

BACS

Benenden Amenity and Countryside Society

Newsletter June 2009 No. 61

Dates for your Diary:

Early Summer Walk – Sunday 7 June 2009

Benenden Primary School Celebrations:

Benenden Primary School is celebrating the 400th anniversary of primary education in the village this year. A village primary school was first founded by Edmund Gibbon in 1609 and a school has stood on the village green ever since. To celebrate this special event the primary school has organised a range of events throughout June, which local residents are very welcome to attend:

Friday 5th June, 6.30pm - Service of Thanksgiving, St. George's Church

Friday 5th to Sunday 7th June - Flower Festival at St. George's Church

Tuesday 9th June, 11.30am - 3.00pm - School Open Day

Wednesday 10th June, 1.30pm - Cricket Match on the Green

Wednesday 8th July, 7.30pm - Celebration Pageant on the Green

The March 2009 edition of the Tunbridge Wells 'Local' magazine included a fascinating article on the history of Benenden Primary School. Members who missed this may like to know it is still available to read on the Primary School website: www.benenden-cep.kent.sch.uk. Past editions of 'Local' magazine can also be downloaded as a 'pdf' file from the 'News and Events' section of the Borough Council website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Primary School Book:

Members may also like to know about a new book entitled "The Schools on Benenden Green" by Ernie Pollard, Dawn Bailey and Valerie Moore. This unique book is presented in two parts: Part one is by local historian and former BACS committee member, Ernie Pollard, and details the history of Benenden Primary School. Part two is by former pupils Dawn Bailey and Valerie Moore, and offers memories of former pupils and past school events.

The book is available from 5th June at local shops and from the Primary school, for £5 each. It may also be available at other bookshops in the local area, but the full list of shops is not yet known.

Early Summer Walk:

This year's Summer walk is scheduled for Sunday 7 June. We meet at 2.30pm at Benenden Village Hall car park for a walk around the parish. The walk will be about 5½ miles in length, using some of the lesser known footpaths. The walk will lead us out of the village on the north side of the Rolvenden Road towards Rolvenden, returning on the south side. Weather permitting, it should offer some excellent distant views.

As usual, there will be shorter alternatives of the walk for those who would prefer this option, and dogs on leads will be very welcome. People might also like to bring tea and cakes along for the end of the walk. For more information please contact Alan Milne on 240819 or alanmilne@chartsec.co.uk.

AGM Report:

The 21st Annual General Meeting of the Benenden Amenity and Countryside Society took place on Thursday 25th March in the Benenden Village Hall. The meeting began with Alan Milne presenting his chairman's report, after which Dick Hill presented the treasurer's report. Alan Milne was then re-elected as chairman, Angela Lloyd-Jones was re-elected as secretary and Natalie Blakemore was elected as treasurer. The remaining committee members were then also re-elected to serve on the committee for another year.

The chairman's report in full follows at the end of this newsletter.

This year's guest speaker was Richard Filmer. Following the formal part of the meeting, Richard gave a fascinating and very thorough presentation on traditional Kentish trades, craft and industries. The talk included details on a wide range of traditional Kentish industries including brewing, farming and forest management which until recently thrived across the county. The talk focused on the achievements of many small businesses and local entrepreneurs who produced specialised products to support these traditional industries. This included the manufacture of traditional farming tools, beer casks, specialised ladders and stilts for picking apples and hops.

At the end of the evening, Richard Filmer was thanked for his informative talk, and the vast collection of fascinating historical pictures, used to support the talk to great effect.

Strawberry Wood Culvert Restoration Project:

Restoration work contracted by the Kent High Weald Partnership on the culvert in Strawberry Wood is progressing well. The contractors began by hand digging the entrance of the culvert and continuing to remove tons of silt and debris. The entrance stonework has recently been exposed, having already excavated around some heavy stonework around the top and front edge of the culvert. This was unexpected and is exposing a substantial structure and it may be that the culvert is constructed of two parallel channels separated by a stone partition, as postulated in the ASE report.

For the latest information on this project please call the Kent High Weald Partnership on 01580 212972 or visit www.khwp.org.uk.

Dawn Chorus Walk:

Thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Dawn Chorus Walk. The event was well attended and very successful, despite the early start and freezing temperatures.

Led by Stephen Message we identified many different bird songs in the woods and fields surrounding Sissinghurst Castle. Despite concerns about the declining Cuckoo population, we did eventually hear their familiar call near the end of the walk. We also saw many of the birds, including a skylark and a couple of herons in flight having taken off from their heronry. As always, Stephen's expert knowledge was impressive and invaluable, ensuring the continued success of this popular BACS event.

Subscriptions:

The subscription for 2009 is £3 for an individual or £5 for a family. Alternatively, you can pay £50 for individual life 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.

Electronic BACS:

As you may know, BACS has its own area on the Benenden village 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, which would be delivered as a 'pdf' document. Some members have already chosen this option. If you would also prefer to receive your newsletter in this way, please contact William Davies or any other committee member.

Planning Matters:

The Committee continues to look at planning applications for the benefit of all in Benenden. Roger Lake now is responsible for monitoring all planning applications, which are then discussed at BACS committee meetings.

A summary of planning applications can be found on the Parish noticeboard in the village centre, and details can be found on-line at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk. Alternatively, planning applications may be viewed at the Town Hall in Tunbridge Wells or at the Weald Information Centre in Cranbrook. Please contact the Borough Council on 01892 526121 or info@tunbridgewells.gov.uk for further information.

If you have any concerns about a planning application near you, please contact a committee member who will be able to raise your concerns at the next committee meeting.

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 are printed below. The vehicle is accessible from 8am until 11am, and this is the same every fortnight.

June	July	August
Sat 13 th – Benenden Village Hall Sat 27 th – Iden Green crossroads	Sat 11 th – Cherryfields, Benenden Sat 25 th – Iden Green crossroads	Sat 1 st – Benenden Village Hall Sat 15 th – Iden Green crossroads Sat 29 th – Cherryfields, Benenden

Your committee:

Alan Milne – Chairman
Somers, Mounts Hill, Benenden, TN17 4ET
Tel: 240819 Fax: 241109, Email: alanmilne@chartsec.co.uk

Dick Hill
Columbanus, Off Standen Street, Iden Green, TN17 4HR
Tel: 240517

Angela Lloyd-Jones – Secretary
West Winds, Cranbrook Road, Benenden, TN17 4EU
Tel: 240354 Fax: 243064, Email: angela136@btinternet.com

David Grief – Membership
Crit Hall, Cranbrook Road, Benenden, TN17 4EU
Tel: 241772 Fax: 240772, Email: david@grief.co.uk

Natalie Blakemore – Treasurer
2 Hortons Close, Benenden, TN17 4LF
Tel: 243118, Email: nattib30@live.com

Roger Lake – Planning
Benenden Barn, The Street, Benenden, TN17 4BZ
Tel: 241605

Gill Snow – Publicity
Orchards, Mounts Hill, Benenden, TN17 4ET
Tel: 240493, Email: grsnow@hotmail.co.uk

William Davies – Newsletter
Weald House, Iden Green, TN17 4HH
Tel: 240723, Email: wgd@wealdhouse.co.uk

BACS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 21st AGM – 25 MARCH 2009

2008 was a quiet year for BACS, but one of which we can be proud.

After a period of relative calm, the Strawberry Wood Culvert project came to life and, having been nominated for "Facilitator" status, we received £48,700 grant towards the project from the Heritage Lottery Fund. TWBC has added a further £21,000 from its Heritage Grant Scheme. Ernie Pollard will give us a brief updating report at the end of this formal part of the meeting.

Members will remember that at last year's AGM they had considered and unanimously approved a slight redrafting of the Constitution. Robin Dalton Holmes asked for some specific provisions to be inserted, which he withdrew on the basis that your Committee would further consider the matter.

BACS therefore have joined the Civic Trust, the country's pre-eminent body which advises Societies such as ours. We have also joined the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies, who are the regional association looking after amenity societies, such as ours. You will be pleased to know that our Constitution follows best practice, as laid down in the Civic Trust's model rules, and conforms to other amenity societies' constitutions.

Can I welcome all newcomers and new members here this evening? Please let your neighbours – and especially new arrivals – know about BACS. Recent Newsletters and other news can be found on the village website www.benendenvillage.org.uk, which gives you a comprehensive view of activities and events in Benenden.

We continue to organise 2 walks during the year, a dawn chorus and a visit to a local museum or other place of interest.

We are organising the next dawn chorus which will start from a local venue at 5.30am on Sunday, 26 April. Specific details will be given out nearer the time, as we are just getting clearance from the landowner. As previously, we finish with a garden breakfast. Stephen Message is again leading us and, as numbers are very limited, only fully paid-up members who have pre-booked can be accommodated. A booking form is on the table: please write your name and telephone number clearly. Of course, no dogs are allowed for this event.

During last year we organised a private visit to Cranbrook Union Mill, where the curator and staff very clearly explained to us the workings and history of the mill. As with other events, it was a good social evening.

Philip Message again organised 2 walks for us during the year – at Ashburnham Place, and also a circular route from Mounts Hill when Anne and Michael Evans kindly provided us with an excellent tea. All members and friends are most welcome on our walks and the next is being held a little later in the year (in the hope of better weather) at 2.30pm on Sunday 7 June. We supply maps and walking notes, and keep copies for those who cannot make a walk or who want to go over old ground. Please let me know if you would like any copies.

I am sorry to say that Fred Bishop, who has supported us over the past few years, has had to give up as our honorary auditor, but we welcome Julia Reynolds as his successor. We'd like to thank Julia for auditing our books for 2008. Dick Hill retired as Hon. Treasurer, as he has become a Churchwarden at St. George's, and he continues to support us as a committee member. Natalie Blakemore has taken over as the Treasurer.

I'd also like to thank all of our members for their interest in BACS and give a special thanks to all of the Committee for all their support, hard work and enthusiasm.

Finally, I'd like to bring to your notice that Ernie Pollard has written some more historical notes on Benenden and is shortly publishing a book on 400 years of education in the village. This year is the 4th centenary of the Gibbon & Buckland education charity

The Memorial Hall also celebrates its centenary this year and we have on show a small set of exhibits put together by Sue Fisher. I find the elephant in The Street photo quite amusing.

We now move to the formal part of the meeting, after which Richard Filmer will talk about a lost sector of village life in the Weald's recent past.

After his talk, we can further relax over a glass of wine and something to eat.

Thank you for coming along this evening.