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St Mary's overcomes modern day challenges

Despite fears of problems in the running of the centuries-old St Mary's, a team is now in place to take the church through 2005, a crucial year in which it is hoped a new Rector will be appointed.

The annual Parochial Church Council meeting heard that retiring treasurer and churchwarden David and Lynda Twaite, have agreed to continue supporting the PCC although planning to move and Alison Ellman-Brown is to receive assistance as churchwarden from Joy McLoughlin.

Associate Rector Ruth Bierbaum reported interviewing is taking place to find a new Rector after the Rev. Roger Castle's retirement but added the process was a lengthy one. It could be later this year before a replacement is selected. Mrs McLoughlin was supported when she criticised the "archaic" system of selection.

The Rev Bierbaum said: "The interregnum should not mean that life at St Mary's is put on hold. It must - and is still - going on, and we are building links between the church and the village by events such as the Harvest Lunch.

"A pointer to the future is taking the Ministry to the children and the Rev. David Jones and I visit the school every week. We have more youngsters at St Mary's than many neighbouring churches."

Mary Johns, stepping down as fabric committee chairman and handing over to David Way, said dampness in the church walls and drainage in the churchyard was causing concern with repairs being given priority. The 14th century glass windows need restoring and a specific charity may help with funding.

Straight Eight promise a concert to remember

Hunton parishioners and visitors are being invited to "come and be enchanted" for an evening of music as Straight Eight perform at St Mary's Church for a Summer Concert on Saturday July 2nd at 7.00pm

The talented and versatile group of singers is led by their lively conductor Peter Brice, a new Grove Lane, Hunton resident who the concert organisers have "pounced on with gratitude and some glee."

The choir, well known for sell-out carol concerts at Leeds each year, will be making their first appearance at Hunton with a programme including something for everyone from the glorious Rutter Requiem to much loved pieces from Albinoni and Elgar with spicy modern arrangements of Cole Porter and Lennon/McCartney.

Tickets at £7.50 from Joy McLoughlin (820551) will include a glass of wine and tasty bites in the interval.

Dressing up helps children's creative writing

It was a busy, action-packed second half of term at Hunton Primary School with the children taking part in World Book Day, Red Nose Day and even 'The Big Bang.' The latter was part of A History of All Time in which Years 5 and 6 joined pupils from Cornwallis School for the performance. More than 20 schools took part in the Moat Hall production.

Not to be outdone, Middle School (years 2 and 3) put on their own show when they visited Leeds 'The World's Loveliest' Castle a magical setting for a production of 'The Swan Princess.' The children dressed up and acted out the story which helped with their creative writing back at school. It now seems a long way off but blizzard conditions on World Book Day forced the school to close for a second time during this half of the term. However, the children came to school the following Monday dressed as their favourite fairy tale characters, animals and oddballs from science fiction. Together, the children wrote a book called 'The Journey Back in Time.'

Your Local Contacts:

Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Village Hall Booking: Jackie Crooks	820226
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Under-5s Playgroup:	741951
Maidstone Police:	608186	Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829
Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866**	'Potholes' concern (MBC): Graham Steady	602000
also: Revd David Jones	741474**	Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	813527	Joy McLoughlin	820551
Rectory:	747570	Organist: Philip Moore	749356

**not available on Fridays

Dates for Diaries:

7th May	Applause Event - Seckou Keita (820683/820226)	12th June	Hunton Open Gardens (820852)
8th May	New market Parkwood Shopping Centre, Maidstone	31st July	Hunton East v West Street annual cricket match (820628)
18th May	Parish Council AGM (814445)		
22nd May	Hunton School May Fayre (12-4pm)		

All items for the June issue to the Editor as soon as possible, and by 15th May, please

A life laid down....tremendous outpouring of affection

Isn't it amazing that so many young people went to Rome to support the Pope as he took his final journey from this world?

Everywhere else we see the gulf between young and old widening - as if different age groups really are occupying very different worlds.

Yet in St. Peter's Square we saw a tremendous outpouring of affection and respect for a man who in his last years and months had become everything youth is meant to be scared of.

A passage in Isaiah speaks about God's promised one as having "no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

Though youth is usually drawn to beauty and strength and can believe itself to be immortal, something in "Papa" reached across the generations.

Was it not that in being free of worldly trappings and of the need for popularity, he was able to give himself fully to God and to others?

There is a beauty in self-forgetting, which is the image of Christ shining through.

Christ is attractive because He is love: full; ever-gracious; generous; outrageous love.

He is the beginning and the end of truth and His good news is relevant, no essential, whatever your age.

In Pope John Paul II, in a life laid down, the young saw something of God and realised they were hungry. Herein lies a challenge to all of us with faith to also give of ourselves, that through us God might be known to the next generation.

Ruth Bierbaum

Council's "cautious spending" pays off

Parish council clerk David Swan has reported to members an income over the year of £18,712.50 and expenditure of £8851.95 leaving bank and cash book balances of £9850.55. The Council had been "cautious in its spending this year" because of the potential financial commitments in relation to King George's Playing Field.

Illustrating this point was a further payment, since the report had been prepared, of £1204.38 for urgent repairs to the play equipment. Further expenditure was required and the council was grateful to the three Borough Councillors each allocating £300 from their devolved budgets towards this project.

The Borough Council's budget which forms about 15% of the total Council Tax, had been increased by 4.9%.

The council, as Corporate Trustee of the King George's Playing Field, has agreed the constitution suggested by the National Playing Fields Association. All members and sports clubs had seen copies.

The Council became Custodial Trustee and responsibility for the Field passed to the Management Committee established under the constitution. The Committee is made up of two representatives from the Bowls Club, Cricket Club, Football Club, Hall Committee and Parish Council.

The Committee would not have any funds; income and expenditure would be recorded as separate items in the publicly audited Parish Council accounts, subject to inspection. The Clerk will convene a meeting of the Management Committee.

Borough councillor Adrian Brindle reported the Scrutiny Committee had been advised that telephone masts were not unsafe and would become smaller. It is unfortunate that unlike France and the USA where masts are shared, each UK supplier had to have its own network.

The adverse snowy weather had caused further damage to the Hunton road network and members were advised to report particular problems direct to the borough's Adrian Hygate.

The AGM takes place on 18th May. A vacancy has arisen on the council - anyone interested should contact the Clerk. (814445)

Have you spotted any Spotted Flycatchers? Spotted Flycatchers were once a familiar summer bird over much of the southern half of Britain but over the past 20 years the population has declined to one fifth of its former numbers. The main cause is thought to be the loss of the parkland landscape which was formerly so characteristic of southern England. Spotted Flycatchers like big trees well spaced to allow them to sally forth and catch flies in mid-air before returning to a perch to look for the next item of prey. They also like creeper-clad buildings to build their nests. Until last year, I had only seen them on rare occasions in Hunton, but then a pair decided to use an old blackbird's nest in the wisteria we planted seven years ago. Although their fly-catching is so flamboyant, their dull grey-brown streaky plumage, and careful (rather than shy) ways meant I had to look out for them each day rather than just see them. They successfully reared at least three young, and then became quite noisy for a couple of weeks. Hunton would appear to have many mature gardens and I would be interested to know if others had them nesting in their garden.

David Newman

Daughter recalls Fun time in Hunton

In the last issue we gave a brief report on the death of Mrs F. Jean Fisher. Her daughter Frances Jones, now living in Norfolk, has supplied more fascinating details of her mother's many happy years in Hunton.

Some of Frances' earliest memories, from the age of five, were of coming to St Mary's church with her parents and sisters, when the family moved from London to Willow Grove, Yalding.

Jean, Delia and Sylvia were born in Kent. They moved to Hove with their parents in their early childhood. This was where Jean's life-long love of tennis began (she played for Sussex) and how she met her first husband.

During the War she and her parents lived in London and she packed parcels for the Red Cross. She then went to work for the Land Army in Kent at Beltring. Her job was to look after the hoppers who came down from the East End of London to harvest the crop in the summer.

Many of them had never been outside London before and found the countryside completely alien. Their experience was not helped by German aircraft menacing them in the fields. Jean's first marriage broke up after the War when she re-met her husband-to-be and they were married in 1948.

"My parents set fine examples and standards. My mother had an enormous sense of duty and was particularly good at visiting people when they had retired and were in nursing homes. She loved interior decorating, gardening and arranging flowers.

"I have received letters from old friends telling me about the FUN that they all had in Kent from the early 50's onwards. We moved to Downs Farm House and I can remember a wonderful party that my mother gave for my father's 80th birthday in the garden."

White House 'Presidents' bring home the Plate

A local petanque team playing at the White House pub, Barn Hill, Hunton, have bought home a prestigious Maidstone and District Winter Petanque League trophy for the first time in the club's 12 year history.

The 'Plate' is a knock-out competition played by 16 'local' petanque teams. To win, the White House Presidents had to beat rivals 'Hartley Friends' from Hartley Country Club. The game was played at the Albion in Boughton Monchelsea.

The choice of venue was lucky for the Presidents because the piste was very much to their liking being deep shingle, more similar to their home pistes than the 'manicured' pistes of Hartley. The game had been rearranged from a previous week due to snow,

"If the game had been played at the George in Meopham as originally scheduled, then it's possible that we would have been beaten," said Mike Taylor, one of the winning team. "Their piste is hard and Hartley would have liked that". In the event, the Presidents won convincingly 3-1.

"Hartley are probably the better team but we just outplayed them on the night," said Captain Kay Chapman. "Coming home with the silver just made it that bit more special." Kay played with her hubby John and Tom Croud; the other half of the team was made up by Mike Taylor, Mike Jackson (from Herne Bay!) and Dennis Boarer.

Tom and Dennis were playing for the team for the first time, having recently joined the club from the now-closed Coxheath Bell, playing in place of Trevor and Pat Watford, (also from Herne Bay) who helped to bring the team to the finals but had to miss it due to 'sunning it up in France.'

Arthur Morris, White House licensee, along with many other well-wishers from both sides, turned up to cheer his team on, making good on his promise to buy a round if they won. If anyone would like to sign up for the summer league, they should contact the White House 820520.

Apple Crumble: courtesy of Judy's mum

A short summer recipe from our resident cookery lover Judy Vickery of Bensted Close who describes her May dish as My Mother's Apple Crumble.

The ingredients: 4 oz white breadcrumbs; 3 oz Demerara sugar; 2 oz melted, unsalted butter; grated rind of a large lemon; and 1lb of cooking apples (preferably Kentish) - thinly sliced.

Method: Mix all the dry ingredients together plus the sliced apples, reserving enough breadcrumbs to make a topping. Put the mixed ingredients into a buttered oven dish and sprinkle the reserved breadcrumbs on top. Pour over melted butter. Bake in a moderate oven for about 25 minutes (180 degrees, gas mark 5).

Eerie desert sounds will echo round hall

Hunton Village Hall Committee is presenting young, new generation Senegalese kora (harp-lute) star Seckou Keita bringing his passionate singing and ambitious instrumental brilliance for villagers' enjoyment.

For the Applause stage show Seckou's music is being complemented by traditional sabar and calabash percussion and the eerie desert sounds of Juldeh Camara's one string fiddle (rit/nyaneru) at the hall on Saturday May 7th at 7.30 for 8 pm.

Seckou hails from the Cassamance region of Senegal and has already made a considerable impact on the European World Music scene, most recently on the frontline of the stunning 12 piece touring ensemble Jalikunda Cissokho.

This is the latest in a series of highly successful productions sponsored by Applause - Rural Kent Touring bringing professional artists to Hunton. The hall committee organisers are hoping it will again be a sell-out success.

Tickets adults £9 - children £6. For reservations please contact Alan on 820683 or Jackie on 820226.

At St Mary's Church in May

Notices	Services
<p>Brass cleaning: Mrs Archer & Mrs Tritton</p> <p>Flowers: 1st & 8th: Mrs Cadel 15th & 22nd: Mrs Leonard 29th: Mrs Grainger</p> <p>Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am) 1 May: Mrs Twaite & Mrs Johns 5 June: the Forster family</p> <p>Church Cleaning: Mrs McSweeney</p> <p>Petty Hoo to Host Sunday Club The club next meets on Sunday May 15th at Petty Hoo, Bishops Lane from 5.15pm until 6.45pm for an outdoor meeting, weather permitting. Last month everyone had a jolly good evening at a new venue Freelands, West Street with thanks to the Dixon family for their hospitality. For those with primary school age children why not call David Jones (741474) and come along to the May</p>	<p>Sunday 1st - 5th Sunday of Easter 11.00am Church Family Service <i>Revd D Jones</i> Reading: John 14:8-14</p> <p>Thursday 5th - Ascension Day 8.00pm Benefice Service of Holy Communion <i>Revd R Bierbaum</i> Readings: Acts 1:1-11 Luke 24:44-53</p> <p>Sunday 8th - Sunday after Ascension Day 9.15am Holy Communion (1662) <i>Revd D Jones</i> Readings: Acts 1:6-14 John 17:1-11 <p style="text-align: center;">OPEN COLLECTION FOR CHRISTIAN AID</p>3.30pm Benefice Service at Heart of Kent Hospice</p> <p>Sunday 15th - Pentecost - Whit Sunday 11.00am Holy Communion (CW) <i>Revd M Shaw</i> Readings: Genesis 11:1-9 Acts 2:1-13</p> <p>Sunday 22nd - Trinity Sunday 9.15am Holy Communion (CW) <i>Revd D Jones & Mrs E Doyle</i> Readings: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 Matthew 28:16-20</p> <p>Sunday 29th - 1st Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at West Farleigh</p>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(information regarding any of the following available at The Rectory)

3 rd - 5 th May	Maidstone Bible Convention. Salvation Army Citadel, Union St. Maidstone. 8.00 p.m. each evening. Speaker: Rev Dr George Carey.
Tuesday 3 rd May	SHALOM Ploughman's lunch from 12 noon. Speaker: Mrs Edith Mukotekwa, on 'Zimbabwe'. Information: Mrs Doak: 683878
Saturday 7 th May	SHALOM 10.00 a.m. Speaker: Rev'd Brenda Russell
Saturday 4 th June	SHALOM 10.am. Speaker Rev Canon Donald Allchin
11 th June 2005	2gether4god again. Children's Festival at The Friars, Aylesford.
18 th June 2005	Wellspring 2005. Aylesford Priory

Tuesday gatherings in Coxheath Centre

All are welcome to come to two gatherings in Coxheath Centre, behind the former Bell pub. The first is Benefice United, taking place on the second Tuesday in the month, 7.30pm. May's meeting is on the 12th when the subject for consideration will be the Unity and Diversity of the Church. We begin by sharing a meal together.

The second is a new venture on the fourth Tuesday a Bible Study meeting at 7.30pm, and this month it will be on the 24th May when the subject to be explored are the parables of Jesus, over a number of sessions.

May	1st	5th	8th	15th	22nd	29th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	8.00pm Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Hunton	9.15 MP	11.00 HC	11.00 CFS	10.30 Benefice Service of Holy Communion at West Farleigh
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC		8.00 HC	11.00 Parish	8.00 HC	
Linton	9.15 HC		8.00 HC	9.15 HC	9.15 HC	
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC		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 \(741474\)**](mailto:Rev David Jones (741474))