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A weekly update for Parents on news from Benenden

Friday 17 January 2020



CUP WINNERS! Girls' success at public speaking competition [Details](#)

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News and Announcements



Welcome to Our New Chaplain

Revd Tracey Bateson has recently joined Benenden School as Chaplain. Revd Bateson's husband, Jack, will be joining her in the Summer Term as they become joint Chaplains. For the time being Revd Bateson is with us part-time as she continues to fulfil some prior parish commitments.

Revd Bateson has worked within the Church for 24 years, 16 of which have been as an ordained Priest. During this time she has ministered within University Chaplaincy, the Royal Army Chaplaincy Department and a number of parishes in the Dioceses of Winchester and Canterbury. During Revd Bateson's time in the Army she was deployed to Iraq.

Revd Bateson has recently taken some time to write a book, *Forever Wrestling*, in addition to supporting her husband, who has been serving his curacy in the Calehill with Westwell Benefice, Kent.

She looks forward to working alongside both the girls and staff and listening to what people would like the Chaplaincy to be.

Both Revd Tracey and Jack Bateson look forward to being with Benenden full-time from the Summer Term and they hope to move on site, with their son John, by the Autumn Term.

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Junior School Play: Box Office Now Open

6 and 7 February

The Box Office is now open for Wickenden Hall, performed by Fourths and Upper Fourths and loosely based on the stories of Malory Towers. It looks at the nostalgic world of a girls' boarding school (long before Hogwarts!) where the girls endure midnight feasts, cliff rescues, pranks and everlasting friendships.

The performance times are:

- **Thursday 6 February** at 7.00pm
- **Friday 7 February** matinee at 2.30pm
- **Friday 7 February** at 7.00pm
- [Book your place](#)

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Parents' Trip to Porto: Extra Places Available

Monday 27 to Thursday 30 April 2020

Extra places are now available on this trip to the town of Porto in Northern Portugal that the Parents' Event Committee is organising.

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Last Chance to Book: Parents' Lecture 2020 - The RAP Project

Thursday 23 January 2020

The Benenden School Parents' Association is taking final bookings for Thursday's Parents' Lecture by the RAP Project. The booking deadline is **Monday 20 January**.

- [Full details later in the bulletin](#)

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Term Dates for 2020-2021 Amendment

In last week's Bulletin we shared with you the dates for the 2020 Autumn Term. These dates have changed since they were provisionally published a year or so ago, so we wanted to ensure that all parents have the correct dates in their diaries.

Most notably, the next school year now begins on 1 September 2020 for the Sixth Form and 2 September 2020 for the Lower School. This has brought our dates in line with most of our peer schools.

Unfortunately, some of the timings listed alongside the dates in the second half of the term in last week's Bulletin were incorrect. Please find below the corrected list, with our apologies for any confusion.

The confirmed Autumn Term dates for 2020 are as follows:

- Tuesday 1 September - 8.30am - Staff return
- **Tuesday 1 September - 2.00pm - Six Two Students return to School**
- **Tuesday 1 September - 3.30pm - Six One Students return to School**
- **Wednesday 2 September - 3.00pm - Current Lower School Students return**
- **Wednesday 2 September - 4.00pm - New Lower School Students return**
- Friday 18 September - 12.30pm - Fixed Exeat begins
- Sunday 20 September - 7.30pm - Fixed Exeat ends
- **Friday 16 October - 12.30pm - Half Term begins**
- **Sunday 1 November - 7.30pm - Half Term ends**
- Wednesday 4 November - Oxbridge Admissions Tests
- Saturday 7 November – time TBC - Fourth-Lower Fifth Meet the Tutor

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- Saturday 28 November – 10.15am - Fifth Parents' Meeting
- **Friday 11 December – 3.00pm - Term ends**

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Save the Date: Careers, Higher Education and Futures Convention

Saturday 1 February

On Saturday 1 February we will be holding our biennial Careers, Higher Education and Futures Convention from 11.00am to 2.00pm upstairs in the Study Centre, to which you are very warmly invited. Your daughters will be required to attend.

Please note that this is on the same day as the Upper Fifth Parents' Meeting.

To ensure an even flow of visitors at this very busy event please note the following timings:

- **10.30am to 11.00am** - All Fourth, Upper Fourth and Lower Fifth involved in away matches – compulsory
- **11.00am to 12noon** - All Fifth, Upper Fifth, Six One and Six Two involved in matches must attend between these times
- **11.00am to 2.00pm** - Fifth, Upper Fifth, Six One and Six Two - compulsory
- **1.00pm to 2.00pm** - Fourth, Upper Fourth and Lower Fifth not in matches – compulsory

This is a major event in the School's Careers and Higher Education programme. It offers an outstanding opportunity to every girl in the School to meet informally with representatives from a wide range of universities, colleges and gap year organisations, as well as from many career areas.

We have over 25 universities and around 65 organisations, businesses and apprenticeship schemes participating. Throughout the convention we will also be holding informal workshops and talks of around 25 minutes in various fields of expertise.

Registration for the talks will not be required, please just come along. The full programme will be available in next week's Parent Bulletin. We will also be inviting other local schools to attend.

We would be delighted if you are able to accompany your daughter and, with her, meet the delegates to discuss A Levels, higher education, gap year and career options.

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New Date: Upper Fifth Parents' Lunch

Thursday 19 March

Further to the Save the Date notifications we have published in the Bulletin in recent weeks, please note that the date of the Upper Fifth Parents' Lunch has been now changed because the original date was creating a diary clash for some parents.

This lunch will now be held in London on **Thursday 19 March**.

Further information and bookings will be circulated in due course; in the meantime we would encourage you to please save this new date.

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Burns Night Reeling Tomorrow

Saturday 18 January

We look forward to welcoming parents to Burns Night tomorrow evening. Those attending will have received an email this week with full details, but to remind you the timings are as follows:

- **6.30pm** – Welcome drink in the Café
- **7.00pm** – Dinner in the Science Atrium
- **8.45pm** – Reeling will commence in SPLASH
- **10.20/10.30pm** – Carriages

If you have any queries please [email Dawn Bradford](#).

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Take Part in Tatler's Annual Questionnaire

Tatler have asked us to share a questionnaire with our parents as part of their review of Benenden for the annual Schools Guide, published later this year.

If you wish to complete the survey and return it to Tatler, please find the link below. Please do not feel obliged to complete all of the questions if you do not wish to.

survey, and not to the School.

- [Take the survey.](#)

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Chance to Participate in Study Camp in China

Girls aged between 14 and 18 have the chance to participate in the 2020 Confucius Institute/Hanban China Study Camp in China in July.

This opportunity is open to all girls, aged 14 to 18, regardless of whether they study Mandarin as the Study Camp is both a cultural and a language experience.

Any language tuition undertaken is set at a level that matches the experience of each individual girl. Being a complete beginner is never a problem!

If you would like your daughter to attend [email Alice Webb](#), Head of Mandarin, by **Friday 31 January**.

- [Full details](#)

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Academic News

Lower Fifth Parents' Morning

Tomorrow (Saturday 18 January)

This is just a reminder that we are holding a Lower Fifth Parents' morning tomorrow, starting at 9.45am with coffee in the Theatre.

This will be a chance for both students and parents to learn more about the process of choosing GCSEs and to discuss any queries with teachers, tutors, Hms, the Head of Lower Fifth (Miss Ellie Fryer) and the Senior Management Team. Please note that Mrs Northridge, a Lower Fifth tutor, will not be able to attend.

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Fifth Parents' Morning booking form below.

- [Book here](#)
- [View the GCSE Making Choices Booklet for September 2020](#)

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Reminder: Parents' Mornings in the Spring Term

Please find below a reminder of forthcoming Parents' Mornings (all are on Saturdays unless stated otherwise):

- **Tomorrow (18 January)** - Lower Fifth
- **1 February** - Upper Fifth
- **8 February** - Six One
- **7 March** - Six Two
- **13 March** - Fourth and Upper Fourth (Please note that this is being held at 1.00pm on a Friday - the day of the Exeat. Further details will follow in due course).

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Success at Public Speaking Competitions

We entered two teams in the Rotary Club Public Speaking Competition at Towers School in Ashford on Tuesday.

The Intermediate Team, made up of Upper Fourths Annalise Worraker, Ursula Rowe and Alice Pearce, had to speak on the subject of 'Is CCTV in public places an invasion of our privacy?'.

The Senior Team, made up of Fifths Zara Warne, Aliya Adebawale and Jamie Barbour (pictured above), had to speak on the subject of 'Should we positively discriminate for people with disabilities?'.

Each team had to speak for 15 minutes (five minutes per student). Both teams did exceptionally well and our Senior Team did so well they won and are through to the next round - where all the winners from the South East will go head-to-head. If they get through this they will be into the national stage of the competition.

Then on Wednesday evening Oreoluwa Adeogun, Roya Power and Catherine Pearce went to Canterbury for the second round of the ESU Mace Competition.

They argued strongly on the motion 'This House regrets the commercialisation of Pride'. Whilst they narrowly missed out on a place in the Regional Final (by just three points), they should be very proud of their achievements in getting this far in their first ever debating competition.

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STEM Ambassadors Team Launched

On the day that David Attenborough warned of a climate crisis moment, yesterday over 30 girls from across the School who have volunteered for the role of STEM ambassadors met.

This was the first meeting of the group and was an opportunity to discuss the STEM Ambassador role. This will include the group offering their time and enthusiasm to help bring STEM subjects to life and demonstrate the value of them in life and careers to other students and the wider community.

They will be an integral part of the Science facility, working with teaching staff to help engage students outside of the classroom.

We are so excited about their enthusiasm and commitment for seeing STEM activities flourish across the School. We have a fantastic range of research projects developing and we will have further events where girls present their research.

Another whole focus for us in STEM is the Earthshot initiative which Prince William and Kate Middleton launched over New Year – giving ten years to repair the Earth. Girls are really excited to get involved with this campaign and make it a focus for activity across the School.

The Earthshot prize says it 'will be a chance for everyone's voice to be heard, we want to motivate and inspire a new generation of thinkers, leaders and dreamers.'

Our students' voices can be heard and we are excited about action they can do within STEM, and the School, to be innovative and make contributions to solving the challenges of the planet.

Professor Becky Parker, Head of Physics, and **Sue Harris**, STEM Outreach, Events Coordinator and Lead Technician

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Girls Cook on a Budget in PSP

Girls from the Six Two tackled a cookery challenge as part of their Professional Skills Programme (PSP) on Friday.

As part of the Life Skills section of the programme, the girls were put into teams and provided with a set of ingredients worth approximately £10. They collected the ingredients from the Cafe at 3.00pm and then took them to the various Founders' Kitchens to prepare meals from them.

Their task was to prepare a meal for six people to include a dish suitable for a vegan and also to take into account nut allergies. In addition to the cookery part of the challenge, the girls were asked to research buying food for the rest of the week on a budget of £30, comparing supermarket prices and devising recipes.

They were then asked to present their findings, along with their meals, to the judges from the PSP team.

Higher Education and Careers Bulletin

This week's Bulletin is below. It contains information on an ancient world and classics taster day at University College London, the CyberFest Girls Competition 2020, University of London taster days and Leiths School of Food and Wine Open Evening.

- [Read the latest Bulletin](#)

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Music and Drama



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House Shout

A capacity Theatre audience enjoyed a tremendous Sunday afternoon in the form of the annual House Shout. Always a favourite with the girls, the event felt particularly energetic and polished this year, and enormous credit must go to the Fifths who led their Houses.

The judges - Professor Parker and Mr Schagen - were left with very hard decisions to make in awarding the famous 1923 Singing Shield and the newer, but still highly coveted, Production Trophy.



In the end they concluded that Marshall's Voulez Vous had to be recognised for the strength and vitality of the singing, complete with well-handled harmonies.

In terms of production, each House offered incredible drama and creativity through the use of dance, props and costumes, but the prize went to Echyngham's version of the Taylor Swift song You Belong With Me which felt like a mini musical over four minutes.

A huge well done to all involved.

- [Photo Gallery](#)

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Sport

Berkhamsted Fixtures Tomorrow

As per the email sent separately this afternoon, unfortunately the majority of fixtures against Berkhamsted tomorrow have been cancelled due to waterlogged pitches. The only fixtures going ahead are:

- **1.45pm:** 1st, U16A and U15A Netball
- **3.00pm:** 1st and U15A Lacrosse

For those parents who are still attending, please note that spectators can park at the Knox Johnston Sports Centre - the postcode for which is HP4 3BG - where possible avoid parking by Chesham Road fields due to other fixtures. Spectators will then be directed to the lacrosse pitches (netball courts are at this site).

Unfortunately dogs are not allowed on site

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Lacrosse Against Putney High School

It wasn't just House Shout rehearsals going on this weekend - there was also a busy programme of Lacrosse and Netball. Our photos show our Lacrosse girls in action against Putney High School.

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Jessica is Selected for England

A huge congratulations to Six One Jessica Platts, who has been selected for the England U19B Lacrosse Team for the forthcoming home internationals - another example of Lacrosse continuing to flourish at Benenden.

Well done Jessica!

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Senior Pre-Season Netball and Lacrosse

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diary if you would like to attend. The venue for all current Lower Fifth and Sixth Form players will be Battersea Park, London SW11.

Netball

- Wednesday 26 August between 10.00am and 3.00pm
- Thursday 27 August between 10.00am and 3.00pm

Lacrosse

- Friday 28 August between 10.00am and 3.00pm
- Sunday 30 August – Tournament for invited players (TBC)

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School Life



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Dr Peter Vardy

On Friday, renowned philosopher and academic Dr Peter Vardy visited Benenden to invite Sixth Form students to consider what they can hold to be meaningful at a time of rising relativism and the collapse of truth.

Using examples from modern art with links to post-modernism, Dr Vardy asked questions such as whether there can be such a thing as absolute truth and meaning if beauty and value was dependent on the eye of the beholder.

Dr Vardy also posed the question of whether mathematics was invented or discovered, and if discovered, perhaps there is an absolute truth that exists, and maybe relativism isn't the answer after all...

Whilst he was here Dr Vardy judged the essay competition and commented that all the entrants were good, showing intelligence and independent thought as well as clear indications of interesting and good teaching.

The Upper School winner was Iona Warne, with Izzy Gibbs in second place, and the Lower School winner was named as Sophie Moody-Stuart, with Nicole Lee in second place.

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The Weekend

While the Lower School were busy with House Shout, the Sixth Form had a great first weekend back. On Saturday night, they had fun with a karaoke machine in Founders Bar, and on Sunday a carvery lunch at The Bull was enjoyed by all.

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Cutting Our Food Waste

Reducing our food waste here at Benenden is something that is high on our agenda and we have taken steps this week to further cut down the amount of food we throw out, with the launch of our Take What You Want, Eat What You Take initiative.

We are now monitoring how many kilograms of food waste we throw out each day and what that equates to in terms of the number of meals it would make.

Food waste has a detrimental impact on the environment, not only by the methane emissions it produces, but also in terms of the money it wastes.

When food is taken to landfill to decompose, it decomposes without access to oxygen. When this happens it creates methane, which is 23 times more deadly than carbon monoxide. In total 8% of the global greenhouse gas emissions come from food waste

If you could encourage your daughters to help us get our food waste down to a minimum it would be greatly appreciated!

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London Winter Run

Sunday 9 February

Benenden tradition as we enter for a fifth year in a row.

If you could spare any donations for the charity it would be greatly appreciated. Your donation will help Cancer Research continue their life-changing research, bringing them one step closer to reducing the statistics of one in two people having the disease in their lifetime.

- [Visit the JustGiving page](#)

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Prayer Themes

On Monday Mrs Price was welcomed with a rousing rendition of 'Happy Birthday' and led Prayers wearing a birthday sash given to her by the Grey Jumpers.

She then used the example of 'Waddles', the soft toy left on a train, to get the girls to see how we can [turn around situations where something goes wrong](#).

Rev'd Bateson led a very thoughtful Prayers with Upper Fifth to Six Two on Tuesday, reflecting on how many aspects of her life had not gone according to her expectations, or others' expectations of her and the fact that this has not always been a bad thing. With mocks, progress tests and university offers being at the forefront of many girls' minds at the moment, this was a very timely and helpful message.

Miss Gough spoke to the Fifth and Upper Fifth on the theme of 'Maths and...', showing how skills developed through the study of Mathematics can be useful across numerous aspects of everyday life.

One of our Equality and Diversity Grey Jumpers, Lily Phillips, talked to the Fourth and Upper Fourth about the importance of being themselves, an important message at a time when girls are starting to explore who they are and how they fit in to different communities.

Today saw an engaging presentation from Lily Maclean Bather and Zara Webb on their experiences with the Canadian Cadet Force last summer. It was clearly an exceptional opportunity, which the girls threw themselves into and will hopefully be an inspiration to other girls.

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The latest travel arrangements can be found on the Portal [here](#).

Please note for anyone making travel arrangements this weekend, that all trains on Sunday (19 January) are leaving London via St Pancras International to Ashford International, and this does mean that ticket prices will be slightly more expensive.

The coach will collect from Ashford International Station.

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Parents' Events and Information

Last Chance to Book: Parents' Lecture 2020 - The RAP Project

Thursday 23 January 2020

The Benenden School Parents' Association is taking final bookings for the next Parents' Lecture by the RAP Project. The booking deadline is **Monday 20 January**.

The talk is designed to give teenagers and their parents advice on personal safety, defining rape, sexual assault and consent as well as examining how online pornography, sexting and social media are influencing, attitudes, behaviours and expectations.

A coach is available between the School and Staplehurst Station.

- [Full details and booking information](#)

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Lower Fifth Parents' Drinks

Thursday 6 February, 6.30pm to 8.30pm, Oriental Club, London

A reminder that parents of the Lower Fifth are invited to a drinks party at the Oriental Club in London on Thursday 6 February. This is a great opportunity for you to meet other parents if you are a new parent and vice versa if you are a current parent.

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- [Full details and booking](#)

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Save the Date: Upper Fifth Parents' Lunch

19 March 2020, London

We would invite parents of girls in the Upper Fifth to save the date for this year group lunch later this term. These year group lunches are always lovely occasions and a great opportunity to meet other parents in your daughter's year.

Please note the date change as the original date was creating a diary clash for some parents.

Full details and booking information will follow in due course.

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Parents' Trip to Porto: Extra Places Available

Monday 27 to Thursday 30 April 2020

The Parents' Event Committee is organising a trip to Northern Portugal to visit the vibrant town of Porto that gave the country (and the famous wine) its very name and there are now extra places available.

The deadline for booking onto this trip is **Friday 24 January**.

- [Full details and booking information](#)

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Parents' Events

Upcoming social events for parents, mostly organised by the Parents' Events Committee. See also the dedicated [PEC section](#) on the Portal.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)**23 January** Parents' Lecture: The RAP Project [Details](#)**6 February** Lower Fifth Parents' Drinks Party [Details](#)**12 March** Fifth Parents' Lunch *Details to follow***19 March** Upper Fifth Parents' Lunch *Details to follow***Summer Term****27 to 30 April** Parents' Trip to Porto [Details](#)**6 May** Six Two Parents' Lunch *Details to follow*[Back to top](#)

Diary Dates

Please find below some of the main forthcoming School dates.

2020**Tomorrow (Saturday 18 January)** Burns Night Reeling**Tomorrow (Saturday 18 January)** Lower Fifth Parents' Morning**23 January** Parents' Lecture**24 January** Fixed Exeat**1 February** Upper Fifth Parents' Morning**1 February** Careers, Higher Education and Futures Convention**6 February** Lower Fifth Parents' Drinks Party**6-7 February** Lower School Play, Wickenden Hall**8 February** Six One Parents' Morning**14 February** Half Term begins**23 February** Half Term ends**7 March** Six Two Parents' Morning**13 March** Fixed Exeat**13 March** Fourth and Upper Fourth Parents' Meeting (1.00pm start)**26 March** End of Spring Term**21 April** Start of Summer Term**7 May** Fixed Exeat**22 May** Half Term begins**31 May** Half Term ends**2 July** Leavers' Ball**4 July** Speech Day and end of Summer Term**1 September** Sixth Form students return to School**2 September** Lower School students return to School**18 September** Fixed Exeat**16 October** Half Term begins

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11 December End of Autumn Term

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