



Next Editors: James and Andrea Forster: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 10th December

Christmas in Hunton

At the time of writing this article, we are in the second 'lockdown' and very uncertain if we will be allowed to spend time with our families and friends. Alas, the glory of the traditional Hunton Christmas is likely to be very different this year. Like many, we will miss the Christmas fayres, carol singing and time with friends.

So, let us hold onto those traditions that are possible. Almost everyone loves a carol, even Scrooge! Aided by Christmas tree lights, the spicy aroma of mulled wine and mince pies, carols have the power to summon up a magical mood. When we go out for our wonderful Hunton walks, why not take a few carols with you? No one will hear you singing! You can take a flask of mulled wine and download a few carols. Moreover, on the 20th December, a pre-recorded carol service (using social isolation) is planned on zoom. Watch out for further news on this around the village.

Many of the songs that we associate with church were not composed as Christmas carols. Furthermore, almost all did not start life with the words that we know today. The folk song tradition is actually the basis for many carols. Indeed, many 'English' carols are far from English in their derivation. The word carol is featured in many European languages.

In the beginning, a 'carol' was a celebratory song; with dancing around the fire, cakes and ale. Congregational singing began in the sixteenth century with the Reformation. By the eighteenth century, carol singing was allowed in church, as a mixture of folk music meets Handel! Moving on, words, often in a stanza poetry style, were linked to Bible stories and everyday folk life. These words changed and evolved, being influenced by such people as Vaughan Williams, the Wesleys and, poets William Morris and Christina Rossetti. Cecil Sharp's collection of folk songs celebrates the best of the English tradition. Twentieth century composers started to set new poetry into carols. For example, 'Bethlehem Down' was composed to pay for an un-paid beer bill! We all love the work of John Rutter and sing along with the best of Dylan or Lennon and McCartney. Just how many carols do you know?

There is plenty more singing to do, so COVID rules allowing, pass the mince pies and mulled wine! Happy Christmas, whatever it may be!

Iain and Wendy Simmons

Peter Pan Returns - but not yet!

Having postponed the Pantomime from April 2020 to just after Christmas, it is quite obvious that it won't be happening this Christmas after all. We do have dates reserved in April 2021 in the hope that we may be able to perform again. The dates are Thursday 8th, Friday 9th and Saturday 10th April, matinee and evening. Wednesday 7th will be sponsors evening. All tickets purchased will be valid for the same evenings as originally purchased for. Fingers crossed that the current situation will be under control by then.

Sue, Sharon and Neil - production team.

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
Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288	Hunton Bell Ringers: Jeff Young	746541
Village Club: Gil Robertson	820059	WI President: Ann Sawtell	820731
Maidstone Police	690690 or 101	*not available on Fridays	
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@googlemail.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, gt1huntonpc@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

What are you hoping for? Something short term and known only to you or your family and friends? Or a bigger thing that will benefit many? Do you harbour your hope in secret, or are you sharing it with others? Hope. It's a strange word and has many interpretations. "To desire or cherish with an expectation of fulfilment" or "a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen" are common definitions. How secure are we in the things we hope for? How confident in them are we?

The opposite of hope is despair, or dread, or disbelief. In Dante's *Inferno*, part of his 14th-century epic poem *Divine Comedy*, we are made aware of the sign above the inferno (also known as "hell") which says: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here". What an awful place to be – in a place with no hope. Dante's poem has three parts (followed by *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*) in which he tells the story of a journey towards hope and life in all its fullness with God.

When we are in such a place, it is often a change in circumstances that can trigger the renewal of hope. As I write, many things have changed in the past weeks, which may have triggered a fresh hope in you. For example, a new president-elect in the USA. The shake-up at No. 10 Downing Street as long-standing SPADs leave. The success of Pfizer in development of a vaccine against COVID-19.

As we enter the season of Advent, we recall that it is a special time of hope and anticipation. We anticipate the celebration of the first coming of Jesus to earth at Christmas – and whatever the pandemic situation, we can celebrate that in our hearts with joy and peace. And we anticipate the return of Jesus at a time unknown to any of us, when he promises to end all suffering, to bring about a new heaven and a new earth, and when God promises to be with his people. This is the Advent Hope – in which we can be confident because it is based on God's promise to us!

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not yet seen" and St. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

May Advent be a time of hope for you, filled with God's blessings.

Peter Callway, Rector.

Upon Bishop's Field

Many of you in the village, and some from further afield, have been enjoying the walking opportunities in the village; especially the access to the private land of Bishop's Field. In this strange year, the number of people, and dogs, walking around the field has increased greatly. It has helped to improve peoples' health and wellbeing and, proves to be a great place to meet others whilst socially isolating. By the time that you read this, the next chapter in the life of the field may well have started.

The field is part of the Hunton Court Estate. It was sold off in 1954 and then repurchased in 2018. The current owner, Serge Desmarais, is creating a woodland in this 60 acre field. Over this winter and spring, 45,000 trees will be planted. Mostly native species with a number of statement trees. To give the trees the best start in life, the woodland will be protected by fencing to keep out the rabbits and deer. Knowing how the village community love walking round the field, a strip of land is being left between the fence and the field boundary; for all to continue to use.

After decades of use for agriculture, mainly hops, wheat and oil seed rape, 2019 saw grass being sown and the most amazing display of poppies spring naturally from the ground. This summer brought the spectacle of the grass being cut, baled and transported. The antics of the contractors kept many of us amused, and interested, for weeks and weeks. Next summer will see the woodland, with its rides and open spaces planted and taking shape. It will be interesting to see the changes to the flora and fauna that flow from the latest chapter in the life of this part of Hunton.

Save Your Stamps

With Christmas around the corner everyone will soon be having Christmas cards falling through their letterbox. Please don't discard the stamps when you throw out the envelopes. Kicks Count can benefit from your used postage stamps! Both UK and International stamps are welcome. Your used stamps are collated by volunteers and raise a flat rate of £20 per kilo.

Kicks Count aims to reduce the UK's high stillbirth and neonatal death rate by raising awareness of baby movements. While there isn't one cause of stillbirth, a decrease in fetal movement can be a key warning sign that a baby is in distress and early delivery could save nearly a third of stillborn babies. In the UK, 8 babies are stillborn every single day.

Please cut around your stamps without damaging them and pop them through the Club's letterbox. That's all!

Thank you.



Tales From The Science Lab – Part 6

In a previous tale I recounted how the pressures of being an expert witness in a courtroom trial can turn a talented and usually extremely competent scientist into a quivering wreck. This story recalls how the very same thing almost happened to me.

It started when we received a large plastic bag of white powder wrapped in paper which was crudely fastened with three surgical plasters. Along with this came a box of plasters with three missing. Both items had been taken from the luggage of a man leaving a ferry in Dover. The box of plasters was in his shoulder bag in full view. The bag of powder was less obvious. I was asked two questions: 1) what is the white powder? and 2) can I prove that the plasters securing the package had come from the box found on the 'suspect'.

Question 1 was easy. A quick analysis showed indisputably that the powder was heroin – and of such a quantity to be worth a great deal of money. Question 2 was more of an issue. The fact is that plasters are made in their millions using a standard and very reproduceable process. I did everything I could think of but in the end, there was no way that I could confirm whether or not the plasters came from the box found on the suspect.

When I sent in my report, I thought that would be the end of it - so imagine my alarm when I received a message asking me to give evidence in the trial. Prior to the big day I met with the prosecution team and we went through my evidence. They understood what I was saying about being unable to prove that the plasters came from that box but made it clear that they 'knew this guy is guilty' and were looking for me to deliver the final telling piece of proof.

When I took to the stand all went well as the prosecuting lawyer asked me to talk through what I had done, and I showed photographic and other evidence to support what I was saying. Then came the turn of the defence lawyer. He readily accepted that the white powder was indeed heroin but argued that his client had no knowledge of the package or how it got to be in his luggage. Then came the killer question: "So Professor, from your very detailed analysis I gather that your conclusion is that the three plasters in question must have come from the box that my client was carrying, quite openly, in his shoulder bag. Is that correct?"

One piece of advice I had been given years ago by a colleague was 'tell the truth, don't try to be clever and never try to make the evidence fit a predefined theory'. With this in mind, my response was "No that is not correct". The defence lawyer smiled until I continued saying "But I have tried for many weeks, using every technique I know, to find a difference between the three plasters on the package and those in your client's box – and I have not been able to find one." My evidence finished I went back to meet the prosecuting team, worried that I had damaged their case by not providing the proof they were after. To my surprise they were delighted. It turns out that the defence team had 3 scientists standing by to point out that there was no way that I could prove the plasters came from the box. Had they thrown doubt on that part of my evidence, the rest would also have been doubted. The jury were left to form their own conclusions and the defence scientists were never called to give evidence.

The prosecution won their case, the suspect (as it turned out a known drug smuggler) was sent to pay his debt to society. Phew!

Chickens in Chainhurst

Those of you who may not frequent social media might have missed the announcement that Fridays Ltd, a local Kent egg producer, wants to expand its laying chicken operations and has bought the Reed Court Farm estate that borders the River Beult. It is proposing to build a 'free range' operation there, comprising three sheds 250m long x 6m high accommodating **192,000 chickens**. Amongst the proposals is an intention to move the footpaths across the estate, and to fence them in between 2m high fences. The details can be seen on their specific website www.wealdenwoods-freerange.co.uk.

Our neighbours in Chainhurst, and some of the residents in East Hunton, have expressed concern about some aspects of the proposals (traffic, noise, smell, lighting) and have created a website to act as a forum for comments and a source of (other) information; on www.WeLoveChainhurst.co.uk. Fridays invited interested residents, myself included, and Parish Councillors in Marden & Hunton to visit their facility near Goudhurst in October. This was a bit of an eye-opener as to how the company operates a production system with that number of hens being housed & fed, and what use the hens make of the open ranges (like how they engage in small groups in the sheds, decide when to leave & return, and how they each always go to their own same tree on the range).

My specific concerns, with my environmental hat on, are the potential effects of field waste run-off to the River Beult SSSI (the fish and biology therein), and the loss of biodiversity, habitat corridors and ponds/ditches on what was always a favourite walking route and KCC educational trail in Peter Tipples' time (where we could introduce our young children to the wildlife and variety of nature in the pastures & woods). It is also puzzling how one might use the diverted 'riverside walk' along the Beult when the reason the footpath crosses the fields there is to stay out of winter flooding zones!

By the time you read this and check out the two websites, the Planning application will probably be in progress and more reports/details will be available on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Mike Summersgill, Tree & Pond Warden

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wednesdays 8pm – 10pm Sundays 12.00pm to 3pm and 8 – 10pm

Remembrance

Sadly, the Service of Remembrance was cancelled. However, the church was open on the morning of the 11th November for private prayer. Three wreaths had been placed, privately, on behalf of the Church, the Friends of St Mary's and the Parish Council. The graves of those who fought and those who fell in the wars were marked with crosses or wreaths.

Together, wherever we were, we endeavoured to ensure that the memory of those who fought, served, and gave their lives for us, continues to be remembered.



The Farleighs' Christmas Farmers Market

If lockdown is lifted as planned, then it is hoped to go ahead with the Christmas Market on Sunday December 6th. The Market is now located in the WI Hall, Forge Lane and will be open from 10am to 1pm with full Covid19 compliance in place.

There will be local foods and crafts on sale, many perfect as Christmas gifts for friends and family.

Please do not park directly outside the W I Hall; which would obstruct a busy and narrow road. There is a huge village car park near the Primary School and plenty of parking in Vicarage Lane.

There was wonderful support for the November market and £30 was raised for the Maidstone Food Bank, so do come along and visit again! It has been decided that any charity money for December will also be donated to the Food Bank; which is in desperate need at the moment.

Any last-minute changes to plans will be announced on The Farleighs' Farmers' Market Facebook page...

<https://www.facebook.com/thefarleighsfarmersmarket>

A Village Memorial

There's a yew tree in the churchyard that has seen a thousand years.
It's seen villagers in hundreds who have daily passed it by,
And each of them has left behind their lives, their loves, their tears,
Their worries and their happiness, regrets that brought a sigh.
It's seen sandals, boots and pattens, shepherd smocks and homespun clothes,
The old, the young, the babies toddling through the graves.
It's seen farthingales and doublets and some in silken hose,
And some were going barefoot, but each one has left their waves.
It's seen returning soldiers, bows and arrows, musket guns,
Seen Crusaders, Roundheads, Cavalry, from Bosworth field, from France,
From Culloden, from the World Wars, and each one was a son
Of Hunton, their own village where they danced the village dance.
They passed the milky snowdrops that grow so thick beneath.
Prime minister and shepherd, feudal masters and their serfs,
Napoleon's sworn enemies that camped up on the heath
And we remember all of them and glory in their worth.

Anon

December Transitional Benefice Service Rota

Details of services for December will be circulated when known

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