

BACS

Newsletter April 2004 No. 43

B e n e n d e n A m e n i t y a n d C o u n t r y s i d e S o c i e t y

Dates for your Diary:

Spring Walk – Sunday 23rd May, at 2pm

AGM report:

The 16th Annual General Meeting of the Benenden Amenity and Countryside Society was held on Wednesday 11th February. The Chairman, Alan Milne, opened the meeting with his chairman's report. After a short review of the year's events, it was announced that two committee members, Carol Varley and Lizanne Brown, have decided to stand down from the BACS committee. The Chairman expressed his thanks for all their hard work and dedication, over the years. The new committee was also elected at the meeting, to stand for one year. Alan Milne was re-elected as Chairman of the committee and Angela Lloyd Jones was re-elected as Secretary. The remaining Committee members are: Dick Hill, David Grief, Ernie Pollard, William Davies and Roger Lake.

John Potter then gave a brief update from the Benenden Flies Infestation Committee, which was set up following last summer's fly infestation. This committee first met in September, and has met three times since, and includes representatives from the NFU, Borough Council and Parish Council. The Borough Council sent surveys out to all other local authorities to assess how common this problem is, and how other authorities handle it. So far, there have been 150 responses, which is unprecedented for this type of survey. It was agreed that a Code of Practice was the best way forward for all concerned, to prevent a repeat of last summer's infestation. Clearly, this can only work with genuine cooperation and goodwill, which appears to be there from both producers and transporters of chicken manure. John Potter also noted that the commitment that has come from both the Borough Council and the NFU has been excellent. The Code of Practice is now approaching its final draft, and it is hoped it will be announced and published in April, before the Parish Council AGM. Anne Widdecombe has also expressed an interest, and may play a part in the future, at a Parliamentary level.

Robin Dalton Holmes spoke for a short moment on the proposed redevelopment of the Benenden Village Hall. The Hall opened in 1977, and at first glance it appears to still be in good condition. However, there are many ways in which the hall can be improved. For example, there are no disabled toilets, there is a poor sound system and there is no terminal for any computer. All these issues will be resolved by the redevelopment. The village would also gain a much needed parish office. Although money has already been raised from through grants and donations, between 60 and 70 thousand pounds still needs to be raised if the project is to go ahead, and there will be many events over the year designed to help raise money for this good cause.

The meeting ended with a talk from Paul Donovan, the Chairman of the Cranbrook Historical Society. He explained that Parishes as we know them today were first drawn in the 1830's, when buildings were also measured and surveyed for the first time, in part for tax purposes. It was about this time that Turnpike Roads, or Toll Roads, acted as major highways across the Country, and one of these was the road which passes through Benenden and Iden Green. In 1768, a document was signed that turned this road into a turnpike road. It was needed due to the appalling state the roads had got into in the area, and 182 trustees were appointed to ensure the road was managed correctly. It was left to the trustees to decide how many tolls were needed between Golford and Sandhurst, and what the toll charge should be. Historical documents reveal that a Wagon with four horses cost 9p, a wagon with two horses cost 6p and a horse alone cost 1p. It is perhaps a shame that we can't reinstate the toll today, to pay for the much needed improvements along Iden Green Road!

Electronic BACS:

BACS now has its own area on the Benenden website, which can be found at www.benendenvillage.org.uk. On this site, you can discover the origins and objectives of the society, you can read about upcoming events, and you can print a membership form, which can be used to either join the society or renew your membership. It is also possible to download back issues of the newsletter, from issue 37 onwards.

It is now also possible to receive this newsletter by email. If you would prefer to receive your newsletter in this way, please contact William Davies. Remember, by choosing this option, you'll be saving the society money by lowering the costs of printing and postage.

The first four village trails, which have been serialised in this newsletter, can also be viewed on the internet, through the High Weald web-site at www.highweald.org. If you can't find the correct page, below is the exact URL, which you can type into the address bar on your internet browser.

http://www.highweald.org/about/visitor/walks_details.asp?routeID=91

Subscriptions:

Membership this year remains at £2 for an individual and £5 for a family. There has been some confusion over when payments are due. The committee would like to remind members that subscriptions cover the calendar year, as opposed the financial year or academic year. Subscriptions are therefore now due for 2004. If you have not yet paid for this year's membership, please contact David Grief, who will send you a renewal form.

It was agreed at the most recent committee meeting that from 2005 onwards, there should be the option for life membership. It has been decided that this will be a flat rate of £50, and it is hoped that many members may take up this option.

We are currently trying to increase our membership. If you know of anyone who may like to join BACS, please contact David Grief, who will ensure a form is sent. Perhaps you can encourage friends and neighbours to join. Members receive a quarterly newsletter, which contains details of events being organised by BACS, and items of local interest from around the parish.

Planning Matters:

The Committee continues to look at planning applications for the benefit of all in Benenden. Ernie Pollard is responsible for monitoring all planning applications. BACS has also now created a new planning sub-committee, which will examine plans and sites and submit the Committee's view, where an application may be contentious. A summary of planning applications can be found on the Parish noticeboard in the village centre, and details can be seen at the Borough Council Offices in Cranbrook. If you would like to discuss any planning application with the society, please contact Ernie Pollard.

Spring Walk:

This year's Spring walk will start and finish at Pypne Manor and will be hosted by Miss Pat Thoburn on Sunday 23rd May. It will commence at 2pm and should take about 2 hours. Following the completion of the walk, tea will be served from around 4pm to 4.30pm. This event caters for all ages and abilities, and there is a shorter walk available for those who would prefer this. Everyone is welcome to attend. Dogs are also welcome, but must be kept on leads.

Amenity Refuse Collection:

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council organises the schedule for amenity refuse vehicle, which visits the Parish for three hours every fortnight, on a Saturday morning. For your information, the dates and venues of this service for the next three months, are printed below. The vehicle is accessible from 8am until 11am, and this is the same every fortnight.

April	May	June
Sat 10 th – Iden Green crossroads Sat 24 th – Cherryfields, Benenden	Sat 8 th – Iden Green crossroads Sat 22 nd – Benenden Village Hall	Sat 5 th – Iden Green crossroads Sat 19 th – Cherryfields, Benenden

Your new committee:

Full details of your committee are printed below. If you have any questions regarding subscriptions, please contact David Grief. If you have questions or concerns regarding planning matters, please contact Ernie Pollard. If you would like to comment on the newsletter, contribute an article, or if you would like to receive it by email, your contact is William Davies. For any other questions about BACS, please contact the Chairman, Alan Milne.

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The Benenden Home Guard, 1940:

As a complete change from walks, we return to the village of May 1940 and look in on the first meeting of the Benenden Local Defence Volunteers, later called the Home Guard. We are able to do this because the local commander, Collingwood Ingram, wrote out the talks he gave and they have survived in two exercise books. Thus we have a contemporary record of the way in which a village responded to the daily threat of invasion. The single entry printed below could be extended into a series if it proves popular.

Once again, we are extremely grateful to Ernie Pollard for researching the topic and compiling this article. His few annotations are in *italic*.

Home Guard address – Delivered 23/05/40 Incorporating tentative Standing Orders

My reason for summoning you here to-night is to explain as briefly as possible the duties you will have to perform as members of the Local Defence Volunteers.

So far as our instructions from Headquarters have been very meagre. But it is clear that our chief function will be that of armed watchers - in short we can regard ourselves as part of a network of sentries for the military mobile units, some of which are stationed at no great distance from here. It is obvious for the moment we have not enough rifles or ammunition to be an effective offensive force.

Plan of Action

As it is imperative to get going as soon as possible, I have been obliged to formulate an emergency plan of action, which will be subject to alteration as circumstances arise. It is briefly as follows.

The Parish has been divided into North and South Patrols & these will be manned, so far as possible, by persons living within the areas concerned.

These two patrols will be Standing Patrols. The strength of each will be two [*now three*] men who will remain on duty from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. when they will be relieved by the second Patrol, who will be on duty from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.

This makes a total of 8 ("12" inserted) per night which, at our present strength, will mean one night on duty out of every four. It would, of course, help matters greatly if you could induce some of your friends to join the force, By doing so they would not only be participating in a very important national service, but they would also be making the work of all less arduous. What I should like to aim at is only one night on duty out of five & three patrols - I really think this is almost the minimum number required for the large area we are expected to watch.

Positions

South Patrol. Coronation Clump [*i.e. Jubilee Plantation!*] - that is the small plantation of pine behind Mr Bardon's farm [*Yew Tree Farm*] at Iden.

North Patrol. Somewhere in the Goddards Green area to be decided on the ground [when] the ground has been reconnoitred.

Challenging. Patrols will challenge all persons approaching their posts & any other person whose genuineness they may suspect. The challenge will be Halt! Who Goes There They will satisfy themselves that they are harmless citizens before allowing strangers to pass.

Information

Should there be anything to report it will be the duty of one member of the Patrol (to be decided on beforehand) to go as quickly as possible to the nearest house containing a telephone or to a Public Call Box. He will promptly awaken the inmate of the house &. After showing a signed Authorization Card (which will be carried by every member of the force) request immediate use of the telephone. As a further safeguard as to the genuineness of this demand the applicant will use the Password WITH THANKS. These words have been carefully chosen for not one foreigner in a thousand pronounces them correctly. Your report centre will be Major Uloth's house, Ben N^o 3196. Failing an answer there you will try my number Ben 2115. If you again fail to get a reply you must ring up the Cranbrook Police Station. Cranbrook 42222

The question of messengers in case of telephone dislocation will be considered later.

Arms

We have received 20 rifles & 200 rounds of ammunition.

Mr Fuggle has very kindly agreed to undertake instruction, although as Special Constable he is not a member of the Corps.

In view of the fact that our rifles are of an unfamiliar type, everyone must go through the following instruction with Mr Fuggle.

Load
Unload
Use of Safety Catch
Cleaning
Removal of Bolt
And how to Port Arms for inspection

Those detailed for tomorrow nights Patrol must see Mr Fuggle after this lecture.

I must emphasize that no rifle may be handed from one man to another except after the breech has been shown open. It does not matter whether you have been issued with ammunition or not. It must become second nature to you & is one of the most important safeguards against accidents.

As we have only 20 rifles & one individual must be held responsible for its upkeep I propose, in the meantime at any rate, to issue them to the persons who have the greatest experience with military firearms.

Discipline

All enrolled members of the corps will be subject to Military Law & must obey orders.

The system of periodic inspection of arms is under consideration.

Rifles are to be carried with the magazines charged but chambers empty when on Patrol. They must be unloaded immediately they reach their homes.

Section Leaders

I have selected certain Section Leaders. In doing so I have been chiefly guided by geographical position of their residences & to some extent by the experience & the capacity of getting from place to place. These Section Leaders may be changed any time due to a change of plan or for any other reason. This would not imply that a man had been demoted but merely that the steps had been taken in the interests of our general plans.

The following have been temporarily selected.

Mr. Donovan D.
Leney P.
Blandford
Harcourt Vernon

Their duties will be:

1. To visit each Patrol - both N. & S. - once during the night. That is to say he must visit one of the two Patrols during the first Watch & one of the two Patrols during the second.
2. To see that they are alert, at their posts & in possession of their equipment.
3. See that the rifles are correctly loaded - magazines charged - chambers empty.
4. Should the situation warrant they will remain with the Patrol.
5. They should answer when challenged by Patrols "Visiting Rounds"

Every man should now:

1. The position of all telephones in his area &, if possible, made himself personally known to the occupants of houses containing them.
2. The telephone numbers I have already referred to. I will repeat them...

Enrolment – For particulars of method & time, I am awaiting instructions.

What every man should have in his person

Those named. Rifle & 10 rounds
Notebook & pencil
Pence for use in Telephone Call Box
Respirator
Torch
Cord
Emergency Telephone Authorization Card

General Alarm

In case of any hostile action or sound of firing in the immediate neighbourhood all around members of the force, not on duty, to assemble in front of the Memorial Hall as rapidly as possible with their arms & ammunition.

Reports should always be as clear & as concise as possible. No set form can be given for these reports. It would be of great help if you practiced making a few imaginary ones in your spare time or while you are waiting at your observation post. Here is a sample for your guidance.

“Patrol Pollard speaking. Five enemy parachutists landed on Springhill Farm. 10.30 P.M. Now under observation by Weekes.”

In conclusion I would like to express my deep gratitude to Major Uloth. Despite his many public duties he has unselfishly consented to become Assistant Patrol Leader - in other words to act as my adjutant. I have therefore been able to benefit from extensive military experience & his assistance has been of invaluable service to me.

The following will be on duty tomorrow night Mon 24 ... *(to be selected by Section Leaders, who are repeated here)*

As we have not yet had time to clean or prepare an arms record rifles will be issued tomorrow at 6.30 at the Memorial Hall.