, as are Californian and opium poppies, cornflowers, calendulas and the very pretty orlaya grandiflora. There are some super new calendula varieties available now online from Chiltern Seeds; the 'Touch of Red' series and 'Snow Princess' are far from the ubiquitous orange varieties, although without fail I grow 'Indian Prince' every year and calendula officinalis, the original pot marigold - hard to beat, and edible too. This year I intend to try my hand at growing orlaya grandiflora - I shall be delighted if I get it to germinate! I think I will try the direct sow method with this one, as if it doesn't germinate at first then a period



of cold (or stratification) is supposed to do the trick.

My experience of growing perennials and grasses from seed has been limited but I have tried gaura and stipa tenuissima with extremely abundant results. I have also grown a dahlia, 'Bishop's Children', from seed, which was a roaring success. I am on to year two with my tubers and the colours are much better this year. As they develop, I will take basal cuttings in late spring, which is a reliable way to increase stock.

If I feel lucky, I may try my hand at growing a very pretty echinacea spied on a recent outing to Hever Castle. E. pallida were growing tall and strong amongst grasses, dotted here and there as if they had been drop-painted into the landscape. I should surface sow seed and keep at a steady 20-24 degrees temperature until they germinate, but this could deliver erratic results and if nothing germinates at all I will have to resolve to stratification - toing and froing from fridge to warmth every 2-4 weeks until the seeds decide to grow.

Sowing a few vegetable seeds at this time of year keeps an extended supply going beyond the summer months. Kale, rocket and chard can all be sown now in a damp, crumbly tilth and can either be snipped as young leaves or left to grow on. You may need to cloche rocket once it gets colder, though. A row or two of radish and lettuce leaves easily germinate in warm soil, too, and if I could but gather enough momentum, I would be most grateful for a fresh bowl of green crunchy salad leaves throughout winter, but I have yet to achieve this holiest of grails.

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Above: Summertime: the Drama Workshop; cricket on The Green; volunteer Jackie Ceeney preparing for Benenden's community shop AGM and social evening; bell ringers in the belfry and on the Limes Barn Railway; Eye Unit staff at Benenden Hospital; The Wyrd Sisters - Benenden School's performers at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; the harrowed Beacon field; local harvesting

Front cover: In the footsteps of those who have played since 1798 on The Green. Photograph: Amelia Thomas