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Fascinating church history is now on record

An amazingly detailed history of St Mary's Church, Hunton, dating back to its Norman origins through to the 13th Century tower addition and right up to the 21st Century, has been presented to the current and past churchwardens Lynda Twaite and Robert Goodsall. The record has been painstakingly collated over the past three years by a team of volunteer experts from the Mid Kent section of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies.

Leader June Stoodley treated parishioners attending the last family service in December to graphic details about the church history, highlighting just a few of the fascinating features of the centuries-old building. These included the east stained glass window depicting Jacob's Dream, with angels; the north wall sanctuary tomb chest to the memory of Sir Thomas Fane; and details of a 'new' gallery where the church organ once stood before being moved in 1885. "The church can be proud of its organ for it was made by a leading organ builder, Henry Willis, who also built the one in St Paul's Cathedral. Also, a bible dating back to 1613 and given to St Mary's by James Allen in memory of his father, was given to Maidstone museum over 200 years later and can still be seen there."

Parishioners wishing to view the record should contact the churchwarden Lynda Twaite (820739).

Ladies to reveal *Deliciously Slim* secret

Two local ladies who have children at Hunton School say they are smashing all conventional boundaries of the diet industry with their revolutionary new diet club, *Deliciously Slim*. Jacqui White and Alison Adams have both struggled for years with the usual diets on the market, their weight yo-yoing, leaving them feeling constantly fed up and deprived. This summer they decided that enough was enough and they would devise their own healthy eating regime, allowing them to eat foods that were normally denied to them, and indulge in the occasional glass of wine.

"The idea for the diet started after we read an article in the *Daily Mail* on carbohydrate-controlled diets and how scientists were beginning to realise that this was the most healthy and effective way to lose weight," said Jacqui. "We researched as many similar diets on the market as we could find, and read scientific articles."

Jacqui's honours degree in chemistry and Alison's previous nurse's training have been an invaluable help. "The diet needed to be flexible, enjoyable and delicious!" Unlike both the low fat diets currently available and the Atkins diet, this would be something that people could incorporate easily into their everyday lives.

Those wanting to find out more can attend a meeting and have the subject fully explained. The two ladies say: "We are very approachable - don't forget we've been there, done that and got the T-shirt!" They launch on Monday, 10 January at Coxheath Village Hall from 7.15-8.15pm, with an extra session on Thursdays from 2.15-3.15pm. For further information, give Jacqui a call on 745382.

Urgent search for someone to join 'Herald' team

Are you computer-literate and do you have a keen interest in Hunton, its people, and the current issues in the village? If so, you may be the person we are looking for to bolster the 'Herald' editorial team. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we need a further volunteer to help with compiling pages for the monthly publication. If you feel you can help, please call the Editor (820858) or the team's co-ordinator, Wendy Simmons (820875)

Your Local Contacts:

Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
Village Hall:	820309	Village Hall Booking: Lisa Danch	820322
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Under-5s Playgroup:	741951
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829
Maidstone Police:	608186	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683	'Potholes' concern (MBC): Graham Steady	602000
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866	Churchwardens: Lynda Twaite	820739
also: Revd David Jones	741474	Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	813527	Organist: Philip Moore	749356
Rectory:	747570		

Dates for Diaries:

9 January: 7.50am Ruth Bierbaum's New Year message on Radio Kent - 96.7 or 104.2 FM (see page 2)

15 January: Yalding Farmers' Market (814109)

22 January: bulk refuse freighter 7.45-8.45 at Village Hall

28-30 January: Weekend of services for World Peace and Disarmament

Articles for the February issue to the Editor as soon as possible, and by 14 January please

A Happy New Year

Ruth's Thought for the Day on Radio Kent (see Dates for Diaries on front page)

An honour for the parish's Ruth Bierbaum who was asked at the dawn of the New Year to compile a 'Thought for the Day' message for Radio Kent and we publish below a precis of her thoughts before going on air.

"After the excesses of the festive season, I've been considering focusing on the Desert Fathers.

The *Desert Fathers* were Christians who, in the fourth and fifth centuries felt the need to get away from the excesses of their culture to apply themselves to God, and so took up residence in the deserts of Egypt. And, for me, that's not an unattractive proposition - at least for a week or so! I mean, weren't they right? Doesn't the noise of daily life: the 'busyness' of families, work, traffic, shopping; the kaleidoscope of messages that bombard us day after day from the TV...don't they all drown out what JG Whittier called that "still small voice of calm"?

I recently visited the nuns at St. Mary's Abbey, West Malling, and while I was there I had the privilege of listening to an account of how one of the nuns was called to her vocation. It wasn't so much a call as a cry; not so much a still small voice, but a demanding, urgent petition, akin to a baby's incessant plea for help, for comfort...and only after leaving the fairground of contemporary life, was she able to reach the baby and find in her, at one time, the cry of the poor of this world and the call of God. Now, in a simple life of prayer, this nun's work is to hold both in her heart, one to the other.

But I believe, if we are prepared to listen, we *all* will be able to hear that cry, that call. And if we do, it will change us and the world. As we make time to hear the cry of the poor, the excesses of our society become less attractive, and as we hear the cry of God, we ourselves can become a channel of his compassion to those he is calling us to love. I pray you a 'Quiet Time' in this new year to perceive your own calling."

Yours in faith, Ruth

Ofsted praises school's caring ethos

'Very good behaviour and attitudes to school as well as strong links with the community are all strengths which impact on the friendly and caring ethos at the heart of Hunton Church of England Primary School,' says the recent Ofsted report.

Acting Headteacher Barbara Godden-Wood is pleased with the report, in which the dedication, high level of commitment and hard work of staff and Governors is praised.

The inspection team found that "pupils enjoy coming to school: they are keen to take part in activities, behave well and relationships are very good." The foundation stage gives children a good start to their schooling and standards in science are above average by Y6, with good teaching seen in all classes throughout the school.

"I am really encouraged that the inspection team highly praised pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities and the way in which the school develops them," said Roger Flaherty, Chairman of Governors. The school has already started work on the areas for improvement, with leaders for key subjects and an emphasis on improving the handwriting and spelling of all children.

A new Head Teacher, Sue Wood, has been appointed and we hope to include a feature on her next month.

Hunton Pre-School, based in the village hall, has also had an Ofsted 'Care Standard' inspection.

They have been praised for their "warm, welcoming atmosphere and excellent organisation with a good team of staff working hard to meet the children's needs." It was also said they provide a "safe, secure and stimulating environment where children are happy and engaged in their play."

'White daffodils' on a Turkish beach - Out & Out abroad

At times, one's forced to do one's own thing when on holiday.

One Sunday morning I left my husband David resting to get over a tummy infection in the hope that he would be fit again next day. And after eating nothing but tea leaves and cooked rice perhaps he deserved it!

Having enjoyed a breakfast of water and sweet melon, dried apricots, fresh bread and grilled tomato with marjoram, I walked to the beach and the seaside nature reserve at Oludanez. I paid to get in wondering why this area was supposed to be so special.

Soon all I could say was 'Wow!' and dropped on my knees beside the *Pancratium Maritimum*. How spectacular - four large slightly lily-like flowers, all looking at me with their centres slightly green! The shape of the petals was unlike others, the strong stem carrying them coming straight out of the sand and hardly a leaf to be seen. Between deck chairs there were more small colonies, very localised, just in this area.

I recognised the flower from books at home and remembered dreaming that one day I might find it in the wild. I came out of my reverie when an English voice said: "Oh look dear, white daffodils on the beach!"

The first in a fascinating holiday report from Hunton resident and 'Out & Out' correspondent Anke Way. Does anyone else have any interesting tales they would like to share?

Spring in step for new warden covering parishes

A Parish Warden who will cover the five parishes of Hunton Linton, Coxheath, East and West Farleigh, is in training. It is understood that he will be accountable to the Police and, although he will have a car, he will more often than not be seen on foot. He is due to take up his duties in the spring.

to all our readers!

Flamenco fun is a Spanish sell out: Tickets for the appearance of Eduardo Niebla, the internationally renowned Spanish guitarist, at the village hall sold out two weeks before the event - and at just £8 including a Tapas supper, it was no wonder tickets went fast. Eduardo was supported by Hugo Elizalde from Mexico playing a repertoire of his own Latin and flamenco jazz.

Hall Committee Chairman, Alan Bishop, delighted with the turnout, was disappointed however that people had to be turned away. "It is fantastic that Hunton can have such wonderful world-class acts perform at the hall, but a shame we could not accommodate everyone." He thanked numerous locals who supported the event, either financially or by contributing to the preparation of the hall and refreshments. These events are arranged through *Applause, West Kent Rural Touring Scheme* who help with sponsorship and enable such talented artistes to perform locally. This is the fifth *Applause* event and they are proving to be extremely popular.

Eduardo & Hugo's performance was the first on the new stage purchased by the Committee from the proceeds of earlier fund-raising events. This staging will enable different types of performances to be held at the hall, including drama. The next *Applause* event is due on Sat. 7 May 2005 when Seckou Keita will be performing.

Make poverty history: When the cream of British music gathered to record *Do They Know It's Christmas?* late last year, many were seen wearing what is set to be the symbol of 2005 - a simple white band. The band, which last month was also seen around the arm of supermodel Claudia Schiffer, is in support of *Make Poverty History* - a UK coalition of organisations and celebrities that are asking the world's leaders to take a stand against global poverty in 2005. To find out more, and how your support can really save lives, go to www.makepovertyhistory.org

The Parish Council has asked Maidstone Borough Council about the continued lack of kerbside collection of recyclable material in Hunton and the inadequacy of sites in this part of the Borough. The reply indicated that the service would be phased in as soon as possible but, at the same time, the high cost of this was stressed.

The deterioration in the play equipment on King George's playing field is causing concern to parish councillors. Unless it can be kept in a safe condition it will have to be taken out of service.

Some urgent repairs have been sponsored by *Savages Cranes* and this was welcome, but a more structured approach to funding repairs is now being set up.

The Council will enter the annual *Trees in the Village* competition encouraging good practice and rewarding outstanding achievements with trees. Warden Anne Bishop said: "Hunton has many trees to be proud of and more can always be done to improve the situation. I still have money for tree planting and will approach the council if further help is needed." This tree contest entry will be an incentive, and consideration may also be given to taking part in the new-look *Best Kept Village* contest 2005.

Dudley needs help in setting up new website

A new village website - www.hunton.org.uk - is being created by Dudley Farman, who has been a local resident for 14 years. He is seeking support from any long-standing and knowledgeable parishioners who might be able to give help and advice.

Dudley explains: "I don't want to upset the person who has already created a website. Mine is not really in competition with that one, which is more about people's personal histories of living in the Hunton area. I would like mine to be about current things in the village. I have already tried a small piece of local advertising, from which I received a couple of visitors, but now am planning to expand on that and, if the *Herald* readers can help, that would be marvellous." Dudley can be contacted on: dfarman@btinternet.com

Speeding drivers a threat to everyone

- a letter to the 'Herald'

In response to the leader article in the December edition, I would like to respond, as I was Parish Council clerk for 15 years during which time the issue of traffic calming in West Steet was almost a fixed agenda item, generating angry responses from parishioners.

The then constant lack of positive response from the Police and KCC was most frustrating. I think currently the issue is exacerbated by the fact that most parishioners do not front West Street, as I do, and perhaps are only aware of the dangerous conditions when venturing out of Bishops Lane, Grove Lane and Bensted Close.

Why this discussion goes on is beyond me. I face on to West Street and witness speeds in excess of 60mph while many folk have seen overtaking outside the school! It is not 'if there is a fatality' but 'when' and do not limit that threat to children - everyone is at danger.

20mph is the only sensible restriction from Bensted Close to beyond Bishops Lane, with the rest of the village reduced to 30mph. Enforcement will be difficult unless physical obstructions are constructed to block off a carriageway. Simple and relatively cheap, this will enable the village to return to some form of tranquility and safety. Please, however, no flashing lights, they are irritating and do nothing.

The Parish Council should not go on discussing the situation but see that at long last action is taken, which would, dare I say, be welcomed by everyone in the village.

Other counties have already taken action. Suffolk for example has a compulsory speed limit of 30mph through villages, while Essex has installed extensive traffic calming measures. *Ron L Porter*

The bulk refuse freighter will be at the Village Hall on Saturday 22 January from 07.45 to 08.45

At St Mary's Church in January

Notices

Brass cleaning: Mrs Forster & Mrs McSweeney

Flowers: 2nd & 9th: Mrs S Scott

16th & 23rd: Mrs Way

Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am)

2 January: Mrs Grainger

6 February: Mrs St John & Mrs Andrews

Church cleaning: Mr & Mrs May and Mr & Mrs Twaite

The PCC meet on Monday 10 January at Lantern Cottage (7.15)

Sunday Club: Any parents who would like their children of primary school age to join in the fun, once a month, at Hunton Sunday Club, please contact David Jones (741474). The club gathers on the third Sunday of each month, from 5.15pm until 6.45pm, at a home in the parish.

As well as activities, games, and a story, the children also always have tea before going home. The next meeting is on 20 January at a venue to be arranged. Contact David for further details.

Sunday 2 January is Party Time for Hunton Sunday Club and friends. Invitations will be sent out in good time. The club hopes to see everyone present and enjoying themselves.

Services

Sunday 2nd - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

11.00am Church Family Service *Revd D Jones*
Reading: John 1:1-9

Sunday 9th - Baptism of Christ -

1st Sunday of Epiphany

9.15am Holy Communion *Revd R Bierbaum*
Readings: Isaiah 42:1-9 Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday 16th - 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

11.00am Morning Prayer *Mr D Barnes*
Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7 John 1:29-42

Sunday 23rd - 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

9.15am Holy Communion(CW) *Revd R Bierbaum & Miss C Bostock*
Readings: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-23
OPEN COLLECTION FOR KHoCA

Sunday 30th - 4th Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Benefice Service of Holy Communion
Readings: 1 Kings 17:8-16 John 2:1-11

Sunday 6 February: Church Family Service 11am

Benefice Service - 30 January: All the churches in the Benefice will be coming to St Mary's Hunton for a combined Holy Communion Service at 10.30am on that day. The preacher will be the Priest-in-charge of Kingshill, the Revd Stuart Mousir-Harrison.

The Remembrance Sunday Open Collection for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal totalled £97.49, which included a donation of £25.00 from the PCC.

Gift Service: Over 50 presents were received at the Gift Service in November and these were taken to East Sutton Park Women's Prison for their Childrens' Christmas Party. Thank you to all who gave these gifts, as again this year they were very gratefully received.

'Up & Running': The toddler group held at Holy Trinity, Coxheath every Thursday from 1.30-3.00pm starts up again in the New Year after the Christmas break on Thursday, 6 January. Why not drop in with your baby or toddler?

Prayer for Christian Unity: On Monday 24 January, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be marked by a service at Holy Trinity Coxheath at 7.30pm when the preacher will be Revd. Brenda Russell, Minister of the United Reformed Church, Week Street. The theme this year is 'Christ, the one Foundation of the Church.'

On Sunday 23 January, *Churches Together in Maidstone*, of whom St Mary's is a member, will be holding their own service starting at The Salvation Army in Union Street at 3.00pm and moving via the United Reformed Church before ending at St Francis' at about 4.00pm.

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, on Wednesday, 14 February, when the Church begins its period of prayer and fasting. The season ends on the first Sunday after Easter, 11 March.

Services at the other churches in our group:

January	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	9.15 MP	11.00 HC	11.00 CFS	10.30am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Hunton Preacher: Revd Stuart Mousir-Harrison
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	11.00 Parish Worship	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	
Linton	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 11.00 CFS	9.15 HC	9.15 HC	
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC 6.00 EA	11.00 CFS	9.15 HC	11.00 MP	
10am every Thursday - Holy Communion (1662) at Coxheath HC: Holy Communion MP: Morning Prayer CFS: Church Family Service EA: Evening Alternative					

For Weddings, Thanksgivings, and Baptisms, please contact Revd David Jones (741474)