



Next Editors: Fay Joyce & Tricia Nichols: herald@hunton.org.uk
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th April

Councillor Gary Thomas

Many parishioners may have heard of the sad death of Gareth (Gary) Thomas last month in Maidstone Hospital following a major stroke at the age of 85.

For 18 years Gary was a Parish Councillor in Hunton, serving as Vice Chairman for many years and as the previous Chairman for three years. Prior to the family's move to Hunton he had served on Boxley Parish Council, the largest parish in the Maidstone Borough, including a period as Chairman. He was also a Borough Councillor and sat on the Planning Committee for a time. His overriding passion was a commitment to see that the borough and the parishes he represented were not spoilt by development, whether that be housing, industry or the poor routing of the High-Speed line to the north of Maidstone in the 1980's. His interest in these matters led him to join the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), where he became not only the Chairman of the Maidstone branch, but the County Chairman for Kent.



Born in 1935 Gary was the grandson of a coal miner from South Wales, something which I think he was rather proud of. After he left school, he read Mechanical Sciences at Selwyn College, Cambridge and worked in his sandwich years for Napier's, developing the Blue Streak missile. Later, he worked for BEA on engineering projects including the baggage handling system at Heathrow; his last position was as Chief Engineer for Bowater Scott, at Aylesford.

He held a pilot's licence and was a keen vintage car enthusiast. As the "under gardener" at Hillside he enjoyed growing vegetables. The garden was opened in 2005 for the village and four times subsequently for the National Gardens Scheme.

His knowledge of the planning system has been of great value to Hunton. At the relatively recent inquiry into the Maidstone Borough Plan he gave evidence to support the reduction in proposed housing numbers to the inspector. He managed to read and absorb huge volumes of planning proposals emanating from the Borough Council and give the rest of us a succinct, but usually highly critical, summary of the latest proposals. He always found it disappointing that the job description for the planning officers for Maidstone did not have the remit of protecting and enhancing the lived-environment for the residents of the borough. Gary ran PC meetings with good humour. I will always remember a meeting many years ago, when another late and much missed Parish Councillor, Les Leonard, said "come on Gazza, let's get going" (Les didn't want to miss last orders at the Club), Gary grimaced and chuckled at the same time.

I first met Gary 25 years ago when he popped his head over the hedge to apologise to me for digging up our water supply while building his patio! I couldn't really be cross with him though. Later we shared many car journeys together to various meetings, and I invariably found them informative. He will be missed by us all. I am sure our thoughts are with Sylvia and their children Laura and Paul. Sadly, a son Giles predeceased him.

David Heaton, Chairman Hunton PC

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@googlegmail.com	Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhhuntonpc@gmail.com
Clr Jonny Goddard - 820096, jonny@cheveneyfarm.co.uk	Clr Roger Lee - 820210, rlhuntonpc@btinternet.com
Clr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com	Clr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com
Clr Helen Ward - 820810, hwhuntonpc@wardy.org	

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

As I write this the year ahead seems to be full of hope and the promise of freedom. The Government have released details of their 'roadmap' out of lockdown. The vaccine programme is rolling out faster and more efficiently than was originally expected. Schools have reopened to all pupils and we are seeing the restrictions on our movements slowly being lifted. There is light at the end of the tunnel! Even if it comes with a caveat that the dates are not set in stone but only the earliest at which the next step will be taken; the announcement has given us all hope. It's an indicator that soon we will be able to reconnect with those we have missed and return to a pattern of life free from many of the restrictions we have been living under.

The announcement coincided with the changing of the seasons bringing longer, brighter, warmer days and now we've passed the equinox it's officially Spring. The signs of new life that we see in the natural world fill us with a lighter, more hopeful spirit after the darkness of the winter.

After such a long time separated it is certain we will all be experiencing a mix of emotions. Fear, of what's to come, of being near people again? Sadness, at the time, people and things we have lost? Anxiety, of what if it happens again? What if, what if But there will also be happiness, laughter and tears of joy when we meet up with family and friends again in person rather than through a screen or on the end of a telephone line.

As Christians we will also be celebrating the most hopeful season of our faith this month – Easter. We see the crucifixion of Jesus not as a loss, but as a victory! We can look back at the events of over two thousand years ago, secure in our faith and knowledge that he triumphed over death and rose from the grave to show us the depth of God's love for us all. This is the light at the end of the tunnel for Christians, this is where we find hope; and it's the same for everyone who chooses to follow Jesus.

Christ is Risen! Hallelujah! Happy Easter! Here's to hope wherever you find it!

Spring is Sprung

With birds nesting and lockdown easing, thoughts are turning to warmer days ahead and the chance to get out and about with friends and family.

The Playing Field Management Committee have a number of projects planned for the next few months, some of which were held over from last year. These include the provision of a second picnic table outside the children's play area, improvements to the entrance and exit to the play area with the installation of grass protection mats, the addition of an extra waste bin in the car park and repairs to the surface of the car park.

If anyone has any suggestions with regards to further improvements or additions that they would like to see to the playing field and / or play area, they can contact the Committee through the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The Cricket Club are looking forward to what we hope will be a full season of league cricket starting in early May (lockdown easing permitting). We expect the same playing conditions to be in place as last year when the club played just under half a season, cleaning the ball and our hands every six over's in 'sanitisation breaks', people putting their kit on in their cars rather than the changing rooms and bringing their own teas.

We have a game most Saturdays from early May to mid-September, so if you're visiting the playing field, pop over and say hello and we may be able to offer you a cup of tea!

Steve Jones (Chairman) Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club

Back-2-School

As you can see from the smiles, comments and fabulous bunting hand made by our critical worker and vulnerable children we have just welcomed back all our children at Hunton Primary. The children were greeted with balloons, bunting, banners and bubbles and the children responded with palpable excitement, smiles and laughter. With much anticipation I looked forward to meeting all the children for the first time since becoming Hunton's Headteacher in January. March 8th will undoubtedly be a special day to remember.

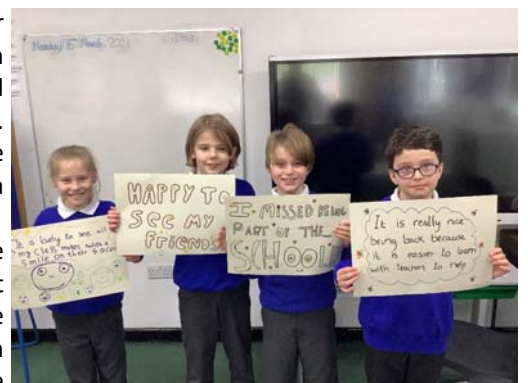
What a term it has been! The staff at Hunton have been working tirelessly to ensure that our remote learning offer was the very best it could be for our children whilst also coming in to school to teach our critical worker and vulnerable children. I have incredible admiration for our parents who have ensured children have engaged with remote learning and Zoom sessions. This really is no mean feat when many were working themselves and were juggling priorities. A group of parents and friends of Hunton still found the time and were incredibly generous in helping to improve the grounds on a Sunday morning – with a digger and driver in tow too!

The children have to be the focus of this article and I am incredibly proud of them. Each week their work was displayed by their class teacher on Zoom meets and it truly was difficult to select a 'Star of the Week'. They are all stars! They have challenged themselves in so many ways; we had children win Blue Peter badges, enter competitions, bake delicious cakes, perform music and create beautiful pieces of art. One even wrote a letter for 'The Cricketer' magazine and won letter of the month. The children were inspired by Captain Sir Tom Moore to complete their own physical challenges and certificates were given.

With the restrictions of lockdown gradually being lessened we do hope that Terms 5 and 6 will see more normality for Hunton Primary with perhaps some of the traditional events such as Sports Day and the Summer Fair being able to take place. We do miss our volunteers and the benefits they bring to children's experiences and learning and so look forward to welcoming them back.

We all wait and, as Captain Sir Tom Moore so movingly and eloquently said, **"We will get through it in the end but it might take time, but at the end of the day we shall all be OK again... the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away."**

Anita Makey, Headteacher



Hunton's History

The rise in popularity of domestic history programmes such as *If Walls Could Talk* and *A House Through Time* has piqued our interest in simple tales and conundrums -- and made us appreciate that it is not only the aristocracy and well-documented families who left their mark. If anything, there's more satisfaction to be had uncovering the stories of everyday people -- although this can require more work. When, a few years ago, I was working on a London newspaper, I was lucky enough to be asked to write a piece about the history of my home; this is an abridged version:

The Georgian cottage I live in with my husband had been in my family for more than 45 years when I first moved in in 2012. It's a quirky place and nothing quite adds up. Older members of the village say that it was a pub -- although the oldest resident says he cannot remember this. A cellar, a bricked-up hatch by the roadside and an odd, double-thickness sash window in the front room are the only supporting evidence.

One of my three great aunties, who used to live here, insisted that the correct spelling of Forester's Lodge, was in fact "Forrester's Lodge". It sounded like a rather silly affectation; rather like when parents spell their child's name in an alternative way, just to make it sound exotic. I also suspected that my aunties, who moved here in 1972 from a rather grand house, had changed the name from 4 Forester's Cottages to make it sound more upmarket.

As part of my research, I engaged the help of Melanie Backe-Hansen -- an historian specialises in researching the history of houses and streets. She started by carrying out some research online, as well as visiting the National Archive and contacting the Land Registry, before coming to take a look around. After an hour or so she headed to the Maidstone Archive to gather more detailed, local information: this included looking at historic maps, censuses, electoral rolls and parish records.

Melanie solved or shed light on many of my queries but at the same time uncovered a wealth of other charming tales. I was not convinced about my house having been a pub as it simply doesn't look like one. However, in 1901 a census carried out for taxation purposes records the owner as Thomas Taylor, a "retired licensed victualler" -- and the house as a pub.

Taylor lived here with his wife Grace and seven children and the house was called Sunnyside -- appropriate in that it faces south-southwest but hardly what you would expect for a spit-and-sawdust pub. It seems likely that it was an informal, almost Irish-style pub, where the front room served as a bar for local workers and hop pickers. At a later date the house was owned by Owen Forman, a wealthy grocer and draper, who also worked as an agent for W & A. Gilbey, who were wine merchants and distillers... so the boozy theme continued.

So, what about the funny spelling of its current name? In 1896, an Inland Revenue record shows that the terrace, at that time known as Elm Corner Cottages, was bought as an investment by the Ancient Order of Forresters -- a "Friendly Society" or benevolent organisation. So, there was truth in the unusual spelling and also an explanation for why a row of brick cottages in an area famous for hops and apples, was associated with forestry.

The final conundrum, is when and by whom my house was built? On No 2 Forester's Cottages is engraved DD1830. Although there are records of a house on this site from around 1750, it is likely that my house was built by a man named Daniel Dann, a carpenter, in around 1820. Curiously, his father -- also named Daniel Dann was a gentleman and yeoman farmer -- so why did his son end up a simple carpenter? (This 'drop in status' is considered significant in this era).

Daniel Dann senior died in 1827 and, according to his will, it would appear that his son used money left to him to build 3 adjoining cottages. As well as making money as a carpenter, he would have earned rent from the cottages and an acre of orchard. This helps to explain why my house has a large garden and orchard while the neighbouring cottages don't.

The 'house historian' gave me an overview of my home's history, from when it was built at the beginning of the 1800s, to my aunties buying it in the 1970s, but left me with a desire to find out more. It's a funny feeling knowing who has lived in your house over 200 years but also rather comforting. It no longer feels like a household of three -- and more like a bustling pub of local characters including a carpenter, a victualler as well as a grocer and draper. The more the merrier, I say.

Jennifer Stuart-Smith

What a cold wet winter brings....

With added organic matter on the field from our grazing sheep, we have seen increasingly large flocks of birds attracted by the worms and leather jackets brought nearer the surface by the wet weather. Also, many more Fieldfares and Redwings, numbering in their hundreds (they usually arrive after Christmas once they have stripped the orchards of the windfalls).

A flock of Starlings, that have grown year on year, now number in their hundreds too and the noise of them twittering in the oak trees and willows around the field is almost deafening. A pair of resident Buzzards are around all year, nesting near-by and they join the Starlings, Jackdaws and Crows on the field. They are now so used to us coming and going and barely move from their watch-posts as we pass by.

To our delight this year we have had Lapwings, around 50 of them, their characteristic floppy flight of black white black as they take off and land a few feet along the field is unmistakable. If you can get a closer look, you can see their shimmering emerald back and impressive crest. They are one of my favourite birds and I remember seeing them as a child in their hundreds on farmland but now they are sadly very much in decline. Looking more closely at the flock of Lapwings, we spotted 3 Snipe scuttling and a solitary Redshank.

Sue Heaton

Churchyard Mowing

If anyone would be interested in joining the team of volunteers who may the grass in the old churchyard please contact Sue Heaton on 820678.

Music Events

The proposed 4Square music event due to take place at Hunton Village Hall on 5th June has been postponed yet again due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Subject to the easing of lockdown restrictions in the summer and artist availability we are looking to re-start our musical events in the Autumn. For further information contact Mike Summersgill on 820429.

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

The Village Club is currently closed until further notice

Bowls Club News

The recent Government's roadmap for the easing of lockdown restrictions will enable Clubs to prepare with confidence for the 2021 season from the 29th March. This is brilliant news for Hunton and we eagerly await detailed guidance on a 'Safe Return to Play' from Bowls England.

The safety of our members is of utmost importance and we understand return to play will be a cautious and gradual procedure to be programmed into 4 Steps. The final Step will hopefully see the easing of all restrictions from Monday 21st June. We understand from Bowls England that, at this point in time, this guidance is not yet official.

As from 12th April it is likely changing rooms will be able to open as will outdoor catering on site be allowed – nothing like a nice cup of tea and a slice of cake after a game. 17th May means larger groups should be able to gather at Clubs and inside catering to take place with restrictions and finally the 21st June should allow the easing of all restrictions. Yippee!

Our season commences the last weekend in April, prior to this we usually kick start the new season with our Bowls holiday to Cyprus in February – which obviously didn't happen this year – followed by our Coffee Morning and our Opening Fling at the end of April.

Thanks to COVID, last summer was a non-starter with league matches, competitions and tournaments all having to be cancelled, although some of our members enjoyed a rollup from June until September.

The season will undoubtedly feel a little different, as much as life has done in recent times, but with the majority of our members having received their first vaccination - with a few having had their second - we are looking forward to meeting our friends and other club members once again. We are hopeful that our fixed league and friendly matches will take place but matches involving greater numbers of people will start later in the summer when all restrictions are lifted.

At the beginning of last year we were all looking forward to the opening of our new changing rooms which everyone had worked so hard to complete for the start of the 2020 season. Thanks to COVID, it didn't happen!! Even the green developed a disease. However, weekly mowing, maintenance and TLC continued throughout the hot summer/winter months and we are pleased to report it has now been restored to its former glory.

At the start of every season the Club's finances are always in need of a much-needed boost, never more so than last year. The replacement of the changing rooms during 2019/2020 - not to mention the usual expenditure on insurances and winter materials for the green, had a huge impact on our figures at the end of our financial year in October. During the course of any season we rely heavily on various fund raising events, membership subscriptions and income from match fees etc to ensure a healthy bank balance at year end. However, we were very fortunate to have received the majority of our membership fees at the beginning of our 2020 season. The Club also actively pursued opportunities for grants due to the pandemic and were awarded £1,000 from Sports England

and recently, most gratefully received from the Parish Council, a grant equally distributed to the Football, Cricket and Bowls Clubs for the loss of income suffered during lockdown. This money puts the Club in a healthy financial position for 2021.

All that remains now is we wait with bated breath, mixed with a certain amount of trepidation, the easing of lockdown restrictions and a 'Safe Return to Play'.

If you are looking for a new hobby after lockdown we would love to hear from you. Why not come along and give it a try? You will find the Bowls Club behind the Village Hall or contact Angela Baptie on 820625, email angela.baptie@btinternet.com or join us on Facebook?

YALDING ART GROUP

Arts & Crafts Fair

On Sunday, 17th May 2021

11am until 4pm

At The Village Hall, Lyngs Close, Yalding.

www.yaldingartgroup.weebly.com

FREE ENTRY – REFRESHMENTS

Transitional Benefice Service Rota – April 2021

	2 nd Good Friday	4 th 1 st Sunday Easter Sunday	11 th 2 nd Sunday Easter 2	18 th 3 rd Sunday Easter 3	25 th 4 th Sunday Easter 4
		Lead/Preach/HC	Lead/Preach	Lead/Preach/HC	Lead/Preach
Zoom at 10.30am	All ages Good Friday Worship; 2.30pm: Stations of the Cross	LF/PC from Holy Trinity, Coxheath	BP/DJ	LF/AC	PC/LF
East Farleigh		8am - HC; PC		9.30am - HC; LF	8am - HC; DJ
Hunton		9.30am - HC; DJ		9.30am - FS; PC	
Linton		9.30am - HC; LF	8am - HC; PC		9.30am - MP +HC; PC
West Farleigh		9.30am - HC; PC	9.30am - MP +HC; LF		

Maudy Thursday Service at Linton April 1st, 7.30 pm to 8.15pm, followed by watch hour of prayer and readings ending at 9.15pm

PC – Rev. Peter Callway; DJ – Rev. David Jones; LF - Rev. Lorna Faulkner; AC – Mrs Alison Callway; BP – Mrs Becky Parnham; BW – Mrs Bertie Woodward. HC - Holy Communion, MP - Morning Prayer, FS - Family Service

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