



Benenden Magazine

November 2020

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Editorial



In these difficult and uncertain times, it is truly heartening to see how Benenden is willing to make the best of circumstances and adapt to change. "Necessity is the mother of invention," said that old sage Plato, and never has it been more necessary to be inventive. So I applaud the creativity of those village stalwarts finding new avenues to raise funds for charity. After the success of using JustGiving for online donations for Christian Aid, instead of door-to-door collections, the Poppy Appeal will follow suit. But you can still donate in person and pick up your poppies outside the community shop on two Saturdays (see page 9 for details).

November is a time for remembering the courage of those that fell during the wars and this was very much brought home to me while I was researching Betty Stannard and her sacrifice, aged only 21 (page 25). However, this year, it's also a time for admiring the grit and spirit of today's youngsters persevering in education and trying to pursue a career.

Thank goodness for the ability to go online and keep some of the wheels turning - albeit not always as fast as we would like. The village primary school found that hosting a 'virtual' parents evening had a lot of benefits and I wouldn't be surprised if this became the norm when we come out the other side. Just think how much easier it will be for us all when we finally get the broadband we have been promised for so many years.

Perhaps I should again heed Plato, when he said: "The basis of wisdom is patience." But then I would expect to be a lot wiser than I am by now!

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

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Village Calendar

November

Monday 16

Parish Council Meeting, 7pm

The Village Calendar may look a little light for the foreseeable future. Coronavirus and the Prime Minister's lockdown of the entire country have rather put a crimp in our social lives and dates have been cancelled left, right and centre. Even the civic amenity vehicle won't be around for a while.

These will be trying weeks for us all as we negotiate a new landscape of self-isolation and social distancing. To that end, David Commander has come up with a list of guiding principles to steer us all through the confusion. We hope they may be a help until normal service is resumed.

Guiding principles

Our approach to making decisions about specific events, services or issues can be guided by these principles:

Be calm and trust the advice given by relevant authorities.

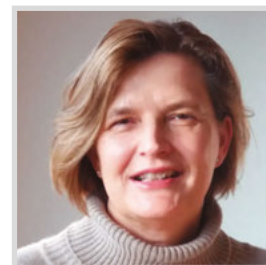
Protect the vulnerable. It's not just your health, but the health of others who may be more vulnerable.

Continue to love our neighbour. Respect their needs and concerns as much as your own - but safely. If you have a neighbour living alone and isolated they would appreciate a call.

Be transparent and open with one another, sharing accurate and up to date information.

Be creative when making decisions - "how can we do this differently in these circumstances".

Parish Council



It is with great relief that we have now submitted the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan Draft Regulation 15 to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, who will be putting our plan out for a further consultation period of six weeks on 30 October. As ever, the Parish Council is very grateful to all who have given their time, and a great deal of effort, into moving the NDP forward. This has become even more important with the looming of the proposed reforms by the Government to the current planning system, the details of which were released under their Planning for the Future white paper at the end of August.

In other news, we are hoping for the delivery and planting of 40 trees very soon, for which we thank our county and borough councillor, Sean Holden, for organising the grant to make these available to us. The Benenden Village Trust have been extremely helpful with their suggestions, and have proposed a mix of species which will be sympathetic to the area, mostly oaks, hawthorns and ornamental cherry trees. These will be planted mostly around the recreation ground, softening the boundaries around the new play area, and along the northern boundary.

Please take time to read and respond to the BVT article in this magazine regarding proposed changes to public toilets, moving them into the corner of the village hall, and turning the existing toilet building into a community space for our clerk and the village hall manager, as well as giving us some space to house our valuable archive documents.

Finally, please do not post anonymous letters (normally planning related) to parish councillors. This is not helpful at all, and can cause undue stress to the recipient. Any comments on planning matters should be directed to the TWBC website, where they are taken into account while considering applications. Anonymous comments are not accepted by TWBC.

Thank you, and keep warm and safe now the nights are drawing in.

Nicola Thomas, BPC Chair
nicolat@benendenparishcouncil.org

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 16 November 2020,
7pm - details tbc



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.

Each 10am service will be recorded, and the video available the next day on www.benendenchurch.org.

Sunday 1 November	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion	
Monday 2 November			7.30pm All Souls' Day Service
Sunday 8 November	8am Communion	10am Remembrance Service 10.50am Commemoration, War Memorial	
Wednesday 11 November		11am Act of Remembrance, War Memorial	
Sunday 15 November	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion	
Sunday 22 November	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	
Sunday 29 November	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	5pm Advent Service of Light

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

Funerals 9 October Tessa Welsby Funeral and burial

21 October Sister Chiara Hatton-Hall Committal and burial

Rector's Letter



November ... 'Remembering'

I ended last month's letter with: "Let's remember to make the most of these happy occasions and celebrate them; they are an important part of our changed new normal." Well, we're still in this extraordinary period of things being far from normal; but now we're entering a time of 'remembering'. Remembering those dear to us who have died; remembering those killed and affected by war; remembering why we will, next month, be celebrating Christmas i.e. the Advent season is nearly upon us.

This year our All Souls' Day service will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 2 November at St George's Church. The service will have a familiar format but will also be slightly different (i.e. no congregational singing unfortunately; and regrettably, no time of fellowship before or after the service). If you would like the name of a loved one remembered at the service, please email Cathy at benendenchurch@gmail.com

This year the way we mark Remembrance Sunday will also be different. We will hold a short service in St George's Church starting at 10am; this year conducted by Revd Rosemary. Numbers will be severely restricted to a maximum of 80 people in church - well down on the usual attendance for our Remembrance Day service - and will be ticketed. There will be a sign-up form in the church porch from Sunday 25 October. If you wish to attend the Remembrance Sunday service, please put your name down and then come to the Rectory to collect your ticket(s). Once the maximum numbers have been reached, we will be unable to admit any more to the 10am service on Sunday 8 November. Sorry. However, the Commemoration - with Roll of Honour, Last Post, two minutes silence, and Reveille - will take place down at the village War Memorial starting at 10.50am on the same Sunday. If you can't get to church, please come to this commemoration. Please remember: no groups of more than six people; and always maintain social distancing between groups. Armistice Day will be marked in the village, with an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial starting just before 11am on Wednesday 11 November.

The season of Advent begins on Sunday 29 November. We will mark the beginning of Advent this year by an adapted Service of Light starting at 5pm. This will not be the usual Advent carol service with the lighting of individual candles filling the church with light, but we feel we can mark the start of Advent in a suitable way.

So, there are some important dates for your diary this coming month: 2, 8, 11 and 29 November. I am now turning my attention to how we mark Christmas, and all the traditional things we 'normally do'! One thing is for certain, it will be different. I just hope that the COVID-19 restrictions are not tightened further between now and December. I have ideas for our usually packed Crib service. Just prepare to wrap up warm is all I'd say at the moment!

In the meantime: keep well, keep safe. If you'd like a visit or a chat, please contact me.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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Just a Thought



First steps

The parents of the young first-born looked on with delight as the child released his hold on his mother and, after some contemplation, took his first steps alone in the world. He was about to discover the joys of walking, albeit in a tentative and limited way at present, but where will walking take him in the future?

This confident four-year-old however, though still quite little, was just finishing a five-mile walk and seemed no less cheerful than she was at the beginning, helped by a satisfactory snack in the middle. Almost by joint consent her mother had consigned the buggy to a needy charity at an early stage. Then they began to enjoy Tuesday Treks to interesting places without encumbrances, other than the snack of course.

A five-mile walk was the price to be paid by another girl, in a far-off country, if she wanted to access education beyond how to farm the shamba and run a household. She had persuaded her father to pay the school fees but she had to get herself there, and that was after collecting water for the family from a distant well. She determined that the potential benefits were worth the effort so long as they were not cancelled by an early, arranged marriage. At least she did not have to fear unexploded bombs and land mines as she walked in the countryside, as others in neighbouring territories did.

The dangers of the urban jungle for a group of teenage boys, especially at night, meant that playing football in a training ground held an even greater attraction than walking anywhere at all. At the same time few of them will have given a thought to the idea that, elsewhere in the world, other teenagers were fully trained, gun-toting soldiers, who were required to march through the real jungle and kill on command.

How had it come to this? He had a lovely wife, a home in a good area, and a growing family. He enjoyed being administrative officer at the hospital, and it paid quite well. Now here he was, among hundreds of others, trudging along the road carrying a bundle of belongings through scenes of desolation. His house had been destroyed by a bomb, one of his sons killed and after weeks of near starvation they had all been advised to leave. 'But where shall we go?' they had asked. The stark reply was, 'just keep walking'.

The elderly couple shared a host of fond memories of many walks; climbing mountains, long family rambles and walks of exploration and discovery through woods and moorlands. They sat down on a bench on the cliff top over-looking the sea. The trip had taken them longer than usual, but they were grateful that they could still manage a reasonable distance. Expectations which continued to be modified over time, meant that they were able to enjoy the exercise and a sense of accomplishment. Captain Tom was steadfastly walking at 100, so they had more steps to go yet.

Sue Fisher

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News and Events

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

As we are unable to organise our usual house-to-house poppy collections this year, we have set up an online JustGiving page to receive donations for the Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal. Visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jane-dalton-holmes2 which takes you directly to our donation page. UK taxpayers can add Gift Aid contributions if appropriate. Unfortunately, our familiar contact with house-to-house donors cannot take place this year, but the donation total on JustGiving will still be recorded as part of the total collection for Benenden.

In addition, you can make donations in the Poppy Appeal collection box and pick up traditional poppies, enamel pins and wooden crosses outside the community shop on Saturday 31 October and Saturday 7 November. We also hope to place collection boxes in the village shops and pubs from Saturday 24 October - Sunday 8 November.

REMEMBRANCE DAY CHURCH SERVICE SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER, 10AM

An official limit of 80 attending the church has regrettably affected the normal Remembrance Sunday service arrangements at St George's and the usual gathering at the village War Memorial afterwards.

This year the rector will be conducting a service at Sandhurst at the usual time on 8 November. The Revd Rosemary Kobus van Wengen and The Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie will be leading a shorter than usual reflective service at 10am in St George's Church followed by a parish gathering at the War Memorial at 10.50am.

To avoid any misunderstanding about numbers in St George's those wishing to attend are asked to sign an attendance wish list in the church porch, which will be posted from Sunday 25 October. Once the list reaches 80 people, regrettably no further parishioners will be able to attend or be admitted.



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
POPPY APPEAL

In these exceptional and challenging times, our volunteers will not be collecting door-to-door.

Instead we have set up an online JustGiving page.

To donate please go to:
www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jane-dalton-holmes2

 Jane and Robin Dalton Holmes
Benenden Branch Royal British Legion

COMMEMORATION, WAR MEMORIAL SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER, 10.50AM

The normal remembrance tribute in church, this year, take place at the parish War Memorial in Walkhurst Road starting at 10.50am giving time for members of the congregation to gather with members of the Royal British Legion, the Parish Council, the Benenden Hospital and a small contingent of the Benenden School Combined Cadet Force for wreath laying, the Last Post, two minutes silence, Reveille, the National Anthem and prayers. Please gather only in Walkhurst Road to the sides and north of the memorial maintaining social distancing and desirably wearing masks depending on current regulations at that time.

ARMISTICE DAY ACT OF REMEMBRANCE, WAR MEMORIAL WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER, 11AM

As usual all those wishing to gather at the time of the 1918 Armistice signing are invited to assemble at the War Memorial, joining the senior year group of the Primary school, just before 11am.

Robin Dalton Holmes
Benenden Branch Royal British Legion



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The Arnold Cole Trust

The Arnold Cole Trust would like to invite applications for its annual disbursements from those clubs and societies within the parish in need of funds. Dr Arnold Cole was GP in Benenden from 1930 until his death in 1960, after which his daughter, the late Joan Weston, set up the Trust in 1968. The aim of the Trust is to apply its income for the "general benefit for the Parish of Benenden with special consideration being given to both the elderly and young".

All applications in writing please to:
The Secretary, Arnold Cole Trust, Scribbins,
Benenden, Kent TN17 4DT. Please note
applications must be received no later than
30 November.

Planning Matters

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

19 October 2020

- 20 02385 FULL Bayeaux, Goddards Green Road. Removal of existing conservatory and porch; Single storey extension to form gym space and exercise pool; Single storey extension to kitchen; internal alterations.
- 20 02621 FULL Collingwood Grange, The Green. Single storey staff changing room.
- 20 02637 FULL 3 Victoria Cottages, Walkhurst Road. Conversion of room above double garage to form 1 bed annex.
- 20 02661 FULL Shepherds Hey, Dingleton. Proposed replacement dwelling.
- 20 00565 FULL Eaglesden, Mill Street, Iden Green. Demolition and re-build of boot room; renovation of existing barn; erection of carport with studio/gym above; loft conversion; insertion of roof lights.

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Hospice in the Weald fundraising

It is with sadness that we have decided to disband the Benenden and Sandhurst fundraising committee for Hospice in the Weald. Half of our committee members are no longer able to work with us for a variety of reasons and finding replacements has proved impossible. Also, COVID-19 has highlighted the difficulties that we face in fundraising.

Several committee members have been working hard organising events and catering for them for over ten years and we feel that it is now time to take a break. I would like to most sincerely thank everyone who has supported the hospice over the years.

We would love it if someone in the Benenden community felt that they could take on this worthwhile cause, so if you are interested in setting up a new Friends Group, please contact Kathryn Cracknell on kathryn.cracknell@hospiceintheweald.org.uk or 01892 820533.

Jenny Stevens

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Talking Shop

With the festive season approaching, Benenden's has good news. Our Christmas stock has started to arrive, including Christmas cards, wrapping paper, cookie gift boxes and our yummy Goupie chocolates. With the advent of chillier weather, we are serving takeaway baked potatoes and soup in addition to hot snacks, rolls and cakes and, as December approaches, our mince pies.

More good news is a new member of staff. Sheila Wilson was first attracted to the shop when she visited the café and was served by our charming volunteer rector, David Commander. Sheila has had a varied career, including office work, at Biddenden Vineyard, running a children's clothes shop, working in Jempson's and as a taxi driver. We are delighted to welcome her and look forward to seeing her on Fridays and Saturdays. A warm welcome to the new members on the committee: Mo Manning, Peter Nuttall and Peter Traill. Our grateful thanks go to them for their commitment. Keep coming and volunteer if you can. A warm welcome awaits.

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

Neighbourhood Development Plan moves to the next stage

The Regulation 15 consultation resulted in further changes to the draft Benenden Neighbourhood Plan. Input from residents, local business and a team of independent consultants resulted in yet more work to better craft our policies and projects. The work has finally been completed and the Parish Council has formally submitted the draft to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. They plan to undertake a further public consultation on it from 30 October to 11 December. For information on the consultation please view the TWBC website from 30 October.

Paul Tolhurst

Chair, Benenden NDP Steering Committee

Benenden School news

As you may have seen in the local media, and in common with many schools, earlier this term we were dealing with some cases of coronavirus among students and staff. As a boarding school where the girls are all living together, cases were always possible this term. Thankfully, we were able to pick up these cases as soon as the girls developed symptoms using our on-site testing device and this meant we could respond quickly. The affected bubbles were isolated on site, continuing with their lessons and activities remotely, and we are pleased that we have not had any positive tests for more than two and a half weeks at the time of writing.

I hope that this is a useful and reassuring update.

Against this challenging backdrop, it has therefore been especially pleasing to receive the good news that Benenden School officially has the best food of any independent school in the country! Benenden was revealed as the winner in the prestigious Best Food category at the Tatler Schools Awards. The awards are run by the Tatler Schools Guide, which described Benenden's food as "incredible" in its latest review, published in September.

Benenden has long been renowned for its outstanding food - and we are particularly proud to support so many local suppliers.

In more day-to-day matters here at school, the Six Twos have been busy preparing their UCAS applications, while at the other end of the school our Fourths spent a day this week building - and then launching - model rocket cars. In the theatre our A Level and GCSE drama students have been creating the most wonderful devised pieces, while our Upper Fifths have started the exciting process of selecting which A Levels to study.

While we are awaiting - with, it has to be said, a degree of trepidation - further announcements from the government about their plans for next summer's exams, seeing the usual activities of the academic year going ahead is a very welcome return to a semblance of normality during these uncertain times.

Samantha Price, Headmistress



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Benenden Hospital news

New research launched by Benenden Health, which the hospital is a part of, shows employees in the south east are struggling with poor mental wellbeing. As many as 34% of employees in the region took time off work due to poor mental health in 2019, compared to 35% across the UK, with workers absent for between two and five days on average, costing UK businesses an estimated 40 million individual days of work across all regions.

It's concerning to see poor mental wellbeing having such a significant impact on employees and businesses in our region, even before the pandemic hit. There continues to be a stigma around discussing our mental wellbeing and often it's more prevalent in the workplace than elsewhere.

Employers should talk with their teams encouraging them to speak about pressures they may be facing, especially considering the impacts faced by many during lockdown.

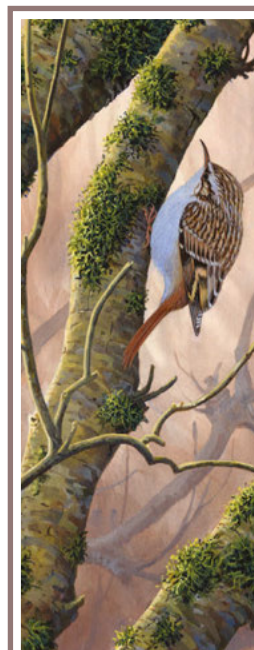
The research also revealed almost half of workers in the south east who took time off due to poor mental wellbeing said they were honest about the reason for their absence: a third of employees saying they instead cited a physical issue and a quarter reported taking annual leave to avoid questions or embarrassment.

To help tackle this, businesses need to prove to their employees they genuinely care about their wellbeing, foster a culture of openness, and provide the necessary internal and external support.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse

Benenden Village Trust news

Following the AGM of the Benenden Village Trust, Olivia Collier, Martin Dickson and Athena Cripps were confirmed as trustees, joining Tom Dawlings, Sally Ann Marks and Richard Stubbings. Jonathan Strong was elected as chairman and Kent Barker vice chair. The BVT is very grateful to retiring trustees, especially founding chairman David Harmsworth.



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Apple Day fun

The Standen Fruit Farm Community Association's traditional Apple Day was a great success on Sunday 27 September. On Apple Day every year the association and its members invite visitors to discover more about the orchard, pick as many apples they wish for free and browse local produce stalls. Despite the blustery, cold weather there was a great turnout.

The orchard comprises over 300 individual plots with apple and cherry trees over 50 acres. The majority of those are managed by volunteers who carry out and arrange for pruning, mowing, maintenance of fences and gates, picking of fruit, and many more tasks. A typical plot is roughly 45 x 15m and become available from time to time. To discover more about the orchard, getting involved or perhaps buying a plot when they become available visit www.sffco.org.uk

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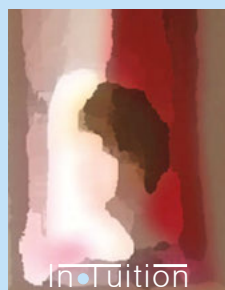
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Primary School news

As I write, we are approaching half term and I feel extremely thankful that, unlike many of my colleagues in the north, we have not had to close any of our bubbles; pupil attendance remains high and staff morale is very positive. Indeed, it has been so lovely to pop into all the classes and see how easily the children have settled back in to school life. It has also been a delight to watch our reception children enjoying their first full weeks in school.

Classrooms are buzzing with activities, [energy and excitement; routines have been re-established and new ways of communicating with each other have been embraced. I can honestly say that I really look forward to our weekly Zoom assemblies and we are very grateful to Revd David Commander and Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie who Zoom a worship service to the children every Monday. These allow us to stay connected to St George's Church even if we are unable to visit it or receive external visitors at this time.

This term we have already held our first 'virtual' parents evening to allow our parents and staff an early opportunity to have a dialogue and meet face to face, albeit remotely. I understand talking to the staff and parents that the meetings ran smoothly and that there were certainly some positives to this new way of working - the parents were able to zoom in from the comfort of their own home or the office and without the need to get a babysitter or bring any children out in the cold and indeed the staff were able to keep to time.

2021 reception intake: Please contact us by telephone or email (details below) to make an appointment to view the school. Tours will be after school at 3.30pm in groups of four people. We ask that only one parent from each household attends, no children, and that a face covering is worn at all times.

Please do look at the website www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk for all the latest news.

Lindsay Roberts, Headteacher 240565
office@benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk

Village Hall news

It's November already and where has this bizarre year gone? The children are a good chunk of their way through the school year, the winter coats are out of storage, and people are ready for bonfire night and Christmas. The hall's bookings calendar has settled back into a regular schedule of classes, having been closed for much of the year, and then reopened to a very quiet August, September and October saw the gradual return of hirers. Despite our beloved pantomime taking a break this year, there is still plenty going on. We have several new classes including Pilates with Sally on Tuesdays, and even Charlotte Hudson's dance classes have a new face, having been taken over recently by Ami of Tenterden Dance Academy.

We have a full range of yoga on offer as Charlie Hartley has extended her hours to include a Monday class as well as her existing Friday one, Ruth is back with her power yoga sessions and Hayley is teaching the kids.

Unfortunately, due to the introduction of the 'Rule of Six' we can't currently offer parties, which means that we have to temporarily say goodbye to Nerf guns and bouncy castles, but we very much look forward to welcoming them back when we're able.

We do still have some availability, so if you are thinking about starting up a new class, or hoping to find a venue because another has closed down, do feel free to reach out, and we'll see what we can do.

If you're interested in joining one of the existing sessions, contact Holly at the email below, and keep an eye on our website and social media, which are having a bit of a facelift.
Holly Clayson 07419 989830
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Benenden Action Team news

It's no surprise that many of us are currently facing very tough times in terms of employment issues and unforeseen changes of circumstances which can have a huge impact on household income. To help ease the pressure a little for individuals and families, we have been looking into setting up a foodbank in the village. As a result, we discovered that we are extremely fortunate to be able to benefit from the Nourish Community Foodbank home delivery service. Nourish is a registered charity, based in Tunbridge Wells that provides short-term emergency provisions, support and advice.

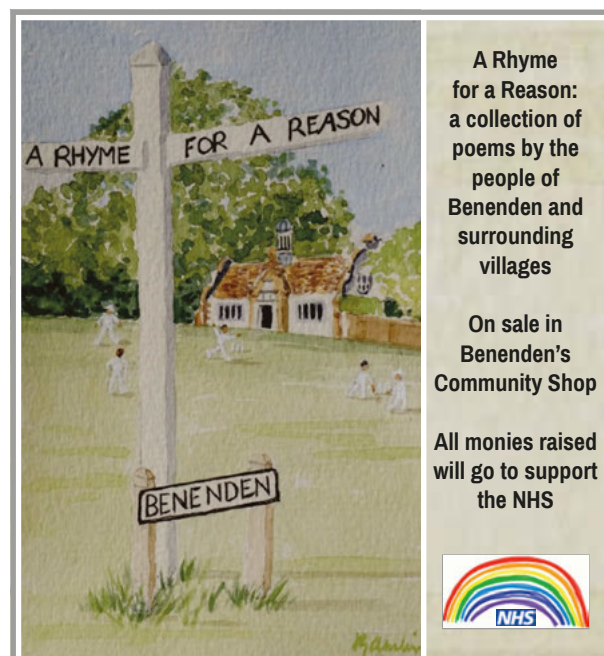
As well as food, the Nourish team also help advise on how to get longer term support and help people acquire skills including cooking, budgeting and dietary skills as well as employment and training advice.

To qualify for help, you must be referred to Nourish by a professional care organisation such as your GP, care provider, local church, school, social services, housing association or Citizen's Advice Bureau. They will then refer you - confidentially - to Nourish and they will be in touch.

Please look at the following www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk or call 01892 548892 for details on how to apply. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or your local BAT co-ordinator if you need any assistance.

Guy Hagan, BAT co-ordinator

07515 275150 guy@rawfellconstruction.co.uk
www.benendenaction.co.uk



Iden Green and Benenden WI

Many members have spent time in the garden recently and bottled vegetable and fruit, jams and chutneys are resplendent on our shelves waiting for our raffles and coffee mornings to re-start. Also, many of us who enjoy exchanging plants and cuttings, as well as news and views, are looking forward to our annual plant and produce stall in the spring. All speakers are booked for next year and we are hoping that it won't be too long before we are able to meet again.

Our national federation has produced the following vision statement: 1. Be bold and inspiring. 2. Grow and be relevant. 3. Always be inclusive. 4. Be flexible. Although these aspirations are difficult to put in place now, we hope to be able to meet somewhere safe in the New Year and explore them further. To this end, our president is proposing to invite six members of our committee to meet and discuss the way forward as far as possible. She will then contact everyone by email or phone to keep us in the picture.

Meanwhile, West Kent Federation are hoping to produce a hard copy of West Kent WI news for December and we will arrange a central venue for collection. As always, our main aim is to make sure our members remain cared for and safe.

Jackie Liffen 752232 WI@daisystar.co.uk

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Hot Topic



Looking for loo solutions

Public toilet provision in the village is hardly the most glamorous of subjects, but doubtless one of importance to those in need! Possibly Benenden has a surfeit of facilities - a detached building next to the village hall with five separate stalls and a sizeable urinal. But it isn't cheap - this year's Parish Council budget earmarked £6,050 for the rates, water charges, electricity and cleaning.

Until 2008 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council owned and maintained the toilets, but to save money they decided to close them unless the Parish Council took them over - which they did the following year.

The land they're on was owned by the Harmsworth Memorial Trust - now the Benenden Village Trust (BVT). Following discussions with the Parish Council, the BVT is proposing a new toilet solution which would involve relocating them inside the north-west corner of the village hall. The entrance would be via the current fire

door, just a few metres from the existing block. A new corridor and fire door would be created for the hall.

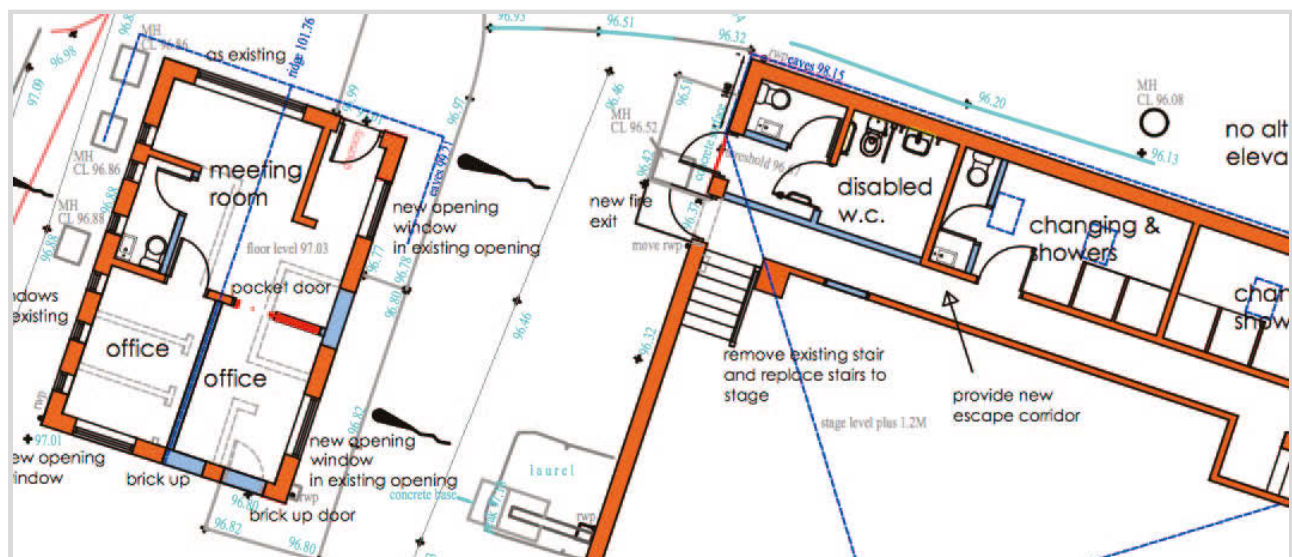
This would free up the current toilet building to become a new community room, with a double office for the parish council clerk and the BVT manager and have space for small meetings or interviews. It would also house the village archive.

Recently a selection of historic books and documents belonging to the village was moved from a metal cupboard hidden away under the eaves of the village hall. This community room would house this archive, making it more accessible and provide space for people to study it.

The BVT is keen to consult on the proposed replacement toilets in the village hall. Clearly facilities for people with disabilities are required, but do we really need more than one unisex cubicle overall? There is just a possibility that a second WC cubicle could be squeezed in. How do people feel about segregated cubicles? Would they offend advocates of gender neutrality or, conversely, upset those who want safe women-only spaces?

The scheme will involve altering slightly one set of steps down from the stage and reducing the size of the changing rooms by a small amount. Does anyone foresee any problems here?

You are welcome to look at the full plans and make any comments by contacting the BVT manager: bvttrust@gmail.com
Kent Barker, Benenden Village Trust



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Can You Help?



Where was this photo taken?

Anthony Robards asks for your help in tracking down some of his ancestors

I am researching my family history and I am hoping to find any present-day relatives in Benenden and Iden Green who may be able to help me fill the gaps in a fascinating jigsaw puzzle.

This photograph shows the descendants of my ancestor William Week(e)s (1812), who married Kitty Johnson. Their daughter, Mary Ann Weeks, was baptised in Benenden on 21 Dec 1834. She had an illegitimate daughter, Sarah Ann, on 21 Aug 1852. No father is given on the birth certificate but James Hatcher is cited as father on her baptismal record. Mary Ann then married John Rose in Benenden on 29 November 1856.

He is the pivotal figure in this story. He was also probably illegitimate. He uses various names: John Rose (his mother's maiden name), then John Butler (his mother married John Butler in 1832), and on Sarah Ann's marriage certificate he is named John Weeks.

What an enormous amount of information there is in this photo of 20 people (and a cat) spanning four generations, if only we could

extract it. What was the occasion? The photo is circa 1897, which fits well with the ages of the people in the picture and the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, but where was it taken? At the time of the 1891 census, John and Mary Ann lived near Scullsgate, then were at Babb's Farm in 1901. Benjamin Goldsmith was living in Hinksden Road in 1891, then Scullsgate by 1901.

Assuming this photograph was taken in 1897, here are some of the suggestions that have already been made to me as to the identities, along with their probable ages:

- 1 John Rose (65)
- 2 Mary Ann Rose (née Weeks) (63)
- 3 George Charles Lockyer (26)
- 4 Helen Jane Lockyer (née Goldsmith) (22)
- 5 Eva Jane Lockyer (1)
- 6 Benjamin Goldsmith (44)
- 7 Sarah Ann Goldsmith (née Weeks) (45)
- 8 Eva Goldsmith (17)?
- 9 Sister of George Charles Lockyer? Emily (21) or Minnie Elizabeth (19)

If you are a descendant of any of these and can add any more details, then please email me:

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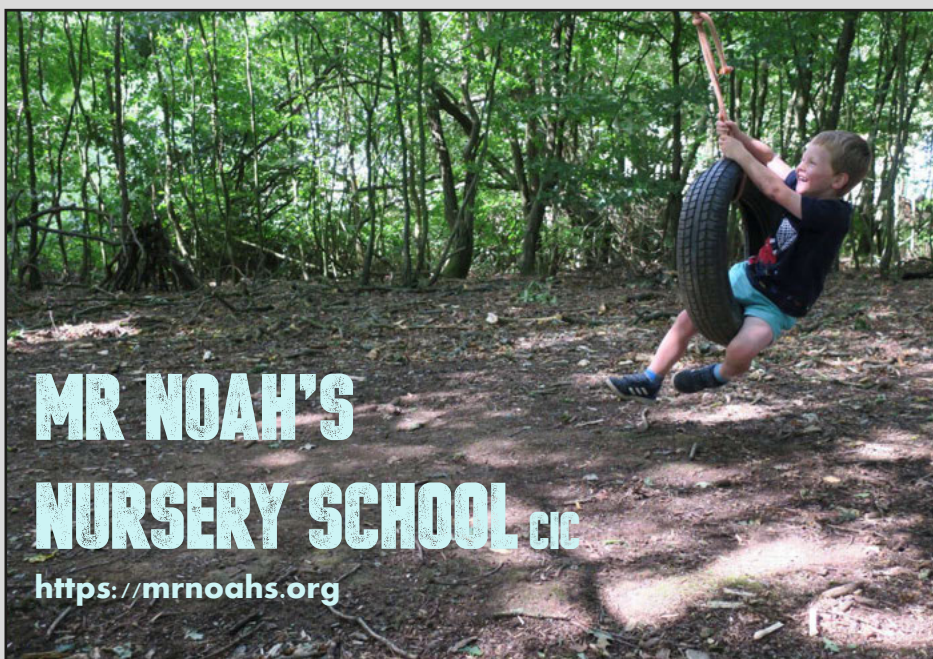
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Benenden History



Betty Stannard: By force and impact

Ruth Clark celebrates the short career of Leading Aircraftwoman Betty Stannard, who is buried at the village church

I have often wanted to know more about the life of Betty Stannard, whose grave is in St George's churchyard and whose name is on our war memorial. All we know from the inscription is that she was a WAAF who died 'serving her country' on 18 May 1943, aged just 21.

In the village, I personally know of at least five young people currently serving in the Army, Navy and RAF and, as Remembrance Sunday on 8 November and Remembrance Day on 11 November approach, I wanted to

remember the contribution and sacrifice this particular young woman made 77 years ago during World War II.

Betty was the older sister of Ruth Tolhurst (obituary September 2020) and the daughter of Albert and Eleanor Stannard. She grew up in the village and I assume she went into the WAAF as soon as she could, aged 18, in 1940, and joined RAF Balloon Command, which operated the UK's barrage balloons during WWII.

Balloon Command was established in 1938 to protect cities and key targets such as industrial areas, ports and harbours, and the balloons - 66 feet long and 30 feet high, filled with 20,000 cubic feet of hydrogen and tethered to the ground or a truck by steel cables - were grouped into squadrons like fighter aircraft. The main objective was to prevent low flights and pinpoint bombing by the Luftwaffe,



who were forced to fly higher and into the range of anti-aircraft guns, which struggled to attack aircraft flying at low altitude and high speed.

At first only men served in Balloon Command, but in 1940 it was decided to train members of the WAAF, to relieve more men for active duty, and by the end of 1942, 10,000 men had been replaced by some 15,700 female balloon operators.

After training, Betty was posted to Cardiff along with other members of the 953 Balloon Squadron. Cardiff had eight balloon sites across the city and Betty and her team managed one close to Roath Power Station. It was there that the house they were living in took a direct hit from a German bomb at 3am on Tuesday 18 May 1943. Four were killed and several injured and were the first war casualties sustained by the squadron. Betty's coffin returned to Benenden two days later accompanied by a WAAF Officer and NCO.

Vi Et Ictu (By Force and Impact) was RAF Balloon Command's motto. It neatly encapsulates the task that the men and woman managing the thousands of barrage balloons around the country faced until Balloon Command was disbanded in February 1945.

Thank you, Betty.





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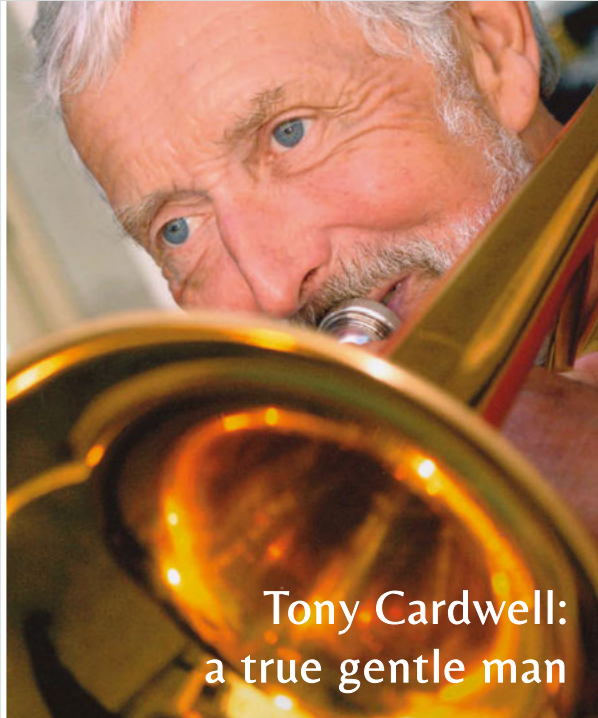
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Spotlight



**Tony Cardwell:
a true gentle man**

Tony certainly lived life to the full, first pursuing a (brief) career in writing before switching to teaching and then training as a professional thatcher. He spent the last 30 years of his life in Benenden and died age 81, earlier this year, after a long illness.

His career decisions had been very much about what he did not want to do. Whilst studying philosophy at Bristol University he played his beloved trombone - New Orleans jazz was his passion - and was good enough to be approached by Acker Bilk to join his band. Instead, fancying life as a script writer, Tony headed for a croft in Scotland with no electricity. Soon realising that he was not going to make it in the literary world, he turned to teaching and moved to Bethany School in 1963 as an English master, becoming deeply involved in athletics, rugby, cricket and clay pigeon shooting. He stayed for 20 years, during which time he also edited the school newsletter and wrote the History of Bethany.

In a tribute to Tony, fellow teacher Paul Holmes described his presence: "Tall, bearded and urbane with a quiet air of authority, he was remembered by many pupils for his enormous brown brogues, corduroy trousers, woolly jumper, sports jacket, slight stooped shoulders with sweeping, slightly chalky, black gown and an air of perpetual mild amusement." Interviewed sometime later by Giles Coren for an article in *The Times*, he said of that time: "It was a terrific life and I hope I did it justice".

In his late 40s, realising that he was superbly, but perhaps complacently happy at Bethany, Tony underwent a complete life change and became a thatcher in 1983. He had been living in a thatched house at the time and, realising the roof needed some attention, took a six-week training course with the Thatching Advisory Service, which triggered his new career, thatching houses all over Kent - only a few of which later burned down!

Tony still found time to pursue his lifelong love of local archaeology. In his youth he explored for the grave of Napoleon's horse Jaffa, which he rode at the Battle of Waterloo and is said to be buried at Glassenbury. His later fascination for Roman and medieval history culminated in his book *Limen*, which told local history through the flow of the River Rother (*Limen* was the river's Roman name).

Tony and his partner, then wife, Maggy had been together for 31 years before his death. They married just three years ago and celebrated with coffee and cake in the village café. Maggy says: "Tony loved living here and wanted nothing more than his home, friends, beloved view, and jazz. These all sustained and comforted him during his long illness."





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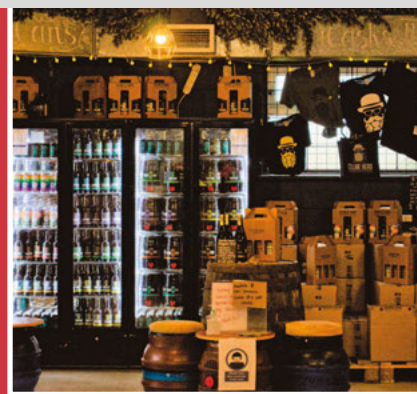


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Food and Drink



Drinking to the health of British beer

Peter Thomas visits a local microbrewery at the centre of a revolution

There was a time when I was evangelical about good beer. Every time one of the big national breweries bought up one of the local minnows then unflinchingly closed it down, I'd rant and rail at the injustice of it all.

But then a funny thing happened: one of my favourite independents, Fuller's of Chiswick, sold its Griffin Brewery, established in 1816, to Japanese giant Asahi last year, with all the horrible possibilities that entailed - and I realised I really didn't care.

It wasn't that I didn't care about beer anymore, but I wasn't bothered about the tradition and the bricks and mortar, because there are so many micro-breweries springing up all over the country that finding top-notch local ales is easier now than it's ever been. Which is how I found myself at Cellar Head in Flimwell.

As with so many of these vibrant new concerns, this one occupies a site that might best be described as rustic light industrial, a stone's throw from the A21 at Pillory Corner. What it lacks in grandeur, however, it makes up for in passion, expertise and a sense of adventure.

Cellar Head was set up in Uckfield in 2017 by Chris McKenzie, a relocated Aberdonian who spent a globetrotting 27-year career in the petrochemicals industry before realising he wanted a fresh challenge. He and his wife Julia (marketing and comms) convinced friends and family that their "madcap gamble wasn't quite so madcap", funding was secured and soon they couldn't make enough beer to satisfy demand.

"Our point of difference was that we were using all English hops and making unfiltered beer," explains Chris, and publicans lapped it up, to the extent that a move to the current ten-barrel plant, capable of producing 16,000 pints a week, became a necessity.

Quite remarkably, the inspiration for the project came from the former beer wasteland of North America, now the epicentre of a craft revolution. So, as well as the core range of traditional British styles using all-British ingredients - some as local as hops from Scotney Castle - there's a raft of offbeat beers, bringing in the youth market to sup alongside the old school.

As we sit in the tap room - open 5pm to 8pm on Fridays, noon until 8pm on Saturdays - head brewer Joe Dann oversees a growing array of casks and bottles, many of which stemmed from a trip to Canada that inspired his own home-brew revolution in the garden shed.

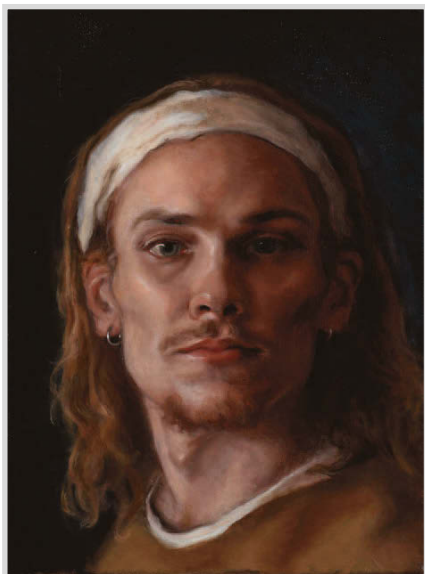
"All the craft ideas and a lot of the funky hops come from across the Atlantic," he enthuses over a pint of his light yet gloriously full-flavoured Session Pale Ale (although his favourite is Amitola, an American pale ale, in a can!), "so there's a divide between our core and craft beers, but the common ground is that I like to keep it clean and simple and let the hops come through."





Oliver's road to Florence has wound its way via Saint Ronan's School, to Eastbourne College, followed by a year studying art at Canterbury before completing a degree in art history at Manchester University and heading at last to Italy. His interest in Renaissance art took root at university and, during his summer breaks, he would visit Florence to paint. It was after interviewing painter Charles H Cecil for his degree thesis that Oliver decided to become a student at his atelier in Florence, focussing on life-size portraiture.

The atelier tradition stems from Renaissance Italy, in which a master painter opens his studio to a select group of dedicated students and, alongside other visiting teachers, trains them to excel as artists. For the last three years, Oliver has been training at the studio alongside 20 other students from all over the world. They are taught the sight-size method where the canvas and the subject are placed side-by-side. The artist views them at a distance so there is a one-to-one visual comparison and proportions can be judged correctly. The environment is important too. Ideally, a north facing studio with natural light and enough room to stand back. Leonardo da Vinci believed the best distance to view a subject was three times its greatest



Oliver Raw: A young man building on the legacy of old masters

Following in the footsteps of artists Titian, Velázquez, Van Dyck and Sargent is Benenden's own Oliver Raw. While he grew up in the village, today 25-year-old Oliver is studying the

works of old Renaissance and Baroque masters and painting beautiful portraits in Florence using traditional materials and techniques handed down from master to pupil over the centuries. I caught up with Oliver when he came home during the summer to talk about his beautiful landscapes and portraits and discover what drives and inspires him.





length. This method has been used by masters since the 17th century and the technique has been handed down over the centuries from master to pupil in private ateliers.

Oliver did his best to explain sight-size, or painting at the size of life, to me: "It's a philosophy of seeing. I strive to avoid focussing on rendering parts of the face in great detail but instead take in the whole subject at once and look at the masses of tone or shadow and how the light flows down the subject. It's a visual language that you have to learn and, on average, it takes about three to six years to train your eye."

It takes about 30 hours to paint a portrait spread over a couple of weeks, although a broad impression can be made in half the time. "It's a very intense and focussed process and at times incredibly hard on the mind and body. But it's exhilarating too. You become so engrossed in someone's face you pick up their energies - even in silence."

Oliver has studied the methods and technical practices of the Renaissance masters in detail - "you learn so much from studying the paintings, techniques and writings of the old masters; it's a long lineage and each successive generation has learned from, and built on, the skills of their predecessors" - which is why he mixes his own

paints by grinding traditional pigments and preparing the carrier medium. In this way he achieves the exact tones that replicate those of past masters. He prepares his medium in the traditional way, using linseed oil, naturally thickened in the sun with a touch of Canadian balsam sap and Greek pine nut mastic.

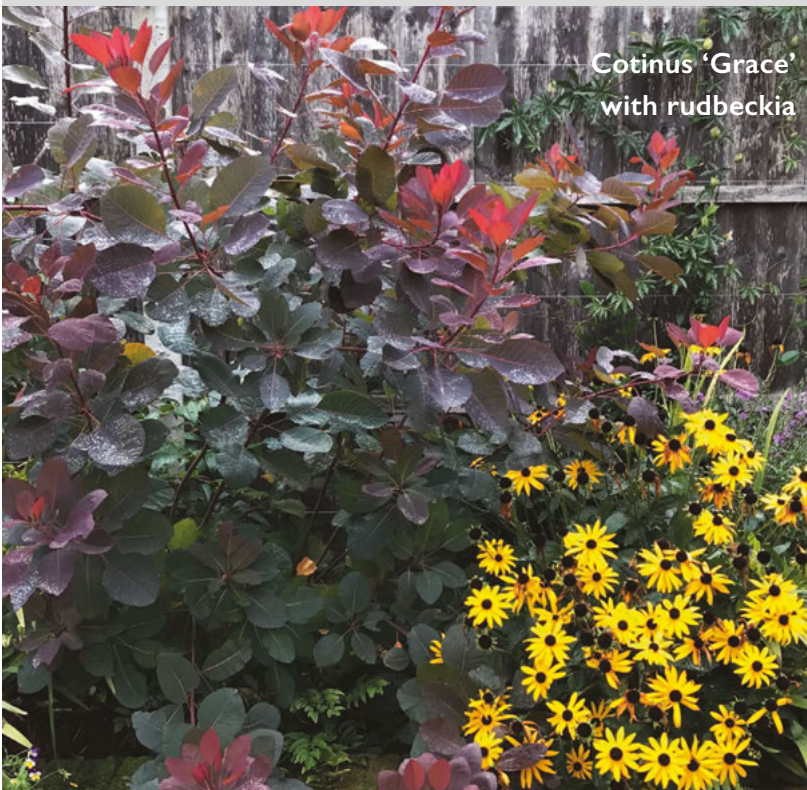
When asked to pick his favourite paintings, Oliver couldn't pick from the many, but highlighted a couple he saw recently in Venice: Tintoretto's Last Judgement and Titian's Pieta. "These are extremely profound paintings and the techniques used to paint them were incredible. I can spend hours studying them and learning from them."

It's refreshing to talk to someone who is so passionate about their craft and who has spent so much time learning from his predecessors. "You have to study the works of the masters to learn how they achieved their wonderful results. You need to understand their techniques in order to build on them and to be able develop your own style. It's a technique handed down over the generations," he explains. "I have been lucky to have shared in this lineage with Charles Cecil and in turn I want to pass it on to the next one day."

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 Ruth Clark



In Your Garden



Cotinus 'Grace'
with rudbeckia

carefully plotted plants. It billows about in the wind, gets covered in mud and is difficult to transpose. Far easier to peer down at a label and dwell on the subject of 'what to do' there and then.

My other lesson learnt is to make worthy garden notes, preferably with a photograph alongside. One success has been a pairing of cotinus with rudbeckia - I advised a garden owner to coppice his Cotinus 'Grace' last winter and underplant with rudbeckia in the spring. This has been a successful ongoing display since July; in fact, the cotinus just gets better and better, turning a really fabulous colour as autumn gathers pace.

However, my not-so-proud-moment has been a sowing of pink cosmos. Having sown them at the correct time, but not potted them on until they were far too leggy and drawn (I was too busy concentrating on the vegetable growing), I then proceeded to plant them out at the base of a south-facing wall at the entrance of my driveway. A very visible spot to have badly performing plants!

To give them their due, and I put this down to cosmos being the most accommodating of plants, they are flowering a beautiful pink and I do delight in seeing them as I arrive home each afternoon - but I have never had to implement such measures to keep plants alive. Constant watering, mulching, more watering, black fly invasions, more watering, mildew - it's a wonder they're still alive. Now I have to decide what to plant in their place for next year's display ...

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Planning and colour for next year

As my gardening experience grows with each year, it never ceases to amaze me how there is an infinite amount to learn about plants - and border planning is also in the same vein. In the past, I have struggled with mapping out plants in a border on paper. Intending to use this as a guide for tweaking my displays for the following year, I have found it is near impossible to list everything accurately, especially if the border is well-stocked and a few years into its establishment. The other element I have struggled with is actually making notes of how new plants have performed. Some have been a roaring success, others a constant struggle.

This month I picked up a very useful tip from a client who had been watching online 'Zoom' lectures by Fergus Garrett of Great Dixter. If you have borders brimming with perennials and you wish to cut them back in the autumn, then the team at Dixter get out their labels and pens and mark each spot where the plant has been cut back. This seems such a simple task to do, and in practice it works a treat.

It is so much easier than marching out into your garden with an A3 piece of paper full of



Pink cosmos



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Above: The natural world gives back as we take care: Apple Day bounty at Standen Fruit Farm; David Collard continues maintainance work in the churchyard; the lychgate dressed for Harvest Festival; Siobhan Massey with new puppy Finn
 Front cover: Sharing the goodness of autumnn: Balmoral Cottage open for the National Garden Scheme. Photograph: Janet Illman