



Benenden
Magazine
May 2021

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Editorial



How wonderful to see the village gradually unfurling as restrictions ease. More than ever, I really appreciate the simple pleasure of being able to sit outside the café or in the beer garden with a family or a few friends, despite the chill of recent weeks. After 16 weeks of virtual boot camp, the ability to exercise (and chat) 'in real life' on the Glebe Field was exhilarating. But I take my woolly hat off to Mary Cruse, who likes nothing better than swimming in cold, 'wild' water and extols the benefits to mind and body it brings (page 30). Not sure I'm that intrepid but I like a challenge and may start practising under a cold shower.

Added to this excitement is our hotly contested local election on 6 May, which gives you the chance to have your say on how Kent County Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are run, and after which I may indeed need a long cold shower! This year we have seven candidates to choose from at County level: Gillian Douglass (Liberal Democrat); James Groome (Labour); Nancy Warne (Tunbridge Wells Alliance); Seán Holden (Conservative); John Hurst (Green); Venetia Carpenter (independent) and Toby Stripp (Reform). There are six in the Borough poll: Tom Gardner (Liberal Democrat); James Groome (Labour); Lee Hatcher (Tunbridge Wells Alliance); Seán Holden (Conservative); John Hurst (Green); and Toby Stripp (Reform).

Most, but not all, have declared if they are supporting, or not, our Neighbourhood Development Plan. For are Conservative, Labour and TW Alliance; the Green Party is not in favour (so far) and the rest are yet to comment as far as I can see. It's certainly not easy to discover the stance of each, despite lots of hunting online. Which brings me to my pet hate: the dire quality of the material that drops on my doorstep from candidates - that's if they bother to lobby me at all (as I write, only one out of seven has). It's not hard to produce a clear leaflet with sharp text. Must do better. That's my rant over.

Ruth Clark, Co-Editor

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Village Calendar

May

Monday 10	Christian Aid Week starts	p.9
Sunday 12	National Open Garden Scheme, Balmoral Cottage, Benenden, 12noon-5pm	p.9
Tuesday 18	Balmoral Cottage, Open Garden for St Michael's Hospice, 10.30-4pm	
Monday 17	Parish Council Meeting, 7pm - details tbc	
Monday 24	Parochial Church Council Meeting, St George's Church, 7.30pm	p.9

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



To begin, I am sure everyone will join the Parish Council in expressing our deepest sadness at the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and our enormous gratitude for his extraordinary lifetime of public service.

To bring you up to speed with our activities around the village, I expect you will have noticed that our trusty Speedwatch team is up and running again - we are currently working with KCC Highways on our Highways Improvement Plan, and hopefully over the next few weeks you will notice some changes being implemented to encourage drivers to adhere to the speed restrictions.

Unfortunately our village sign located on The Green came away from its awning during a high wind in early March. The sign was erected back in 2000 to celebrate the Millennium, so it has been subject to many a storm since then. Thankfully the painting remains intact and in reasonable condition, but the oak surround needs repairing, and the anchoring post will probably need replacing. We will do our best to get this work carried out as soon as possible, and have the sign back in its rightful place. We are also currently getting quotations for the repair work and restoration required to our two listed memorial wells in the village.

Keep Britain Tidy's advice has been that no organised litter picking events should take place whilst in lockdown. However, now restrictions are easing it is hoped that the Great British Spring Clean will take place between 28 May and 13 June, and the Parish Council will aim to organise an event at this time.

On a more unsavoury note, due to inappropriate behaviour occurring in the public toilets by the village hall, we have had no option but to close the men's toilets until further notice. We will let you know when these will be reopened in due course.

To finish on a positive note, it's so great to see our pubs and café serving again in the sunshine - normality on the horizon at last.

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 17 May 2021,
7pm - details tbc

Church Calendar

St George's Church

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

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
It will remain accessible for the whole week.

Sunday 2 May	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion	
Sunday 9 May	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	
Thursday 13 May			7.30pm Ascension Day Service
Sunday 16 May	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion	
Sunday 23 May	8am Communion	10am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	
Sunday 30 May	8am Communion at St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am Communion	

Mission Church, Sandhurst

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

Iden Green Congregational Church

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

Sunday Services 10am Morning Worship 5.30pm Evening Worship on Zoom

For those shielding the 10am Morning Worship service is also broadcast on our YouTube channel:
search for 'Iden Green Congregational Church'.

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

Fr Barry Grant 713364 www.sttheodore-cranbrook.org

Masses 9am Sundays 7.30pm Holy Days

From the Parish Registers

Funeral 9 April Sarah Suewing Funeral and burial

Rector's Letter



The joy of worship, together

The period of Easter is not just Easter Sunday. It is not just an early morning sunrise service. It is not just Easter eggs, Easter bunnies, and chocolate. It is a period in the church year that continues for another six weeks and includes the Ascension - when we remember Jesus returning to his father. At the end of the Easter period - nine days after the Ascension - we mark the gift of the Holy Spirit to all of us, as we celebrate Pentecost. So while we are still in the Easter period it is quite appropriate to continue to proclaim: "Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

This is what we gathered together for on Easter Sunday. But joy of joys, we actually gathered together, in our churches, at the same time, face-to-face - public worship together for the first time in 12 weeks. And what joy it was. We celebrated collectively three times on Easter Sunday: a sunrise service, although the cloud did not cooperate - we were not rewarded with a glimpse of the sun this year - but we were singing as one outdoors.

Then we gathered again for Communion services in both parish churches. I cannot begin to tell you how good it was to be worshipping with real people in real time once again, rather than speaking to a camera on a smartphone. The joy of being able to preach and get immediate feedback. The power of being able to share Communion. The whole experience was incredibly powerful as we proclaimed together: "Alleluia. Christ is risen!"

At present we are living in this period where some restrictions are easing, some are not. We can enjoy the new freedoms that we have, but still need to be cautious - things are not 'back to normal' yet. If we all remain cautious, if we show some patience, then one day, one wonderful day, things will again feel normal. If we are not cautious then the worry is further lockdowns may result. So let's rejoice in what we can now do, but not forget this is still serious.

For the month of May, and probably for all of June (hopefully Government restrictions will be lifted completely on 21 June) we plan to be open for worship every Sunday. (Not every church is doing so; some opened for Easter Sunday and have closed again.) Our service pattern will continue with the reduced format for the time being:

1st Sunday of the month	8am St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am St George's
2nd Sunday of the month	8am St George's	10am St Nicholas, Sandhurst
3rd Sunday of the month	8am St Nicholas, Sandhurst	10am St George's
4th Sunday of the month	8am St George's	10am St Nicholas, Sandhurst

I invite you to come and praise and worship God - in church, at the same time, together. It is a wonderful thing to be able to do. Let us never again take it for granted.

Revd David Commander, Rector



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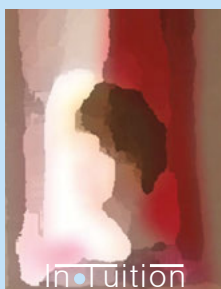
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Primary Subjects
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Helen Grant

MP for Maidstone and the Weald

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If there is an issue of concern to you, where
you believe I can assist, or if you would like
to arrange a meeting with me, please email
me at helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk
or telephone 020 7219 7107.

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London SW1A 0AA

Talking Point



All in good time

It would seem that talking about time and measuring time has never been more prevalent than when associated with this pandemic. A year since the first lockdown; 12 weeks between jabs; so many people on ventilators in seven days; deaths in 24 hours; grandparents haven't seen grandchildren for months; all adults should have been vaccinated by the middle of July, and so it goes on. But time has always been an elusive challenge.

Time flashes by or time drags. I remember the fun I had as a child in a rowing boat on the lake in our local park but it seemed no time at all before the loudhailer was calling 'come in number nine'. Then again two minutes seems a long time when the electric toothbrush is still going and one wants to get on and out. In other circumstances a designated amount of time seems to stretch when one is prevented from doing something: "not until you are 18", or conversely when one has to undertake a task one doesn't wish to do, "you need to spend at least an hour working in the garden". Despite the existence of a variety of timing devices there is always the tussle between measurement and perception. How to answer the cry from behind, "are we nearly there yet?" - "half an hour" or "soon"?

There are of course timetables which endeavour to give some structure to our lives and expectations. There are also timeframes and time-driven 'road maps'. However, that doesn't stop us waiting, and mentally measuring time in varied degrees of anxiety or anticipation, for the arrival of the bus, a child to come home, results, visitors, a wedding, a birth, a death or the end of lockdown.

There is one aspect of the time conundrum which is almost entirely subjective, and that is the definition of 'wasting time'. We have all done it but equally we each have opinions as to whether other people have been wasting their time or more significantly - our time. There is the urgent desire in some to use every waking hour to achieve recognisable goals, whilst others have a significantly more relaxed attitude to the time at their disposal.

As a primary school teacher I have had to teach both aspects of time: 'time of day' and the 'measurement of time'. I have always been surprised how many children have difficulty with combining the two - "what time is it 20 minutes before kick off at 2.15pm?" It is generally much easier to give pointers such as: "at break, when you have finished your homework, before bedtime, at the end of term". Although it must be said they were very good at knowing when their favourite programme was on TV.

Finally, time can be both an inflexible line in the sand and an elastic concept depending on circumstance. However, surely we can all agree that one of the most abused terms in relation to time has to be: "I won't be long!"

Sue Fisher

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Bells rung in respect

Upon receiving the sad news of the passing of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the tenor bell of St George's was tolled slowly 99 times in respect, with the flag at half-mast, at 1.45pm on Friday 9 April.

Rod Lebon

Parochial Church Council

Monday 24 May, St George's Church, 7.30pm

The church's annual Parochial Church Council Meeting is on Monday 24 May in St George's Church at 7.30pm. Before then nominations are needed for new PCC members. There are four vacancies for a three-year term and one vacancy for a one-year term. There are also elections for two churchwardens and one Deanery Synod Representative for two years. I have left a folder at the back of St George's Church which gives more details and nomination forms but feel free to ask church officers about this if you are interested.

Julia Collard, PCC Secretary
julia.collard@btinternet.com

Balmoral Cottage garden open day

As part of the National Open Garden Scheme, Charlotte and Donald Molesworth's beautiful garden will be open to visit from 12noon-5pm on 12 May. Together they created the garden over 37 years ago and today its romantic and extensive topiary form the backbone for rich mixed borders. The garden is organically managed with particular attention given to the needs of nesting birds and small mammals.

Visit www.ngs.org.uk/view-garden/34649 to purchase tickets in advance. Or entry on the gate is £6 (adults) and £2.50 (children).

You can find Balmoral Cottage north of the village green, a few hundred yards down the track west of St George's Church.



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

Instead we have set up an online JustGiving page.

Our target is to raise £3,000 and all donations will go directly to Christian Aid.

To donate please go to:
www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cawbig

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

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid Week is 10-16 May and our fundraising focus this year is helping the many communities around the world who are suffering great hardship due to the climate crisis. Droughts are now more frequent and more intense and millions are struggling to get enough food and water.

Your donation could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live.

Our village JustGiving page makes donating quick and simple. To access the site visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cawbig or simply scan this QR code. It's very secure and your money goes directly to Christian Aid. With your generous and wonderful support we hope to raise £3,000 this year. Thank you all.



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Benenden Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall has not been open since March 2020 due to Covid restrictions, but we hope to be able to open the premises soon after a thorough clean and complete sanitise. Applications to rent the hall should still be sent to Jackie Liffen (MemHall@daisystar.co.uk). We hope to be able to open the hall from 21 June for normal use but may be able to open for small groups from 17 May. In the meantime, we are looking for a cleaner to work one hour on Monday evening, and possibly Wednesday and Friday evenings, plus ad hoc work as it arises. This is a paid position.

For further details please contact:

David Collard 241944

Benenden Speedwatch

Hopefully, you have noticed that the Benenden Speedwatch group has restarted sessions after a year's absence due to Covid. Many have commented, during our absence, about the noticeable increase in vehicle speed through the village and around the area, and in our first week of four one hour sessions we have reported 66 offenders. The worrying fact was that almost 50% of the offenders were travelling at 40mph and above in the 30mph limits, so there is a clear need to try and reduce this problem.

It was noticeable pre Covid that our presence was reducing vehicle speed, so it is our desire to continue this work. However, this cannot be achieved unless we have a significant team of volunteers. Our original team has reduced to only five which is not enough to be effective. So this is a plea for others to join the team in order to spread the load and increase the effectiveness. Volunteers have to be approved by Kent Police following some basic training and you will be working with experienced operatives.

Please message me if you are interested in joining the team via Nextdoor and Facebook or email me.

Ken Anderson ken.anderson4@btinternet.com

Almshouse site consent

Although Tunbridge Wells Borough Council had granted planning consent, for the Hybrid Application for 12 Almshouses and access roads in detail, and 13 affordable houses in outline, on 9 September 2020, absolute consent was not authorised until a Section 106 agreement had been signed off by Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and all almshouse trustees on 22 March 2021.

The 53-page agreement was then formalised. This incorporates index linked payments totalling £125,000 towards the relocation of three medical practices in Cranbrook, local library facilities, local primary schools, as well as contributions to transport and sustainable bus services. The planning consent also required a footpath extension from Rothermere Close on almshouse development land inside the hedge for the full extent of the frontage with Walkhurst Road.

All this means that the Benenden Almshouses Trust is cleared to prepare a detailed scheme for the construction of 12 almshouses, any additional fund raising and a cooperative plan for 13 affordable houses with a chosen developer, who will be selected in due course.

Robin Dalton Holmes and John Burbage,
Almshouse Trustees

Save the date

Saturday 17 July from 3pm, Iden Green Pavilion Jazz & Blues party with BBQ, beer and Pimm's tent and more. Tickets £7 at the gate, children under 12 go free. Bring a rug and a picnic. All proceeds go to charities.

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See above for contact information
and feel free to contact for
more details, quotes and prices.

Benenden Village Trust

Construction of Iden Green's new playground is due to start on Wednesday 5 May and should be finished before the end of the month. Building can begin thanks to the success of the playground fundraising appeal, which has raised £49,105 - a wonderful achievement.

Huge thanks are due to all who donated so generously, and everyone involved in the campaign. Any money remaining after completion of the project will be put in a fund dedicated to the upkeep of the Iden Green and Benenden playgrounds.

Plans are under way for an official opening ceremony in early June, provided there are no unexpected building delays. Further details will be announced in June's magazine and on the website of the Benenden Village Trust, which is responsible for the Iden Green and Benenden playgrounds (www.benendenvillagetrust.org).

Unfortunately, the car park used by members of the Iden Green Tennis Club will have to be closed for the duration of construction, and for some days before it starts. This is for security reasons and so it can be used to store equipment and plant, and for the builders to park.

However, an alternative arrangement for the parking of players' cars during this period has been agreed with the Iden Green Pavilion Trust. Because of its limited space, the pavilion's own car park will remain for the exclusive use of its hirers. But the Trust has kindly agreed to provide access for vehicles through its car park to the recreation ground, via a drop-post near the pavilion car park entrance which is normally locked. Anyone using the field should be aware that the Trust will be relocking the post overnight.

Many thanks to the Trust for this support, and thanks as well to the tennis club for allowing the use of its outside tap to provide water for construction.

Detailed plans for the playground equipment were drawn up by the Friends of

Iden Green Playground, village volunteers who also played an important role in the fundraising appeal. Very special thanks to them.

If you have questions about the construction process, in the first instance please contact Julie Lewis (julielewis@live.co.uk), who heads the FIGP. Alternatively, Caroline Levett, the BVT manager (bvttrust@gmail.com), may be able to help.

Martin Dickson, Benenden Village Trust

Planning Matters

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

19 April 2021

- 20/03322/FULL 4 Medway Cottages, Woodcock Lane. Side and rear part single part two storey extension; addition of 4 no. rooflights; changes to fenestration.
- 21/00337/FULL Yew Tree Farm, Mill Street Change in use of land for the out of season retention of a single mobile home for seasonal workers accommodation.
- 21/00533/FULL Ramsden Farm House, Dingleton. Construction of greenhouse.
- 20/03267/FULL Cleveland Farm, Green Lane. Conversion of The Granary to form two residential units; Demolition of all other buildings on site and the erection of four new residential dwellings with associated landscaping.
- 21/00762/FULL Tree Cottage, Halden Lane. Change of use from Agricultural (sheep farming) to Amenity Garden.
- 21/00809/FULL 6 Vere Meadows. Partial garage conversion.
- 21/00777/FULL Hopehouse Hens, Standen Street. Stationing of a mobile home and timber shed for an agricultural worker for a period of three years (Part Retrospective).
- 21/00911/FULL Standen Farmhouse, Standen Street. Erection of single storey rear extension.



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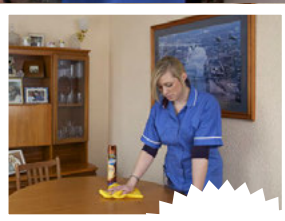
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Primary School

Looking back at another busy, albeit unusual, term, it has been fantastic to see the children really getting back into their stride. I am delighted that they have enjoyed a variety of activities already: reception learned about first aid; everyone enjoyed an introductory judo taster session, which will be an after-school club; years 3/4/5 have been engaged in an engineering project and the whole school had a fantastic day raising funds for the World Wildlife Fund, one of our charities.

The children were invited to bring £1 for the privilege of dressing up as endangered species and had the opportunity to raise even more funds by buying goodie bags. Even the Easter bunny came.

The feeling around school is very positive; it's lovely to hear the school alive and buzzing again. Everyone has slipped straight back into our now 'normal' routines and safety measures and we are so proud of how the children have coped with the strange year that they have experienced so far.

We are delighted to announce that we have subscribed to the 'My Happy Mind' curriculum. This is based on helping children understand how their brain works and to support them in developing positive skills and habits to be their very best selves. This exciting resource is grounded in scientific research and helps children to feel happier; know what to do when they feel worried or stressed, improve their focus, learn more, achieve more of their goals, develop better relationships and feel great about who they are.

It focusses on five different modules: Meet your Brain, Celebrate, Appreciate, Relate and Engage and we look forward to sharing how the children progress.

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

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Easter Raffle and to all those who so kindly donated prizes. Thanks too must go to everyone who bought a 'Balloon' for the virtual balloon race, which set off from Istanbul and followed real weather data. Fun and certainly different! Fundraising is infinitely more challenging when we are required to spend much of the time apart. All your support of these 'remote' initiatives is so appreciated.

We were delighted to be able to surprise all the school children with an Easter chocolate bunny to take home on the last day of term. The children have been super, settling back into school life with aplomb. We are enormously proud of them.

Benenden Girls' School is generously supporting our printing costs for the primary school cookbook. We are very grateful to have them as a sponsor and excited to see this published. Keep an eye out and do grab your copy. Thanks must go to all our contributors. We would love to see photographs of you trying the recipes.

Our super headteacher, Lindsay Roberts, is bravely undertaking a skydive (we are in awe) and is raising money to share equally between The Weald Family Hub and the Benenden and Kilndown PTFAs. It's certainly going above and beyond. If you would like to support her and wish her luck, the JustGiving page is: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/lindsay-roberts-3

For more information on all our fundraising activities and how to participate, please scan the QR code below or visit our PTFA website, which you will find through the school's own. We have collated a truly varied way of fundraising.

Thank you, our community, for your continued support on the wellbeing of the children of Benenden Primary School.

Athena Cripps, Benenden CEP, PTFA



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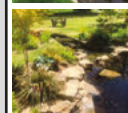
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Iden Green and Benenden WI

Recently, some of our members joined Hawkhurst WI on a Zoom call when Wayne Trice, a conjuror, entertained us. He told us how he started performing and how some of his tricks were being included in various therapies. He also taught us how to do some of them with elastic bands and playing cards.

We have purchased a Chromebook for our secretary to use. It is possible to write/type on it, or use the 'speech-to-text' app to prepare the reports. It also has file storage, emails, and easy access to sites on the internet. The report written on our West Kent AGM tends to relate mainly to work carried out on our new constitution. Also, National Federation have updated our equalities policies. Inclusion seems to be the by-word and we hope that we still present a welcoming image to the world. Please contact our President with any comments.

We continue making plans for the Garden Party and Shirley Fidler is trying to contact everyone to confirm. This will be held at the usual place and time on Tuesday 29 June. Please let one of us know if a lift is needed.

The West Kent News is being distributed online now and we are hoping most of you can have sight of it. Once government guidelines allow, the committee will consider the easiest way to distribute hard copies.

We have received a warning about burglaries in the area. Please ensure all your property is securely locked. For free advice, telephone 101 and ask for the Crime Prevention Officer.

Jackie Liffen 752232
benendenwi@gmail.com

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

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

For more information please visit:
www.benendencricketclub.co.uk

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



Benenden Pre-School

It's the summer term at Pre-School and we are looking forward to lots of garden-based play. One of our focus activities this term is weaving and this is an art form which lends itself well to an outdoor context. An obelisk trellis in the garden provides the opportunity for children to thread ribbons, string, pliable twigs, leaves and all sorts through the gaps.

As with almost all 'early years' learning, it's about the process rather than the product and there are many benefits to weaving. Firstly, it is a wonderful way to create beautiful art which is transient and can be redesigned as often as the children wish. Weaving can also be a social event, with children working together as they build up their creations. In addition, the large muscle movements the children use to weave their chosen materials through the trellis develop their manipulation and control as well as their hand-eye coordination: all skills that will later be employed as they learn to write. Get weaving!

Lucy Oakley, Supervisor
supervisor@benendenpreschool.co.uk

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LEVEL 2 TECHNICIAN

Benenden Hospital

At a time when hospital hygiene and cleanliness is a much-discussed topic, I believe that employing our own housekeeping team puts us in pole position to meet the challenges of maintaining a clean, infection-free environment. They're some of our unsung heroes.

Keeping any hospital clean and infection free is undoubtedly a challenge and especially so with the advent of Covid-19. People have real concerns about visiting any hospital, be it at a private hospital like ours, or in an NHS setting and that is totally understandable.

Key to the hospital are our housekeeping team who maintain our rigorous hygiene and cleaning regime. Leading the 28-strong team is Marian Chandler, our housekeeping manager. We have an enviable record on hygiene and cleanliness with no cases of hospital acquired infections such as MRSA or Clostridium Difficile (C.diff) as far as our records go back (to 2002).

At the emergence of the pandemic we critically reviewed and questioned the how, why and what of everything we do around our hygiene and cleanliness regime, to ensure their effectiveness against Covid-19. New team members don't simply 'join' our housekeeping team, and the stereo-typical image of a cleaning team waltzing across the floors armed with mops and buckets is completely wide of the mark. They undertake rigorous, ongoing training, including aspects specific to hospital settings, known as 'isolation cleans'.

The housekeeping team know the buildings inside-out and consistently go above and beyond to help ensure the hospital retains its reputation as a clean and safe environment and that our hygiene and cleanliness standards are never compromised.

Jane Abbott, Hospital Director and Chief Nurse

Topical health

At this time of year, as the village green is having a regular grass cut and the weekends hum to the sound of lawn mowers, many start to suffer from hay fever. Far from being a minor irritation, hay fever can be debilitating for some. Unlike a common cold, or other viral illnesses, it can last for weeks or months, between March and September, depending on the pollens you are most allergic to.

Hay fever is essentially an allergic reaction affecting the nose, throat, chest and eyes, with common symptoms including, itchy eyes, nose and throat, through to sneezing, shortness of breath and fatigue. As with many illnesses, the best form of defence for sufferers is to avoid exposure, in this case to pollen. This is done by monitoring the pollen forecasts on apps or weather forecasts and staying indoors when the count is high. Simple acts like showering and changing your clothes after being outdoors are said to lower the pollen burden, while regular Hoovering and damp dusting during the pollen season help maintain low pollen levels indoors. Other tricks include wearing glasses when outside to help prevent pollen getting into your eyes and applying petroleum jelly around your nostrils which will trap some pollen. One often overlooked tip is to avoid drying clothes outside during the season.

Mild to moderate hay fever can be treated with over-the-counter antihistamine tablets and nasal sprays, which a pharmacist can advise on and which may subsequently be brought in many supermarkets quite cheaply. As ever, if you are severely affected, or you are not responding to standard remedies, your GP may prescribe alternative antihistamines and a steroidal nasal spray or refer you on for specialist input from an immunotherapy service.

Peter Ellis

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Benenden School

The spring term ended on a lovely, positive note. Not only are we all very pleased not to have had any positive cases on site since we returned but the wonderful weather in the final week of term enabled us to round off spring with a delicious farewell barbecue for the girls, before holding our traditional end of term Mark Reading outside, with year groups in separate areas. It was a notable occasion for us as it was the first time we have been able to gather the whole school together this year.

We are very optimistic about the summer term which we are confident will feel much more normal, not least because we will be welcoming back more than 60 of our students living overseas to quarantine with us during Easter, before the rest of the pupils return.

The past year has prompted us all (young and not so young) to reflect on our lives and society as a whole. In our Chaplain's Easter message at Mark Reading, she spoke about the need for us to evolve from Covid-19 a better, more equal, safer, society, rather than simply reverting to the status quo of a pre-Covid normal.

Finally, you may have seen in the local media a fun story about four pupils who recently explored a cupboard in the School's main building, Hemsted, and discovered an array of artefacts dating back to the war. The inquisitive pupils found an array of chocolate wrappers and other packaging as well as letters to Second World War soldiers from the 1940s, when the school was used as a military hospital.

During a study session in a room in which the layout had recently been remodelled, the Year 10 pupils spotted a hatch almost entirely hidden by a wardrobe. They pulled the wardrobe out and found the hatchway gave access to a small portion of the eaves, revealing the items after more than 70 years. It's lovely to know that the buildings can still spring some surprises after all this time!

Samantha Price, Headmistress

Fete-supported charities

The support given by the village to the church fete each year is superb and this year, Covid willing, it will be held on Saturday 18 September. However, many probably do not know where the takings go to and may assume that they all go to the church. In fact, they are largely used to fund our annual distribution to charities, and this is the first in a series of items about those we plan to support this year.

Crossroads Care Kent supplies relief carers for those who look after disabled people in their own homes to enable them to shop, go to their medical appointments and to relax a little. Other programmes include looking after young carers; sudden care crises; end of life care in conjunction with Macmillan; post hospital care; dementia care and old people's day care.

Tools with a Mission collects tools, computers and sewing and knitting machines. These are refurbished and sent to African countries where youngsters are trained to use them before being presented with a set of tools so they can make a living. This is very much a hand up rather than a handout and works very well in areas where there are few big employers. The cost of sending about 24 containers of tools per year is great, but very worthwhile.

Dolen Llanbrynmair is a small charity which helps the Kumi district in Uganda, currently helping to set up a base for training local youngsters in skills and funding a local orphan project.

The Salvation Army has changed a lot in recent years and is far less about conversion and far more about helping the most deprived, including the hard to help. Many homeless and jobless services are provided by the Salvation Army all over the UK and they are responsible for rescuing many desperate families and individuals.

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Talking Shop

Good news from the shop

At last! We are beginning to cast off the chains of lockdown and return to something rather more like normality at the

community shop. Any of you who have passed Benenden's over the course of the last two weeks can't have missed the fact that, since 12 April, tables and chairs have appeared outside the café and customers have been gratefully taking advantage of them. It has been a real pleasure to see those of you resilient enough to brave the chilly temperatures, cheerily supporting the café and putting the world to rights whilst enjoying a cup of our finest. Welcome back.

Social distancing rules are still in place and so we would remind you to take note of the

following: please be advised that orders will be brought out to you and only one person from each table should enter the café to order and pay; the table will be cleared by staff and sanitised after each customer and we'll be grateful if you could leave your tableware on a tray for staff to collect; unfortunately we are unable to offer toilet facilities at present. A quick sprint to the public toilets outside the village hall should help, although sadly it's women only at the moment.

However, from 17 May, subject to further restrictions being lifted, we intend to welcome you back inside the café again. As yet the rules governing inside use are unclear, but as and when we are officially informed, we will share this information using social media and a sign outside the café.

For those of you looking for a post Easter treat, apart from the good quality, wide range of products usually sold in the shop, watch out for our supplies of fresh asparagus which should be making an appearance soon.

Finally, many thanks to all the volunteers who have helped to keep the shop going throughout the last few months and if any of you would like to volunteer in the future please don't hesitate to come in and put your name down.

More volunteers will be needed as we open for longer hours - and it's fun.

Bev Beveridge info@benendens.co.uk
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Letter to the Editor

Please write to the Editor,
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BENENDEN AT ITS BEST

The best thing about Benenden is how it works as a village. It looks and sounds the part, with church bells ringing across a real English green; where cricketers are into a fourth century - not runs, but years. It acts the part. Villagers act for the village. They stand-to when Benenden's needs call. Like the volunteers creating the impressive Neighbourhood Development Plan led by Paul Tolhurst; Benenden, unlike other villages, relying little on expensive consultants.

Benenden people understand best how Benenden should reach the mid-2030s. Also, unlike other neighbourhood plans, Benenden's earmarks sites for limited, needed, timely development with "minimal impact on a place that holds such an abundance of natural beauty", as Parish Council chair, Nicola Thomas, says. I'll urge residents to back this good plan in its referendum.

Nowhere have I seen a village hang together as long as Benenden battling for a new primary school, from 1938 no less. A real community struggle for sure. Hundreds of people for generations. Yes, debate was fierce sometimes. People cared. I was pleased I could rally Kent's Cabinet Member for Education to Benenden's fight for government cash for a new school, ending educational injustices inflicted on village children.

And Benenden people defibrillated their village's heart. They've made their own shop and café, raised the money and run it. The £10,000 from my KCC community grant is for the most communitarian project I've ever backed. And the hot chocolate's fab!

Benenden is the most English of villages. I'm proud to have represented you since 2008 on the Borough Council and 2013 on the County Council.

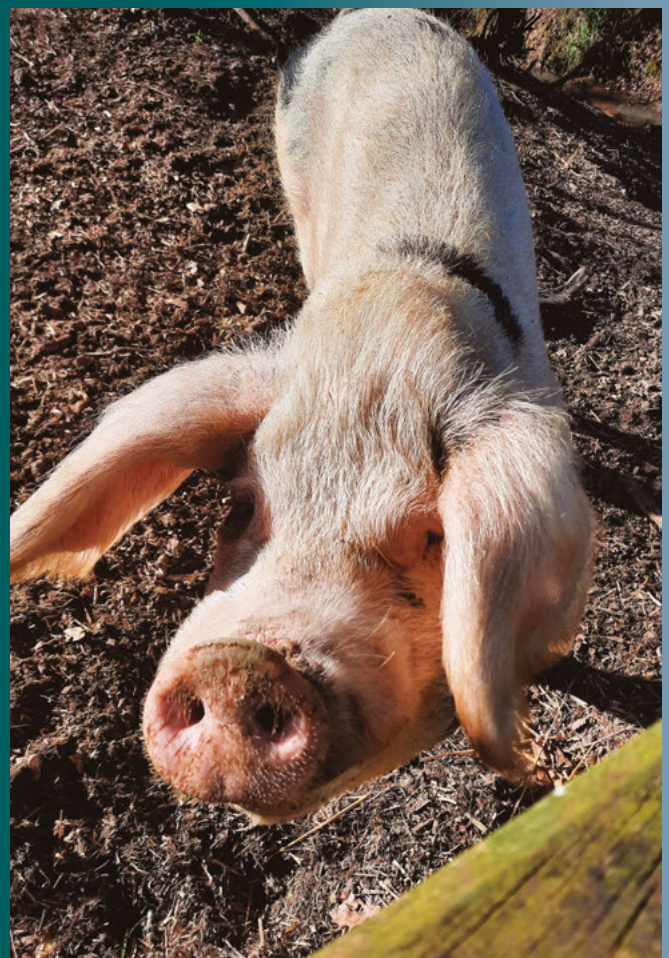
Seán Holden

Walks with her dog Marley have sustained Helen Jewsbury over the past year and, like many others, she often stops to check in with Ethel the pig. Here's her ode to her porcine friend.

Ode to Ethel

Now let me just tell you, I do love a pig,
And Ethel is luscious with her ears so big,
She'll trundle on over for love and a treat,
With her great hairy back and trotters for feet.
She earns every morsel by making us feel
That little bit special, "a pretty big deal"
She lifts up our hearts and makes us all smile
With her snouty old snout and her feminine wiles.

But, don't you be fooled by her charming demeanour
Half the village are feeding her, she's a wiley old weaner.
But she's funny and joyous so long may she reign
Hooray for Ethel, Benenden's fabulous Dame.



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Image by James Wilson on Unsplash

Are you eligible to claim attendance allowance?

Do you have an illness or a disability which makes life difficult some days? Can you bend down to pick things up off the floor or to put your shoes on? Do you need any equipment to make life a little easier? Do you need reminding to do things or help to do things? If you have answered yes to any of these questions you may be eligible to receive attendance allowance advises Kelly Duke.

Attendance allowance can be claimed if you are of state pension age and incur extra costs to live because of your illness or disability. It is a non-means-tested benefit which is paid to individuals who need help during the day or night to care for themselves, who need supervision with daily activities or need assistance to prevent them from putting themselves in danger.

It does not matter how much money you have in the bank or what your income is. What matters is sometimes you struggle a little. The payment is made to help you to keep your independence for as long as possible and is, sadly, one of the most under-claimed benefits there is.

If you have needed assistance for at least six months you may be eligible for financial support. If you have been diagnosed with a terminal illness and you are not expected to live for more than six months you will be eligible for a payment.

Attendance allowance covers assistance with things such as: washing; dressing; getting in and out of bed; using the loo; moving around at home, i.e. climbing the stairs, getting in and out of chairs; eating or drinking and preparing food; taking medication; dealing socially with other people; keeping an eye on you to make sure you are safe.

Whilst attendance allowance is paid when you stay at home, you can also claim this benefit if you live in a residential or nursing

Kelly, her husband Kevin and his two boys moved to Benenden from Tenterden a year ago and, in Kelly's words, lockdown has been "wonderful. We are in the middle of the countryside, with chickens



and dogs and surrounded by orchards and within easy reach of the village shop, butcher and farm shops - what could be better."

Kelly started as a legal secretary in 1995 and worked her way up, qualifying as a lawyer in 2005. Today she runs Argo Life and Legacy alongside her husband Kevin, largely working from home and supported by her team based in Maidstone. The company offers legal, financial and social care advice and support and Kelly will be writing about a variety of these topics for us in the future.

home. If you pay for the costs of your care, in full, with no help from the local authority, you can still receive attendance allowance.

This benefit is not claimed by everyone who is entitled. It should be. You have not asked to have an illness or a disability that makes it difficult to manage each day, so why not have a little extra in your pocket to help with those extra costs. You are able to use the allowance to purchase the services of a carer, a gardener, a cleaner, to get a taxi if you cannot drive or take the bus, to purchase a new microwave, whatever it is you need. That extra £50 to £90 per week could make a really big difference.

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Benenden's musicians adapt in lockdown

Ruth Clark spoke to three local professional players about their career and how they have reacted to the impact of the pandemic

TIM RUNDLE: master of oboe and tools

As principal oboe for the Philharmonia, lockdown had an immediate impact on Tim.



Like many musicians he is self-employed, so he had to decide how to maintain an income. Always practical, he turned a hobby into

a business and began Tim's Tools, a business repairing and servicing garden machinery, and has found many positive aspects to his new life.

Tim lives here with his wife Sarah and two sons. He fell in love with the oboe when only seven in Rugby. "It had me hooked from the start," he says. He graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music 2003 and faced stiff competition to join the BBC Scottish Orchestra, where he met Sarah.

They moved to Benenden, Sarah's home village, and Tim joined the Philharmonia in 2012. "When I was working I would typically spend half my time with them and the rest as a guest principal oboe with other orchestras including the LSO, BBC Symphony Orchestra

and the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields. He is also professor of oboe at the Guildhall School of Music and



Drama. "The variety is a joy," he says. "One day we'll be in London, the next in Paris or Tokyo.

"Coming to a sudden stop was a shock, so too the need to find an alternative way to fill my days. I've always enjoyed fixing things and when I saw a job lot of broken machinery, I spotted an opportunity. I repaired and sold them and that started the ball rolling. Word spread and Tim's Tools was born!"

"I'm looking forward to playing live again. I'll continue to repair garden tools in my spare time too. I'm lucky, I can balance both sides of my life. As well as the challenges, there have been many benefits, particularly spending more time with my family."

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SARAH SHELDRAKE: singer/songwriter

Sarah is our home-grown singer, songwriter and composer. Today, alongside writing songs and soundtracks for other artists, she sings as 'SHELLS' and collaborates with others globally.

As a youngster, she started playing the piano and creating songs and the muse has never left. An inspirational teacher encouraged a shy Sarah to perform publicly for the first time, and she and a friend would perform at The Bull here, and The Grey Lady in Tunbridge Wells during her teens. "I am very grateful to Mark and Lucy at The Bull, Paul Dunton at The Grey Lady, and Abbie McCarthy and team at 'BBC Introducing in Kent' who have given me lots of support," she says.

She spent the months after university running from one nursery to another across London dressed in a sparkly tutu with all her kit. "I played to babies at 15 nurseries every week - great fun." She continued to perform and record her own work and soon attracted producers. In 2015 she signed her first deal, followed by many festivals and gigs between 2016-2019, including the Radio 1 Festival, when the BBC picked her for the 'Introducing' stage following the release of 'Gold' and 'Jailbird' and, in 2017, a European tour supporting Charlie Puth. She has also launched two EPs, the latest of which was written and recorded here last year.

Sarah and her fiancé moved back last year and they will shortly marry in Benenden. "We are so lucky to be here," she says. "I have space, my instruments, my studio and am surrounded by beautiful countryside." Recently, Sarah has focussed more on collaborating with other artists. "During lockdown dance music has been incredibly popular. I've been really busy working with producers and artists in Norway, Sweden, Germany, USA and Canada. Before, I would travel but our Zoom sessions have been very prolific. I'll probably work this way too when life returns to normal."

Discover Sarah's music on:
iTunes, Spotify and www.shellsmusic.com

SARAH ANDREW: multi-skilled bassoonist
While dancing around at school to the 'Hall of the Mountain King' as a child, Sarah fell in love with the sound of the bassoon. When introduced to the instrument to play in the orchestra, she didn't hesitate. Love at first sight. Lessons followed, including with, among others, Andrew Stowell of the Royal Opera House orchestra. She studied at the Royal College of Music before travelling to play with the Hong Kong Philharmonic: "an amazing experience".

After two years, Sarah returned to the UK and joined the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, where she met her husband.

With their first child they moved to Benenden and Sarah put away her bassoon to spend more time with the family and work with friend Laura developing Village Vintage, which hires rustic furniture and accessories for events.

Soon after her second son was born, however, the Royal Opera House invited her to freelance in the orchestra. "I could schedule performances to fit around home, Village Vintage and Tim's work, as the ROH didn't tour often". In 2019, Sarah was invited to become a permanent member: "It was my former teacher Andrew's place. He was retiring - a lovely symmetry."

During the pandemic, the orchestra has been performing live to online audiences and broadcasting previously recorded material. "It has been a very quiet schedule! But from June onwards we are back rehearsing and performing almost full time. It is very exciting - playing to an auditorium of people again is going to be a very emotional experience!"

Village Vintage, in hibernation for the past year, is starting to get very busy too as weddings and parties are planned. "It's great to start up again, we are desperate to get going," says Sarah. "The last year has been a challenge, but in many ways it has been an incredible gift of time with my family."

www.villagevintage.co.uk



Take the plunge and go ‘wild’

Dedicated cold-water swimmer Mary Cruse encourages us to brave ‘wild’ waters and enjoy the many benefits to mind and body

Ice, when swum through, dances on the water, and tinkles softly. At least, in Kent it does. Our cold is not the cold of the Arctic, the Scandinavian countries, Canada or the East Coast of the US. Not for us the effort of cutting or breaking holes in the ice like winter swimmers in the far north. Yet, the water temperature is 6°, and the air temperature is just above freezing. It is January. I am swimming in a lake in Benenden, courtesy of a generous friend who has stepped into the breach in lockdown, as I can no longer go to the sea.

‘Wild’ swimming has been all over the media in the past year, in part as those who previously swam in pools have either had to stop or find alternatives. Swimming outdoors can be done in a socially distanced manner, as our climate means that except in heatwaves, there’s usually plenty of space on the beach. But ease of access, and fashion alone cannot explain the huge rise in popularity of open water swimming.

Sport England reported almost 80% increase between 2017/18, with Outdoor Swimmer magazine noticing a rise particularly

amongst women. Only 1% of those surveyed liked outdoor swimming less than they’d expected. So what draws people to climb into lakes, rivers, and the sea in the coldest winter months?

At its simplest, the answer is probably ‘because it makes one feel fantastic’. There is an immediacy and a vitality to being in cold water that drives out all other cares and concerns. Devotees speak of an endorphin rush, clarity of thought, relief of chronic pain, improvement of mood. The internet will tell you that cold water immersion will make you thinner and improve your sex life. So where is the truth?

Professor Mike Tipton of the University of Portsmouth, himself an open water swimmer, has been studying the effect of cold-water immersion on human physiology, particularly mood. He’s identified two relevant physiological aspects; the first, cold water shock, which provokes the gasp response. The heart rate and blood pressure rise fast, breathing speeds up, adrenaline floods the body and glucose and fats enter the bloodstream as the body prepares for action. In the brain, beta endorphins are released, providing pain relief and a sense of euphoria. Cortisol, a stress hormone, maintains this heightened state.

Tipton has also identified that there is a



Photograph: Russell Cruse

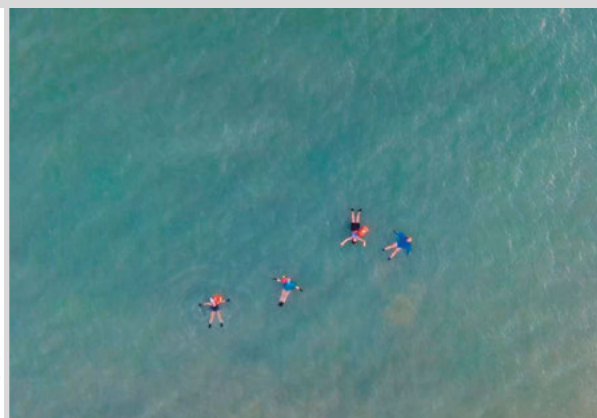
longer-term physiological adaptation to cold water immersion, which happens surprisingly quickly, after as few as six immersions. The body adapts to the cold water, breathing and heart rate come down more quickly, and the physiological stress is better managed. Tipton theorises that this adaptation can make cold water swimmers less reactive to everyday stress, too, through a process called 'cross-adaptation'.

He believes that psychological and physical stress affect the body in similar ways (think of how your heart beats faster when you are anxious) and that there is potential for cold water immersion to help with mental health difficulties like anxiety and depression. Certainly anecdotally, many cold-water swimmers speak positively about how regular outdoor swimming has helped their mental health. Recent research from Cambridge University even suggests cold water swimming may be protective against dementia. Part of this is undoubtedly the camaraderie, inclusivity, post-swim chat (prior to lockdown) and mandatory cake.

Yet, it's not without its hazards. Plunging into cold water can be dangerous, owing to the rise in blood pressure and heart rate. In very cold water, muscles seize up and it can become impossible to swim after only a few minutes. The body continues cooling for about 40 minutes after leaving the water, which can lead to 'afterdrop' - nausea, dizziness, and faintness. Hypothermia is a medical emergency.

Tides, winds and currents need informed and sensible understanding, and there is no room for bravado. 'The sea will always be there another day' is a mantra, as is 'work out your exit points before you get into the water'. No-one wants to swim in sewage and it's advisable to avoid swimming after heavy rain (many swimmers become much more environmentally conscious). Various apps make this easier: Magic Seaweed gives wind speeds, wave heights and swell; Safer Seas gives water quality data. Essential websites are: www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com www.loneswimmer.com.

Photograph: Sam Rowland



Mary second from the left at Bexhill



Mary in a friend's lake in December

It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of wild swimming but crucial to keep a level head, and to be aware of where swimming is sensible and lawful and where it isn't. The RNLI does a brilliant job providing lifeguards at beach resorts and raising water safety awareness; it's wise to start in the summertime when beaches are life-guarded.

Local outdoor swimming groups include the Hastings and St Leonards Azur Swimmers, and the Bexhill Seagals (both on Facebook), and nationally the Bluetits Chill Swimmers.

And yes, cold water immersion can lead to increased basal metabolic rate, a stronger immune system and an increase in testosterone and oestrogen. So, dig out that cossie and put on your brave pants. It might just be life changing.

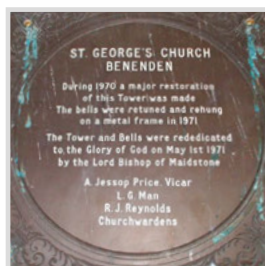
From Benenden to Burma and back again

Stephen Durnford reminisces about his adventurous family's close ties to the village

For 20 years from my birth in 1943, my home was Benenden, a place of which I have many fond memories. In July 2019 the Magazine featured the item below, referring to the Revd Jessop Price ('JP'), whose arrival in place of the Revd Yearsley I well remember.

JP had already lost a son in a mountaineering accident, and another son, Martin, who was older than me, I knew at school, and in 1964 or 1965 he introduced me to his Cretan fiancée, Maria Zenaki, in the house of a young couple named Cloke, whose house stands on the eastern side of The Street. Before his own premature death, Martin had been Deputy Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and then Director of the British School at Athens.

That plaque in St George's church also refers to my late uncle, Colonel Lionel Man. Also, in June 2019 I received a letter asking whether I agreed to the plaque's relocation and could name any other contacts who might hold a view about it. I had no objection and passed the letter on to John Man, my older 'double first cousin', who now lives in London.



Can you help?

The Parochial Church Council is discussing with the archdeacon the possibility of having the plaque pictured moved to the north wall of the

bellringing chamber of St George's Church from the west end, as it concerns the rehanging of the bells in 1971. In order to do this we have been asked to contact any known descendants of the vicar and churchwarden as shown on the plaque. We know about Robert Reynolds' family, but does anyone in the village know of any family of Lionel Man and Rev Jessop Price? If anyone has any information please do get in touch.

Julia Collard 24/1944

Benenden Magazine July 2019

I call John this because he and his three younger siblings share both pairs of grandparents with me and my younger brother and sister - my mother's brother had married my father's sister. Three generations of Man and Durnford families, along with several other relatives, all lived in various houses in the village during the 20th century's first seven decades, reaching, I think, a peak of six concurrent households in the late 1950s.



Fig.1 Family photograph, 1906-07

I grew up supposing that all families lived in such mutual proximity, until discovering in later years that my experience resembled less that of the average Briton and more that of members of an African or Indian extended family, but let me return to Uncle Lionel.

Lionel Garnet Man was born on August 23, 1903, the first child of Beatrice Angela Man, née Crofts (29 September 1870-28 March 1959) and Edward James Fowle Garnet Man (28 April 1869-28 December 1933). This was in Rangoon, Burma, as it was then known, where his grandfather had been assistant commissioner of Bengal and Government Advocate of Burma, and where his father continued in the legal profession. Garnet and Beatrice were married in 1902 in Mountfield, East Sussex, before returning to Rangoon.

In the above photograph of the family, taken in about 1906-07, Lionel is no.3, 'Little Master' (Fig.1). The couple went on to have two more sons in Burma, one of whom lived only three days, while the other, John Henry Garnet Man (1906-1993), moved with them to Old Standen,



Fig.2 View of Old Standen included with Lionel Man's letter home

Benenden, now Grade II* listed, where my mother, Catherine Mary Felicity, later Durnford, was born on 12 June 1913.

From 1914 to 1917, my grandfather, although over military age, volunteered as a private and was posted all around the south-east, during which time he wrote home several times a week, and my grandmother kept his correspondence, along with letters written home by the boys from boarding school, all of which remain with me. One of his letters included this 1914 view of Old Standen (Fig.2), and here is a 1916 letter from Lionel (Fig.3). He was always keen to report his test results.

In September 1918 Old Standen was sold, and the 31 pages listing the items that were auctioned or had been lent to museums are like a time capsule for the social historian. Garnet took to developing the village, and found, in the 1931 Ideal Home Exhibition, a type of prefabricated sectional wooden bungalow, of which he put up a string of nine about 100 yards east of The Street, running northwards from the lane opposite Fuggle's Garage. I was in one of those bungalows when the V1 fell on the outskirts of the village, and I will write about it another time.

Garnet developed stomach cancer, which resisted all treatment, and he died in 1933 in Ruthin Castle, North Wales, which was a specialised hospital in those days. His doctor in Benenden was Arnold Cole, of Walkhurst Road, who was

also mine through the 1940s and 1950s. Dr Cole used his own car to drive my mother and grandfather in a forlorn mid-winter dash across the country to Ruthin.

Lionel had already become an army officer in India, serving as a fellow second lieutenant with Muhammad Ayub Khan, who later made himself President of Pakistan. Lionel went on to become Colonel of the 9th Jat Regiment, whose football pitch was exactly on the border with Afghanistan. When the ball got kicked into touch on that side, they had to send an armed guard into the next country to retrieve it. He was

consequently very interested talking to a Pathan friend of mine from university, who came to stay the weekend.

After WWII, Lionel and his wife, Audrey, née Johnson, moved to Merrimans in Benenden, but when his role as churchwarden began I do not know. Some years before his death in 1974 they moved to the house next to the Vicarage Coach House.

This is the first in an occasional series of reminiscences. I hope that they may cross with those of other past and present residents and would be glad to hear of any corrections or additions that anyone may wish to offer.

stephen.durnford@gmail.com

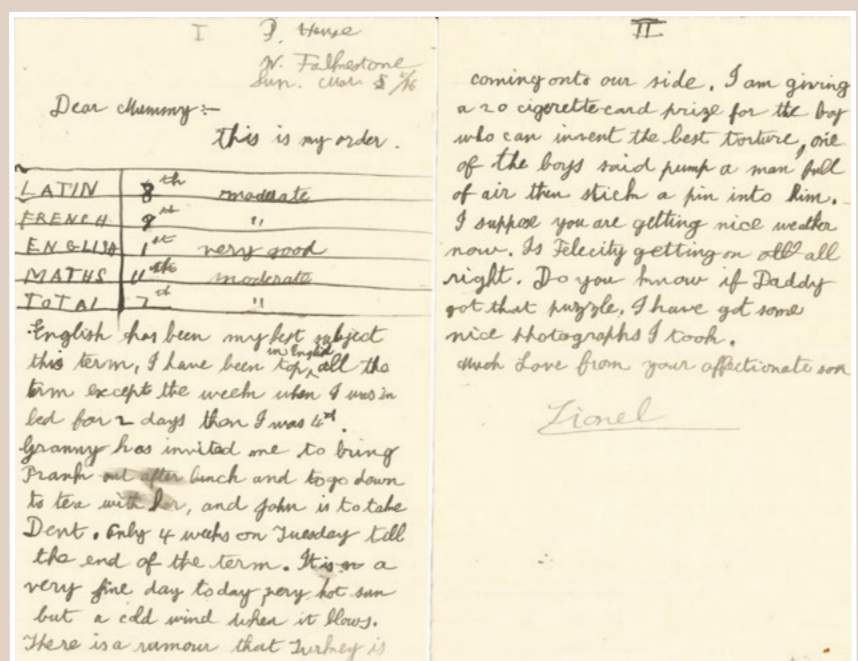


Fig.3 1916 letter from Lionel Man to his mother

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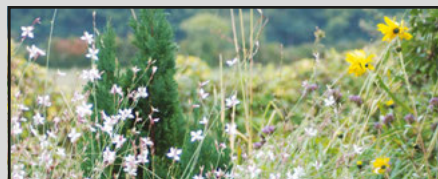
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Space: the final vinous frontier

Peter Thomas examines the question of whether or not wine travels well

Are we on the road out of lockdown? I went to the Bull on reopening day and it certainly looked like it, with a host of the usual suspects sitting outside, chasing the polar bears away from their pork scratchings. That was just a short drive up the road, though. What about a proper foreign wine trip?

I started to mull over that other great imponderable of 'oenotourism': whether or not wine 'travels'; in short, if wine bought on holiday will taste as good back in Blighty as it did on a balmy evening amid the racket of cicadas.

My view is that if we're talking about car holidays, then wine travels just fine. Unless there's scientific evidence that conditions in the back of a modern motor with air-conditioning are liable to bring on a chemical reaction of epic proportions, then why wouldn't it? The only wine that doesn't travel well is bad wine.

In a plane, though, the scientists' verdict is a little different. Air-freighted wine can finish its journey with significantly reduced levels of sulphur dioxide - wine's natural and added preservative - and signs of 'browning'. In short, small but noticeable amounts of oxygen may well have been absorbed through the cork, causing the wine to age prematurely, just a tiny bit - then again, who doesn't age prematurely when they fly Ryanair?

Apparently it may be down to the micro-vibrations of the plane, which stress the wine. Then there's the cabin pressure, which when allied to the dry atmosphere can adversely affect your 'suitcase' wine and disrupt the flavour of those little bottles they give you with your meal - nothing at all to do with the fact that it's basically paint stripper with a different label on it.

The latest wine-travel frontier, though, is space. More specifically, what happens to a wine when you send it beyond the earth's atmosphere,

which was precisely what the research project Space Cargo Unlimited did in 2019 with 12 bottles of the high-class Bordeaux red, Chateau Petrus - then left it there, 400km above the earth, orbiting us 16 times a day and travelling 300 million kilometres, just to see what it would taste like when it came down.

Actually, they claim the experiment was more about analysing drought and disease resistance, the broader implications for the food and pharmaceutical industries and the potential for microbial fermentation in anti-cancer drugs; but I bet they were all queuing up for a snifter of the Petrus when it landed.

Apparently tasters discovered different flavours in the space bottles, with softer tannins and the aromas of a wine with several years' more bottle age. So next time I'm struggling with how to squeeze eight cases of plonk into the back of a Volvo XC90, I'll spare a thought for the people who have to launch a rocket before they get to have a drink.



In Your Garden



Early spring flowering colour

As gardeners we are always looking ahead (I have just planted my dahlia tubers into three-litre pots) and my thoughts at this time of year always turn to early spring colour, particularly around the base of tulips and the emerging herbaceous plants. This makes for an opportunity to gather some notes on current gaps in the borders and to see where an additional layer can cover some ground.

However, it is easy to forget how much herbaceous material grows each season -



although the additional layer will help to suppress any emerging weed seedlings - so it is definitely worth giving it some proper thought and getting it right.

I have normally relied upon pulmonarias, forget-me-nots and wild primroses to successfully blend together and provide some early colour as the tulips bloom. A successful trip out (very nice to be out and about, too) very recently to an open day at Sarah Raven's garden at Perch Hill in East Sussex saw a group of plants that I had not considered using in the borders before, which are polyanthus.

I believe polyanthus are, in fact, hybrids, resulting from the crossing of the common wild primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) with the cowslip. Perch Hill trials are producing some very useful perennial shades which would easily complement the blues and primrose yellows I have been relying upon, although there are some stronger colours if you prefer these. What's more they come into flower in February so could easily be partnered with the very early narcissi and iris reticulatas, and are also useful in early spring pot displays, either underneath taller plants such as hellebores or even one of my favourite combinations, which is using early spring flowering deciduous shrubs, eg. forsythia or ribes, and underplanting.

Once the shrub has finished flowering it goes out into the garden to be planted permanently - polyanthus are perennial so will return the following year.

Some are old varieties raised from seed, so they will naturalise well in the garden; many, though, are F1 hybrids, so these are best divided every few years to maintain



vigour. They will benefit from a leafy mulch of home-made compost to keep their roots moist and well-fed, and if planted in a container it would be worth dead heading spent flowers and any tatty leaves to keep them looking tidy.

This time of year can be fleeting and before long we will be awash with colour. As with all stages of the year in our gardens, it is worth taking time to stop and stare, jot down a few thoughts and make a calendar note (I use Google for this) to make sure they are not forgotten.

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Above: Out and about in the parish: Some of the housekeeping team at Benenden Hospital; Katelyn Malaugh helping with lambing at Woodside Farm; Jean Patterson, 97, and her great grandson aged 2 - the youngest and oldest members of parish magazine delivery team

Front cover: Never ones for social distancing. Photograph: Amelia Thomas