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## All the Fun of the Christmas Fair – Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 3.30pm

We have received this lovely letter from a rather special person...

Dear Hunton

*I am really looking forward to coming to the Hunton Village Christmas Fair again this year – indeed it was one of the very first dates I put in my diary as I really enjoyed it last time. I understand that St Mary’s church is completely sold out with 19 stalls offering a huge range of gifts and craft items as well as locally grown food. There will be refreshments in the church this year too. The churchyard will again have a BBQ and there will be a further 5 stalls offering a range of food and drink. A lantern parade for kids of all ages will end at the lychgate where I am told snow is guaranteed (just like last year). I MUST have my photo taken there this time – it looked really good fun! Over in the hall you will find another two stalls and a host of activities and attractions for the kids (including a train layout!). There will be refreshments there too and of course I will be in my magical grotto.*

*I’d love to go into more detail, but this is a very busy time for me and my elves and I really don’t have the time, so why not come along to St Mary’s church, churchyard and Hunton Village Hall from 3.30 until 6.30pm and see for yourselves. I hope to see you there and would like to be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.*

*Lots of Love, Santa*



If you would like to see Santa in his grotto we do have a small number of spaces left at £5 per child so call Steve and Sue on 01622 820403. Entrance to the fair is £1 for adults and free for under 16s. As Santa says, we have a huge number of stalls with a wide variety of things to buy and we hope it will be even more fun than last year. All profits from the event will be shared between the Church and other village organisations.



### Please Save Your Stamps

When all your Christmas cards arrive through your letterbox don’t forget to collect the used stamps and help to cover the cost of training hearing dogs to change the lives of deaf people.

Just cut around the stamps of letters and cards you receive leaving a 1cm gap. Then bring your stamps to Hunton Village club. If the club is closed there’s no need to wait until it is open, just put them in an envelope addressed to me, pop them through the letterbox and I’ll do the rest. Thank You!

*Tricia Nichols*

Your Local Contacts:		Village Hall Booking:	<a href="http://www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk">www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk</a>
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Maidstone Police	690690 or 101
Under 5’s Pre-School:	820309	Neighbourhood Watch: <a href="mailto:huntonwatch@gmail.com">huntonwatch@gmail.com</a>	820403, 820429, 820731
Pre-School Supervisor:	07972067110	‘Potholes’ Hotline (KCC)	03000 418181
Pond and Tree Warden: Mike Summersgill	820429	Community Warden: Adam McKinley	07811 271021
Rector: Revd. Peter Callway	747570*	PCSO - Jasmine Pay	101
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474*	Helen Grant MP <a href="mailto:helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk">helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk</a>	0207 219 7107
Associate Rector: Revd Eileen Doyle	204241**	Hunton Bell Ringers, Michael Webb	745716
Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288	<b>*not available on Fridays; **not available on Mondays or Tuesdays</b>	
Village Club: Gil Robertson	820059		
Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at <a href="http://www.hunton.org.uk/contacts">www.hunton.org.uk/contacts</a>			

Parish Council Contacts			
Parish Council Chairman – David Heaton 820678		Clerk to the Parish Council – Sharon Goodwin 681238	
Cllr Jonny Goddard 820096	Cllr Roger Lee 820210	Cllr Tony Stanbridge 820721	
Cllr Annette Trought 820448	Cllr Helen Ward 820810	Cllr Gary Thomas 820691	

Diary Dates			
Sat 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	<b>Quiz Night</b> Village Club 8.15pm	Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>Christmas Fair</b> Church and Village Hall 3.30-6.30pm
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>Village Club AGM</b> 7pm	Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>‘Mr &amp; Mrs’</b> Village Club 8pm
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>Carol Service</b> St Mary’s Church 6pm	Mon 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	<b>New Year’s Eve Party</b> Village Club 8pm
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	<b>WI ‘Appalachian Adventure’ Meeting</b> Village Club 7pm		
Check out <a href="http://www.hunton.org.uk/diary">www.hunton.org.uk/diary</a> for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email <a href="mailto:diary@hunton.org.uk">diary@hunton.org.uk</a>			

## Pastoral Letter

As you read this, Christmas is approaching fast, and carol services will be springing up all around. Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced round stone circles. The word 'carol' is a derivative of the French word *caroller*, the interpretation of which means dancing around in a circle. Carol and carols, eventually came to mean not only to dance but included music and lyrics to become a song of praise and joy! Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived.

Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones. However, not many people liked them as they were all written and sung in Latin, a language that the normal people couldn't understand. By the time of the Middle Ages (the 1200s), most people had lost interest in celebrating Christmas altogether. Then St Francis of Assisi got permission from Pope Honourius III to set up a manger with hay and two live animals — an ox and an ass — in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio, and so the first of many nativity plays came into being. The people in the plays sang songs or 'canticles' that told the Christmas story. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but mostly they were in a language that the people watching the play could understand and join in! Later carols from Elizabethan period are untrue stories, very loosely based on the Christmas story about the holy family, and were seen as entertaining rather than religious songs. They were usually sung in homes rather than in churches!

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was banned. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols remained mainly unsung in public until Victorian times, when there was a resurgence in popularity.

There are plenty of opportunities to sing carols in the benefice this year, from carols in The Bull, Linton (Dec 14<sup>th</sup>) and the White House, West Farleigh (Dec 21<sup>st</sup>), around trees in Coxheath (Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>) and East Farleigh (Dec 8<sup>th</sup>), and in our five churches on December 16<sup>th</sup> (see [www.unitedbenefice.church](http://www.unitedbenefice.church) for times).

Happy carolling, and God's blessing in this Christmas season.

*Peter Callway, Rector*

*Some material thanks to James Cooper ([whychristmas.com](http://whychristmas.com))*

## Rural Theft Problem Reaches Hunton

There has been an increase in rural theft in the county in recent weeks and sports clubs appear to have been singled out, as they often have valuable equipment locked away in remote buildings.

Sadly, Hunton has not been spared and in the last month three attempts have been made, during the hours of darkness, to break into outbuildings on the King George V playing fields and one was successful with an expensive mower being stolen. The police have been informed and details of a couple of vehicles that may be of interest have been passed to them.

Clearly the area has been targeted and almost certainly has been checked out in advance so if you are a regular user of the King George V playing field, or attend functions at the hall and see anything that seems suspicious please notify the police (calling 101) or Huntonwatch ([huntonwatch@gmail.com](mailto:huntonwatch@gmail.com)) with the details. Please also take special care to protect your belongings and ensure that nothing of value is left vulnerable.

Once again Huntonwatch has had to inform police of joy riders driving across crop fields and causing criminal damage. The culprits don't seem to realise that if caught they will have a criminal record that will impact their entire lives. If you witness or come across any evidence of this anti-social behaviour, please report it to us as we are trying to keep the police updated.

Thank you, *Huntonwatch*

## Christmas Farmers' Markets

**Yalding Yuletide Market – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 4.45pm – 8pm**

The High Street will be alive with street entertainers, festive food, the Farmers' Market and a variety of stalls run by charities, village organisations and individuals, all helping to create a festive atmosphere.

**East Farleigh Market – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 10am – 1pm**

Local foods, produce and craft stalls with three new stalls this month, including Carolyn Millen Pyrography – decorated boot jacks and bird boxes. Proceeds from the December market will be supporting Maidstone Samaritans, who will be holding a lucky dip for the children.

## HGVs on Our Rural Roads

Borough Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid and Parish Councillor Helen Ward met recently with Helen Grant MP to discuss the problems experienced locally with HGVs using our narrow, rural roads.

Helen explained that she is working with John Wilson and the Kent Association of Local Councils to find a long term, sustainable solution which can keep more HGVs off of Kent's rural roads. The aim of the project is to work with all stakeholders including farmers, local politicians, hauliers and enforcement authorities to find a mutually agreeable way to limit the number of HGVs on rural roads. A specific solution could include: more accurate sat nav use, better road signage, agreed routes for HGVs to use to access farms and enforcement when the agreements are broken.

She has facilitated a meeting between KALC and the Kent MP group in which the Kent MPs were supportive of the project. The project has also won support from Kent County Council and the Leader of KCC has asked for a working group to be set up to report into the KCC Cabinet on potential solutions. This group will be chaired by Sean Holden, KCC Councillor for Cranbrook, and will meet for the first time in the coming weeks.

Once specific proposals have been drawn up, and agreed by KCC, Helen will be working with Kent MPs to lobby Government for any funding which may be required.

## A Walk Up East Street in the Early 60s

Former Hunton resident, John Chaplin, who now lives in France, takes us on a trip down memory lane...

It has been wet in Haute Vienne today so I have taken a walk around East Street as I remember it from then.

Starting at the Beult river bridge looking over to the left you could still see the abutment of the old bridge and part of the old road. Just past there is a farm track that goes through to Bishops Lane, a short cut through to Elphicks Farm for the hops to be taken for picking from Gatehouse Farm.

On the right, Beult House? This used to be the butchers shop. Next door was Wensheda, the home of Fred and Win Guess, named after their three daughters, Wendy, Sheila and Linda; Fred was the local carrier and had two lorries.

The oast house on the right was converted to a house by one of my teachers, Mr Gracie; all the window frames he made from the central oak beam. Next door is The Bull pub where I lived and my little sister, Sally, was born.

Round the double bend the field on the left had pickers huts in it along with Bull Oast, where I worked as a 14 year old. In front of the oast was a nissen hut type building which housed a complete family from East London for the hop picking – I think there were about 12 of them! Clockhouse Farm is next, home of the Day Family (Peter). I can remember my elder sister and her two friends had half a bin hop picking here one year. A point of interest, the oast here was one of the last three in Kent to be coal fired.

Next on the right used to be a petrol station and a small haulage yard (the first place I ever saw a Scania Vabis). Then on the left was the village shop run by Mr and Mrs Gill, with help from their daughters, Janet and Susan (*ed: now the Wealden Hall House*). The next house I can remember is Grafton, home of Algie Day. He had his yard next door where they made paying fences (delivered by Fred Guess).

Think I had better stop now. I will go up to the old school and along Redwall Lane another time if anyone is interested.



The Bull pub in the 60s

## WI Scarf Craft and Open Meeting

November's meeting was a craft evening led by Chris Summersgill with glamorous assistant, Tricia Nichols, who demonstrated the process before the other ladies had a go. Long white silk scarves were put in an embroidery hoop then dotted with three or four toning colours using sharpie pens. Drops of surgical spirit were then put in the centre of each dot and then the magic happened. Everyone produced a unique, beautifully coloured scarf. The next meeting is a Christmas meal so there will be no meeting at the club in December.

The January meeting will be one of our popular open meetings when everyone is very welcome – ladies, gents and non-members! This will be held at the village club on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, a Thursday and not the usual first Tuesday. Doors open at 7pm and we feel sure that many in the village would like to come along and hear Hunton resident, Megan Dolman, talking about her Appalachian Adventure. There will be a charge of £5 to include refreshments for non-members.

## At Your Village Club this Month...

### Quiz Night – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 8.15pm

No need to book, no entrance fee, and no prizes! It is just a fun evening. Teams of up to 8 people. If you don't have a team, no worries, we will put people together to form a team.

### AGM – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December 7pm

Please do come along and learn about how projects are progressing and our future plans. The committee would welcome all comments and suggestions.

### "Mr & Mrs" - Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December 8pm

How well do you know your other half? We are hosting a "Mr & Mrs" evening based on the old TV show. There will also be a fun charity quiz for everyone, in aid of the animal welfare charity SPANA, working to improve the welfare of working animals in the world's poorest communities.

### New Year's Eve Party – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> December 8pm

Forget hiring a babysitter or hosting your own event, bring your family to a party in the club to herald in the New Year. The evening starts at 8pm with a welcome drink, then a buffet supper and a wee something to toast the New Year. There will be a crash space for the children - bring your own games/consoles. Adults bring a board game or get ready to dance. Everyone welcome even those without children!

Advance reservations £10 for adults, £1 for children. Spaces are limited but if any are still available, then entrance on the night £15 adults £5 children. For more information and to reserve places contact Lesley on 01622 820210 or email her [lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com](mailto:lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com).

Christmas opening hours are still being finalised and will be posted on the Hunton Facebook page and group, and on the Hunton website when available.

## Rob Hunt

On 4th November, Robert Hunt passed away at home. Rob, 79, was a quiet but long-standing resident of Hunton, having lived in West Street for almost 40 years. He will be sadly missed by his wife Ann, and by his family, friends and neighbours.

## Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wed-Fri 8-11pm  
Sun 12-2.30pm & 8-10.30pm

## Road Closure

Redwall Lane will be closed from 10 - 14 December outside Burford Oast for a new water main connection to be made.

## School Remembrance Workshop and Assembly

On the first school day back after half-term, Borton class at Hunton CEP School were incredibly lucky to have a fantastic workshop all about Remembrance Day delivered by Mrs Simmons. During this afternoon, we got to watch a video about World War I, which contained lots of soldiers from England fighting for the country, which was interesting. It also made me understand what WWI was like and what life was like in the trenches. The class also looked at soldiers from Hunton, Yalding and Coxheath. After this, we wrote our own letters home in role of a soldier. We included some vocabulary which conveyed our feelings about the War. Mrs Simmons then came in to help deliver assembly to the whole school about Remembrance Day. During this assembly, we read the letters we had written to the whole school. Mrs Simmons also brought in a silhouette soldier. Later that week, we visited St Mary's Church and saw all the poppies and all the silhouette soldiers that represented the soldiers that died from Hunton, 27 in all. We want to say a massive thank you to Mrs Simmons for giving us a fabulous workshop and for teaching us more about World War I.

*Roger Lee*

## Riverside Pop-Up Gallery Looks Forward to 2019

To finish this year's season we held a charity auction in aid of YCPS – Yalding Church Preservation Society. To date we have raised approximately £660, which is awesome, so it's a big thank you to everyone who dug deep into their pockets and enjoyed the auction with us.

We have decided who we are going to support in 2019 – Yalding Cricket Club – and we are looking forward to a varied and wonderful year, which will be full of interesting painters, sculptures, potters and photographers.

We officially open again on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March for our Resident Artist and Guests Exhibition, which will feature June and Melanie Chapman, Valerie Lovett, Bill Shepherd and Susan Taft.

Workshops already booked are Craft Button Initials on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and Fused Glass Workshop of Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March. It looks like it's going to be a busy year!

Contact us on chapman.june59@gmail.com for any enquiries or look at our website [www.RIVERSIDEpopupGALLERY.com](http://www.RIVERSIDEpopupGALLERY.com) or our Facebook page, [riversidepopupgallery](http://riversidepopupgallery), which is updated daily.

## Wine Tasting and Supper

A record number of over 80 people attended the sixth Village Club Wine Tasting evening on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October. The evening was professionally hosted by Hunton's very own Graham Ashlin of Sensible Wine Services. The theme of the evening was Californian wines, a sparkling wine on arrival, three whites followed by 5 red wines. This was accompanied with a delicious selection of American inspired food including smoked salmon on bagels, barbequed chicken salad with blue cheese dressing, gammon, various salads, cheeses and sweets including cheesecakes as well as apple, pumpkin and pecan pies provided by numerous volunteers. A number of bin end wines were available for sale along with an auction of fine wines, vintage champagnes and glassware. Following the tasting more super prizes were given out to the lucky raffle winners.

The event raised just over £2,000 towards equipping the new Club kitchen, which is now mostly complete thanks to Roger Ward and was put to good use during the evening to assemble the dishes. The kitchen now needs a cooker, splash backs, fridge and dish washer among other equipment which this event will help in purchasing. A recent donation by the Hunton Herald Committee has also significantly helped with this as well. The next project is to be an upgrade of the toilets.

Very many thanks to Graham, Lesley, Roger and everyone else who gave of their time, provided dishes for the supper and of course to those that supported this most enjoyable event.

### At St Mary's Church in December

Flowers	Services
Fay Joyce and Sue Scott	<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December</b> 9.30am Holy Communion – Rev David Jones
	<b>Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December</b> 6.00pm Carol Service – Rev David Jones
	<b>Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Eve</b> 10.00pm Holy Communion – Rev David Jones
	<b>Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day</b> 10.00am Family Service and Holy Communion – Rev Eileen Doyle

#### Other services in the Benefice

December	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
Coxheath	11.00 HC	11.00 MP	16:30 Carol Service	11.00 FS	17:00 Children's Service; 23:15 HC	10:45 FS/HC	Benefice Service at Coxheath
E. Farleigh	09.30 Matins	08.00 HC	18:00 Carol Service	08.00 HC	16:00 Christingle; 23:30 HC	No Service	
Linton	09.30 FS	09:30 HC	16:00 Carol Service	09.30 MP	23:30 HC	09:30 FS/HC	
W. Farleigh	08.00 HC	09:30 MP	18:00 Carol Service	09.30 HC	21:30 HC	No Service	

HC Holy Communion, MP Morning Prayer, FS Family Service

**All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editor by 10th December, please**

# Hunton Remembers



The vision for this event emerged late in 2017. It has been a labour of love, gentle negotiation and last-minute sleepless nights for several people involved in the organisation! So, what a joy it was to see the church full for the Remembrance Day Service, with 130 people attending the service.

The service, which was led by Eileen Doyle, was most moving; being complemented by uplifting organ music, traditional hymns, the wonderful introduction and poetry reading of 'The Soldier' and the totally evocative singing of Flanders Field by The Huntones.

Our community was represented in so many ways, especially through the laying of wreaths and a small posy by one of the youngest members of our village.

The church remained busy during the afternoon following the service with additional visitors viewing the exhibition. It was gratifying to receive special requests to open the church during the week after Remembrance, especially ensuring two visits from Hunton School, which also linked to project work.

The church looked fitting in every way, setting the scene, thanks to the hard work of those who produced such beautiful flower arrangements. How wonderful to have the bells ringing out throughout the country. I would like



to thank my daughter, Alice Simmons, for making the amazing statues of the 27 fallen soldiers of Hunton.

Above all, it was the carefully researched and powerfully delivered presentation by James Forster and David Heaton that captured our attention and now lives in our memory as a tribute to the 94 men who went to war from Hunton. The most comprehensive historical booklet documenting these men's lives, connections to Hunton and their service records, put together by James and David, was received

with great interest, so much so, that we need to print more to meet the demand!

Comments received made the immense effort worth it and a true tribute to those who fell and those who served and survived. Let us not forget.

"Wow – that was amazing!"

"I Feel very privileged to have been involved in such a moving service, we will remember it for a very long time".

"For such a small village, the effort made by everyone would have made our village men of WW1 proud, as we are of them".

*Wendy Simmons*

## Remembrance Day Service Presentation

Below is the full text of the presentation given by David Heaton and James Forster (with James' sections in italics):

*The Armistice that ended WW1 became effective at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month 100 years ago today so I hope we can be forgiven for focussing on those from Hunton that were affected by that conflict.*

*To mark this centenary, David and I set out to gather as much information as we could on the 16 men listed on the memorial plaque but, finding that there had been a party held in the Working Mans Club for 53 returning servicemen, we were encouraged to dig deeper!*

*Using the 1911 census, contemporary news reports, military records and a search of gravestones, we found*

*references to 27 killed and 67 who survived with direct connections to the village – a total of 94 or almost 25% of the entire male population of 396. Each man identified has been remembered with a small wooden cross by the path on your way in.*

*We have established links to 84 specific homes and these are marked on the map at the back of the church.*

*We cannot be sure we have found everyone, and there are bound to be errors and omissions, but we hope that what we have started can be built on in the future.*

*We have seen indications of how tough life was in the average size of recruits (about 5'3" weighing less than 10 stone) but they clearly had extraordinary resilience: typical fatality rates for units our men served in were about 20%; the one regiment that also recorded those wounded, suffered a 72% casualty rate – sobering statistics indeed.*

The records kept by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, noting the grave or panel location, and frequently next of kin, has aided our search for those killed in the Great War.

The Imperial War Graves Commission, as it was known then, was set up by Royal Charter in 1917 as a result of demands by relatives to know where their loved ones were buried. Unlike previous conflicts all personnel were to be treated in the same way with a grave marker of the same design and dimensions for both officers and other ranks.

The largest cemetery is near to Ypres in Belgium, Tyne Cot holds 11,900 burials of which only 3,605 are identified, and were casualties mainly from the third Battle of Ypres. That so many men have no known grave is common, half of the Hunton men killed in the war have no known grave and are commemorated and remembered on panels within cemeteries or memorials.

The memorial with the greatest number of names recorded is Thiepval on the Somme with 72,000 names, equivalent to the population of Chatham today. Four Hunton men are remembered on this memorial.

The second greatest number is at the Menin Gate at Ypres with 55,000 men remembered, the population of Ashford. One man from Hunton is remembered here.

The third is perhaps less well known; the Basra Memorial and is situated on the road between Basra to Nasiryah, so has a great contemporary resonance, especially as this was a battlefield in the 1991 Gulf War. This memorial has 40,000 names on it, most of whom were from the Indian sub continent serving in the Indian Army. One man from Hunton is remembered here.

Memorials were created in most villages and towns, as we have here in this church, but both James and I are uncertain as to who qualified to be on a particular memorial. Some men appear in the Hunton Parish Magazine Roll of Honour and yet are not named on our memorial. Others like John Page appear on both Hunton and Yalding memorials. So our research has tried to identify those who had a connection with Hunton, wherever they are remembered.

*We found a gravestone that recorded the death of Arthur Haywood who died at the Somme aged only 20. He is not on the memorial but his Grandfather and Father both lived in Smithfield, West Street and his relative, Lawrence Haywood, lives there still.*



*We were delighted to speak to Rosemary Owen and Julie Older (both of this village) to establish that, not only are they related to Jane Martin, wife of a Sergeant William Traynor VC, but that Jane (once of Bishops House) was the sister of Richard Martin whose name does appear on the memorial. Julie was also able to help us find both Charlie Cheeseman and Alfred Wells, who she is also connected to and who both survived, so our thanks to them both.*

*One example of the challenges we faced in*

our research is illustrated by the story of a George Smith, born in Deptford, but working as a farm labourer, lodging with the Days at Amsbury Farm Cottages, in 1911. We traced a service record for a George Smith with matching birth details, who had joined the East Kent Regiment at about the right time in 1914. So far so promising, but: he was found guilty of bigamy in 1916 and of using an alias. Sentenced to hard labour he deserted twice before being returned to his unit to be discharged 7 months later, in June 1918. Was this our man? Perhaps we will never know but it is interesting that he was treated more leniently than one might have expected.

More uplifting is the story of the 20-year old Blacksmith's son, William Hambrook, who enlisted in 1915, the year his brother Frederick was killed. He had lost an eye when only 13 but, thankfully, the army showed both compassion and good sense in passing him fit for service before posting him to look after horses, serving 2 years in England and then 2 years in France, where he survived the war.

Our research has looked at contributions made by our young men but a few days ago we stumbled across a story that hints at a wider effort. In 1914, the widowed mother of Edward Egerton, husband of the daughter of the owner of Gennings, travelled out to France delivering medical supplies. Asked to provide hot water to servicemen passing through Rouen Station she established a coffee stall that became one of the largest on the Western Front. A friend and fellow widow, who joined her in 1914, died of bronchitis in 1916 – the same year Captain Egerton died. Perhaps as a mark of respect, she was buried beside the soldiers in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915 my Great Uncle Brian died of wounds at Gallipoli. On receiving the news, one of his brothers, Geoffrey, then serving in France, wrote to his parents, my Great grand parents, stating that:

“I only hope that should I be called to join him I may face it with the same courage with which I know he did”

Geoffrey was killed a few days later on September 25<sup>th</sup> at the Battle of Loos.

My reason for mentioning this personal recollection is because three thoughts come to my mind.

Firstly, I am sure that the thoughts he expressed were not unusual, and I am convinced those men from Hunton, commemorated on our memorial, undoubtedly felt the same. We can only feel very humble at the courage they felt and displayed. Something I think today we might find very hard to comprehend or understand.

Secondly, it is that some families endured more than one son being killed; the Relf family from Bishops Lane lost two sons. While the Gurr family, who had lived in Redwall Lane before the war, lost all three sons, two of whom died within three days of each other in 1917.

My third thought is that who died and who survived really does seem to be a bit of a lottery. Men who took part in some of the hardest actions came through unscathed, others in seemingly safer roles died. The randomness of death is baffling, which is why, perhaps, somebody once said that there were not many atheists to be found in a shell hole.

As an example; Colonel Borton recorded in his diary that while on the open beach at Gallipoli in 1915, 25 shells landed in close proximity to him, and all failed to explode.

Albert Tucker from East Street, a regular soldier with the Royal West Kent's was unlucky to be left wounded on the battlefield at Mons in August 1914. He lay there for three days. But his luck held and the Germans picked him up and he was taken to hospital. He spent the next four years as a POW, though he pushed his luck on one more occasion when a German cook assaulted him, Albert “resenting this in a very forceful manner” as the Parish Magazine put it, was shot and wounded by



a German officer. Fortunately he recovered and returned home in January 1919. It is Albert Tucker whose voice was recorded whilst a POW and who can be heard reciting the parable of the prodigal son on the British Library sound archive.

But to me perhaps one of the most tragic deaths, because of timing and circumstance, was that of Horace Simmons who is buried in the new churchyard here. Serving with a Labour Corps battalion he had survived the war only to be knocked down and killed by a motor vehicle in Nottingham while on duty in April 1919, five months after the Armistice.

The effects of the war were manifest for many years. Physically many men were left disabled or damaged. Charlie Cheeseman, from Durrants Cottages for instance, suffered from the effects of poison gas for the rest of his life.

Families were left without fathers and husbands: Hannah Boorman was left with eight children, though she remarried in 1921 to a surviving Relf brother. But her sister in law Minnie Boorman, left with six children, never did.

Even 100 years after the end of the war the dynamics of many families in many ways were so changed that the effects are still being experienced today.

*You have heard something of the visible impact the conflict had on those who served and on those left behind but there was an invisible impact too.*

*As we went through the lives of those who survived we noticed that a good number were declared to be no longer fit for service in spite of not having any wounds recorded, also that many only married 5 – 15 years after the end of the war. One man, who had no record of a physical war injury, was receiving hospital treatment in 1933 that was recorded on a service record although he was demobbed many years before.*

*It seems reasonable to assume that shell shock, what we now know as PTSD, had a lasting impact on the lives of some Hunton families.*

*I know of one case where a father could never join his children on the beach on annual seaside holidays because he couldn't bear the reminder it gave him of his time in the shifting mud of the trenches.*

*Such a simple joy lost - we can only guess at the burdens that they and their families suffered in the years after the war ended.*

*In the limited time available we have only touched on a few lives but we have put together a booklet available at the back of the church. This contains more detail and records the extraordinary collection of medals awarded to Hunton men. If you want your own copy please add your name to the list placed at the back of the church.*

*This booklet lists some curious moments – for example, that George Vidler joined up in 1914, survived for over 3 years in the trenches, bent over in the cookhouse to clean his boots in 1918 and got shot in the knee by a soldier cleaning a revolver.*



*There are also stories of courage, stoicism and compassion. For an example of how stoical and brave they were, the letter from Cuthbert Kemp to his parents is well worth reading.*

*So, in conclusion, we ask you all to remember and give thanks for the sacrifice and courage of those men, especially those from our village and others known to us, who have served in all conflicts; to consider the randomness and awfulness of war and the wider loss and hurt it leaves behind, and to be forever grateful that most of us have been spared the full force of these horrors in our lives to date.*

\* If you would like a copy of the booklet, please contact James Forster on 01622 820628