



Next Editors: Wendy and Iain Simmons: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th May

A Different Herald for Difficult Times

Clearly there have been few village events to report. We are surrounded by worry, about the threat to health and to the economy. We worry about ourselves, our families and our friends, but on the other hand, how lucky we are to live where we do, to be able to walk from home, with gardens to tend and prepare for summer! It is good to see so many out enjoying the countryside, getting their daily exercise and happy to chat, but even better that all have kept a sensible physical distance.

We have seen spring arrive against a backdrop of glorious weather with the sounds, sights and even smells that come with it: the raucous dawn chorus, skylarks and other bird calls during the day (have you heard your first cuckoo?) wild flowers and the scents of the woods. Do look out for the Honey Buzzards and Red Kites that have been seen around Hunton, and for the dramatic lilac blossom of the Foxglove trees by Buston Manor.

We are fortunate to be able to learn about what we see and hear, perhaps more easily today than ever before, thanks to smartphones with camera functions and apps that identify birds, trees, flowers, butterflies etc for us. (If you have such an App that works well do please let us know so this can be included in the next Herald, allowing others to benefit from your good experience.)

We are also lucky to live in a community where people look out for and are ready to help others. All over the village there is evidence of our community spirit as we approach the lockdown in a characteristically rural, caring way, keeping on going with a sense of determination, humour and stoicism.

By way of example of what has been, and can be, done: Bishops Lane has set up a WhatsApp group to ensure that those in their group are looked after and that trips to shops are kept to a minimum. In the first week members borrowed, used, shared, and acquired caster sugar; dried milk; 5 bags of compost; 3 hot cross buns; 1 roll of tin foil; 1 roll of chicken wire; 2 pots of white paint; peanuts and seeds for the birds; plum maggot traps; 1 sledge hammer; numerous vegetable seeds and fresh eggs. A vegetable and cake delivery was arranged from Marden Farm Shop and meals and Easter treats have been delivered too. Suggestions as to how you can use a 2018 bag of flour and old dried fruit and a film of the sunrise and dawn chorus on Easter Saturday have also been circulated! On this theme, you may be interested to know that Woods Butchers of Coxheath can deliver meat, Pleasant View Garden Centre will post out seeds and Cloude Enterprises Kent will deliver plants! Please do send further examples of unusual items or experiences shared, to the editors (Wendy and Iain Simmons) for the next edition of the Hunton Herald. What a wonderful village we live in!

Not Just Natter

Hunton's Needles & Natter Group are certainly not just about nattering. After one of our members saw the "Maidstone Sewing Group for NHS & Key Workers during COVID 19" Facebook Page, action began. Hunton's ladies answered the call for volunteers to make items for Maidstone Hospital. Material, velcro, elastic, wadding and wool was sourced and work began to make surgical scrubs, surgical caps, isolation gowns, face masks, knitted and crochet ear savers for face masks and drawstring bags.

If anyone wants to help or seek more information please visit the "Maidstone Sewing Group for NHS & Key Workers during COVID 19" Facebook page. If you like sewing, knitting and crochet etc and enjoy socialising then when life gets back to normal come along to the Village Club on the third Friday evening of every month and meet like minded ladies.

Tricia Nichols

| Your Local Contacts: | | Village Hall Booking: | www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk |
|---|---------------|---|--|
| School: Secretary/Head Teacher | 820360 | Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com | 07907 019996 |
| Under 5's Pre-School: | 820309 | 'Potholes' Hotline (KCC) | 03000 418181 |
| Pond and Tree Warden: Mike Summersgill | 820429 | Community Warden: Adam McKinley | 07811 271021 |
| Rector: Revd. Peter Callway | 747570* | PCSO - Martin Chivers | 101 |
| Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones | 741474* | Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk | 0207 219 7107 |
| Associate Rector: Revd Eileen Doyle | 204241** | Hunton Bell Ringers: Jeff Young | 746541 |
| Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown | 820288 | WI President: Ann Sawtell | 820731 |
| Village Club: Gil Robertson | 820059 | | |
| Maidstone Police | 690690 or 101 | *not available on Fridays; **not available on Mondays or Tuesdays | |

Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.hunton.org.uk/contacts

| Parish Council Contacts | |
|---|---|
| Parish Clerk: Sharon Goodwin - 681238, huntonpc@goolemail.com | Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhhuntonpc@gmail.com |
| Cllr Jonny Goddard - 820096, jonny@cheveneyfarm.co.uk | Cllr Roger Lee - 820210, rlhuntonpc@btinternet.com |
| Cllr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com | Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com |
| Cllr Helen Ward - 820810, hwhuntonpc@wardy.org | Cllr Gary Thomas - 820691, gthuntonpc@gmail.com |

Diary Dates
Check out www.hunton.org.uk/diary for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email diary@hunton.org.uk

Rector's Letter

In the past month or so life and daily living has changed for all of us. The change for some maybe more radical than for others but we are all now experiencing life in a way that we never expected. The measures being taken to prevent the spread of the Covid 19 virus have affected us all in a myriad of ways causing us to re-evaluate our priorities and the way we do things.

As this national crisis has unfolded I have been reminded of the three virtues that St Paul talks about in his first letter to the Corinthians – Faith, Hope and Love.

As a Christian, I have faith that God is with me and can bring good things from the chaos that is currently surrounding us; but I have also heard many others say that this current situation is restoring their faith in human nature. They, like myself, are amazed at the stories of self-sacrifice, and care and compassion that we are hearing on a daily basis.

Many homes now have rainbows in their windows and what started as a way to keep the children amused whilst out walking have now once again become a sign of hope. We are told in the first book of the bible that the rainbow was placed in the sky by God as a sign of His promise to Noah and we are holding onto the hope that those bright colours proclaim, looking toward a brighter, more connected, caring society, once this danger has passed. We are seeing signs of unity across the nation through the weekly round of applause for keyworkers, we have seen many volunteering to help and support the vulnerable in our society and we can have hope that this surge of goodwill and connectivity will continue.

And love is underpinning all of this. Love for each other, a love for life, a love for where we live. We are realising that we each need to work together, in whatever role we have been given, for us to get us through this crisis as quickly and as safely as we can.

No it's not easy. No, we will probably not come out of this the same as we were when it started. Yes, we may lose some of those we love along the way. But if we hold onto our Faith, our Hope and our Love we can come through this together.

Becky Parnham

Huntonwatch Meds Collection Service Now Live

Huntonwatch is please to report that we have been able to put in place a collection service for medication for all three local GP surgeries.

For Yalding surgery patients we collect and deliver meds every Tuesday. For Coxheath surgery patients we collect from Lloyds pharmacy and deliver every Wednesday and for Marden surgery patients we collect from either the surgery or Marden pharmacy as appropriate and deliver every Thursday. Need a paper prescription dropped off? We can do that too.

None of this would be possible without the army of volunteers who have put their names forward and our sincere thanks go to every single one of them.

If you need us to collect and deliver your medication for you then please contact us either by telephone (07907 019996) or by email at huntonwatch@gmail.com. Please note that many pharmacies are experiencing delays in receiving the medications from their suppliers so you will need to order you medications at least 1 week before you need them.

Keep safe! Steve and Sue Wyles

Village Hall Car Park

The car park at the King George V Playing Field on West Street and the children's play area are both closed until further notice. The playing field can still be accessed on foot but please ensure you follow government instructions on exercise and social distancing.

Faversham Town Walk

In early March the Hunton Walking Group decided against walking the local wet and muddy fields and opted instead to do a town walk around Faversham, which has much ancient history and some wonderful buildings dating back to medieval times.

Leaving the main car park, the group walked into Prescott Street pausing at the Alexander Centre at Gatefield House, passing the information centre, a former inn built circa 1600 and on into Market Street. The market has existed since 1086 Doomsday and is the oldest in Kent. The Guildhall still has wooden Elizabethan pillars c. 1574. The walk continued to the Chart Gunpowder Mills dating to the 18th century and the oldest in the world. From the Mills the group walked to the Quays where 1,200 ships were built and launched between 1916 and 1969. The former Abbey Granary Warehouses built in the 17th century are here and are amongst the oldest in England. From the quays the group strolled up Abbey Street and deviated to see the raised mound of the footprint of the abbey in the school sports field. Behind the field are two large barns built c. 1400, once belonging to the abbey. Continuing past the original Queen Elizabeth School, founded in 1576, the group stopped at the St Mary of Charity Church, believed to be the resting place of King Stephen. The church, reputed to be the 2nd largest church in Kent after All Saints Church in Maidstone has a tall crown spire being a landmark for sailors navigating the Creek. From the church we returned to Abbey Street passing the former Fremains Brewery and the Shepherd Neame Brewery.

Eventually we returned to the car park and somewhat surprisingly decided not to visit the brewery for lunch but an Italian Restaurant back near the Creek! A very different walk to our usual countryside rambles around a pub but no less enjoyable.

Philip Nichols

Bowls Club News

It's been a busy six months at the bowls club. At the end of September we had much pleasure in demolishing the old changing rooms. The wet weather that followed was a hindrance to say the least but despite this, the building was complete by the end of December. Then came the hard work – thanks to the many skills of Wilf Marten and his Team the internal works started to take shape and by the end of February were complete in plenty of time for the new season in April.

The magnificent clock donated by Diane Cheeseman set off the new building superbly along with fond memories of our dear friend and member Trevor Cheeseman.

At the end of February we took our usual bowling holiday to Cyprus and as always a good time was had by all. On our (lucky) return

home we were met with the Coronavirus restrictions, followed by lockdown.

Hunton BC together with all other sports clubs took the necessary precautionary action and cancelled all fixtures and events for the foreseeable future. The normal bowls season is relatively short starting at the end of April until the end of September. At this time of the year the green is always looking at its best and this year was no exception having been well looked after by our groundsmen throughout the winter months. Minimum maintenance of the green will continue during this difficult and unprecedented situation until we can safely resume bowling.

We are all hopeful that maybe – weather permitting and a review on Government restrictions we could extend the season to the end October. We can only hope! Keep safe and keep well everyone!

Angela Baptie

Lockdown Birdsong

Possibly the only plus point in the current lockdown is that the world has become largely silent apart from natural sounds. Fortunately now is the time of year when the world is anything but silent because we are surrounded by birdsong. An early morning jog or stint in the garden is accompanied by songs and calls from seemingly every tree or telegraph pole, rooftop, field or hedgerow. But for those who find the mixture of melody and timbre confusing, the sheer number of individuals contributing is frustrating, especially as many, like blackbird and song thrush for example, are similar. Learning to identify and differentiate a few species at a time, therefore, is a sensible strategy. In the case of the two in question, Robert Browning provided a clue...

*That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
lest you should think he never could recapture
the first fine careless rapture!*

Listen carefully, and he does indeed repeat short phrases two or three times, while the blackbird is less repetitive.

Even the cuckoo can be confused with a distant collared dove, which itself is easily confused with woodpigeon. The trick of separating the latter two is the collared dove's annoyingly repetitive football chant of "U-Ni-Ted, U-Ni-Ted" while the woodpigeon's call can be rendered as a different chant: in Gloucestershire, where historically Welsh border raids resulted in the loss of cattle, it was a monotonous "take-two-cows, Taffy; take-two-cows, Taffy; two".

Hunton residents can thank Enid Blyton for helping them recognise the yellowhammer's "little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese". Sung throughout the day, it is sometimes the only accompaniment to a drowsy summer afternoon when most other birds have fallen silent. An added delight is seeing the male's head, lemon yellow against the dark green hawthorn leaves, protruding from the hedge. Many species don't have a convenient mnemonic to help us remember their song, but I sometimes find it helpful to create a mental picture of when and where I first connected a song to a species, like sitting next to a dense bramble patch in Suffolk where nightingales and a garden warbler were singing simultaneously. A magical moment, never to be forgotten.

Nowadays, with a smartphone ever to hand, there are apps a-plenty to assist. Free ones are abundant, but come with abundant advertising too and often species you are never likely to hear. An app I have come to rely on is *Chirp! Bird Songs UK and Europe*, worth every penny of the £3.99 to download it. Simple to use, you can set it to UK species only, specify your habitat (a Hunton garden or moorland, for example) and has photographs to help identification. Most helpfully, there is a 'favourites' function so that once you've mastered a species you can separate it for future reference.

Assuming you will be proud of your ability to distinguish your collared dove from your woodpigeon, and blackbird from song thrush when Hunton Herald is next published, I'll provide a few more hints for making the most of this, possibly unique, experience being forced upon us.

Ray Morris

Hunton Football Club 1898 - 2020

At this time of troubles and concerns affecting many of us, it could feel rather misplaced to report the every day 'challenges' of running Hunton Football Club! But looking back there have been many great challenges faced by us all over the 122 years since our village football team was first formed in 1898, so we must look forward to tomorrow to bring better days for us all.

Hunton FC originally played in a field off Water Lane, though in 1927 it moved to its present location at the King George V Playing Field next to the Village Hall. The club was disbanded during World War I and reformed in 1919 by Messrs T. Haffenden and E. Hubble, and played on until the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

In 1947, with £8 from the Home Guard Funds, a group of local young men, once more re-formed the club. Two of these men, Albert and Les Packham were Mr. Haffenden's nephews and the Packham name would be associated with the running of Hunton FC up to the 1990s.

Born and bred in Bensted Close, I played for the club before getting involved in helping to run it from 1989. Since then I have had the pleasure of being Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman, pitch marker out, changing room cleaner, kit washer etc.

Throughout these last 30+ years I have been ably helped and assisted by too many people to mention all, but they include Colin Butcher, Keith Eatwell, John Bates, Danny Peacock, Ron Hickman, Graham Packham, Eddie Chambers, Kevin and Scott Elliott – the list could go on!

As with most local club set ups, many of these guys have done their bit and moved on, so we are keen to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in any way with one of the longest surviving local Saturday football teams in the county and assist us in continuing our history. Local sport is facing challenging times. Although in recent years we have managed to win the Tunbridge Wells Charity Cup 3 times since 2012 and in 2017 we won the Maidstone Benevolent Cup at Maidstone United's Gallagher Stadium. Sadly the Maidstone League (the oldest local league in the country) has now folded and so Hunton FC plays in the 1st Division of the Rochester and District League.

That's us up to-date; please come and join us and be part of the next hundred years! Any one interested in getting in touch (Sponsors/ players/ managers etc) please do not hesitate to contact Dave Elliott email: huntonfc@gmail.com or text/ phone 07766 732259.

Dave Elliott - Chairman Hunton Football Club

A Short Hunton Quiz (answers next month)

1. Name the 3 Manor Houses of Hunton
2. In which year was the Parish of Coxheath created, taking 18 Hunton houses with it. *Answer A) 1913, B) 1949 or C) 1963?*
3. Hunton Court was the country home of which Liberal Prime Minister?
4. Which is believed to be the oldest house in Hunton?
5. True or false: Hunton had a church before the Norman Conquest?
6. In which century was the first Hunton Parish Magazine published?
7. In which street was Hunton's last shop?
8. In which year was Hunton School opened in West Street? *Answer A) 1953, B) 1963 or C) 1973?*
9. What was the first recorded name of Hunton in the 11th Century? *Answer A) Huntington, B) Huntingtun or C) Huntindone?*
10. The population of Hunton at the 2011 census was 702. Were there more males than females?
11. Why is Lughorse Lane so named?
12. How many species of bat live in/around the church, can you name them? (If you know, please tell us!)
13. What is the oldest gravestone in the churchyard?
14. Why were Bishops House and Bishops Lane so named?
15. Who grows the salad crops in the field opposite the church? Where might they be served up? Clue for the second part - M (before the lockdown).
16. The Gudgeon Farmhouse used to be a pub. What was it called?
17. What was the first Easter pantomime in the village?

With thanks to Phil Nichols and the Langdons

Beer Festival – 6th September 2020

Advance notice for your diaries ... the Hunton Club Beer Festival, a family event, will be held on Sunday 6th September from 12.30 pm to 10.30pm. Sunday has been chosen so that our event does not clash with other similar ones on that Saturday. More details will be published nearer the date.

Dr Hannah Odling of Bishops Lane has borrowed one of the village gazebos for her GP surgery to use as an area to treat any patient with suspected Covid 19 as it is much easier to sterilize than deep cleaning the building! I am sure we all agree this is an unexpected, but most welcome, use of the proceeds of the fete!



Spare Plastic Glasses

There are many unused plastic glasses stored at the hall. Could you make use of them for an event this year? These were donated to Hunton for village use rather than being thrown away. Some have been used at Fetes, Musicals on the Green and other events but there are hundreds of new sealed champagne flutes, wine glasses and tumblers of various sorts which are not needed in the foreseeable future. Rather than continue to store them, they are available free to anyone in the village. If you think you could use some please contact Lesley (820210 and lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com) or Sue Pinks (820709 and suepinks@icloud.com).

A Warm Bumbarrel

My first day of Boris' self-isolation diktat has been brightened by the discovery of a Bumbarrel in the greenhouse. Before you reach for Google, Bumbarrel is an old country name for the Long-tailed Tit – those tiny bundles of white, russet and pink feathers that arrive in your garden in family groups of a dozen or more. I soon cornered it and popped it in a bag for a few moments while I prepared to put a tiny, numbered ring on its leg. I weighed and measured it too before sending it on its way within minutes of catching it.

We ring the birds so that we learn how long they live (for this species, typically two years – but only if they are the one in four young that survives its first year), where they go (not very far) and many other aspects of their lives. The one I had in my hand weighed just 7.9g – a healthy weight and a little above average. This weight was soon explained when I blew gently on the bird's tummy to part the feathers. A small patch of bare skin was starting to appear where tiny down feathers had fallen out. This, then, was a female bird preparing to lay eggs. The extra weight represented the additional nourishment needed to produce her own weight in eggs - six to nine of them - at a rate of one a day. So that explained why a pair of these Hedge Mumruffins, Bum Towels or Feather Pokes (more old country names) had recently become regular visitors to the fat block on my garden feeder.

I may be lucky enough to find their exquisite nest – a tiny, barrel-shaped (hence the name) construction of moss and lichen, bound with spider silk and lined with up to a thousand feathers. There is no entrance – birds just part the sides as necessary. Many of the feathers are from the female's breast – this not only lines the nest, but exposes her bare skin (which becomes distended with engorged blood-vessels near the surface) to form a brood patch. This allows direct contact of her skin on the eggs so she can maintain the optimum temperature for the chick to develop.

And, just like Boris is exhorting us to do in the present crisis, the extended family – last year's young, siblings, uncles and aunts all pull together to help the parents feed and care for their brood. This behaviour is almost unique amongst birds – let's hope it's more common amongst us! So as all of us are set to spend more time at home over the coming months, we can at least be sure of entertainment from Bumbarrels and the many other birds busily reproducing in our gardens.

Ray Morris