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Magazine

May 2019

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Editorial



My name is Ruth Clark and in March I was very flattered to be asked to join the Benenden Magazine as one of its editors. My initial excitement was quickly tempered as I considered the task ahead. It's quite a responsibility to be part of the amazing team that puts this publication together.

I am no stranger to the mechanics of magazines. However, my areas of specialisation were commercial fishing and printing technology so changing tack and writing about Benenden people and news is a fresh challenge, one that I am really looking forward to. I began my journalistic career with IPC writing about commercial fishing before moving into the world of commercial printing technology (as you do - there is a tenuous link I assure you). As a tech nerd I then joined a PR firm specialising in the field for 11 years before starting my company, Splash!PR, in a small office in Rolvenden. I retired last year and am now having a lovely time getting involved in village endeavours.

The magazine team have been terrific at bringing me up to speed. Shortly after an issue hits the streets, we gather to plan the next one. In addition to regular items, we discuss upcoming events, news, and a variety of features and outline a rough schedule of who's doing what and when. The deadline for copy has been now moved to the 10th of the month preceding publication. This may seem early, but it gives time for our production wizard Camilla Macdonald to design the final layout, approve the finished pages with contributors and send it to the printers. You may find that your text has been slightly edited to suit space constraints and our house style.

The demand for advertising has grown so that some months we can't accommodate all requests. This may be frustrating, but we do aim to give priority to village-based advertisers alongside those that make 12-month bookings. We can't please everyone all the time, but we set out to please most of you most of the time.

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

May

Friday 3	Woodland Wide Games, Iden Green Congregational Church, 7pm	
Saturday 4	Cornhole Tossing, St George's Club, 8.30pm	
Sunday 5	Michael Robertson, Organ Recital, St George's Church, 6pm	p.21
Saturday 11	Bingo, St George's Club, 8pm	
Sunday 12	Christian Aid Week starts	p.23
Sunday 12	If I Catch Alphonso, Tonight!, Benenden Village Hall, 3.30pm	p.9
Wednesday 15	Iden Green and Benenden WI, lunch at the Ewe and Lamb	p.23
Saturday 18	The Choristers of Canterbury Cathedral, St George's Church, 7pm	p.13
Saturday 18	Darts, St George's Club, 8pm	
Sunday 19	Messy Church, St George's Church, 4-6pm	p.13
Monday 20	Parish Council Meeting, Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm	
Monday 20	Parish Annual Assembly, Iden Green Pavilion, 8pm	
Tuesday 21	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.23
Tuesday 21	Iden Green and Benenden WI, AGM, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.23
Saturday 25	Quiz Night, St George's Club, 8.30pm	
Tuesday 28	Merry and Bright, Memorial Hall, 3pm	

Benenden Youth Club/Streetcruizer, age 11+

Tuesdays at Benenden Village Hall, 6.30-8.30pm

Coffee Shop

Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall, 10-12noon

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

Refuse Lorry Collections

Saturday 4 May for Domestic Waste

Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-9.20am and Iden Green, crossroads, 9.40-11am

Saturday 18 May for Garden/Compostable Waste

Benenden, Village Hall layby, 8-9.20am and Iden Green, crossroads, 9.40-11am

Parish Council



Following the change in the clocks, as we look forward to long evenings in the garden, it hardly seems possible that it was ten months ago when I attended my first Parish Council meeting.

My family and I live on the outskirts of the village at Hinxden Farm Dairy, a business that has been in my husband Richard's family for 100 years. For the last 30 years, we have been retailing our dairy produce on doorsteps and to businesses across Kent and East Sussex. I am very pleased that our daughters, Rebecca and Katy, are involved in all aspects of the farm and are keen to remain in the village.

My area of interest on the Parish Council is Highways. Over 30 years volunteering as Regional Safety Advisor for the British Horse Society, training and assessing horse riders on how to ride safely on the roads.

Safety of all road users is very high on my priorities. Therefore, I am delighted that the Speedwatch group are active again. At the last Parish Council meeting we discussed ways of improving safety on both Benenden and Iden Green crossroads. The Neighbourhood Development Plan has also highlighted this need. We look forward to working with representatives from KCC on this and other road improvements in the future.

Remember, you can report road conditions either by contacting the Parish Clerk or online at www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem.

If you read this in time, the annual village spring clean takes place on Saturday 27 April: meet at the community shop or Iden Green Pavilion at 9-9.30am. All volunteers will receive a voucher for a drink and a cake at the community shop.

Dee Manford, Parish Councillor

Caroline Levett, Benenden Parish Council Clerk
01580 240371 clerk@benendenparishcouncil.org

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

Parish Council Meeting
Monday 20 May 2019,
Iden Green Pavilion, 7pm

Parish Annual Assembly
Monday 20 May 2019,
Iden Green Pavilion, 8pm

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

Churchwarden: Tracy Claridge 240454 maisonsicheluk@tlclaridge.co.uk

Churchwarden: Julia Collard 241944 Julia.collard@btinternet.com

www.benendenchurch.org 850849 benendenchurch@gmail.com

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

Sunday 5 May	8am Communion	10am All-age Communion and Sunday School	5pm Choral Evensong 6pm Organ Recital
Sunday 12 May	8am 1662 Communion	10am Morning Worship	5pm Evening Prayer at Mission Church
Sunday 19 May	8am Communion	10am Sung Eucharist	4pm Messy Church
Sunday 26 May	8am Communion	10am Morning Worship	
Thursday 30 May			7.30pm Ascension Day Service

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Every Tuesday 10am Communion

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship

The Roman Catholic Chapel TN17 4EL

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Funeral 3 April John 'Art' Cowling Interment
17 April Bill Hinkley Funeral and burial
23 April Edith Masters Funeral Charing Crematorium

Rector's Letter



‘Thou knowest how busy I must be this day’

So, did you enjoy all the busyness over the Easter period? Or is it more a case that you managed to survive it all? The school holidays were unusual having two weeks of holiday before Easter, and then straight back after the Easter weekend; maybe it was a case, for you, of surviving those two weeks. For the majority, there was the long weekend with two bank holidays to enjoy off work. I hope that amongst all the busyness you found time to enjoy the break and Easter.

As we look forward (there I go again ‘looking forward’), there are another two bank holidays coming up in May; which means another two four-day weeks for us to look forward to and enjoy. The wedding season really kicks off in May when many couples will be enjoying their special day; when many of their family and friends will enjoy being together for the ceremony and for the party afterwards. May is also a beautiful time of year and usually a time for proliferation of bluebells, and they have already started to appear as I write. May is also a time of longer days and warmer beautiful weather; a time of year to really enjoy.

Or are we all still so busy living life that all the natural beauty which surrounds us here in the Weald of Kent just passes us by? That would be a real shame. Once in a while, just step off the trend-mill of life and stop, if only for a moment. Look, listen and smell; use your senses and marvel at the beauty of the place in which you live, for we are lucky indeed. Look out for the beautiful sunrise or sunset; listen out for the sounds of the birds; breathe in the clean air. Take a moment out of the busyness of life to enjoy what you have or, before you know it, it will have passed you by.

And, of course, as a Christian, as a priest and as your Rector, I also encourage you to take a moment out of the busyness of life to remember and enjoy the relationship you have with God. Your God and our creator. Don't just let it be in a time of crisis that you remember him and cry out to him. He is there all the time; waiting to pick up that relationship with you when you are ready. Before the Battle of Edgehill (October 1642), one of the Royalist commanders, Sir Jacob Astley, evidently prayed: “O Lord! thou knowest how busy I must be this day: if I forget thee, do not thou forget me.” A good prayer and a simple prayer. So, take a moment to step back from all the busyness. Recognise how busy you are, but in that moment of stillness enjoy the gift of life you have.

Revd David Commander, Rector

MEET YOUR MP Helen Grant

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

www.helengrant.org

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



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Just a Thought



The minefield of manners

What situation presents a potential minefield for grandparents and off duty teachers? Young children's manners. (Those of teenagers is a world I will leave for another time - if ever).

Older adults have probably been tut-tutting about the manners and behaviour of the young throughout the ages. Grandparents have been saying: "what do you say?", "what's the magic word?", "please don't just drop your things anywhere", "wait a minute, I'm talking to ...", "did you hear me?", over the generations. But is the situation beginning to change?

In earlier days, whatever the society, there were fairly narrow accepted norms and for the most part these were followed and encouraged. This was still the case when we worked in St Helena, a very isolated, relatively small community in the middle of the South Atlantic. Everyone knew everyone else and any disapproval for some misdemeanour, large or small, was soon communicated to the offender's family. It meant that manners and behaviour were generally very good on the island, but the environment was also somewhat oppressive for the youngsters.

Nowadays there is far greater diversity of culture, and exposure to a variety of behaviours and standards within a community. The pressure from society is less overt and the messages sent out through the media must, at times, be very confusing to young and old alike, especially the grandparents. When a grandchild's manners diverge from those of the grandparent, should one say something or not say something? Perhaps this depends on the location; their home or yours: "in my house this is what I expect", with lips held tight when elsewhere. Maybe it should depend on who is responsible for them at the time. Then again should the magnitude of the discrepancy influence the decision on whether or not to speak out? Of course there is also the attitude and reaction of the parents to be considered. There is so much discussion these days about the ways in which children should be brought up and what manners and behaviours are to be desired or are at least acceptable. Grandchildren can be such a source of delight, friendly, boisterous, thoughtful, enlightening and great fun much of the time; they can also present a challenge. It is a minefield indeed.

Grandparents are not alone, however. Another group of people also challenged in this regard are teachers and retired teachers (of whom I am one). There is no problem at school or nursery: "my classroom means my rules". However, when off duty and presented with undesirable manners, or lack of any at all, it takes a concerted effort to switch off, move out of role and assess whether the time, place, status and situation require an intervention. The alternative is "not my problem" followed by a big sigh, closed lips and the thought "I wonder how my grandparents would have navigated this minefield?"

Sue Fisher



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The Villages

News and Events

New Benenden-Tenterden bus route

The village's bus travellers, currently surviving on a service that takes them to Tenterden just two days a week, can take heart from the announcement by of a community bus pilot scheme that will run daily for the next year.

Timetables and fares are due to be finalised in May, but it seems there will be four routes, running from Shirkoak Park, Leigh Green, Rolvenden and Iden Green, with the last-named expected to go via Benenden, Goddards Green and Castletons Oak. The service will be run by Tenterden Social Hub using a 16-seater, wheelchair-accessible minibus, with concessionary passes still accepted.

KCC intends to have the pilot scheme up and running by June, in the hope that the increased frequency and inclusion of more villages - replacing and improving on the Hams Travel 293/294 service it currently funds - will encourage a greater number of people to travel on the service, thus making it more sustainable. A decision on whether to make the changes permanent will be made at the end of the trial.

The Hams Travel 293 service between Tunbridge Wells and Tenterden will reportedly be unaffected.

Name-the-wine competition

Graham Latter has a five-acre vineyard in Dingleden, planted with a white grape called Bacchus. Normally he sells all his crop, but in 2018 he held back a small amount to produce his own wine for the first time and would like readers of this magazine to suggest a name for it. The person submitting the best entry will receive 12 bottles of his first vintage and may even see their wine name used on the label.

Please send your entries to:

G.latter@yahoo.co.uk

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Best panto award for our Players

The Benenden Players are celebrating receiving the society's first Best Panto Award from the South East region of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA). Bev Beveridge, writer and director, received the winning trophy at a recent awards ceremony along with musical director Graham Beveridge and stage manager John Clarke.

There are 242 drama clubs in NODA South East region and of all the pantos performed in 2018, Raiders of the Lost Monarch was voted the very best. This award is a significant achievement and recognises the huge effort that everyone puts into staging our annual productions. Thank you to our wonderful audiences that come to see us. Your laughter and support make it all worthwhile.

If you fancy joining our award-winning team, on stage or behind the scenes, then come along to auditions in the village hall on Sunday 8 September, 2.30-5pm.

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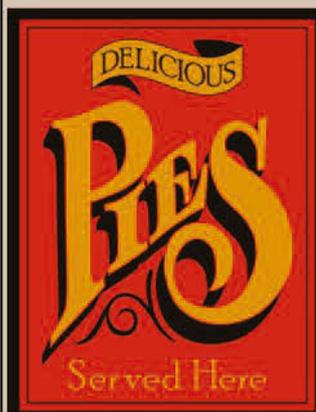
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All the fun of the Fete

Saturday 15 June, The Green, 12noon-4pm
Momentum is gathering and the fete organising team are hard at work making sure that, once again, the village will host a wonderful fete on 15 June.

The ever-popular book, bric-a-brac, Chic Boutique, Tools-R-Us and plants stalls will be there alongside lots of traditional fun and games for all ages. Who will be able to resist the coconut shy, flinging wet sponges at valiant volunteers, getting your face painted and bouncing around on the inflated assault course (the latter for kiddies only of course)?

There will be lots of opportunity to win prizes: Glitter returns to star in the cow pat bingo and, new for this year, is the Morris Minor balloon challenge where you must guess the number of balloons squeezed into a car. The tombola will be in action, alongside the auction of promises and raffle, including the opportunity to win a flight in a light aircraft.

Local food and produce are always a highlight and you will be able to buy delicious cakes and local honey, and savour local ice cream, strawberries, cream teas in the church and local sausages and burgers from the barbecue, washed down with a beer at the Hop Inn.

To make the fete successful, we need your help and your donations. Books in good condition can be left in the church porch or telephone Deborah Jenkins on 240454 for collections. Cakes, biscuits, sweets and preserves can be taken to The Green on fete day or the day before to Helen Jewsbury (07938 004262). Plants will be gratefully received on the day but please remember to label them. If you have prizes for the tombola, to suit all ages, these too can be left in the church porch.

Finally, if you can offer your time before or at the fete please contact us - we would be very grateful.

Tracy Claridge 240454

tlclaridge@tlclaridge.co.uk

Joy Rowlands 07872 467921

joyrowlands824@yahoo.com

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Calling all donors and helpers

Saturday 15 June, The Green, 12noon-4pm

We are starting to organise our famous bric-a-brac stall for the village fete, so if you can help in any capacity or give us some time on Friday 14 June and/or Saturday 15 June, we would love to hear from you.

Now is the time to start turning out your cupboards and attics: all unwanted items and donations can be taken to the Rectory garden, as last year, from Tuesday 7 May. We hope once again to raise a hefty sum for the church and hope that you will join us.

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Village Hall highlights

Farmers' market comes to Benenden

Since I took over running the hall three years ago, I have wanted a farmers' market. I'm delighted to announce that from Tuesday 16 July, Benenden farmers' market will become an integral part of our hall community. It will run three Tuesdays per month from 9-11am by Lindy Alton from Kent Farmers' Markets. There are many stall holders already in place and if you are interested in one please email lindyalton@yahoo.co.uk.

The second Grierson Galleries Benenden Art Show in April was a resounding success. Over 600 people came to see the wonderful array of work. The 2020 Art Show is already booked for 4 and 5 April. Well done to Annie Watsham and Grahame Grant. A massive round of applause to the hall's fantastic caretaker and cleaner team, Karen Saunders and Jen Gurr, who ensured that all ran smoothly.

On Sunday 7 May we have a special theatre production of 'If I Catch Alphonso, Tonight!', a play about music hall star Billy Merson. The play was performed by Miles Jenner to great acclaim at the Brighton Fringe Festival. Tickets are in the village shop.

On Saturday 25 May you may see some unusual action on the recreation field - a private Dart Tag fun game better known as 'NERF' run by Mega Blaster World. The parties are normally held inside the hall, but they are going outside for the first time. Check them out at www.megablasterworld.co.uk.

For further information on events and classes check out either our Facebook page [@benendenvillagehall](https://www.facebook.com/benendenvillagehall) or go to: www.benendenvillagehall.org
Lorraine Jones 243123
enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org

Benenden Village Trust news

A beautiful new hardwood bench has been installed at the Iden Green playground in memory of Don and Ann Packham, Iden Green residents from 1955 to 2016. Our warm thanks to their son Raymond and daughter Shirley Leeding for this generous gift, and to Mark Leeding for installing it.

Thanks also go to everyone who has already contributed to the Play Benenden appeal. Fundraising is going really well and we will be making a fuller announcement in the June magazine. This month we are particularly grateful to the Bonfire Society and Benenden's community shop for their generous donations.

We have collected a good nucleus of applications for membership of the Trust, but it would be a great encouragement to have more; we are just a month away from the annual meeting on Monday 3 June, so do please register for membership - it's easily done through the website. Becoming a member does not mean you have actively to do anything, but it will mean we can keep in touch with you and you will not miss out on the opportunity to make your opinions heard.

At the meeting we will be presenting the accounts, electing the trustees who will hold office for the next one to three years and engaging with members on ideas about future directions for making the very best use of the Trust's assets.

If you feel you could contribute expertise and time as a trustee, do please let us know. The current trustees believe that a more representative demographic balance amongst their number would be desirable and in particular someone from a financial background would be very helpful.
David Harmsworth, Chair
www.benendenvillagetrust.org



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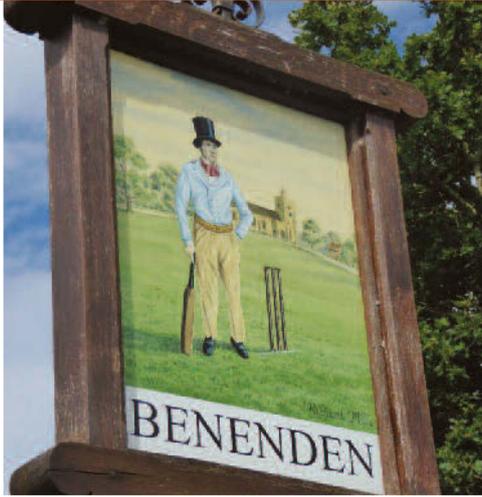


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Benenden Village Trust



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- or by leaving your contact details at the Community Office, Village Hall, The Street, Benenden TN17 4DE
- or on the answerphone - 240371.

FIRST AGM MONDAY 3 JUNE 8PM

The BVT is a charity established a year ago as the successor to the Harmsworth Memorial Trust; as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), its Trustees are elected by its members.

If you have a business here but live outside the parish you can nominate one person to be a member.

* Communications will be by email. For postal communications, there's a small fee of £5 a year to cover administrative costs.



to the requirements of expanding road systems and the volume of traffic they carry. In 1865 the limit was 4mph for motorised vehicles on open roads and 2mph in towns - which sounds a pretty good idea to me. Limits were raised to 14mph in 1896 - the requirement for vehicles to be preceded by a man on foot being abolished at this time as well, the poor chap finally being allowed to sit down for a well-earned cup of tea.

The general speed limit was raised to 20mph in 1903, but as engine performance improved this was widely ignored, even though neither the

BMW 3 Series nor the white transit van had yet been invented. In 1935 it went up to an insane 30mph on built-up roads, and yet, on motorways, in 1965, you could go completely crazy at 70mph - reduced to 50 in 1973/74 to save fuel and promote beer consumption.

The current limits of 70mph on both motorways and dual carriageways and 60mph for rural single carriageways were introduced in 1977. The Transport Act 2000 gave local authorities the powers to introduce 20mph speed limits without the consent of the Secretary of State; below that speed the SoS's consent is required.

A 1998 White Paper was, says Ms Box, committed to a sensible "hierarchy of rural roads for speed management purposes", apparently. However, this was deemed too

Putting the brakes on motorists in a mad rush

Speeding traffic is one of the great bugbears of village life and the Benenden and Iden Green Speedwatch group are trying to do something about it. Here, volunteer Clive Illman explains the background to the struggle against idiotic drivers. The following is based loosely on the riveting Review of Evidence carried out by one Elizabeth Box for the RAC Foundation in 2012. The intention is to enliven it slightly in order to pre-empt catatonia, while retaining the important bits - the bits that have a bearing on the activities of those deranged but valiant Speedwatchers of Benenden and Iden Green. Hurrah!

So ... speed limits have evolved in response

‘We’ve recorded more than 530 speeding vehicles in the village’

The Benenden Speedwatch Group have been active for over seven weeks and have recorded 530-plus speeding vehicles at 35 separate monitoring sessions in Iden Green and Benenden. As a result, Kent Police have issued 100-plus warning letters to multiple speeding offenders and those who exceed the 30mph limit by more than 50%. While some drivers may be responding to our efforts and slowing down, we still see far too many vehicles (90 in a week is not uncommon) travelling at 35mph and above in our 30mph villages.

To increase our coverage, new monitoring sites have now been approved by Kent Police at village hotspots. While our rota includes these sites, more volunteers are needed to fill the one-hour slots we allocate to the early morning, mid morning and afternoon sessions. Can you spare one or two hours a week? We are a friendly bunch who just love to dress up in yellow high-vis jackets and record number plates. Our reward is to meet up (without

high-vis) every month at either The Bull or The Woodcock and it would be great to see you.

If you can't join the Speedwatch group you can still help the cause by driving within the speed limits yourselves. While that is obvious, so often our speed increases without us realising it, which can lead to a procession of speeding vehicles who are just keeping up with the guy in front. It would be great if all local road users stuck to the speed limit to support our campaign.

Apart from trying to reduce traffic speed now and make it safer to drive, walk or cycle locally, is it naive to believe we can permanently slow down vehicles? We have asked the Parish Council to share with us any contacts in Kent Police, Kent Highways and KCC who we can approach for advice and support. We'll report back next month.

Gregg Stapley, Speedwatch co-ordinator
07756 084446 Gregg1.Stapley@hotmail.co.uk

expensive and intrusive, and was ditched (probably thrown out of a car window into a ditch, to judge by the state of the hedgerows around here - but that's another story). These days, if the mood takes you to go out and start monkeying with road signs, you need to consult the DfT Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits - which as everyone knows replaces Circular: Roads 01/93.

So much for history. Ms Box goes on in her Review of Evidence to muse on the reasons that people drive too fast. People speed for a variety of reasons, she explains. They copy other drivers. They think the police will turn a blind eye or simply will never appear in certain areas (as a choice of local race tracks attest: Standen Street, Walkhurst Lane - not forgetting the serious Grand Prix circuits represented by Iden Green Road/Mill Street, New Pond Road and all parts of the B2086).

People also admit to taking risks, as when being forced to make a choice between creeping past the BT Openreach van parked opposite the car park at The Bull or accelerating as fast as possible and putting one's trust in reincarnation.

There are always excuses, however flimsy, but Speedwatch's boys and girls in green cut through the balderdash, sacrificing breakfast for the taste of commuter fear. Our leader Gregg Stapley (pictured) can't be doing with 'smart roads' or police drones; the quietly spoken but determined director of ops at Iden Green HQ believes "you've got to get up in their faces and inside their heads - make them question their humanity. Then you write down their number plates and email the police. Job done." Chilling.

Seriously though, folks, Speedwatch really works, but we need your help!

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Bonfire profits put to good use

Benenden Bonfire Society has finalised the distribution of profits from the 2018 event to youth groups or projects for the benefit of youth in the parish. The financial breakdown is as follows:

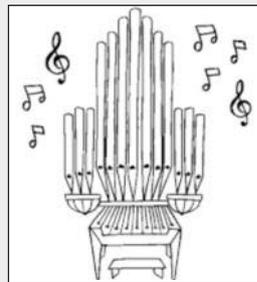
- Balance brought forward from 2017 £5,837
- Income from 2018 bonfire £15,344
- Less costs -£8,067
- Balance £13,114
- Balance held for 2019 bonfire £5,254
- Total available for distribution 2019 £7,860

The following applications were successful:

Benenden Village Trust: Application was made for £3,000. This to be used towards the Play Benenden project to build a new play area on the Recreation Field. The committee felt this was a 'one off' opportunity to support a valuable and lasting project. £3,200 granted to purchase specific items of equipment, the baby swings and the nest swing.

Benenden Players: 1) Application for £1,000. To hold a technical skills workshop, aimed at children who have an interest in sound and lighting. The committee felt it an important opportunity for young persons who do not wish to perform on stage. £800 granted. 2) Application for £1,500. To improve the lighting in the village hall to meet new legislation. While this is not a youth project per se, the committee took the view that the hall is a valuable parish resource and many plays and other youth-focused events take place on the stage, and thus felt this project was an important and long lasting beneficiary. £1,000 granted.

Benenden Pre-School: 1) Application for £360 to provide Yoga and Sporty Tots classes. 2) Application for £100 for the purchase of some new toys. £360 granted. The committee also wished to acknowledge the help given by Pre-School both in numbers of volunteers and in making the excellent guy that adorned the bonfire.



Michael Robertson

ORGAN RECITAL

Sunday 5 May 2019

St George's Church, Benenden

6pm

following Choral Evensong at 5pm

Benenden Scout Group: A funding application has been received, however the committee await more detail in respect of a specific project or proposed use of funds allocated.

We would like to thank all that attended and especially the 70-plus volunteers. Increased costs and legislation will continue to impact and thus volunteers ensure the event can continue and go on providing such funding. We particularly thank Benenden Hospital Trust, Tate Fencing, Jubilee Hire and Mark and Lucy at The Bull, all of whose support significantly keeps costs to a minimum. Also, Cranbrook Scouts and Hinxden Farm Dairy, who provide personnel to staff the first aid tent.

We are looking to recruit new people to the committee as several existing members are due to step back in the coming year. It's fun, rewarding and for a couple of days a year hard work, but this is the year to join and 'shadow' an existing member. Please contact the BBS via email:

info@benendenfireworks.co.uk

Grant Matthews

Chair, Benenden Bonfire Society

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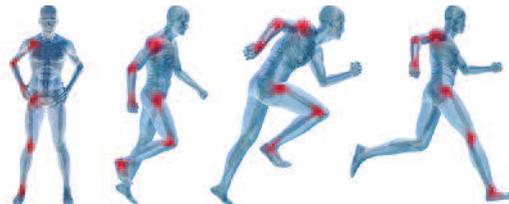


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Iden Green and Benenden WI

Our recent coffee morning was a great success and we made over £150 to give to our nominated charity, the Hawkhurst Community Hospital.

On 16 April we enjoyed listening to, and looking at, amazing wildlife photographs taken by Lynne Hyde, who spoke about her trip to Namibia and Botswana. She explained how she and her husband travelled for miles in a truck before they saw the magnificent array of wild animals - over 30 species. All the animals were very close, and the truck was their only protection. The most frightening experience though was when they were attacked by a swarm of thirsty bees!

A visit to Pashley Manor is planned for members on 30 April when we are looking forward to seeing the annual tulip display.

On 15 May members and friends are going to visit the Ewe and Lamb for lunch.

On 21 May, in addition to our AGM, we shall be running a plant and produce stall, when members can exchange or buy produce.

We welcomed several new members at the last meeting and would be very pleased to greet any ladies who would care to join us in the future.

Jackie Liffen WI@daisystar.co.uk

Open-air Jazz and Blues at the Pavilion

Saturday 20 July, Pavilion, Iden Green, 2-7pm

Dust off your picnic blanket and mark the date in your diary: the wonderful annual open-air Jazz and Blues concert returns to the Iden Green Pavilion grounds on Saturday 20 July. Titillating your ears will be Benenden Jazz and Birdseye Blues with special guests Dave McKean and Entertaining Mr Stone. There will be a barbecue and beer and Pimm's tent.

Tickets are £7 from the Benenden's community shop, or £8 on the gate. Children under 12 go free.



Today's refugee crisis is as challenging now as it was in 1945 when the charity was launched.

Our target is £5,000 so Christian Aid can continue its vital work helping people around the world survive and feed their families.

So please give generously when the appeal envelopes are posted through your letterboxes by our collectors, wearing their official badges, from 12 May.

Tracy Claridge, local Christian Aid Organiser
240454 Christianaid@tlclaridge.co.uk

Benenden Pre-School news

Just before the Easter break, the pre-school children enjoyed an Easter walk through the village, which ended in an egg hunt in Glebe Field. A huge thank you to the committee members who set it up. The children had a great time running around the field and even managed to fit in a bit of learning into the occasion by looking for shapes and numbers.

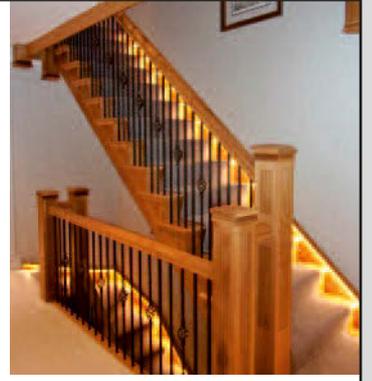
Benenden Pre-School is currently advertising for maternity cover and bank staff. If you are interested in joining the staff and have a Level 3 childcare qualification please contact chairman@benendenpreschool.co.uk for more information. The closing date for applications is Monday 20 May.

Village lunch

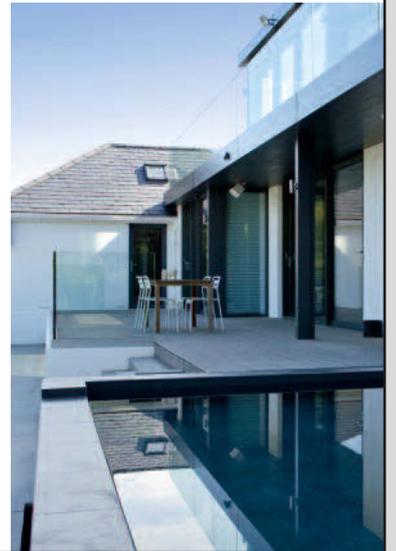
Tuesday 21 May, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

Our village lunch is open to all ages and everyone who would like to come is very welcome. If you would like to join us please contact Genevieve on 240526. Cost of the lunch is £5.

If you enjoy cooking and would like to join the band of volunteers we would love to hear from you. Please call Sheila on 240838.



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The Woodcock

New landlady aims to bring a touch of glamour to Iden Green

Despite it being early doors on a quiet Tuesday, Lyndora Goodger is busy. No surprises there, since the new landlady of the Woodcock also runs a luxury hospitality business based in London. Despite catering to the billionaires and VIPs up in town, she's no stranger to the Weald; over the past 20 years she's run the White Hart in Newenden, The Ewe and Lamb in Rolvenden Layne and Benenden's King William IV.

She has long loved The Woodcock and was great friends with a previous landlord - Frank. It was important to her that it became a free house, the legacy of tied pubs being what it is, and she has found the response from locals to be very positive: "It's really important to me that this place is here for the village and the long term, I can't imagine ever leaving." Lyndora is entrusting this legacy to her daughter Paige and partner Liam: "She grew up in pubs, I can't think of anyone better. We have a team of five staff getting us ready for the summer and we have a lot of exciting plans."

Lyndora has promised to bring a 'touch of

Mayfair' to Iden Green. I asked her to elaborate on what she meant: "We're going to have locally sourced, traditional pub food and Sunday lunches, of course, but we would also like to offer one-off special events such as a sushi night, or evenings with a Michelin star chef." She also hinted that we may occasionally see some celebrities in the area. "I work closely with several premieriership

football clubs, and they all know that I have this lovely country pub."

The kitchen is undergoing a major refurbishment and the plan is to have it up and running in mid-May, eventually employing two full-time chefs serving breakfast from 9am, lunch and dinner. Aside from plans for the near future, a lot of work has already been done. The bar has been extended with a beautiful wooden top and the garden has been levelled and tidied up to provide more seating space. "We

are going to add some lovely blossom trees and lots of pots too," says Lyndora.

Their local media presence has been very quiet so far but as soon as the kitchen is open, she will start advertising. So, keep your eyes peeled for news, but in the meantime pop in for a drink and say hi, and who knows, you might meet a celebrity at the bar.

Kate Clark



Talking Shop

It may not be too surprising to know that Benenden's shop and café is thriving. Judging from the general buzz in the store it would be expected - although we can never afford to be complacent - and as a result, we have been able to make some much-needed new investments as well as a charitable donation to help the wider community. We now have a new ice cream freezer ready for the summer weather, and some of you may have noticed the new smart chairs in the café. These will be followed by a general redecoration to spruce up the paintwork.

To help reduce the heat in the warmer months, we have invested in a new deli unit with doors, which will maintain a better temperature for the food. We have also invested in another air conditioning unit which is more efficient. Both machines are more eco-friendly than previous units and will help to reduce our carbon footprint. Furthermore, all our lighting has now been converted to LED and Benenden School have helped by sharing the cost for this.

Our charitable donation is going to the Benenden Village Trust, specifically to fund The Flicky Low Level Trail, part of the new children's play area on the recreation ground. We are very excited to be able to do this and benefit the community whose support makes the shop successful.

Our AGM, where more information will be divulged, will take place on Thursday 27 June at 7pm. Venue to be confirmed.

As always, our most grateful thanks go to the managers and volunteers who make this lovely shop what it is, and special thanks to Ken Anderson for all his sterling work in bringing in most of the improvements. Please do keep coming to visit and support us; and don't forget, a glass of wine, local beer or cider is now available with your meal in the café.

Bev Beveridge

News from Benenden School

I do not often get the opportunity to reflect on how varied (and, yes, sometimes downright strange) the life of a Head can be, but when I was sitting in a digger last week, followed shortly by swinging a sledgehammer at the music school, for some unknown reason the sentiment struck me.

Joking aside, the Head's role is, of course, rewarding and humbling in equal measure and this was personified by having the honour, along with one of our head girls, Caitlin Gluckstein, to formally get the demolition work underway on our current school hall and music school.

When the pupils return after the Easter holidays, the buildings will have been reduced to rubble.

The new buildings are due to be opened in late 2020 and we look forward to sharing progress with you along the way. I would also like to reassure the village community that we are doing everything possible to minimise disruption and are bringing in large construction vehicles through our rear entrance hopefully to limit any impact on the high street.

Aside from the development works, we have had various trips going out during the holidays, with the Chapel Choir Tour to Paris and Brussels closely followed by academic trips to Cadiz, Rome and Auschwitz.

My Easter holiday got off to an excellent start with a village wine tasting event where we were treated to a wonderful sample of red and white wines from the Ridgeback Winery on the Western Cape, South Africa, as well as fantastic South African food, a fine raffle kindly supporting the Benenden charity of the term, Mary's Meals and, of course, a wonderful spot of tango.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

The sound of leather on willow is back

Benenden Cricket Club started its preparations for the new season in true style, with a few drinks and a club dinner. The event is key fixture in our season, where awards are handed out for the previous season and essential funds are raised to keep the lawn mowers working and match fees low. The evening included a wonderful performance from the Benenden and Iden Green Ukulele Jam and an entertaining speech by club archivist, Andrew Morrison.

The evening was emceed by our new chairman Conrad Chant, and raised £1,400 for the club coffers. Thank you to the London Beach Golf Club for their generosity and hosting of the event, and Rob Moser for his organisational skills.

Pitch preparations are next on the agenda, as the Green transforms into a cricket square in readiness for our first home fixture on Saturday 4 May against Detling CC. Fixture cards will be distributed through letter boxes or available at various spots around the village.

Off-season nets have progressed well at Claremont Senior School and I am pleased to report no major injuries have occurred so far! There is a genuine feeling of optimism among the squad, with new mystery balls being promised by the bowlers and big hundreds from the batsmen.

The season ahead has many highlights including our annual match against the Benenden Pre and Primary Schools' parents on Saturday 29 June, where monies will be raised for the schools via donated match fees, stalls and a barbecue on the boundary rope. We also have a midweek 20/20 series that focuses very much on fun and participation, and is the perfect format for anyone who wishes to start playing cricket again, or have an introduction to the game.

Like all village clubs, Benenden relies on volunteers to keep going and we are very

Benenden Cricket Club strive to maintain the tradition of idyllic village cricket, which has been enjoyed on our glorious village green since 1798.

We offer sociable and competitive cricket. New players and supporters of all ages, abilities and both sexes are made very welcome.

For more information please visit:
www.benendencricket.com

If interested in playing, please contact our Club Captain, Richard Brunt on:
07834 572838 or email bruntyhk@hotmail.com



fortunate to play in such a supportive village, with a wonderful spiritual home in The Bull and such an active membership. We play non-league, friendly cricket, that is open to all genders and all abilities - if you would like to play, attend nets, help out or find out more about the club, please email me at: brunrichard@btinternet.com

2018 PLAYER AWARDS

Batsman of the year: Stephen Message

Bowler of the year: Richard Brunt

Fielder of the year: Tom Grant

Most Catches: Copter Brunt

Rising Star: Tom Mawhinney

Most MoM Awards: Peter Newman

Ken Potter Award for club contribution:

Barry Bassett

CRICKET CLUB HOME FIXTURES

Our home fixtures for May on The Green are:

Saturday 4 May v Detling CC at 2pm

Saturday 11 May v Kings Hill 2nd XI at 2pm

Richard Brunt, Club Captain



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Letter to the Editor

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

When the Benenden Magazine dropped through my letterbox last month I was spellbound by the beautiful cover photo of cherry blossom. It encapsulated the beauty of spring bloom emerging from dormant winter and it lifted my spirits. I then discovered that we have our young photographer Amelia Thomas to thank for such a brilliant photo - many congratulations to her. It coincided nicely with the open gardens at The Grange recently when we were able to see the breathtaking beauty of 'Cherry' Ingram's collection of cherry trees.

The whole Thomas family is involved in the life of our community: Peter, who writes for this magazine and Amelia's mother as chair of the Parish Council. I would like to thank them, and I would also like to thank the many other people who are making such a big contribution to the life of our village. They are far too numerous to name but they know who they are, and I thank them on behalf of us all.

This magazine is an excellent production with a wide variety of content and is pictorially pleasing and eminently readable. To think that it is delivered to every home in the parish, free of charge, is something of which we can be very proud. Many thanks again to all those who provide this wonderful service.

I have lived in the parish for 38 years, 11 of them at Springhill Cottage, Iden Green (next door to Certhia Harden, Cherry Ingram's daughter) and 27 at the Vicarage Coach House. I have seen many changes. My late husband, John, and I moved here from Sevenoaks where we had brought up our family, on retirement. We left our Church, community and friends for pastures new, knowing no-one in Iden Green or Benenden. When we arrived, we were told in no uncertain terms by the 'natives' that it would be many, many years before we would be accepted. It is not for me to judge if or when that

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JUNIOR TENNIS COACHING

Iden Green Tennis Club is now offering tennis coaching for Junior Members on Fridays during Term Time.



Who: Club Members of 6-18 years



Where: Iden Green Tennis Club



When: Friday Term Time groups from 5pm onwards



How much: £6 per session



Contact for further details:
eleanor.cochrane@btinternet.com

Iden Green Tennis Club junior membership is £20 per year.

moment arrived, but we offered what time and talents we possessed and became involved in church and community life and did not look back. We found kindness and friendship everywhere which has continued to this day.

Benenden was a welcoming community and we made many wonderful friends. Although, sadly, most of them are no longer with us I have such happy memories of all of them. Now that I am in my 90th year I am regrettably unable to contribute much to the life of the community, but I feel reassured that when my time comes I will be leaving everything that I value about Benenden in safe hands.

Aurea Gregory

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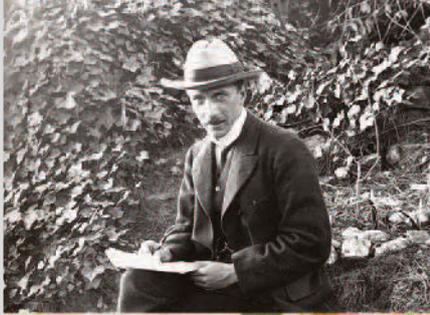
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Fleeting pleasures brought back from the brink

Spring brings so many pleasures, not least the delicate early blossom. But on a gloomy March afternoon my glimpses of a windswept garden were offset by hearing the story of Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram and his passion for Japanese ornamental cherry trees on Radio 4.

Naoko Abe, a distinguished Japanese journalist living in the UK, published her biography of Cherry Ingram in Japan in 2016. Her updated work, 'Cherry' Ingram - The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms, was published here in March 2019 and broadcast soon after.

The Grange gardens, and the story of 'Cherry' Ingram, are familiar to many in Benenden. I have to thank Ernie Pollard and his fascinating article in the September 2017 edition of this magazine, but the broadcast rekindled my interest.

Ingram collected over 120 varieties of cherries on visits to Japan in the 1920s. At first enchanted by interwar Japan and its love of gardens, Cherry grew concerned about the focus on one cherry variety, which had become a symbol for modernity and progress as older varieties were grubbed up. Having reintroduced over 50 varieties to Japan, he delivered a groundbreaking lecture on cherry diversity to the Cherry Society of Japan in 1926, during which he came upon a painting of a superb large, white flowering cherry. Recognising it from a garden he knew in Sussex, he was horrified to learn that it appeared extinct in Japan. After many attempts

he was able to successfully reintroduce it via the Trans-Siberian railway and the humble potato. You'll have to read the book to find out more.

The author visited Benenden this spring, lunching with the Molesworths on The Green and visiting The Grange. Ms Abe returns to Kent in June for the Wealden Literary Festival.

The book, radio series, and TV coverage has generated considerable interest. I met Felicity White, registered manager at The Grange, to learn more. She told me that alongside Ms Abe, well-respected cherry experts Chris Sanders and Chris Lane have visited as a result of the book. The Grange open day has attracted visitors from across the UK, and the event supports the charitable work of the Friends of Benenden Grange, providing wider experiences and opportunities for the 17 Grange residents. Felicity is keen to recruit some volunteers to help keep the garden looking lovely.

The book also tells how the cherry tree has formed a branch of Japanese diplomacy across the years. The Japanese Government, via the Sakura Cherry Tree Project, is donating 1,000 trees to be planted in 2020 across the UK. Benenden will be able to celebrate Ingram's life and work with a memorial, probably sited at The Grange, along with nine different cherry varieties, all associated with Ingram. The new cherry trees for Benenden will spread the simple pleasures of spring as we watch their blossoms open around the village.

Nancy Tolhurst



Thoughts of trains: Colin Hayman's steam locomotives

Many of us living in the district will have been down to nearby Kent and East Sussex Railway to watch the little steam trains trundling along the tracks there, offering visitors an experience of rail travel in times gone by. From the 1920s, through to decommissioning in the 1960s, steam locomotives, far larger

and more powerful than those of the K&ESR, were what transported goods throughout the land, carried folk to work, to business meetings and off on their holidays. How many of those visitors remember those days?

Former avionics engineer, Colin Hayman does. Despite decades spent working on aircraft, Colin maintains that his first love is steam; hardly surprising, since his father was a Royal Navy engineer and his grandfather, Robert Hayman, was the first captain of the paddle steamer, *Medway Queen*, which plied the coasts and inland waterways of Kent. Commandeered in



WWII, she had the distinction of being one of the fleet of Little Ships, which carried out the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940, ending her service as a minesweeper. Colin vividly remembers, at the age of four, sitting cross-legged in the engine room of the *Queen*, his dad's peaked engineer's cap perched on his head. And the family connection doesn't end there. Colin's maternal grandparents both worked for the Great Western Railway company; his grandfather and several uncles being coachbuilders and boilermen.

Colin went on to become engineering facilities manager at Benenden Girls' School and, when he finally retired, he decided he'd like turn his hand to other engineering projects. With several decades worth of tools at his disposal he realised he'd need more, soon acquiring a bench grinder, pillar drill, metalworking lathe, and a milling machine.

"You can make just about anything with one of these," he tells me proudly, and to prove it, shows me something he made: something remarkable. For, typically, Colin wasn't interested in gently easing himself into his new life, and his very first effort was not exactly a beginner's project.

Having acquired a set of plans for a Great Eastern Railways locomotive No. 1506 - an express with a wheel configuration of 2-6-0 (two wheels at the front, six



gigantic drive wheels in the middle and none beneath the cab), Colin launched himself into the task of recreating the engine in miniature. Bearing a white canopy to show that it had pulled a royal train (carrying King George V and Queen Mary), the loco took Colin five years to complete and, in that time, he tells me he learned “everything” from it.

And there is a great deal to learn. A recent restoration project, (a Great Western Railway 4-6-0 55xx Firefly class locomotive) caused Colin some surprise when he discovered that the enthusiast who had originally built it - sometime in the 1950s is the best guess - had used stainless steel for the boiler.



If all this were not enough, the engines must undergo the same tests once every four years, if they are to be allowed on public display. Colin's G.E.R. loco does frequent stints along a 5in-gauge track in Mote Park, where the Maidstone Model Engineering Society (of which he is a member) regularly enthral and entertain the public with displays and demonstrations. No. 1506 can haul up to ten men.

Despite his labours, Colin must find time for his duties as verger at St George's, treasurer of the local branch of the Royal British Legion and trustee of the Benenden Almshouse Charities. He maintains, however, that there's nothing like fiddling with locos for “keeping fingers nimble and brain active”. Seeing the engines, tenders, bogies and fireboxes in various stages of completion; raw metal, copper tubes, castings and tools of every description crammed into the workshop, no-one would doubt that Colin's fingers and brain will be in fine fettle for many years to come.

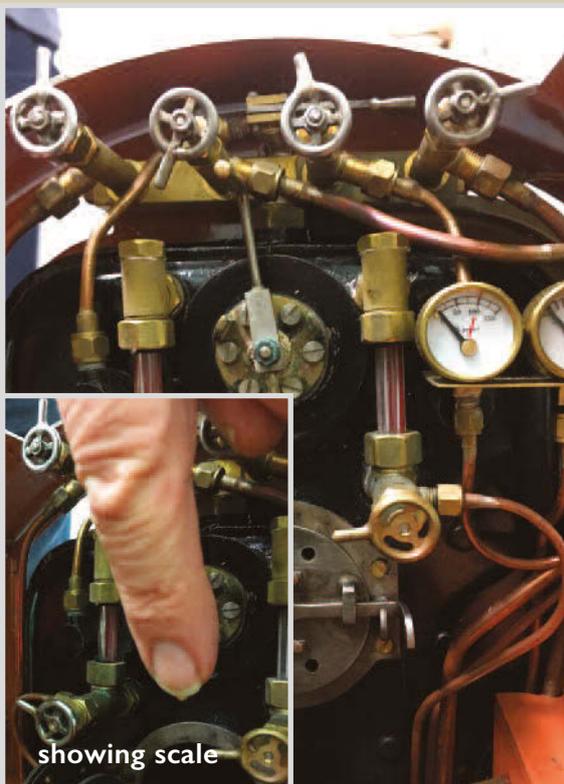
The Benenden Engineering Group (of which Colin is a member) boasts 20 current members and would be happy to have more. Maidstone Model Engineering Society meets every Sunday throughout the spring and summer. Why not go and have a ride on Colin's G.E.R. Express? It will cost you the princely sum of 30p!

Russell Cruse

Colin shakes his head; boilers, he tells me, must be made from copper and independently checked to national safety standards. The boiler itself and all the valves must be able to operate at twice the normal running pressure and,

since most run at 200lb per square inch, the tolerances have to be very high indeed.

Colin informs me that the G.W.R. tender he's working on contains 3,000 rivets, all hammered in by hand, using the same techniques as full-scale riveting (see illustration top left).



showing scale



Miraculous wines that won the fight with global warming

Our resident wine man Tracy Claridge reports from Bordeaux on a troubled yet sometimes tremendous 2018 vintage

“It began like a nightmare and ended like a dream.” Guillaume Pouthier, director, Chateau les Carmes Haut-Brion.

The winter in Bordeaux was cold with plenty of rain. This is usually a good thing, but the rain kept on coming - for most of January right the way through to March. Rainfall was almost double the normal amount in that period and continued until mid-July, causing huge outbreaks of mildew for some, and threatening a complete vintage washout.

Chateau Angludet, having lost their entire crop to frost in 2017, lost 80% to mildew in 2018. The life of an organic/biodynamic farmer is a tough one under these conditions, and yet many survived and went on to make stellar wines. So what happened? Curiously the weather changed around the time the French won the World Cup, although 15 July will be remembered as the worst day possible for Chateau Guiraud, who lost 100% of their Sauternes vines to a hailstorm.

After this, the hot, sunny weather set in right the way through to the end of the harvest. The ground was sodden, and the vapour rising up from the ground brought the onset of mildew to many. Figures show that 2018 was actually hotter than 2003, but the difference in the two vintages is that the night-time temperatures dropped considerably in 2018, to give the resultant wines freshness to complement their concentration. Mildew affects quantity, but not quality; the mildew-affected grapes just fall on the ground. The rest were harvested in perfect condition in September and October.

There's no doubt 2018 is a great vintage - alongside, and in some cases above, the recent great vintages of 2016, 2010, 2009 and 2005 -



yet for me, and many others, it is also a miracle vintage. I wrote about global warming in last month's magazine, about how the unevenness of rainfall across the year is increasing; how the likelihood of early bud-break exposing vineyards to the risk of hail and frost damage is rising; how average summer temperatures are rising, average summer rainfall is falling and violent hailstorms are more prevalent. With the exception of frost, 2018 saw each effect in play.

In 2018, circumstances conspired to produce optimal ripeness. Sebastian Vergne of Chateau Margaux explained that the long, languid summer saw alcohol levels peak in late August and early September and then plateau. This allowed picking to be done, row by row, parcel by parcel, over the period of an entire month, with full maturation of the tannins and tiny grapes concentrated by hydric stress and a rather windy September.

Chateau Margaux 2018 just about edges it from Palmer and Rauzan Segla in Margaux, and remember to always buy second wines in great vintages: Marquise de Calon Segur, Carruades de Lafite, Petit Mouton, Pavillon de Margaux, Reserve de la Comtesse, Petit Cheval, La Croix Beaucaillou and Clarence de Haut Brion all were, in my very personal opinion, among the very best that these chateaux have ever produced.

To sum up, a truly great vintage for some, disastrous for others, and disappointing for the dry and sweet whites.

If you have plenty of money, I can recommend the following: Ch Palmer, Ch Lafite, Ch Margaux, Ch Haut-Brion, Ch Cheval Blanc, Ch Rauzan Segla, Ch Leoville Lascasses, Ch Canon, Ch Figeac, Ch Clinet, Clos Fourtet, Ch Troplong Mondot, Ch Pavie Maquin, Ch Larcis Ducasse, Les Carmes Haut-Brion, Domaine de Chevalier red, La Mission Haut-Brion, Ch Smith Haut Lafitte red and Ch Leoville Barton.

The second wines will be less expensive. My favourites among the less expensive wines are: Lalande Borie, Lilian Ladouys, Pedesclaux, Ch Haut Batailley, Les Ormes de

Pez, Tronquoy Lalande, Ch Capbern, Ch Berliquet, Ch la Gaffeliere, Ch Balestard la Tonnelle.

Opening prices have already started to come out. I cannot imagine prices will come down for the top wines. Lesser wines, well, we might see prices remaining stable, but, like Brexit, there is so much uncertainty.



A taste of the Cape

The village's latest wine tasting was a great success, with importer Richard Banks proving an engaging speaker in presenting eight bottles from Ridgeback Wines of South Africa. The style was a New World/Old World hybrid, characterised by well-defined fruit and a modicum of restraint, with personal favourites being a stunning gold medal-winning Viognier (a mighty glass of pink grapefruit, white peaches and cream), a keenly priced Sauvignon Blanc with a splash of Viognier for backbone, and a warming SGMV (Shiraz, Grenache, Mataro and Viognier) that sat very nicely alongside fine, traditional South African food prepared by the kitchen at Benenden School café.

Hopefully some of these wines will find their way into the community shop. Watch this space for details of our next tasting.



Tulip 'Apricot Beauty' and 'White Rebel'

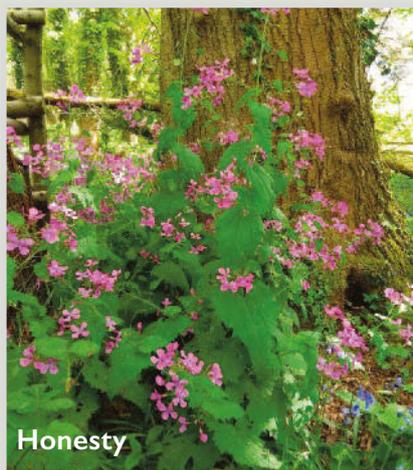
In Your Garden

Tulips and spring ground cover

I couldn't pass on the month of May without mentioning the tulip. And this is always duly followed with some thoughts on spring ground cover, not just to go with the emerging tulips, which I think is essential, but because there are so many easy plants to grow which if allowed to self-seed will establish quickly enough to provide a low-storey canopy. This will then offset your much-curated collection of mid-spring bulbs perfectly.

But first, tulips. Deciding which ones to go for each year is a pleasant task and I don't think I will ever stop trying a different combination, or variety each year. Do I try lily-flowered, robust hybrids, or go all out with the flamboyant parrots? Or should I consider trying species tulips and let them naturalise? Then I could avoid having to worry about slug/squirrel damage, fireblight, and loss of vigour - which usually happens if you leave tulips in year after year.

My success story this year has been a combination of a pale peach variety called Apricot Beauty (single, early) with a parrot called White Rebel. They have been trialled in a container and I am very pleased with the results. If you Google Apricot Beauty, by the way, don't be put off by the images - pale apricot is quite a difficult colour to photograph



Honesty

and can look garishly orange! Not that I am averse to orange tulips (Ballerina being one of my favourites) but I was after a delicate pastel palette this time. My advice would be to try out new varieties in pots, perhaps one colour in each, and group them to see which ones go together well. As always, the trial and error in gardening is all part of the process for me and something I find so immersive and creative.

Onto spring ground cover. My success stories have been pulmonarias, forget-me-nots, tiarellas, aquilegias, campanulas, alchemilla, feverfew, foxgloves and honesty (pheh!). Astrantias, ferns and dicentras are also reliable. All of these will self-seed if conditions prevail, which is another good reason to mulch your soil. Garden compost is nirvana to a self-seeding plant and once they start naturalising and the tulips and alliums start to grow through the lower canopy, the effect is very pleasing. As the bigger stuff takes over in June you can cut all this lower storey back to the ground (if you wish) and it

will regrow within a matter of weeks. You will then begin to wonder why on earth you aim to group plants when nature does such a sterling job of it herself - a bit of give and take in the garden goes a long, long way!

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Above: Creativity, care and the circle of life: the fabulous Grierson Galleries Art Show at the village hall; Mark and Shirley Leeding and Raymond Packham installing their memorial bench in Iden Green; celebrating nature's new beginnings and wily observers
Front cover: Local Llama. Photograph: Amelia Thomas