



Next Editors: Lesley Lee & Bridget Robertson: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th July

Time to Stop and Smell the Roses – Reflections on ‘Lockdown’

Suddenly there was peace. Not silence but peace and with it, slowly, a long-yearned for serenity.

The sun burst out like a consolation prize and spring masqueraded as summer. The birds swiftly moved from the background into the foreground, from the chorus to centre stage. The symphony in our beautiful neck of the woods was instantly amplified. Discordant industrial jarring of cars and trucks stopped in their tracks and bird song filled the air. All the day long too. Not just a puny few at dawn and dusk but chirping all day as they relished the new freedom from poisons and pollution. And how bold they have become. No longer nervy and skittish but coming close like only robins used to do.

Never has my handkerchief-patch garden been so cherished. Oft neglected and scanned en passant with a wince of conscience and a promise I'd attend to it mañana. Meanwhile leaving it to improvise. But not this year! Suddenly green-fingered I've become. So, passionately outdoorsy, all the indoor chores snubbed. And so I sowed and hoed and mowed and took an uncharacteristic interest in the slightest growth of my new best friends, speedy mixed salad leaves being the favourite. It was so eager to please, pushing up valiantly for the prescribed 21 days and then bingo, ready for munching. And I foraged. Nettle tea and nettle soup and dandelions in the salad. Better than an intravenous shot of vits and mins.

It's not all a bowl of cherries. Lifting the pressure off allows old unprocessed griefs and hurts to surface, quietly, unobtrusively. Amorphous days without deadlines and itineraries have allowed me to pause when these sufferings revisit and just let them come. Relieved of dealing with other's distresses I could turn inward and attend to my own for a while. It has been like a retreat. Noble silence but for the birds and happy chatter of neighbours.

A new normal will return in time but I do hope we respect and honour these revealed treasures of our natural selves and the natural world.

Deborah Doole

Happy 100th birthday

Congratulations to church organist Bob Caudwell who celebrated his 100th birthday on June 24th. Bob has been organist and choirmaster at St Nicholas Church, Linton since he was 76. At the age of 100 it is only the lockdown that has stopped him playing there. He has also played at St Mary's, Hunton, on many occasions for services, weddings and funerals. We hope he had a very happy birthday and will be back playing the church organ very soon.

Huntonwatch Meds Collection Service to continue throughout the summer

As the government takes steps to ease the lockdown we recognise that it will be some time before we can all go about our lives as we did before and we are pleased to confirm that the meds collection service that we have been running since March will continue for all three GP surgeries until at least the end of September. If you need more information on this service please email us at huntonwatch@gmail.com or call on 07907 019996.

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 - Paul Vasey	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@googlegmail.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

Pastoral Letter

I have recently had the experience of being in hospital. This was interesting at a time when the COVID pandemic continues to require complicated adaptations to the ways hospitals operate. You may have seen the documentary a few weeks back about our local health trust and how it was coping at the height of the pandemic. It was impressive to learn how the hospitals were managing the dangerous and complex situation, and it gave me confidence to know that if I were to need their services, I would be in a safe place. Little did I know that not long after, this would be borne out by experience in Maidstone A&E and as an inpatient at Tunbridge Wells.

As I was leaving hospital, waiting for my lift home, I was particularly struck by the two other discharges happening at the same time. These were two new-born babies, one tucked up in a brand-new buggy, and the other held tightly by their dad, being taken home for the first time. We were surrounded by staff in masks, checking temperatures, monitoring the one-way system, ensuring and maintaining all the required standards to keep everyone safe, reminding us of the deadly nature of the virus, and here were two new lives exiting the hospital doors into an uncertain world. Once I was home, part of my recuperation was rather more television viewing than normal, and as my preference was for calm, positive messages, the top choices were 'The Repair Shop', 'Gardeners' World' and 'Springwatch'! All these programmes, I realised, affirmed the message of new life; that old loved items can be carefully restored to 'good as new'; plants that are nurtured from seemingly unpromising beginnings offer rewards of countless colours, shapes, sizes, and uses; and with the right conditions, nature renews itself with the re-establishment of threatened species. Sometimes, with everything going on around us, it can be hard to discern the good, the positive, the life-affirming, but God's plan for creation is that everything will be 'made new'. He promises 'new life', which is not just physical life in this world but a promise of a spiritual dimension to life which lasts forever. Jesus came into our world to bring that promise from God to humankind - that we 'may have life and have it to the full'.

Alison Callway

Moving

One of the last groups I attended BC (Before Corona) was U3A Creative Writing. We left with the subject 'Moving' for our next story. How little did I know what this one small word would come to mean.

On the first day of lockdown I decided to follow the maxim and keep moving. The morning walk was lengthened. At first it took me an hour but as time passed and I became fitter, satisfyingly, took less time. As with us all, I have watched the movement of late winter through spring into early summer, luxuriating in the abundance of wood anemones, bluebells and dog roses. I have learned to move with a surprising agility to keep the required distance between myself and fellow walkers, runners, joggers, horse riders. I find I am now tuned to move away from people in most situations.

I have moved cobwebs from the corners of my home. Moved dirt from every curtain and rug and moved dust from every surface. I have impressed myself with the amount of murk I have moved. I have moved items I no longer need and clothes I shall never wear into the outhouse to await the opening of the charity shops. My shed is bulging with bags of garden rubbish to be moved to the tip when it opens. I have moved ingredients from my store cupboard into cakes for long suffering neighbours. I have encompassed the mantra to keep moving into a daily routine and the house and garden has never been so spick and span. Even the cats look alarmed when I move towards their blankets which surely need yet another removal of cat hair and a good wash.

I have moved to Zoom keep fit, moved to beginners Yoga and Pilates, moved the knitting needles and almost completed a cardigan for a friend. I am becoming adept at moving a wine glass or a mug from table to mouth over the quiet times of lockdown often enjoyed with friends and neighbours – at a socially acceptable distance – of course. Which brings me to the subject of my next non- Zoom Creative Writing course and, upon reflection, had better – move myself to type something reasonably coherent ready for our meeting PC (Post Corona).

Fay Joyce

The Sheep of George Street

Covid-19 has affected us all in some way or another. Hannah my partner was one of many who have been furloughed and for her it has been hard, she has gone from working eleven hours a day to sitting at home twiddling her thumbs. I changed jobs in the first week of lockdown and from that day I have been working from home and I hate it, but there has been a saving grace. Lily the lamb came home with us to George Street. lockdown enabled this to happen. With me and Hannah working full time, feeding a lamb three times a day wouldn't have been possible. We found Lily a friend called Einny, as sheep don't cope well on their own. Everything was going great until the start of May when Einny suffered from an extreme case of bloat and, despite our best efforts, unfortunately she passed away. With Lily still on the bottle the following morning we got another pet lamb called Lana. I am pleased to say that both lambs are doing well and have now been moved back to the field with all the other ewes and lambs, where they have been enjoying the recent sunshine.



Liam Tovey

Keep Pedalling

I had stopped cycling – the traffic had become too fast and furious, the wind always seemed to be against me and I didn't have as much 'puff' as I used to. But that was last year! This year 'lockdown' was forced on us. So, I tentatively dug my bike out from under the piles of underused garden equipment in the shed, dusted it down, looked at its slightly rusty frame and thought – 'well, maybe?' My kind, 'bike-savvy', neighbour Jon pumped up the tyres much more efficiently than I would have done, and I was away. Seeing the wood anemones was a priority, so I bumped across parched dry-earth tracks and grassy field-edge footpaths, then pushed my bike through woods and drank in the spectacle of the tiny pink and white flowers surrounding me. Then came the bluebells, in woods filled with birdsong. I became braver and took to the virtually traffic-free roads. I cycled past primroses, then, later, verges filled with cowslips. And now I see cow-parsley mingling with ox-eye daisies, clover, vetch and buttercups and, if I'm lucky, red campion in the grasses and wild roses tangled among the hedgerows. I love the wafting smell of the spring wild flowers, the May blossom and the wild privet, especially in the evening.

Cycling was becoming a habit and my confidence increased, as did the traffic. But the cars don't frighten me anymore. And I have made new 'friends' – the many other cyclists I see who call 'Good Morning' or 'Hiya' as they pass. I have my doubts as to whether there are as many as I first believed, as most look identical - incredibly lean men dressed from head to toe in black Lycra. They could all be the same two or three men! I don't know. But, at least most acknowledge me and, apart from the fact that I am travelling at a quarter of their speed, almost make me feel one of their team!

I now look forward to my daily bike ride. The traffic isn't too bad if I avoid the rush-hour, the wind is refreshing on hot days and I have a wonderful sense of freedom that would otherwise have been difficult to find in these strange times. Now I must don my uniform of helmet, yellow jacket and gloves and get out on the road again.

Liz Oliver

'The Lure of the Oche'

When I suggested to my husband, Mark, six years ago that we go along to a fun darts competition in Hunton Club, we couldn't have imagined the impact it would have on our lives. We soon found ourselves popping in a couple of evenings a week to have a throw and soon Mark was asked to join the club's team. A few months later I also stepped in and have been playing competitively ever since.

After a couple of seasons, we moved on to join a pub team in Maidstone. We worked our way up through the Maidstone Town Centre league to division one and from there to the Superleague, (which is part of the Kent Darts Organisation and is where the county team is selected from). I played my first Superleague game for Maidstone Ladies in September 2017 and, having won my first three matches, I got a phone call from my captain (also a county team selector) asking me if I'd like to play for the Kent Ladies A Team that weekend!

Now things were starting to get serious. If you've ever seen darts on the TV, that's what county darts is like, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale: up on the stage, walk on music, a referee on the microphone...and an audience! So off we went to Hertfordshire where I proudly joined the other 35 members of the Kent squad. I was terrified. I went up on to the stage with my knees knocking, my hands shaking and my heart pounding. How I managed to throw a dart I will never know, but somehow I did...and won!

I'm pleased to say that not all my matches have been that terrifying; I've picked up a few Lady of the Match awards for the team's highest winning average score, and was really thrilled to receive an award from the British Darts Organisation (BDO) earlier this year for the highest average in our division.

I've been with Kent for three seasons and have travelled all over the country to play against other counties. I've loved every minute of it and have made so many good friends, although it's quite a commitment to drive over 800 miles in a weekend to play a maximum of 5 legs of darts! Mark has progressed greatly with his darts too, and now plays for teams in both London and Kent Superleague.

Unfortunately, the current county season and all our local league and Superleague fixtures have ground to a halt due to the coronavirus. Luckily, it's an adaptable sport and our darts room at home has now been taken over by webcams, laptops and cables as we move over to playing online. It feels slightly surreal to play someone in the USA from the comfort of your home but, whilst it takes a bit of getting used to, it has given us new opportunities. We've been competing in numerous leagues and the qualifying tournaments to select the WDA (Webcam Darts Association) England Team, but the pinnacle of my online darts career was captaining Team England to victory in the MadDarts-Live World Championships (not as impressive as it sounds but it was a fun and banter filled weekend nonetheless). With pubs and clubs unlikely to open anytime soon, and with social distancing measures set to remain for the foreseeable future, this has now become our "new normal".

Helen Ward

Turning into puppies?

When I was asked what we had been doing in lockdown, I could think of nothing better than “Not much”. The garden has been a great source of fun and is looking gorgeous, with no one to see it. How ironic! We seem to have acquired a great number of plants with names like not-a-clue, the-blue-one-we-moved-from-under-the-tree, might-be-a-weed and our very own pantomime bush. (Other people seem to know this as Rose of Sharon but a senior moment produced its new name for us, and so it remains. Anyone who has been involved in, or been to, the Hunton Panto will know why!) A worrying moment occurred when Gil looked up from his breakfast and said, in a horrified voice, “What is that on your neck? It looks really nasty”. Before Bridget could leap up in alarm, he remarked “oh sorry, it’s just your hair” Hmmm. We find we are turning into puppies, more and more. We roam the house, looking for snacks, have to restrain ourselves from leaping with pleasure at anyone who comes near the house and getting really excited at the prospect of a trip in the car. And now it’s time for walkies.....

Bridget Robertson

Tales from the Science Lab – Part 2

In part 1 you may remember I said that I worked closely with HM Customs and Excise. Many of my colleagues were also doing work for HMCE and from time to time we were likely to be called to give expert evidence in prosecution cases being brought by the Crown against people suspected of smuggling drugs, cigarettes, alcohol etc.

On one such occasion a colleague, I will call him Bob Roberts for the sake of this story, was asked to do a particularly challenging piece of work on some material found in the possession of a man who had been stopped and searched as he came through airport security. Now you need to understand that Bob was one of the most conscientious scientists I ever worked with and he put his heart and soul into analysing the samples he had been given. He worked long into the evenings. He used several established methods and some more novel ones he had pioneered himself. All the time he took comprehensive notes on what he had done and the results he had obtained until after 3-4 weeks he was able to draw his conclusions. I must say it was a masterful piece of work and the Prosecution were delighted. The trial was a foregone conclusion – the man was guilty of smuggling drugs.

As the day of the trial approached Bob spent hours and hours preparing his evidence using acetate slides for use on an overhead projector as a means of explaining his findings to the jury. These slides were themselves a work of art, with overlays which could be moved in and out of the field of view and everything colour coded. To make sure he got all the information across Bob also scripted the entire presentation in his workbook. The day came and he was ready.

As Bob took the stand and was sworn in a court official wheeled in the overhead projector and plugged it in. Bob started his evidence. All went well for the first two slides and the jurors were listening intently. Then it started to go wrong. Bob knocked his workbook onto the floor mid-sentence and rather than apologise and pick up the book to start again – he just carried on. Sadly, he did not get the script quite right and things went from bad to worse as he used the wrong overlay to demonstrate his next point. Bob panicked, backtracked and went over the information once more – only to get it wrong a second time. After that the fairest thing I could say was that the whole thing became a farce. The jury were confused, the judge was not happy and the Prosecution lost the case.

In his feedback the judge said of Bob “Never, in all my years on the bench, have I seen the use of visual aids so effectively muddy the waters and confuse everyone present.”

Professor Plum

An Unexpected Development

An unwelcome consequence of lockdown is the significant increase in takeaway food wrappers and drinks cans/bottles, as well as used lavatory paper, deposited by the church entrance and electricity substation. This area is a private driveway, maintained by volunteers and householders. This is not an area available for public parking other than through the tolerance of the landowner and if this antisocial behaviour continues then all cars parking there, not visiting the Church or churchyard, will be reported to the police, will have notices attached to their windscreens and when spotted, owners will be asked to park elsewhere.

If you are aware of who is responsible for this most unpleasant form of littering, then please ask them to desist or it will ruin it for the innocent and law abiding majority.

St Mary’s Church in July

St Mary’s Church will be open on Wednesdays only between 2-3.30pm for private prayer from the 24th June.

Churches will not be open for public worship until at least July 4th. A risk assessment is a legal requirement before that happens and social distancing and infection control must be in place. This is being investigated.

Details of weekly service at 10:30 Sunday mornings: Computer/tablet or smartphone: <http://bit.ly/UnitedBenefice>

By phone, dial 0203 051 2874 and enter 185124308# (call is standard cost to a geographic number)

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