



Benenden
Magazine
January 2020

Benenden's

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Editorial



I quite like Januarys, even though they tend to be dark, cold and wet. I like the fact that they herald new beginnings and, unlike David Commander (page 5), I have made a New Year's resolution which is to be as optimistic as possible. Already there's a great deal to be optimistic about in Benenden and Iden Green in 2020. For a start, the success of the Sandhurst 'Blend' youth group may be replicated here, and the 'Hello. How are you? club' starts in January (page 9).

The current status of the Neighbourhood Development plan is summarised on page 13 and I applaud the considerable amount of work that is going into this by a dedicated team of volunteers. If all goes smoothly, then we should be able to vote on the final plan in late summer 2020. Meanwhile, if you are concerned about our transport infrastructure, then I urge you to read and respond to the draft Transport Strategy for the South East by 10 January (see page 23).

Finally, I am very happy to introduce a new 'occasional' series of articles by or about the younger generation in the village. We kick off with a piece written by three performers in Sinbad's Quest, Benenden's (in)famous panto this year (page 25) and we will be celebrating the exploits and experiences of other inspiring young people who call our village home. If you have someone you would like us to profile, please let us know.

Happy New Year everyone

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

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

Editors: Ruth Clark, Peter Thomas

Editorial Board: PCC Rep: Tracy Claridge, PC Rep: Nicola Thomas, Treasurer: Charles Trollope

Acting Advertising Manager: Paul Leek, Advertising Assistant: Iain Fraser

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

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Village Calendar

January

Saturday 11	Quiz in aid of Child Bereavement UK, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Saturday 18	Hello. How are you? Club, Memorial Hall, 10am	p.9
Saturday 18	Bingo, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Sunday 19	Harmsworth Court Service, Community Room, 4.30pm	
Monday 20	Parish Council Meeting, Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm	
Tuesday 21	Village Lunch, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm	p.9
Tuesday 21	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Members' Meeting, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17
Saturday 25	John's 60th Birthday Party, St George's Club, 8.15pm	
Tuesday 28	Merry and Bright, Annual General Meeting, Memorial Hall, 3pm	
Thursday 30	Sinbad's Quest, Benenden Players Panto First Night, Benenden Village Hall, 7.30pm	p.11
Friday 31	Iden Green and Benenden WI, Social Afternoon, Memorial Hall, 2pm	p.17

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

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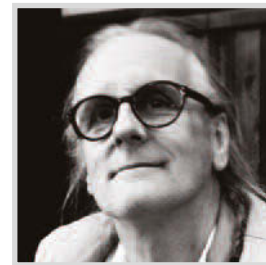
Saturday 11 January Domestic Waste only

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

Saturday 25 January Domestic Waste only

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

Parish Council



Motor vehicles: expensive, polluting, damaging, noisy and dangerous. Historians will look back in astonishment upon their ubiquity in our age. But rural public transport is practically an oxymoron and with services being lost at ever-increasing rates, a car is no longer a luxury but an essential tool, permitting country dwellers a share in the conveniences modern life affords.

Developers recognise our reliance on personal transport. How many more vehicles will be plying the lanes around Benenden once the TWBC building programme has been completed? Some say we must maintain our roads better in order to aid the passage of vehicles, whilst others would say we should widen our narrow thoroughfares. I don't agree. Society has pandered to the car long enough.

Our paths, for example, are often used as semi-off-road parking. That our less-mobile neighbours, perfectly entitled to walk our pavements unhindered, frequently discover great lumps of steel plonked in their way, should outrage us all. Then there's the damage. If the grass verges by the recreation ground continue to serve as a car park, it will permanently disfigure the village. And some kerbstones, (for example, those outside the community shop) are rattling around like loose teeth.

The Street is wide enough for cars to park on both sides of the road. It may restrict traffic flow but in a village where the Speedwatch programme has been logging an average of 62 speeding offences every five days, that's not a bad thing. A bonus could be that owners of lorries the size of Leeds Town Hall might decide that the trip from Felixstowe to Frankfurt need not take in the B2086.

Of course, the Parish Council could put up signs to remind us that pavement parking is anti-social but I feel certain that none of us would wish to add to the almost suburban visual noise that unnecessary signage creates. Far better that we simply respect one another's space and park on the road, not the pavement.

Russell Cruse, 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 January 2020,

Benenden Hospital Quinlan Centre, 7pm

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: David 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 January 8am Communion 10am All-age Communion 5pm Choral Evensong

Sunday 12 January 8am 1662 Communion 10am Morning Worship 5pm Evening Prayer
at Mission Church

Sunday 19 January 8am Communion 10am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 26 January 8am Communion 10am Morning Worship

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

Wedding 21 December Catherine Bee and Robert Sibley

Funerals 3 December John Garratt Funeral Tunbridge Wells Crematorium

10 December Penny Wilmot Funeral

11 December John Garratt Thanksgiving Service

Rector's Letter



Have the heart to say 'yes'

Last month I wrote about 'Caring at Christmas ... and beyond', and the care that we can give one another as community. Well, now is the 'beyond' and January is traditionally seen as a time of new starts and, of course, the dreaded New Year's resolutions. Personally, I do not sign up to the need to have a resolution. They are far too easy to break and then feel despondent or guilty about. So, no New Year's resolution for me, but the start of a new year is a good time to think about something new you might like to do or try.

So, here is a thought: could the new thing you want to do or try be connected to the community; to helping people; to caring about someone other than your immediate family? Could it be getting involved with youngsters? Or, if they are not your thing, getting involved with oldsters? Or, if they are not your thing, there are plenty of people in the middle who would value company.

In September we launched 'Blend' in Sandhurst, the after-school group for children aged 11-14 in school years seven, eight and nine. We regularly get 15-18 youngsters turning up for a couple of hours on a Tuesday from 4pm at the Mission Church. They play table tennis, air-hockey, pool, table football, games on Xbox, and have refreshments, a chat and a laugh together. It is great fun. I still have a heart for this to happen in Benenden as well; I know there is a need. I have an offer of a helper and I have an offer of funding, but I need someone with a heart to make it happen. Could that be you?

This month in Benenden sees the launch of the 'Hello. How are you? club', a drop-in café/social place, in the Memorial Hall (see Tracy's article page 9). Initially it is being held every three weeks, and we'll see how the need develops. It's simply a safe warm place to gather for a couple of hours, with company if you wish, or on your own if you prefer, and have a coffee/tea/cake (free or make a donation). Sit and read a book; have a chat; whatever you want and in the company of others. I have a heart to do a Drop-in Café in the Mission Church in Sandhurst, maybe weekly (similar to the Toddler Group, but you don't need a toddler!). Just a time and space together with others. I need someone with a heart to make it happen. Could that be you?

On Saturday 30 November our new Bishop of Dover, the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin (formerly chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons) was installed at a lovely service at Canterbury Cathedral. In her sermon she encouraged a community spirit and a heart to say "yes". Yes to thinking about others; yes to helping others; yes to building our community. At the start of this new year, look to do something new; and when the opportunity presents itself, just say "yes".

Revd David Commander, Rector

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Just a Thought



Resolution

As the man gazed out early in the morning, he could see the smoke and ash rising high over the distant bush. He had listened to the radio with dismay as the warnings filled the airwaves. He listened to the weather forecast; the predictions were not good although the wind was in a safe direction for him. He looked around at the trees and scrub, the hills and the isolation. He loved being out in the bush and he had gradually built and cared for his home over more than 30 years. He did the chores while keeping an eye on that column of smoke.

By early afternoon he could smell the smoke - the wind direction had changed. Was it coming towards him? He would be OK surely. Fires had come close before but never dangerously so. Now he could hear the crackle of burning brushwood and suddenly flames shot up into the sky down near the settlement. He'd stay and protect his property. The crackling and heat were spreading with such speed. To go or stay? The air was now thick with smoke; it was hard to breathe. The crash of a falling tree, he had no choice ...

On his return all he found were the remnants of two walls and a mangled stove. He turned over pieces of debris. All his life gone, all but a small leather case. Opening it he found a framed photograph of the house. He stared at it. There and then he resolved to build again. Perhaps this time he'd put in those improvements he'd been dreaming of.

It had been raining for days. The young couple were only relieved that the painting had been finished, and the new carpets and curtains had arrived safely just before the baby was due. In fact the mum-to-be was beginning to think it was on its way. As the young man looked out all he could see were the grey shapes of the village houses further up, and beyond them the hills. His anxious wife came to stand beside him. She told him that she loved this little house but she needed to go to the hospital soon. He turned to look at her with love, uncertainty and excitement then took her pre-packed bag to the car.

'Mind the carpet! Don't bring the mud in,' she scolded as he returned.

'Never mind that, there's water covering the road and it's coming up from the river. We should go now before we are cut off!'

The New Year baby was three weeks old when they returned. The rain had stopped and the water had gone down but the mud was inches deep in every room. They looked around in horror. Then the baby snuffled and he appeared to smile so they smiled back. Not the homecoming they'd imagined. They would be at her mum's for some while.

'Trust me,' said his father with optimistic resolution. 'We'll cope. It's a new beginning for all of us.'

Sue Fisher


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News and Events

Primary School news

On 6 December it was a pleasure to welcome the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover, to our school. On arrival, accompanied by Revd David Commander and myself, Bishop Rose, 'Sister Rose' to the children, visited each class to introduce herself and find out what the children were learning. She was very impressed with our wonderful school and indeed how well behaved the children were. She shared stories from her own childhood, explaining to the children that she was from Montego Bay in Jamaica and whilst at school her class were taught in the same room as another class with the teachers sharing a board; one teacher wrote on one side whilst the other teacher wrote on the other side!

The whole school then gathered for Collective Worship and it was a delight to be joined by many of the people responsible for turning the idea of a new primary school in Benenden into a reality. Indeed, we are extremely grateful to everyone who has tirelessly campaigned over many, many years to ensure our new school eventually was built. After worship, Bishop Rose then officially declared our school open. We felt very privileged as this was her first engagement since being consecrated at St Paul's Cathedral in November and installed at Canterbury Cathedral. Friday 6 December 2019 will certainly be a significant date in our history.
Lindsay Roberts, Headteacher 240565

Village lunch

Tuesday 21 January, Benenden Village Hall, 12.30pm

Our village lunch costs £5, is open to all ages and everybody is welcome. If you would like to come along, or if you enjoy cooking and would like to join the band of volunteers, we would love to hear from you.

Sheila Hume 240838

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:
eleonor.cochrane@btinternet.com

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

Hello. How are you? club

Sometimes we all need a change of scenery. If you feel like you'd like to get out of the house and enjoy the company of new people, come along to the Memorial Hall on the village green to enjoy the new 'Hello. How are you? club'.

The doors will be open and the welcome comforting to all, especially families. If you want to sit in the corner and read a paper or a book, please just do that. If you want to engage in conversation and chit chat, feel free. If you want to play a board game or cards, that's fine, too. It's a club where you can be you, and tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits will be served.

What will we talk about? Anything, absolutely anything. There is no theme to this, but community spirit is the key and it is a gathering of people who may not have the opportunity to talk to other people in their daily lives, for whatever reason. Will we have fun? It will be what we all make it, on Saturdays from 10-12noon starting 18 January and then on 8 February, 29 February, 21 March and 18 April.

Tracy Claridge 240454

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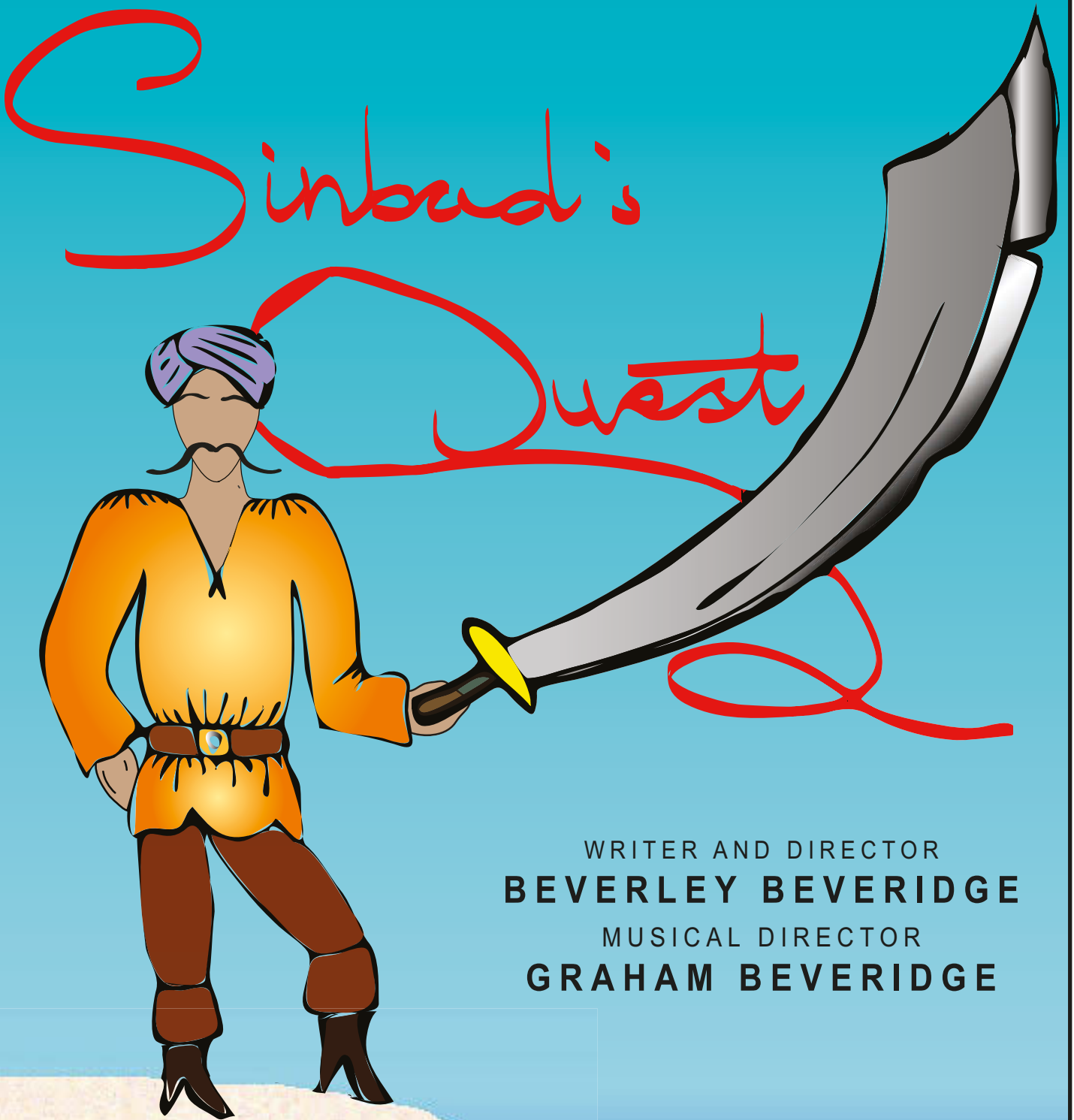
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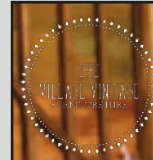
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Neighbourhood Development Plan

Responding to your feedback

The Regulation 14 version of Benenden's NDP was published on 25 August 2019 and the six-week consultation period was extended after we encountered delays in printing the plan (for those without access to the internet version). The consultation period ended at the beginning of November.

I am pleased to say we had a great response to this phase of planning. Although our site allocations had not changed since we presented the Rough Draft Plan earlier in the year, much of the text and key policies had been updated following feedback. Now the review process is underway once again. In all we received input from:

- 5 Landowners
- 2 Developers
- 14 Statutory Bodies
- 22 Residents from Benenden Village
- 31 Residents from East End
- 6 Residents from Iden Green

As you may expect, comments from statutory bodies (Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council etc) focussed on planning policy. Input from some residents also made comments on policy, but most of their feedback concerned the location of the sites allocated for housing development.

As outlined in previous contributions to the magazine, the BNDP concluded that none of our 20 sites put forward for development is ideal. In a perfect world we would find a number of small brownfield sites, outside the AONB but adjacent to existing shops, work, public transport and leisure facilities. Unfortunately, most sites close to the amenities in the centre of Benenden are greenfield and of course, inside the AONB. They also border the conservation area or ancient woodland. The sites at East End are outside the AONB and brownfield but are two or three miles from many amenities. So, we will try to take a balanced judgement through the review and once again look at our allocations.

To this end a separate group of parish

councillors and NDP volunteers has been set up to review all input and to recommend changes to the plan. Their role is to make sure our plan conforms to planning policy, regulations and guidelines. 'Locality', a government funded agency has set out the following key points:

- Any comments received by the end of the consultation period must be considered conscientiously
- All representations need to be considered, but it is legitimate for the Neighbourhood Plan body to take a different view
- A planning judgement needs to be taken
- Decisions on whether or not to amend the plan, and the reasoning behind them, should be recorded. This information will need to be incorporated into the consultation statement
- The Parish Council will need to agree the modifications and approve the resulting draft of the plan for submission to TWBC.

The review should be completed by mid-January and amendments made by the end of January. We will also engage an independent consultant to offer final drafting advice. This amended document becomes the Benenden NDP Regulation 15 Plan. The Parish Council needs to approve the plan and send it to TWBC. TWBC will review and suggest further changes if required by Local Authority policy. Once TWBC and the Parish Council have agreed on the final wording the plan will become the Regulation 16 version. This Regulation 16 Plan will be submitted to an independent examiner who will undertake a further consultation with stakeholders and has the power to instruct TWBC and the Parish Council to make further changes if the examiner believes national planning policy has been ignored.

Residents of Benenden will get the opportunity to vote on the final plan after the examiner has approved it. Based on current progress and despite a great deal of work by volunteers on your behalf, I believe this will be in late summer 2020.

Someone once said "it will be all over by Christmas". But which Christmas? My genuine hope is by next Christmas!

Paul Tolhurst

Chair, Benenden NDP Steering Group





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Benenden Hospital news

We've just trialled a new anaesthetic at the hospital that will allow hundreds of patients to be discharged just a day after having hip replacements instead of two-three days currently.

Andy Chandler, 69, from Rolvenden, was the first patient to have the Pericapsular Nerve Group (PENG) Block following his operation in November. Amazingly, he was able to walk from his bed with the aid of a support frame just two-and-a-half hours after his operation. His case was featured as part of a presentation to the World Congress of Orthopaedic Surgeons last month.

We believe we are the first private hospital in the UK and only the second behind Epsom in Surrey to be trialling this new anaesthetic. At the hospital, we want to adopt the most innovative and up-to-date anaesthesia techniques that lead to shorter hospital stays, patient satisfaction and an overall great outcome from their operation.

We were the first private hospital in the UK to be nationally accredited for providing the highest standards of care to patients in anaesthesia and, among private hospitals, we already have one of the lowest lengths of stay for patients having hip replacements before the introduction of this new anaesthesia which we hope will become standard procedure.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director

Keep the photographs coming

From reader feedback we know that many of you enjoy the photographs we carry throughout the magazine. Last month we carried stunning firework photographs taken by Hayley Daley (pages 26-27) and Theo Shaw (back cover) and turkeys galore taken by regular contributor Amelia Thomas. We rely on and welcome your photographs of village events, so please remember to send them in for consideration. You never know - your image may make the front cover. Send images to:

benendenparishmagazine@gmail.com

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Fete resolutions

The fete committee are already busy getting ready for the village fete on 20 June 2020. There are some exciting new features planned, such as an expanded children's fun area and a full line up of fun, games and music in the central arena. More details will be announced over the coming months but rest assured that its traditional English character will be retained.

But, most importantly, we do need you to help make it a success. Just an hour of your time will make all the difference. So please sign up on the list on the community shop notice board or contact me direct.

Joy Rowlands, Chairman, Benenden Village Fete,
in support of St George's church
joyrowlands824@yahoo.com 07486 660498

Poppy Appeal 2019

The Poppy Appeal collection in Benenden and Iden Green raised £4,300, including a very generous church collection on Remembrance Sunday and contributions from several particularly benevolent donors. We are most grateful to those who contributed so unselfishly, and to the many who gave their time to undertake the task of house-to-house collection, which helped to realise this excellent result.

Jane Dalton Holmes

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Benenden School news

Some of our sixth formers voted for the first-time on 12 December and they were doing so in one of the most interesting General Elections in memory. I have been impressed at how politically engaged the girls here are, and this includes all year groups. They asked some pertinent questions of parliamentary candidates in our Question Time-style event before, in which pupils from Benenden and other local schools were able to quiz candidates from the main parties in the Maidstone and the Weald constituency.

In addition, we held our own mock election which was a fascinating exercise. The overall result was a hung parliament between the Conservative and Liberal Democrats - so perhaps we are not quite an accurate barometer of the UK's voting intentions.

I urge the new government to focus on education. The obvious priority is to increase funding for the state sector, but improvement cannot rely on simple investment alone. A bold, forward-looking government would also look at other ways of helping schools. We should all work together in the interests of improving our already world-class education system.

Back at Benenden, the end of term was an array of exciting activities, including our annual Model United Nations, when hundreds of children from other schools joined us for a day of debate and diplomacy, our lovely carol services, which were held at both St George's in the village and at St Dunstan's in Cranbrook. On the final Saturday we had an ice rink, giant snow globe and Ferris wheel at our Christmas Fair.

Not all our pupils headed directly home for Christmas. Some girls are out exploring the world, with one group skiing in France and another trekking in Nepal. Ben Fogle, whose talks of adventure last month were so inspirational for the girls, would be proud.

I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Samantha Price, Headmistress

Iden Green and Benenden WI

Our first New Year meeting will be on Tuesday 21 January, at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, when traditionally we have a members' meeting. This is our chance to cement new friendships, anticipate and plan the year ahead. Visitors are always welcome, and everyone is invited to contribute to the raffle whenever they can.

The new programme has now been printed and there are several gems on offer, including some hidden ones in September! Plus, of course, our dear friend, Tim, is coming again in February to look at antiques.

We also hope to warm your hands and hearts at 2pm on Friday 31 January when we shall open the doors of the Memorial Hall to welcome you to another popular social afternoon with tea and most delicious cake.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

Messy Church update

As advertised for the last three months, we have been reviewing whether Messy Church is fulfilling a need in the parishes at the moment or not.

We have made a decision to lay Messy Church aside until after Easter whilst we think and pray about whether to relaunch it, how to relaunch it, where to hold it, and when to hold it? Your comments and feedback would be most welcome, as this will help us in our decision making.

We are sorry to those families who have been coming, but trust that something new will come out of this laying-aside time.

Revd David and Helen Commander 240658
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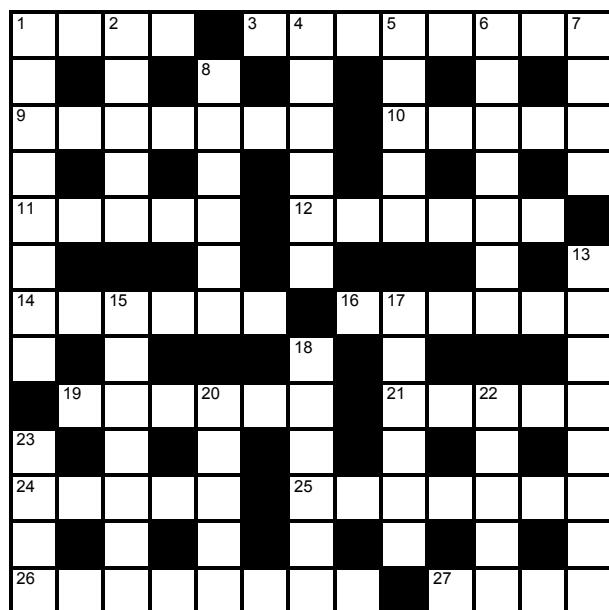
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MINDBENENDERS By ASCII

CROSSWORD No17 (Tricky)



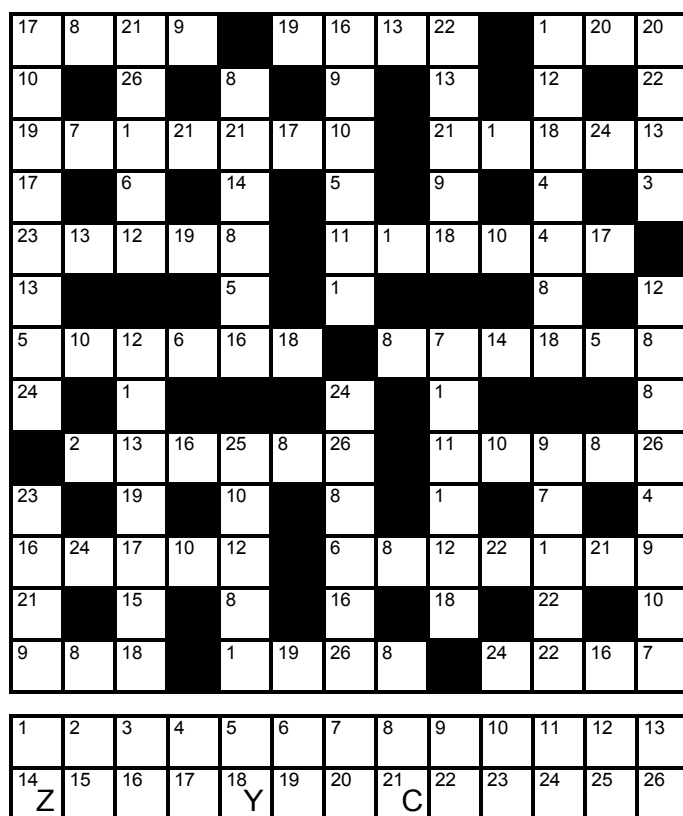
Across

- 1 Defend place for beds in NHS? (4)
- 3 Rodent cooked in deep-fat friar? (8)
- 9 Slowly put on peasant garb (3,4)
- 10 Prickly Sister Capone (5)
- 11 Small Ford latches onto Tibetan ox boat (5)
- 12 Old, stewed rum tea (6)
- 14 Accurate marching untroubled by flat feet (6)
- 16 Fret be awful loss (6)
- 19 Final odds present round object (6)
- 21 Soft hardwood, as lab worked out (5)
- 24 Could charge through the nose, perhaps? (5)
- 25 Badly hits sly influencer (7)
- 26 I kill men messily for calcium oxide (8)
- 27 Silver editor's getting on a bit (4)

Down

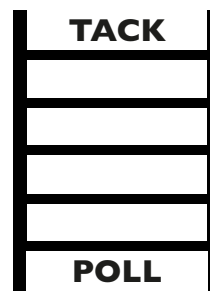
- 1 Confused Kent will unite perfectly (4-4)
- 2 Noisy disagreement over disputed dowry (5)
- 4 Her Sam plays around with a number of women (6)
- 5 Presuppose toilet training? (5)
- 6 Remove grease from damaged pressure gauge, reassemble and it should rise (7)
- 7 Vegetable from tainted lake (4)
- 8 Removing baps from confused black sheep then sorting it out could mean a noisy interruption to an act (6)
- 13 Horrible cat hated clingy owner (8)
- 15 Fallacies aren't from bewildered misanthropes made better (7)
- 17 Egg troubled by Rome (6)
- 18 Western support for painter is a byword for deceit and cunning (6)
- 20 Appointment for ecstatic read? (1-4)
- 22 Flying, doesn't give an f to be on the ground or misleading (5)
- 23 Otherwise Albert shortly talks (4)

CODEWORD No17 (Moderate)



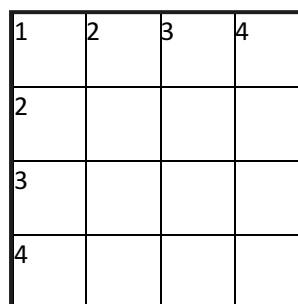
Each number represents a letter. Break the code and complete the grid. Three letters have been given to help you. Heavy lines denote a new word.

STEP CHANGE



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

FOURWORD



In the grid, place all of these letters to make the same four words across and down. Four clues are given to help you.

AADDEELLOOOORSS

- 1 Belonging to Mr Stewart?
- 2 Mouthy
- 3 Rail driven up the wall?
- 4 Fruit but definitely not a quick snack



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Talking Shop

Here we are in January 2020; a new year (where did the last one go?) bringing with it the prospect of changes both welcome and maybe not so much. However, one thing we can all rely upon is the familiar welcome and warmth of our great local community shop. Whatever the weather or whatever the politicians throw at us, our shop remains a place where we can all meet, stock up, chat and relax; to say nothing of the regular bursts of laughter to be heard coming from both sides of the counter.

All through January we have a 'Winter Warmer' offer, whereby if you spend £15 or more in the shop (excluding the post office) or café, you will qualify for a voucher for a free hot beverage in the café (or to take out if you wish). Your voucher will be dated and will be valid for a month from that date. If you needed an excuse to linger in Benenden's and relax, there it is. We can guarantee a customary friendly welcome to beat off the winter blues.

One person who will also be enjoying the ambience of our shop will be Ruth Clark, who will be holding a pop-up box office for the Benenden Panto (Sinbad's Quest) in the café on three Sundays, 5, 19 and 26 in January, from 9-10.30am. Credit cards are accepted.

We are delighted to have welcomed several new volunteers to our shop recently and look forward to working with them in the New Year. It goes without saying that we are always looking to swell the ranks of our volunteer base and if any of you are thinking of a new challenge in 2020, do join us and see what fun it can be.

All of us at Benenden's wish you all a very happy, healthy New Year and hope to see as many of you as possible in the shop and café.

Bev Beveridge

Village hall highlights

It's the time of year when a folk are resolving that 2020 will be the year to get exercising. If this is you, the hall is the perfect place to get started on the road to fitness. So, while you are at home in front of the fire, chomping on a mince-pie, why not have a look at the hall's timetable of fitness classes at www.benendenvillagehall.org/events/ or on our Facebook and Nextdoor page. Takeaway copies are also available from the village hall foyer noticeboard.

We have a great mix of classes and clubs to suit all, and all ages. These include monthly delights (artistic and culinary) from The Arts Society High Weald and Village Lunch Club, as well as weekly classes in yoga, tap-dancing, ballet, Pilates, judo, ballroom dancing, dance and exercise for seniors, Scottish dancing and, starting in February, a new Egyptian belly dancing class. Watch our social media pages for further details. If you are interested in holding a class at the hall, get in touch as we'd love to welcome you to the family.

On another matter, the village hall is looking for a new manager to take over as soon as possible in the new year. It's a part time job - around 16 hours a week - and can be done mainly from home. It involves overseeing the bookings, the finances and the publicity for the hall with the support of the caretaker and the cleaner.

Applicants will need good IT and social media skills, self-motivation, and the ability to work closely with our wonderful clients. It's flexible hours and occasionally there is some weekend work required. Take it from me, it's a wonderful job and although I'm very sad to be leaving I will still be available to help the new person into the job.

If you are interested, then email the Benenden Village Trust - bvtclerk@gmail.com - for a full job description and application form.
Lorraine Jones 07419 989830
enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org
www.benendenvillagehall.org

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Not so glorious mud

I'd like to thank the kind gentleman and his dog who rescued us from the mud on the 'ridge' field next to the new primary school shortly before Christmas.

I don't know if you've seen the Netflix film *The King* (and if not here's a spoiler alert) but it culminates with the Dauphin of France unable to stand up in his heavy armor in the mud of Agincourt field. The young unencumbered Henry V watches him comically floundering before ordering him to be put to the sword. Well, my companion and I were not wearing heavy armor, but we did get completely stuck, losing a boot in the mire along with our dignity.

The spoil from the primary school foundations had recently been spread across the field, but clearly no thought had been given to drainage, and if the contractors knew that two public footpaths crossed the field, they showed absolutely no sign of it.

If you walk a dog round here you get pretty used to tramping through the winter mud. But in a decade of exercising the hound I've never actually got to the point where I really didn't think I'd get out. The problem is that you know that if you do fall flat, you really might not be able to get back up.

To make matters worse we could see, just a few yards away, the lovely new path that had been created at the back of the school. But where this ended at the school boundary, the thick sinking mud began.

Fortunately, another dog walker appeared with boots that were tight enough not to be sucked off. He helped my partner to safety while I discarded my boot and limped, stocking-footed through the cold wet goo. Then, risking life and limb, our rescuer set off into the midst of the mire and retrieved my buried boot.

So, before you tackle footpath WC325 I'd check whether KCC has done anything about it. If they haven't, I advise taking duck boards and a thermos and blankets with you. Oh and a box of matches to light the beacon to summon help - that's if you can actually get to the beacon.

Kent Barker

Sandhurst Twinning Association

QUIZ NIGHT

When: Saturday 7 March 2020
Where: Old School Hall, Sandhurst
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Judy Avery 850623 judyavery@outlook.com

South East transport strategy: have your say

Transport for the South East is currently consulting on its draft Transport Strategy and the deadline for comments is 10 January 2020. All details: www.transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/transport-strategy.

Transport Action Network (TAN), an organisation that helps support people press for more sustainable transport, ran a workshop to assess what was good and bad in the draft strategy. Participants said that while they welcomed: a 2050 net-zero carbon target; acknowledgement that electric cars won't solve congestion, and an acknowledged need for biodiversity net gain, they highlighted, among others:

- The lack of urgency in making change
- The need for a pathway to net-zero carbon before 2050 with milestones
- Greater focus on seamless integration needed between sustainable modes
- The need for greater focus on integrating transport and planning

TAN is urging as many as possible to read and respond to the consultation by completing the online survey or by sending comments direct to:

tfse@eastsussex.gov.uk



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Photographs: Hayley Daley

Why we love panto

Lucy Freeman, Laura Pengelly and Darcy Barras are in Sinbad's Quest, the 2020 Benenden Panto (30 January-2 February) in the village hall. Here they write about what being involved means to them (with no help or hints from the production crew!)

The village pantomime is one of our highlights of the week. It's a chance to see our friends who we might not see during the week and to rehearse and have fun at the same time. Everyone is very friendly and it's like a second home. The adults are supportive and listen to your ideas and give you opportunities to show your true potential. No one is pushy and you never have to do what you don't want to do. Also, they do not give you too many things to stress you out about.

There are so many things that you can get involved with at panto on a Sunday; you get to help with costumes and learn new and creative dances. When we are not needed on stage we can go into the small hall and either rehearse lines and dances or just have some fun. They make sure that we are fed and watered with yummy treats and drinks.

Once we come back from our Christmas

break, it's nearly SHOW TIME!

This is the best part of being in the Benenden Panto, being able to perform with amazing, talented people from the village. Older participants are given the responsibility to show guests of the audience to their seats in character and sell raffle tickets and programmes. We have amazing makeup and costumes which help us to create our character the way we would like them to be.

After the performances we have an after-party where we celebrate our success. At this gathering we get to praise each other on such an amazing performance we all put on as a team. In conclusion, the Benenden pantomime is a kind and welcoming group of people. Come and see the next, Sinbad's Quest, for a fun time where I promise you will have a good laugh.

Tickets: www.benendenplayers.co.uk



Laura Pengelly, Lucy Freeman and Darcy Barras

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CODEWORD No17

STEP CHANGE

TACK, PACK, PACE, PALE, POLL

FOURWORD

1 RODS, 2 ORAL, 3 DADO, 4 SLOE

MINDBENDERS Answers

CROSSWORD No17

Across: 1 Ward, 3 Chipmunk, 9 Low gear, 10 Sisal, 11 Kayak, 12 Mature, 14 Instep, 16 Beret, 19 Sphere, 21 Balisa, 24 Rhino, 25 Stylish, 26 Limekiln, 27 Aged

Down: 1 Well-knit, 2 Rowdy, 4 Harems, 5 Post, 6 Upsurge, 7 Kale, 8 Heckle, 13 Attached, 15 Sophism, 17 Embryo, 18 Weasel, 20 E-book, 22 Lying, 23 Oral

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A magical Christmas

Father Christmas made a very special visit to the young children of Benenden at Christmas when he decided to park his sleigh in the beautiful woodland at The Paper Mill for the fourth year running.

The Paper Mill was transformed into a magical Christmas grotto by Laura and Sarah from local company Village Vintage, in the hope that he would return this year - and he did not disappoint. In the week before his visit, excitement grew as children from the reception class, year one and two at Benenden Primary were hand delivered individual invitations for them and their families to visit Santa and his elves at the woodland grotto.

The day was wonderful as over 30 families enjoyed a private walk through the woods to visit Santa followed by festive refreshments and Christmas carols in the hay barn. The barn had been beautifully decorated with a Christmas tree very kindly donated by Saint Ronan's school and each child found a personal decoration for them hanging on the tree.

As well as creating very special memories

for all the children and their families, the proceeds from the grotto will be used to buy items for Benenden Primary's forest school. The first item on the wish list is an outdoor boot rack for every classroom so that all the children can easily enjoy their outdoor learning every week.

We would like to thank Mr Andrew for letting Santa use his woodland and barn again for this special event, and an extra special thank you to Father Christmas's personal friend who made this happen - Dave Wellman. Sarah Andrew and Laura Burles



SCAM ALERT

If it seems too good to be true, it probably is

We are all at risk from telephone and email fraud, none more so than the old and the lonely. Here Giles Clark offers some timely

advice on how to combat the scammers

How many times have you been happily doing something at home when you have been interrupted by the phone ringing? My guess is that this has become a regular occurrence. What is more frustrating is that the call is from a total stranger who claims to wish to help you.

The pitch from the caller varies: they have found a problem with your computer; they are from your bank and want help sorting out a

fraud; they want to offer you the opportunity to be an early investor in a set of shares that will outperform the market. All the stories are, of course, a fabrication.

The source of the calls varies as much as the tale they pitch.

Some are from overseas and are clearly reading off a script; some from noisy offices based somewhere in Europe; others, often more plausible, are well rehearsed and from the UK. The thing they all have in common is that they

are scammers. Their sole intention is trying to part you from your money, either directly or indirectly.

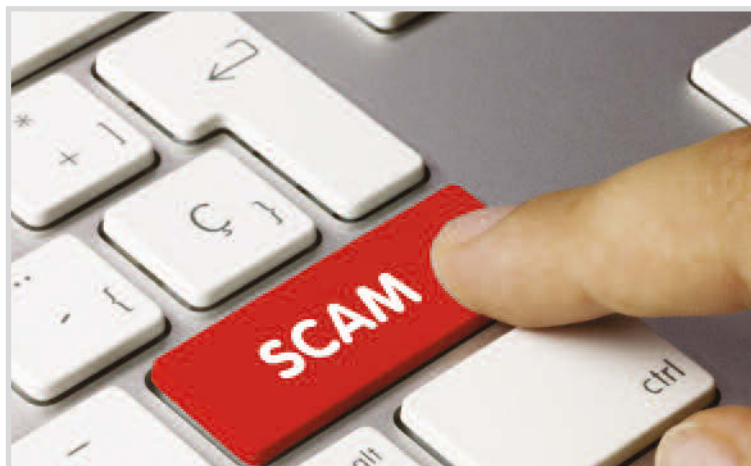
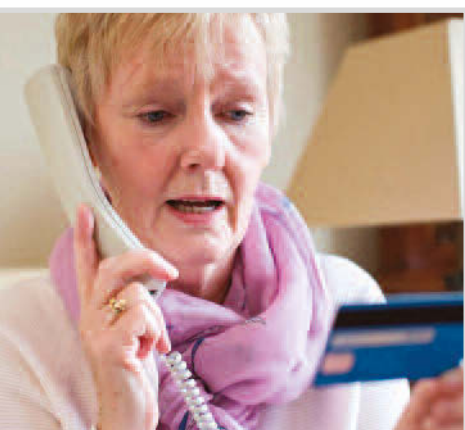
While many scammers do use the telephone, there are just as many who use email, mail or, in fact, turn up in person with just the same intent: to find a victim. They aren't choosy about who they target, either - they are true equal opportunity thieves. Young, old, male, female, rich or poor, they simply don't care.

However, they do regard some groups as easy targets. According to Age UK, 43% of older people - almost five

million people aged 65 and over - believe they have been targeted by scammers. Those with dementia are at particular risk.

"Because older people are more likely to live on their own, and are often lonely, they become targets for fraudsters," says Age UK. In one study, it was found that 27% of single people responded to a scam, compared with less than a tenth of their married counterparts. In England, the number of people over 65 living on their own is expected to rise from 3.5 million in 2015 to just under five million by 2030, and the number of people with dementia is projected to rise from 850,000 now to 1.14 million by 2025. This means that in future, significantly more older people could be at risk of being scammed.

According to figures highlighted by several organisations working to combat fraud, they cost the UK economy somewhere between £5-£10





billion a year. While the overall cost is truly staggering, the cost to the individual victim can be heartbreaking.

Again, according to Age UK: “Once people realise they have been scammed, they often feel ashamed to have been duped and so

will seldom report what has happened. It is estimated that only 5% of these crimes are ever reported.

It doesn’t stop there: “Once a person falls victim to one con artist, their personal details are often added to what is known as ‘suckers lists’ and sold on to other criminals, so they are targeted again and again.

“The impact can be devastating - people who have been defrauded in their own homes are two and a half times more likely to die or go into residential care within a year.”

FIGHT BACK

Like so many crimes, scams do best when they are hidden; bringing them out into the open starts to make them less effective, less scary. It is something the whole community can take part in, raising awareness and being a resource for those who may be targeted by the scammers.

The National Trading Standards Friends Against Scams project gives you the opportunity to take the fight back to the scammers. It may be that you just want to know more, or perhaps you could take a lead as a Scam Champion and

support the community more directly in highlighting the issues and making it harder for the scammers to succeed.

To find out more about Friends Against Scams, visit www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk.

Finally, no article about scams and scammers can hope to cover every instance, but if you are at all worried, have the slightest inkling that there is a problem from a phone call, an email, a letter, just ask someone.



WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION OR REPORT SCAMS

CITIZENS ADVICE CONSUMER SERVICE: can offer support if you or someone you know has been scammed. They will give you advice on what to do next. www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call 0345 404 0506.

ACTION FRAUD: the UK’s national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime where you should report fraud if you have spotted a scam or have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber-crime. www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

MAIL AND TELEPHONE PREFERENCE SERVICES: To reduce the amount of junk mail you receive, register for free with the Mailing Preference Service. Register on www.mpsonline.org.uk or call 0207 291 3310. To help stop marketing phone calls, register for free with the Telephone Preference Service on www.tpsonline.org.uk or call 0345 070 0707.

POLICE: if you encounter a person carrying out a doorstep scam and their behaviour is threatening, then call the emergency services for immediate support (999). If there is no immediate danger you can contact your local police (101).

AGE UK: runs a freephone service offering advice and information on money, care and health. www.ageuk.org.uk or call 0800 055 6112.



Benenden bells: 300 years and still ringing

The history and the future of a great village institution, founded in 1719

In the year 1418 the Archbishop of Canterbury directed his suffragan bishop John of Sora “to dedicate our new church at Benenden, and to bless four bells therein”. This is our present church, whose outer walls still stand, although we do not know any details of the bells. However, in 1621 the Whitechapel Bell Foundry supplied a ring of five bells to hang in the great detached timber tower. These were a ring to match the tower, with the largest (tenor) bell weighing 27 cwt - if they were still in existence today, they would be the heaviest ring of five change-ringing bells in the world, beating the present heaviest, East Pennard in Somerset, by some margin.

This great tower, with its impressive ring of bells, together with much of the roof and interior of the church, was totally destroyed by fire in 1672 in the “great Storm of Thunder and Lightning” commemorated by a plaque near the north door. It is remarkable that the church was

rebuilt only a few years later, to include a stone west tower, which however could only be completed to less than its present height before funds ran out; but in 1718 the tower was completed and in June 1719 a new ring of six bells ordered from Whitechapel. One bell of this ring of six still survives as she was cast in 1719 - the fifth bell of that ring, now the 11th of the present ring of 12.

It seems evident that the new ring of six bells were very far from satisfactory tonally, one bell being exchanged for a new one free of charge, and several recasts being made during the 18th century. In 1801 the treble bell of the ring of six was found to be cracked, and was recast, and two more treble bells added to make a full octave.

The first full three-hour ‘peal’ of 5040 changes was rung shortly after, and in 1820 and 1821 four further peals were rung, duly commemorated on boards on the tower. It is clear that the ‘Gentlemen of Benenden’ as they were called, were a band of unusual ability under their conductor John Hatcher, a local highly skilled clockmaker. Their performances included a world first, of Oxford Bob Triples, a ‘method’ still rung today; and they are also recorded as having rung

a full peal at Goudhurst, a heavy ring of bells still regarded as difficult today.

By 1926 the old oak frame of 1801 had worked loose and was stiffened with iron tie rods, and the sixth bell recast. This was the installation that the writer came to as a young ringer in the 1960s. The oak frame by then had worked loose again, being seriously weakened by death watch beetle attack, and the bells hard to ring, especially for learners. So it was decided to rehang the entire ring on ball bearings in a completely new steel frame, work carried out by Taylors of Loughborough, who retuned the whole ring to the note of E flat. An indifferent and poorly toned collection of bells was transformed into a magnificent singing octave, easy to ring and good to learn on. They sprang to immediate fame as one of the finest rings in the Southeast, and were soon in demand by expert ringers for peals.

However, they were still quite heavy metal and less than ideal for young beginners to learn on; and by the generosity of many sponsors of the parish, in 2003-4, four new treble bells were added to make a full ring of 12 bells together with a new flat sixth bell which, used instead



of the normal sixth, gives a true light octave from bells two to nine, ideal both for beginners of any age and for advanced musical performances by expert bands.

Bells cannot ring themselves, however. Of equal importance has been

the continued willingness of Benenden people to come forward and be trained in our unique English music of change ringing, over the past 300 years. This isn't an historical art stuck in the past, but a still-developing, live performing music that makes the fullest possible use of the latest technology for training, such as our superb simulator that allows a ringer to ring a real bell, but with an on-screen 'virtual band' that never makes mistakes or wants to go off to the pub!

Nor do you need to be a 'church' person or to have any religious belief or practice, though it's fine if you do. Most of us ring because we enjoy the challenge of making music in this unique way and the social life, the fellowship and friendships of the worldwide community of ringers, that results from the teamwork of this highly skilled musical craft. Our training is second to none, honed over 40 years of practice in teaching the art. Unlike many towers whose

bells are now silent, we still have an active band, but only if we continue to train new ringers to make up for inevitable natural losses. Will our famous bells still be ringing 50 or 100 years hence? This will only happen, as it always has, if you, the people of Benenden and readers of this magazine, decide that they will.

Come and have a go.

Rod Lebon, Ringing Master
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Spotlight on: Penny Wilmot

A very stylish lady who contributed much to Benenden. Ruth Clark celebrates the life of Penny Wilmot, who died in November, aged 93.

Eunice Arbuckle, better

known by all her friends and family as Penny Wilmot, was one of those people who was deeply involved in village life during the 33 years she lived in Benenden. She and her husband John arrived here in 1974 when they bought Fuggles Garage at the bottom of the village green.

Penny was born in Sheptheswell in Kent in 1926 and she fell in love with playing the piano early on. During World War II, aged just 15, she joined Duke and his Accordion Band and every evening for four years they entertained the in-transit troops in Dover, known then as 'Hellfire Corner'. She demonstrated her mettle and courage, describing the experience thus: "It was great fun, especially when the air raid warning would sound, and we all had to rush down to the shelter to continue playing and singing." She wore a white suit with red piping, made especially for her, with underwear made from parachute silk. Not surprising then that she remained a very stylish lady all her life and was always perfectly coiffed.

Just after the war she married John Wilmot, who nicknamed her Penny, and they went on to have two children, Susan and Jonathan, and six grandchildren. John was a Royal Marines

Commando during the war and became an accountant afterwards. His business took the family all over the world and they spent time in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), East Africa, Zambia and Antigua, before they put roots down in less-tropical Benenden.

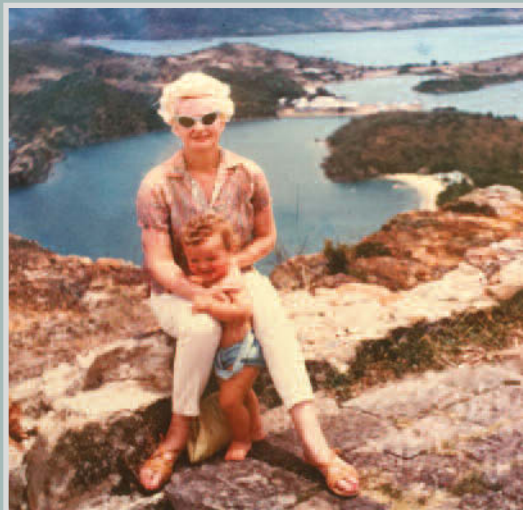
When John and Penny bought Fuggles it was a petrol station and car sales and repair business which also provided a local taxi service; but, ever intrepid, they started Kent's first rural bus service. In her leisure time, Penny was involved in the Iden Green WI, the Guides and was a

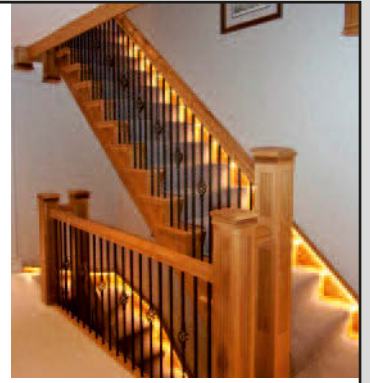
founder member of the Benenden Players, which began in 1981 - she was made lifetime president in 2006. She played piano for all the village shows, accompanied by great friend and saxophonist Dr Cyril Cooling.

As Penny and John's business grew, they built a new bus depot at Apple Pie Farm and in 1985 converted the cottage on the garage site in Benenden into Wheelwrights House, where they continued to live. The couple retired in 1989 and when John died in 2006, Penny moved to Cumbria for a short time before returning to the area in 2010.

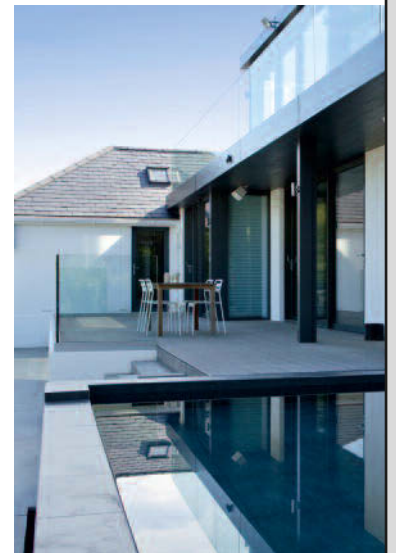
Penny's daughter Susan lives in Crete and her son Jonathan in Australia. Still keeping links with Benenden

is her grandson Tom, who has just completed his law studies and currently works at the Bull. When talking to people about Penny, the words that come up the most when they describe her are 'stylish, kind and generous'. A lovely legacy.





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Food & Drink

How bright is the future for British fizz?

Benenden's wine expert takes a look at the economics of the thriving domestic sparkling market

Christopher Merret (16 February 1614-19 August 1695), was a 17th-century English physician and scientist who became the first to document the deliberate addition of sugar for the production of sparkling wine. The Champenois would have us believe that Dom Perignon invented the genre in Champagne in the late 1600s, but superior bottle-making technology means we Brits got there long before.

Roll on to the modern era, and you will find that New Hall in Essex were the first to plant Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in 1984. Nyetimber planted Pinot Meunier as well to complete the trio of Champagne grapes in 1988, produced their first wine in 1996 and have never looked back. What has happened? Why the seemingly sudden interest in planting vines and producing English wine, especially English sparkling wine? Is it climate change? The simple answer is yes.

Stephen Skelton MW, the leading expert on soil in English vineyards, explains. "Before the 1990s, natural alcohol levels at harvest were between 5% and 8%, seldom higher. Since 2000, there has rarely been a year when they have been under 10%. In 2018 - admittedly an amazing year for UK growers - still Chardonnay wines were made with 13.5% alcohol, all natural.

"The area under vine is currently 3,250 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres), with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier comprising 2,194ha, or 67.5% of the total area. Three-quarters of English wine production is now sparkling.

"There are, however, drawbacks in making sparkling wines - lower yields, the extra equipment, and, most importantly, the additional capital and time required, but long-term, the wait is worth it, as the

world-class quality of so many English sparkling wines shows."

The year 2018 was a totally exceptional one, seeing an early harvest produce 13m bottles (2.5 times the average) and 2019, recently harvested, is also a high-quality year with less volume. So the million-dollar question is: who is going to drink all this wine? Retail prices range from £17 to £45, Champagnes sales are falling in the UK, and the US has imposed 25% import tax on French sparkling wines. Will we see Champagne being discounted in 2020? Will we see English sparkling wines coming down in price as supply outstrips demand? I think the answer to both questions is yes.

We are surrounded by English vineyards - Biddenden, Chapel Down, Herbert Hall, Hush Heath and Gusborne are all on our doorstep - and the community shop stocks the Biddenden fizz, so please try and support them if you can.
Tracy Claridge

Good taste

The latest village wine tasting was, by popular consensus, the best yet, with Luis Marculeta of Rioja Vega presenting an impressive raft of wines to a packed house at Iden Green Pavilion.

Tickets sold out in double quick time, with many of our drinkers no doubt seeking out traditional full-bodied reds for their Christmas table, but there were surprises in store as well.

The entry level Rioja Blanco proved a real hit, but the Tempranillo Blanco was a cut above, showing a complexity beyond its price bracket. Likewise the late-harvest, oak-aged Chardonnay that closed proceedings, but, sure enough, the reds shone through, from the popular Tinto via the over-performing Crianza to the hearty 2012 Gran Reserva.

Details of the next will appear on these pages. In the meantime, Rioja Vega's Blanco 2018, Crianza 2016 and the late-harvest Chardonnay will soon be available in the community shop.

Benenden Wine Committee



In Your Garden

The year of gardening sustainably

If I recall correctly, the last time I made a new year's resolution was about 25 years ago. I was working in an office in London and everyone seemed to make resolutions back then, and so under pressure I decided mine should be to get fit. As we all had a corporate gym membership I had no excuse whatsoever, which was a challenge as I loathe exercise programmes. Very happy to swim some serious lengths in a pool, not a problem getting out onto the tennis court, can walk for Britain ... but an exercise programme?!

Anyhow, I can categorically say that I did not stick to it and the resolution floundered. However, I have decided to make one for 2020 which I shall stick to - and that is to make a considerable effort to garden in a way that is more sustainable and kinder to our environment. It sounds like a bunch of buzzwords now, but this is one that is here to stay and we each and every one have to do the right thing in whatever way we can. Really, I should have done this years ago and forgotten about getting fit.

Ultimately, it is all about a mindset, whether on a professional or personal level. Once we start to make those small changes then one can feel able to take bigger steps and so change starts to grow exponentially. I remember very clearly whilst studying horticulture at Hadlow College, one of my lecturers had an understandably commercial viewpoint on plastics, chemicals, peat and water use; unless you use peat in your growing medium, use a new plastic pot or tray for potting-on rooted

plants, spray fungicide and dose with slow-release fertiliser, you will go out of business fairly swiftly as your plants fail to grow uniformly or just wither and die.

On a domestic level, though, there is no reason why gardeners could not start to propagate more of their own stock at home. Division of perennials and grasses is easy to follow in a good book (I'd be wary of advice online) and many plants can be grown from seed; striking cuttings for hedges and shrubs is not rocket science although admittedly not all are easy subjects; the point is we do not need to buy so many new plants.

We can still buy plastic, but I would make sure it's the durable kind - and ideally I would seek alternatives. I have avoided peat for years (difficult because it is an excellent growing medium) but you can find alternatives if you cannot make your own compost. And don't forget how useful a bag of sharp sand is - both in adding grit to a soil medium and for rooting cuttings. Even seed germination does not require any nutrition, so spent compost mixed with sharp sand would be a perfect starter.

I will leave my thoughts on chemical use to another month, but suffice it to say we can manage without them and it will give your garden wildlife a chance to restore its food chains and your soil a chance to return to its natural balance of microbial activity.

Wishing you all a positive January and a chance to redress some balance and thoughtfulness in our gardens.

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Above: Celebrating together: the official opening of the Primary School; the Iden Green and Benenden WI Winter Party
 Front cover: A day in village history: the official opening of the Primary School by the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin,
 the Bishop of Dover. Photographs: Ali Tuson