

HUNTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
23RD MAY 2016

REPORTS OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

St Mary's Church
By Alison Ellman-Brown

St Mary's is in very good health and has had a very busy year. There were 10 weddings last year, an amazing amount for a country church, but we must thank Kathy (Village Hall booking secretary) for guiding her customers towards the church. We are aiming for 9 weddings this year, we love having them.

The Friends of St Mary have done a fantastic job raising money and obtaining grants to enable the restoration of the inside of the church, with no holes left in any walls!

Who would have thought that the Lent Lunches would have developed into such a hugely successful community effort, not just a church one? Thank you to Lesley Lee and all her team.

Thanks to the team of sidesmen, flower arrangers, choirs (not just our own, but others from the community), churchyard workers, bell ringers (we have a huge number of visiting bell ringers) and of course Rector Peter Callway (whose wife has been extremely ill and in hospital for 4 months, now home and hopefully in good health). Thanks also to David Jones, Chris Bostock and Eileen Doyle, who have helped in Peter's absence.

We have an organist playing twice a month, a fantastic player, who used to play in cathedrals. If you wish to hear her, join us on 12th June at 9:30am for a special service to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

Thank you for all your support.

Friends of St Mary's
By Ron Porter

The Friends of St Mary's has been going since February 2009, so 7 years now, and is playing an increasing part of Hunton Village life - raising valuable resources to preserve our beautiful Church and, we hope, having a lot of fun for all of us along the way.

You will know that we are regular food providers at the Fete and Christmas market plus other events during the year. That has enabled us to raise over the time of our existence nearly £40,000. That has not just been done by selling beefburgers and Spot On hot dogs and running the bar at this year's Alladin production. We received a most generous grant from the Cobtree Trust of £3,000; we have some very generous benefactors living in Hunton and a growing list of FOSM members who provide us with regular income which helps with budgeting. It is only £25 per annum and with Gift Aid that grosses to around £28. You can pay more if you prefer.

This year has seen the culmination of our most ambitious project so far and that is the complete redecoration of the inside of the Church. If you have not seen it yet then I urge you to do so. It is quite spectacular.

When we started planning this project we had some real concerns as to how we would pay for it. The worst-case scenario is to run out of money before completion. However, we joined forces with the PCC and I have to say their success in obtaining grants made such a difference. It is all now done and I must thank the PCC for managing the whole project so successfully. A lot of credit should go to Reverend David Jones.

To celebrate the completion of this work, the PCC, supported by FOSM, will be holding a Concert in the Church sometime in August. More details to follow.

Those of you who attended our Autumn Supper Dance in 2014 will be pleased to know that we are booked to hold this again on Saturday November 12th.

Last year we had to postpone through the illness of Brian Mortimer, but I am happy to say that Brian, despite extensive surgery and chemotherapy, is back to his former self and will be leading his band 2bc for us. Just so that you know, the band perform for free for us, so please mark your diaries to avoid disappointment.

What are our plans now? We await the Church Quinquennial review in 18 months' time before deciding. In the meantime, the pointing on the Tower needs repair as does the exterior wall, so plenty to be getting on with.

Before I sit down, I must thank the Trustees for all their hard work and support which often involves their families as well.

They are: Lisa Halliday (Secretary); David Heaton (Treasurer); Ian Pinks (Membership – 820709); Lisa Dolman; Jenny Vickers; Kate Banks; Lucy Dickinson; Mary Goddard; and Roger Sawtell.

Hunton Bowls Club

By John Apsey

Hunton Bowls Club has been going for 80 years this year. The club did well last season and has a full fixture card for this year. We have done a lot of maintenance on the buildings before the start of this season, so everything is looking good for this year.

We have a reputation as a small, friendly club and other clubs always say how they enjoy playing at Hunton as it is so peaceful. It is a shame that we only have two bowlers that actually live in Hunton. We are always looking for new members and welcome any new players of any ability, whether they have played bowls before or not, so please come along and give it a try. There is a notice on the gate of contact numbers or anyone can come and try on a Thursday evening when we have a practice session. You will always be welcome.

Once again, we are at the start of another Bowling Season and are keeping our fingers crossed for good weather.

Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club

By Simon Taylor

As you will probably know, and especially if you attended yesterday's charity day and pavilion opening event at the field, we have at last finished our new pavilion and it is open for business. It was a terrific day yesterday. There were 120 overs of cricket played, a bar and BBQ, and a few surprises at the last moment, including music for the players to walk on to and commentary from members of the club in various states of inebriation! Over £500 was raised for the British Lung Foundation in memory of Paul Matthewson, a previous player, chair and president of the club.

I am pleased to report that our visitors to date have given the building a favourable report. The showers, fridges, dishwasher and plumbing all seem to be working and there is, so far, a feverish activity before and after games to get the facility ready and cleaned up afterwards. In short, there seems to be a pride in our new building, something I have not seen before at the club and for which I am extremely grateful.

We have already been approached for the use of the pavilion for a couple of village events and we are planning to hold the Playing Field Committee AGM there this year.

We owe a debt of thanks to so many people in bringing this project to fruition – to Hague Construction for their support during the foundation stage; to Passmores for not only supplying the building, but for many additional items to help us finish the project; to the Parish Council, not only for their continuing support, but for practical help, usually in the form of the inimitable David Heaton; to Paulina Stockell for her continuing financial support; and not least, to the club members for their help, given freely even in the depths of winter and sometimes in appalling weather

conditions. I would especially like to thank my colleague Steve Jones, without whose perseverance, support and practical help this project would not have come to completion; and this during a year when he has not enjoyed the best of health.

It seems to be the case that funding becomes easier to come by as a club gathers momentum. More likely is that other doors open to those who have already gained the experience. Whatever the reason, I am delighted to advise that we have been able to secure a further £3,500 in funding from the EWCB towards the cost of a full set of wicket covers, which arrive early next week. Paulina Stockell has already generously donated a further £500 to enable us to meet our partnership funding target for this project.

I reported to the Hunton Herald last October that we had a relatively successful season, with both our Saturday 1st and Sunday XIs narrowly missing out on promotion. Well, following a restructuring of both leagues during the winter, we subsequently found out that both sides had in fact been promoted, the Saturday side to Division 1A Central of the Kent Regional League and the Sunday team to Division 4 of the Kent Village League. This is the highest we have ever been in either league, so this season is going to be especially challenging. We have a strong Sunday side this year and hope to do well in the KVL. On Saturday, trying to field two sides, we are struggling for numbers a little, and our ambition is more conservative. We will be happy to stay up and if we can achieve a mid-table placing we will be delighted.

As far as personal achievements went, Alex Newman scored an impressive 668 runs during the season; Jack Crouch scored 499, including a mammoth 191 against local rivals Yalding; Mike Besson took the most wickets for the club with 40, but Paul Bushell won the Saturday 2nd XI league bowling award with 32.

I apologise for the brevity of this year's report, but I am rather suffering from report fatigue at the moment, having delivered a number of treatises on the subject of pavilions and fund raising recently. Thank you.

Hunton Football Club
By Tom Goodchild

I am standing in for the manager of the club, Dave Elliott.

Many thanks to Danny Peacock for all his efforts on behalf of the club.

The team had a good last season, coming very close to winning Division 2 in the Maidstone & District Football League, and has been promoted to Division 1 this year.

We won the Tunbridge Wells Charity Cup this year, beating Leigh 3-2 in the final.

The changing rooms need some improvement. The football club would like to make changes, but could do with some help. Danny Peacock suggested contacting the Playing Field Committee to discuss it.

Hunton Village Club
By Annette Trought (reading the report of Philip Nichols)

I would like to say that the Club has gone from strength to strength, but sadly that would not be the case, although it is not all doom and gloom. While we have a reasonably healthy balance in the bank, 2015 saw income and expenditure more or less level, which means that, without the income from events that are held, the Club would not be viable. Last year it was reported that the numbers attending Monday night bingo were low and bingo eventually ceased during the winter. Attendance on Saturday evenings was also very low and the committee took the decision not to open on Monday and Saturday evenings. That means the Club is closed to members on Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays. We hope that Saturdays will be reserved for Club events and private hire by members, subject of course to being able to find volunteer bar staff.

The good news is that Club events have been well supported. These include the lunches, which also raise funds for The Friends of St Mary's, quiz nights and the recent Village walk followed by lunch. The wine tasting evening was very successful, courtesy of Graham Ashlin, who was very generous. More good news comes in the form of a second darts team who previously played at another club that was struggling to make ends meet. With two darts teams playing in different leagues, Wednesday evenings are usually busy, with one team or the other hosting a match. By comparison, Thursday and Friday evenings are quiet, and it would be nice to see more villagers using the Club for a social chat over a glass or two.

Yoga classes are now held at the Club on Tuesday mornings and we were pleased to be able to offer the use of the Club for pantomime rehearsals.

I am happy to report that, at the AGM, Liz Ridgeway volunteered for secretarial duties and a new Club Events Social Team was formed. They are planning future events, which include The Queen's Birthday tea and cakes party, refreshments at the fete, a cider and beer festival, quiz night, games night, a couple of village walks and more lunches later in the year. Lesley and Roger Lee deserve a special mention as they have organised the lunches and recruited a number of volunteers to prepare food, drinks and to clear up at the end. These volunteers are also to be thanked, as they are crucial to the success and have helped raise well over £1,000 for each of the Club and The Friends of St Mary's. However, we have discovered that things would be far easier for those concerned if the Club had an equipped kitchen. So we are now beginning down the road of fund raising for the kitchen, plus new flat roof coverings, the re-tiling of the gabled roof and, with the help of the gardening group, re-landscaping the Club's frontage. The amount involved will be a five-figure sum and it is more than likely that we will have to apply for grants and charitable type funding. Needless to say, this will take some considerable time to achieve, but will be well worthwhile for the benefit of the community.

Finally, I would like to thank the Club Management Committee and all of the volunteers that help to run the place, as it would not exist without them.

Hunton Club Book Groups

By Annette Trought (reading the reports of Tricia Nichols and Chris Summersgill)

Book Group A:

February 2016 saw the original book group reach a ten-year anniversary. To mark the event and by way of celebration, we all went to The Woolpack and enjoyed a nice evening together. None of us could quite believe it had been ten years! Over those years we had read some really good books which we thoroughly enjoyed and some that, in our opinion, shall we say, were not quite as good.

Those books read this year include:

The Lowland - Jhumpa Latire
Regeneration - Pat Barker
River God - Wilbur
The Tiger's Wife - Tea Obreht
The Wolf Border - Sarah Hall

We continue to enjoy our monthly meetings and look forward to discovering some new authors in the future.

Book Group B:

Book Group B is still meeting on the second Thursday of each month at the Club. We have only five members at the moment, so hope to recruit some more.

Huntonwatch
By Steve Wyles

The third year of Huntonwatch has seen our network of Co-ordinators and Members working well together across the village to report crime, suspicious incidents and fly tipping.

Membership continues to increase, with 136 households now registered and receiving regular information and updates on scams, advice on crime prevention and any other useful material sent to us by Kent Police and/or the Trading Standards Office. This year we have also started using the Hunton Community Facebook page and the Hunton Herald to reach a wider audience, while the Facebook page has also been used by people in the village to report incidents to us.

Crime in the village remains low but there has been a notable increase in reports of people and/or vehicles acting strangely. This may mean Hunton residents are being more vigilant – which can only be a good thing. No-one knows the village better than those who live here and we are best placed to see when something just does not seem right.

We have been made aware of an increasing number of scams operating in the county. These can be phone based, e-mailed or even face to face encounters, although the latter more generally involves rogue trading of some form. Our general advice remains the same. Be careful and think twice before committing yourself.

The CCTV cameras at the village hall have captured useful information we have been able to pass on to the police and they remain a visible deterrent.

We continue to have regular contact with our PCSO, who is always on hand to offer advice if needed, and we meet in person from time to time. Following the recent elections, we introduced ourselves to the new Police and Crime Commissioner and will be interested to see how his approach compares to that of his predecessor.

We would like to extend our thanks to the entire Huntonwatch team for their continuing support.

Hunton Herald
By Helen Ward

It's been another busy year at the Herald, with so much going on in our small village. This year we have published two bumper editions, one containing reports from last year's Annual Parish Meeting and the other produced in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan team, giving feedback on their initial consultations. This proved surprisingly challenging but we hope they were well received and we will certainly consider repeating this should we have sufficient news to fill the pages.

It has been another very successful year for advertising revenue, which enabled us to make a sizeable donation towards stage lighting, which was used for our wonderful "Hunching" pantomime at Easter, and is now available for general village hall use. We have recently changed the format of our adverts to a "Local Business Directory" booklet to be delivered bi-monthly, which is easier for people to keep for future reference and reduces the amount of paper we use – feedback so far has been very positive. We are very grateful to Sue Pinks for all her hard work in bringing this about.

The Herald team continue to update the village Facebook page, twitter account, Hunton website and KM column, as well as posting relevant information in the Hunton Community Group on Facebook – so there are plenty of ways to obtain up to date information between editions. Please do take a look at these if you haven't yet done so.

There is a fair amount of work that goes on behind the scenes in bringing you the Herald each month and as editor I would like to personally thank everyone who makes it possible – Dudley for doing the layout, Lisa for organising the

distribution, James for handling the finances, all our contributors for their articles and event information and our large team of deliverers who ensure that you receive your monthly copy.

We hope you enjoy reading the Herald and if you have any ideas of things you would like to see included or suggestions for improvements, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Speedwatch **By Steve Wyles**

The Speedwatch team has been active again over the past year and we try to go out 2-4 times a month if we can. The strategy remains the same as in previous years and we try to vary the days and times of our sessions so that we do not become too predictable.

Recently we have been able to borrow the Yalding Speedwatch equipment, which gives us the ability to monitor traffic in both directions and, although we have only done so once this year, so far the results were encouraging and we will most certainly do this again on a regular basis.

I won't bore you with lots of statistics but two things do stand out. Firstly, the average speed of motorists travelling along West Street by the school is lower than it was a year ago and secondly, drivers are spotting us a lot earlier and visibly slowing (this suggests they are being more vigilant as they approach the school which must be a good thing).

The only two approved locations for our Speedwatch equipment to be set up are in West Street, but we recognise that there is a very real speeding problem in East Street as well. Whilst we cannot yet do a full session in East Street, we are looking to use the equipment to get some idea of average speeds along stretches of this road so we can perhaps apply for an approved site along that road.

Our aims remain the same:

- a) To protect children and parents by reducing speeding alongside the school
- b) To work with the police to educate drivers about speed awareness
- c) To lobby to get a blanket 30mph limit throughout the village
- d) To lobby to get a maximum 40mph limit between Yalding and Hunton

We will be out again in June and, with the longer days, will be able to hold sessions during the morning and evening rush hours.

King George V Playing Field Committee **By Danny Peacock**

The Committee has held its usual six meetings over the last year.

The Committee has continued to ensure that the Field is kept clean and tidy through grass cutting; cutting back trees and hedges; and bin emptying, as well as keeping an eye on the rabbits and moles.

Satisfactory reports continue to be received from the MBC Safety Inspector on the play equipment. Two low risk issues identified in the reports have been rectified: four new steps have been fitted on the slide and the platform on the multiplay equipment has been replaced. There are also a few minor clean up items from the annual inspection report, which should be finished by the end of June.

Since the resurfacing of the car park in September 2014, the surface has continued to harden and is holding up well. Occasional holes which develop are being filled using the scalplings left over from the resurfacing and the French drain also continues to work well.

During the year, the Committee has paid for the replacement of the gate to the Field, the hanging gate post and fencing on the west side of the car park. The pedestrian gate will also be replaced within the next few months.

The Committee has contributed £100 towards the cost of the defibrillator cabinet to house the defibrillator obtained by the Pre-school, and has agreed to pay for a third of the cost of the electrician fitting the cabinet to the exterior of the Village Hall (to be done next week).

The Committee has received regular reports from Simon Taylor and Steve Jones on the new cricket pavilion, officially opened yesterday, which Simon has already talked about tonight. It provides a great asset to the Cricket Club and the village.

Looking ahead, the Committee will be considering ways to improve the new play area through provision of new play equipment, seating, etc and ways this can be funded. The Committee's AGM is on 12th July, when a boundary walk will also take place.

Thank you to all the Committee members for their hard work and regular attendance at meetings, and to the Parish Council for its continued support.

Hunton Parish Plan Steering Committee
By Annette Trought

The Parish Plan Steering Committee is in its sixth year. The following is a reminder of the key developments and events that have been delivered and driven forward:

- Footpath
- Fete
- Litter picking
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Speedwatch
- Pop-up shops
- Community Orchard
- Phase 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan

It has been an important group. I have been the Chair for five years; I was not involved in the original set up.

Phase 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan has been completed. The Neighbourhood Plan, when produced, will be a planning document which will supersede the Parish Plan.

All of the working parties are embedded in the village and don't need to report back at meetings, although there is still more to do. The Committee is planning to meet only twice a year in future, just to catch up and see if there is anything which needs to be addressed. It is a great committee to work on and could do with more members.

In the autumn we will look towards Phase 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan with the Parish Council.

Hunton Litter Picking Team
By Di Martin

In 2011, after the Parish Plan Questionnaire was distributed to all households, litter was one of the items people wanted addressed.

As a clean-up hadn't taken place for several years, as part of the Parish Plan process it was agreed a sub-committee would be set up to recommence periodic village clean ups. I volunteered to undertake the organisation of the litter pick team and liaised with Maidstone Borough Council as to the best way forward. They were very helpful and

agreed to insure us under their Public Liability insurance policy. This policy only covers us to collect litter from roads with speed limits under 40 mph, so technically we are only insured for West Street as a 30 mph limit past the school, Water Lane and Grove Lane. Ideally, it would be beneficial to everyone if the approach roads to Hunton had a 30 mph speed limit. The benefits of being under the Council's wing are that they collect all of the rubbish and they supply us with hi vis jackets, gloves, pickers and sacks.

We held our first litter pick on 15th October 2011. As this was the first clean up for a number of years there was a large collection of rubbish, consisting of 30 bags of general rubbish, 20 tyres, 3 car seats, plus an assortment of metal and miscellaneous items. It took a team of 14 four hours to complete this task.

For the second litter pick on 17th March 2012, there were 19 volunteers and we collected 40 sacks of general rubbish, 15 tyres, 2 carpets, 3 estate agents' boards, wheel trims and various pieces of metal. This collection took us slightly less time, only 3 hours. The major problem areas are fly tipping at Lughorse Lane and Barn Hill. Hunton Hill has also been another problem area, but has gradually attracted less litter recently.

Since 2011, we have held 14 litter picks and collected in the region of 300 sacks of general rubbish and 75 tyres, 30 of which were tractor tyres which had been dumped in the woods at Lughorse Lane. These were found by a local farmer, who kindly loaded them on to one of his trailers and brought them down to the village hall for Council collection. We thought we might have a problem with the Council taking these away, but they made a special trip for us.

Over these four years, we have had the frustration of people dumping every day rubbish, such as fast food containers and empty drink tins, but we have also had to remove a toilet and basin, underwear, children's toys and DVDs, which could so easily be taken to Tovil tip.

We now have a complement of 22 regular volunteers who give up their time three times a year to keep the village tidy. It would assist the litter pick team if all residents could keep their verges clear of any rubbish outside their properties.

Hunton Village Hall Committee By Mike Summersgill

The Hall had another successful year as a Wedding venue, with 18 weekends booked for such usage. About 12 are booked for 2016, with more being added (two in December). Seven Musical Events were put on in 2015, and two Applause plays; paying attendances ranged from 28 to 85. In all, 500 people attended these events, and they raised a surplus of £1,000 for Hall funds. One event raised £500 for cancer charities (in memory of Alan Bishop). Thanks to regular volunteers who help put these events on.

The Playgroup continues to use the Hall daily; Judo has been cut to one evening but Yoga has started instead; a Youth Club started up, with Council funding, but ceased after a couple of months. The biennial electrical check was carried out, after the Cricket Club's new cabling was installed. Annual fire extinguisher and bi-monthly pest control visits did not raise any concerns. The Hall now has an Entertainment Licence, instead of needing Temporary ones per event, and has PRS Music licences now.

Nothing significant was renovated this year (unlike the Capital spend of £10,000 in 2014), but several things are showing their age. The sewerage system/plant collapsed in the Summer and that cost us £2,000 to renovate. We have also had an alarm/CCTV system installed by the Parish, which is proving useful, it records the actual time hirers are in the hall and is also of deterrence to vandals.

Overall, the Hall costs around £10,000 a year to run/maintain in its current state; utilities are half the cost. At the Hall AGM last week, accounts were presented that showed a surplus of over £5,000 in the year (chiefly because of wedding bookings) and items of maintenance and replacement (flooring & re-decoration, new tables, window blinds, spoons for kitchen) were agreed. It was also agreed that a Caretaker needs to be assigned for general maintenance duties, and a call will be put in the Herald for any volunteers to carry out that role. Committee all re-elected unopposed!

The Parish Council has confirmed that Community events will take precedence on 10 specific dates annually, and that they will be at no direct cost to Hunton Community users. This helps clarify the situation for the bookings secretary and treasurer. It is also noted that the external condition of the Hall is declining/shabby and re-painting needs to be considered (and perhaps a new Name board).

Peace Cottages Charity
By Liz Oliver

There have been several changes at Peace Cottages in the past year. John Scott, who had been a trustee for more than 30 years, decided to retire and Fay Joyce and Celia Kennedy-Sloan have agreed to become new trustees.

A quinquennial inspection was carried out in 2015, which highlighted areas of work needing to be done, including the overhauling of all external joinery, repairs to guttering, and some damp penetration. Attention was needed to some frayed internal carpeting and the smoke alarms. A damaged bedroom window needed to be replaced. Overall, it stressed the good condition of the cottages. Following the report, a schedule of work was drawn up and the urgent matters addressed immediately.

Throughout the year, repairs have also been carried out to night storage heaters and some plumbing problems have been addressed.

A gardener cuts the grass and carries out minor repairs when necessary.

The residents' contribution has been increased since May last year from £110 a week to the current £125 a week.

The occupancy of the five cottages has changed, with two new residents taking over cottages from their previous occupants, who became too old to be able to cope on their own. The occupancy of the other three has remained the same.

Tree and Pond Warden
By Mike Summersgill

The Parish had a wettish Winter and most of the ponds refilled satisfactorily. Nothing of any note was reported, with most drainage ditches running freely. Warden has still not progressed the pond ownership database, nor received historical information from previous P&T Warden.

Two courses on recording trees were attended, and Warden is about to embark on a round of tree measurement and recording within the Parish. Entries of significant old/large trees will be made on the Kent Heritage Trees website; there are 10,000 in the County now registered and more to come.

Hunton Walking Group
By Mike Summersgill (reading the report of Ann Sawtell)

Once again this year, we managed a full and varied collection of walks every other Monday morning. Rain and muddy fields in the colder months did not spoil the group's enjoyment; when conditions were particularly bad underfoot, we tried new walks in Rochester City, Larkfield Lakes and Haysden Country Park, where we found good hard paths for walking.

Twenty-five walks were undertaken with an average of fifteen walking. We covered most areas of Kent; some were local but others took us further away to Chiddingstone, Frittenden, Luddesdown and to the seaside at Hythe where we celebrated our 100th walk (in the wet).

On this occasion, we did not always manage to find firm footings on the Military Canal towpath and for the first time three unfortunate walkers gave us a demonstration of their inability to keep upright; one it has to be said who was

laughing so much at another walker's attempt to get up, ended up sliding along with them onto the ground. We followed the walk with lunch together at a seafront restaurant looking out to sea (through mist!).

In August last year, we took a walk around Hunton's fields and woods, and walkers then contributed food to cook on the BBQ and share in Hunton Club. All agreed this enjoyable evening was one to be repeated in 2016, which is indeed happening more than once.

One of our members wrote in our record book of a Summer walk in Frittenden: "*blue skies, fluffy clouds and light aircraft over harvested wheat fields - iconic Kent*". We certainly explore some beautiful areas of the Kent countryside, often visiting some interesting and quirky pubs afterwards, whilst enjoying each other's company and getting exercise.

Hunton WI **By Di Martin (reading the report of Jane Langdon)**

Hunton WI, now in its second year, has gone from strength to strength. Overall membership has remained steady at 26 members but we often have a couple of guests at meetings 'dipping their toe in the water'. Hopefully some of these will become full members during the year. We give a warm welcome to any ladies wishing to enjoy an evening out on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Village Club.

The emphasis of Hunton WI is on having fun, often learning something new and meeting with friends and neighbours in a relaxed and social environment.

We have had a wide variety of speakers (some from the village itself), activities and discussions at meetings. Speakers' topics having ranged from the adventures of a Marine Biologist in remote parts of the world, Hypnotherapy, the Life and times of Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst to 'Yorick', a hearing dog for a deaf owner. In November, we had a highly successful evening of Christmas crafts, making very professional looking origami Christmas trees, and iris pattern Christmas cards. We have also enjoyed trips out to the theatre and local businesses.

Many members have taken the opportunity to take part in activities organised at District level. One of the most enjoyable was a visit to Bletchley Park (site of the wartime enigma code breakers, as depicted in the film 'The Imitation Game'). Some were more successful than others in solving the mind-boggling puzzles dotted around the site!

As is WI tradition, Hunton WI has already gained a reputation for the quality of their baking, with stalls at the Village Fete and the Christmas Market. We have recently received a request to bake apple pies for the first Hunton Beer and Cider Festival in September.

Hunton Gardening Club **By Lesley Lee**

2015 again saw members of Hunton Gardening Club and their friends taking part in visits kindly organised by volunteers. In April, Celia Kennedy-Sloane arranged for a group to attend East Malling Research for a Fruit Science History Tour. In May, Edna Dennison set up a tour of Linton Park Gardens and then, in July, she again took a party round Saltwood Castle and grounds.

In 2015, after three years of running the Plant and Produce Stand at Hunton Fete, when they built up a great reputation and raised increasing amounts towards the costs of running the fete, Andrea Forster and Fay Joyce decided to hand over this task to others. Luckily, Des & Lynne Garnham accepted the challenge and thanks to their efforts, as well as all those who grew and donated a wide range of plants and produce and all those who purchased items, a record amount of over £650 was raised.

Those who attended the March winter social evening and supper held in the village club, enjoyed hearing from Sue and David Heaton about how they had planned, constructed and planted their garden and the lessons they learnt. The

November event included an interesting presentation on Invasive Plants from Andrea Griffiths from the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

Gardening Club members continued to help to maintain the Churchyard, and contributed produce to the Pop-Up shops. The membership contact list is used to circulate details of meetings and visits as well as to offer spare plants and produce or request gardening help and advice.

In the five years since 2011, when Hunton Gardening Club was started by 18 locals, the membership has grown to over 70 including several based outside Hunton. This informal, friendly group, with no membership fees or appointed officers, is run by volunteers and welcomes new members, whether they are experienced professional gardeners or just interested in maintaining their own gardens or simply visiting ones created by other people. I look forward to hearing from anyone interested in joining the group.

Hunton Church of England Primary School
By Herschel Santineer

Progress at the school over the year includes having two accredited leading maths teachers at the school and four children who have achieved a place at grammar schools from September.

Challenges have mainly centred on the financial aspects. An external agency dealing with the finances got some of the figures wrong, so we are having to deal with that.

Please visit the school website. There is a lot of information on there, including the last Ofsted report in 2011. We are overdue for an Ofsted visit. A meeting was held with KCC as there were concerns that the school may be considered as 'requires improvement', but we were viewed as 'good' to 'outstanding'!

I would like to ask how the school can have more involvement with the community. Two parish councillors have attended a Governing Body meeting to discuss issues such as the school sign and flooding. The school is trying to progress these issues.