



Next Editors: Liz Oliver & Graham Dolman: huntonherald@outlook.com
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th April

March 8th 2024.

Devastating Fire at Gennings

As a village, we send our thoughts and kind wishes to all of those effected by the devastating news of the fire at Gennings on the evening of Friday the 8th March 2024. It was a very anxious and frightening time for all concerned. Thankfully, no one was physically injured; nonetheless, the emotion of that sudden event would have been considerable.



The fire broke out at about 9pm and was quickly attended by 50 firefighters. Sixteen fire engines were at the scene at the height of the blaze; they attended from all over Kent. As a village, we are very thankful for the way in which the county pulled together to assist. The gravity of the fire was such that local and national press were quickly on the scene and information was shared on social media. Consequently, news of the fire circulated quickly amongst the village community. During the Sunday service at St Mary’s Hunton, our Rector, Revd. Lorna Falkner, prayed for the ‘Gennings’ community. At the time of writing this article, the cause of the fire had not been established.

Press reports noted that the strong easterly wind, that evening, had fanned the flames. Firefighters worked to save as much of the building as possible. Despite tremendous efforts, the roof of the Grade II listed, 18th Century building, suffered immense damage and partially collapsed.

The most significant damage occurred at the main house, which forms the major part of the ‘Gennings Estate’ buildings. This is an 18th century house on the site of earlier buildings. The property was once known as ‘Jennings’. The first house was built in Elizabethan times and has been subject to many alterations over time. Historically, ‘Gennings’ has been the home of many significant, influential and interesting people. Indeed, evidence suggests ‘Gennings’ is highly likely to have been an inspiration for Jane Austen’s book ‘Pride and Prejudice’. Further history can be found in ‘Hunton, a Kentish Village’ (available in the Village Club and St Mary’s Church).

Safer Streets in Hunton, Have Your Say!

The views of all count. Do you want Hunton’s streets and lanes to be safer, to better meet your needs? If so, come along to the Village Club on Saturday 4 May, during the Plant and Produce event from 12 noon onwards, to express your individual views. Members of the Parish Council will be on hand to talk with you and record your comments. This is the start of a project that could transform the village. Further information will follow in the May edition of the Herald.

Your Local Contacts:		
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Maidstone Police 690690 or 101
Under 5’s Pre-School:	820309	Village Hall Booking: www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk
Pond and Tree Warden: Sam Andrews	huntontreewarden@gmail.com	Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com 07907 019996
Rector: Revd. Lorna Faulkner*	747570	‘Potholes’ Hotline (KCC) 03000 418181
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474*	Hunton Ladies: Chris Summersgill c.a.summersgill@btinternet.com
Churchwarden: Iain Simmons	820875	PCSO - none
	ishuntonchurchwarden@btinternet.com	Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk 0207 219 7107
Community Wardens Team	07811 271021	Village Club: Roger Lee: roger.c.lee@btinternet.com 820210
Hunton Bell Ringers: Lavinia Thompson	07885 763071	Reporting HGVs huntontrafficreporting@gmail.com
Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk		

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 Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com
Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com	Cllr Mike Summersgill - 820429, mshuntonpc@btinternet.com
Cllr Iain Simmons - 820875, ishuntonpc@btinternet.com	Cllr Jean Fuller – 07738 935630, jfhuntonpc@outlook.com

Diary Dates	
Fri 12 th April - ‘Meet the Village’-Hunton Village Club- from 6pm;	Walking group 9 th & 23 rd . April (St George’s Day Walk and/or Lunch);
Tues 23 rd April— Ladies open evening ‘Doctors in Africa’;	Thurs 2 nd May- Parish Council Elections
Sat 4 th May - Plants Produce and refreshments at Hunton Village Club-12 noon to 4pm;	Fri 10 th May -Church & Churchyard Working Party-9am to 12 noon;
Sun 7 th July, Strawberry Picnic Tea, with ‘Bells on Sunday-St Mary’s Church;	Sat 31 August – Beer Festival at Hunton Club
Check out www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk/events-list for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email huntonpc@gmail.com	

'Alleluia, Christ is Risen!'

May the message of Easter joy be with you all! Easter is always a wonderful time in so many ways. To the first Christians it marked the message that Jesus came to bring new life after the dark message of Good Friday. It is a message that lives on each year, it comes as the dark days of winter end; the days are thankfully longer! The bulbs and blossoms encourage us that summer is coming with their colour; new life bursting out in so different ways.

As a child, Easter holidays took us out of the suburbs of North Kent into the countryside to stay with our relations in Somerset, Northamptonshire or Kent. We saw primroses, daffodils, lambs in the fields. The cherry blossom began to show; it was all good! The cycle of the seasons gives us hope.

Earlier in March, when I was thinking about this letter, my thoughts were focused on the gloom in so much of life and in the news. Who to believe, what to believe? The future seemed grim. But now there seems to be hope. The news has not changed, but with the Easter message in our ears, and new life springing up all around us, we are reminded of God's faithful love and promise. The World may just come to its senses, and love in all its beauty and fulness. May the World, start to fill broken relationships between individuals and nations. Is this really all too good to be true?

How can it come about? It will happen when we realise that each of us is one of God's wonderful creations, like so much around us. We can show this in the new life he gives us when he died and rose again for us, his children. So, try to live the 'Easter Life' in the coming days, and for the rest of your earthly journey. Then, we will all see 'Life' in all its joy and beauty.

Revd. David Jones

Meet The Village

Save the date, Friday 12th April. You are all invited to 'Meet the Village'. This is your opportunity to meet others in the village. Join us from 6pm at the Village Club. The idea came to a group of enthusiastic events organisers when we realised that there are a growing number of people who have recently moved into the village. Our village is a very friendly, vibrant community. So, we will be opening the doors to welcome everyone, both established residents as well as newer residents.

All clubs, societies and social groups will be represented, which means that you can find out about the numerous activities and events on offer. Representatives of the different organisations will be happy to chat informally to everyone; they will be wearing name badges for ease of identification. Alternatively, if you have an idea for a club/activity not already on offer, you'll be able to discuss your thoughts with others, and this may help get your initiative off the ground.

Enclosed is a flyer, as funded by the Hunton Herald; do pop this somewhere prominent to remind you of the date and time. Free slices of pizza will be available, as generously funded by the Parish Council, and the bar will be open!

We so hope that you will be able to join us. Who knows, there could be a budding new cricketer, footballer, bowls player, not to mention people who would like to be involved in the other many opportunities that we have in the village.

Sue Pinks and Wendy Simmons will be coordinating the event, aided by other enthusiastic volunteers. So, please come along, as we know it will be a good, very informal, evening.

Sue Pinks and Wendy Simmons

Save the Date. 'Strawberry Picnic Tea with Bells on Sunday'

On Sunday 7th July, everyone is invited to a glorious 'Strawberry Picnic Tea with Bells on Sunday' to be held in St Mary's churchyard. We will be including bell ringing by the dedicated team of bell ringers and possibly a chance for you to have a go, or just listen in the sunshine! Let's hope the rain keeps off! More news to follow nearer the event.

Memories of Hop Picking

The Village Club will be running a 'Green Hop Event' in October and we need your help to share memories, photographs and stories about the hopping life and industry. If you can help in anyway, please contact Edna Dennison, 01622 746103 or ednaden@gmail.com

Chasing Sheep!

'Chasing Sheep is best Left to Shepherds,' is a piece of minimalist music by Michael Nyman from the film 'The Draughtsman's Contract' by Peter Greenaway. It has also been adapted for various recordings, including one of the 'Shaun the Sheep' films. It reminds me of the bit where the farmer is counting his flock as they run past, going through the hedge and back round again; this makes me chuckle! Sheep are clever and cunning, don't underestimate them! Herding sheep is an art, it may look simply like chasing them from one place to another, but it never is that simple.

Each sheep has its own personality, some trust you and will gladly follow and help to make a complicit flock. But you just need one that is an independent thinker. She knows you are up to something and decides that actually she doesn't want to follow everyone else. This is fine if she doesn't coerce the others. However, she could easily get the flock moving in the opposite direction. We have tried to breed this trait out of our sheep, as it makes for an easy life when moving a flock single handed.

We had a resident Shetland for a while; they are wilder in character. They can spook a tame flock and undo any well-rehearsed transition around the farm. Once she was coming in for shearing, but to get her through the gate was impossible. We would get her close and she would bounce away on her springy legs in a sponk on all fours. She was like a dancer, added a mocking defiance to her behaviour! Once eventually around the gate, in the yard, we were at last a step closer to the barn; the other penned sheep watched her with eyes rolling upward! In the end we needed the assistance of the shearer to catch her. Defiantly, this was not before she had chomped through our newly planted hedge while diligently keeping her keen eyes on us.

Fortunately, our sheep are now so tame because we have eliminated haughty and scatty ones! The flock know our routine and where they are going. Sometimes, they even run ahead, so we have to be careful to avoid being tripped up. Their vision allows them to see round behind them, this means they run slightly across you to keep you in view. Moving mums with lambs, that's a different matter entirely, it's like herding cats!

A New Church Governor for Hunton School

On the 18th of March, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary's Hunton approved the appointment of Hazel Russel as a new Church Governor for Hunton School. Hazel is married to Steve, and they have 2 adult children. Hazel currently attends the 'Connect Church', based in Senacre and regularly volunteers at the 'Brew and a Bite' at Coxheath Church. Hazel also attends the toddler church sessions with her therapy dog. For the last seven years, Hazel has run her own 'Forest School'; allowing children the freedom to enjoy exciting outdoor activities with careful guidance and supervision. Prior to that, she worked in a nursery and was a childminder. Her experiences include being Chair of the 'Mote Park Fellowship' and as a fund-raising treasurer at Madginford School. Recently, she worked with Hunton School and was struck by the warm welcome from the children and staff. As a result, she is delighted at becoming a governor at Hunton School.

The role of a school governor is vital in ensuring that our schools have external support and challenge. If anyone else has a passion for becoming involved in governance, please contact the Chair of Governors, Iain Simmons on 01622 820875 or email Iain.Simmons@hunton.kent.sch.uk

Charity Quiz for Charity Marathon Runner

One of the Hunton Runners, Lance Parry, is running the London Marathon in April, in aid of Save The Children; a fantastic charity supporting children across the world. The twenty-six-mile route is an awfully long way, no matter how good at running you are! Good luck Lance!

Kindly, the Village Club hosted a quiz on Saturday the 23rd of March. At the time of going to press, the quiz had not yet taken place; however, we are sure that it will be very well supported because teams are already being identified. If you were not able to get along to this event, please do support in any way you can. You can donate directly via Lance's Just Giving Page. Search 'Lance Parry' on: www.justgiving.com

Hunton Run Club

Over the past few months, a group of dedicated (and maybe slightly mad) regulars have continued running every Tuesday evening and Friday afternoon, despite some exceptionally wet and muddy conditions! However, the lighter evenings and somewhat drier conditions have been much appreciated and certainly makes for a nice change! If you're more of a 'fair-weather' runner (and who can blame you?!), now is the perfect time to get involved ahead of the long summer months.

We meet every Tuesday at 18:30 pm outside the Village Club for a relaxed ~5km loop; perfect for anyone starting out or getting back into running. There is usually a good turnout on Tuesdays but it would be great to see some new faces! For anyone wanting more of a challenge, longer runs (10 – 20km) happen most Friday afternoons. There are sometimes additional, ad-hoc runs during a week, all organised via our WhatsApp group.

For more information and to get involved, email Adam Moore at: mail@adammoore.net or text / WhatsApp / call on: 07766 566 449.

Hunton Run Club will also be at the 'Meet The Village' event on Friday 12th April. If you're interested in joining us on some runs but have a few questions before committing, this will be a perfect opportunity to find out a little more and get to know us. We'll be wearing our club kit, so keep an eye out and come and say hello!

World Book Day at Hunton Primary School

Thursday 7th March marked World Book Day. The children were set with a challenge to dress up a potato as their favourite book character or word. There were some outstanding entries that included: Freida Kahlo, Harry Potter and 'Tayta' Swift! During the day, the children engaged with and spoke about the books they loved. Here at Hunton, we try our very best to promote a culture of a 'love for reading' and try to reflect this throughout library areas and by our determination for every child to be a fluent reader by the time they leave our primary school. After some brilliant World Book Day activities, the children had an assembly to judge the best potato and for every child to receive their £1 book voucher. We also thank all those from the Hunton village who come in to hear our children read- it makes such a difference.

Oh, for the Wings of a Dove!

The area around Hunton is fortunate in still retaining Turtle Doves – the country's fastest declining breeding bird. Local landowners are rallying round to help save this beautiful dove for future generations by providing areas where the birds can forage on bare soil for wildflower (aka farmland weed) seeds. The RSPB is providing extra seed to help the birds get quickly back into breeding condition in the spring after their 3,000-mile flight from their West African wintering grounds. Our tall hedgerows and scrubby field corners are ideal for concealing their scrappy nests too. But what they must also have is easily accessible water, so they can produce plenty of 'crop milk' from their diet of dry seeds with which they feed their young. There may be no shortage of water in Hunton, but the doves have tiny legs so almost need to paddle to reach it. Additional shallow-sided ponds have been dug to accommodate them by Natural England and the Medway Countryside Project.

With an estimated 700 pairs, Kent now has a third of the UK's population. A great proportion of these are to be found in the Low Weald. A special project is running in the Marden area to study their behaviour and habitat needs. By attaching GPS tags to three birds last summer, Kent Wildlife Trust scientists discovered some are further ranging than previously thought. Hunton could well be on their itinerary! Funding from the Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) is allowing for more GPS tags this year to see if we get a repeat of last year's wide-roaming birds. Additionally, an MSc student will be working with us studying Turtle Doves and Nightingale nesting habitat too. Please let the Hunton Herald editors know if you see any special birds. Turtle doves come into gardens and happily forage under bird tables. These birds are recognisable by the blue and black neck stripes and tortoiseshell wings. Or you may hear their gentle 'turr-turr' purring on the warm summer air. With your help, our grandchildren will not have to rely on Christmas cards to know what these beautiful birds look like!



Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Fridays 6:30pm - 10:30pm. (except for the 'Meet the Village' event, as detailed in the flyer and article when it will open at 6pm)

Mothering Sunday

St Mary's celebrated Mothering Sunday on 10th March . Revd Lorna Falkner led the service. Beautiful posies were shared with all of the ladies in the congregation, and we thank Sarah Jones for preparing them. Additional posies were taken away to share with other friends and family members in the community. We remembered all of those who were affected by the fire on the previous night.

Church & Churchyard Working Party Friday 10th May 9am – 12 noon

Thank you to all those who give an hour or so of their time to the occasional Church and Churchyard Working Party. These are relaxed, sociable events where everyone selects the task they wish to do to make St Mary's Church, and the area round it, as tidy as possible. The next Working Party will be on Friday 10th May from 9am to 12 noon ready for a wedding the following day. Contact Lesley for more information, or to let her know if you are hoping to attend, so she can organise enough refreshments for the coffee break.

lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com 01622 820210.

Hunton's 250th Walk.

On Tuesday 27th February, Hunton Walking Group celebrated their 250th walk since being set up as a result of the Village Plan in 2011. Unfortunately, with all the miserable wet weather in February, the 'Plan A' trip to London to explore parts of the City of London was postponed. Hopefully, this will take place when we have drier weather in the Spring. The relentless rain continued so we endeavoured to prepare for ' Plan B'. It was our hope to find a country route that was not either knee-deep in mud or in need of a canoe. Alas, this proved impossible and was also abandoned!

Not to be defeated, twelve of us met up for 'Plan C', a walk around Mote Park. Unbelievably, the sun shone! As a consequence, we enthusiastically covered the less known areas of Mote Park and enjoyed some of the first signs of Spring; it was a very sociable morning. At the usual after-walk drink, our numbers increased as we were joined by others who could not make it to the walk but wanted to mark the occasion. April's walks will take place on 9th and 23rd.

For one day only! St. George's Day Walk and / or Lunch on Tuesday 23rd April

Hunton Walking Group is getting together with Hunton Club to celebrate St. George's Day on 23rd April, combining a walk along some of Hunton's footpaths followed by an optional lunch at the Club if you wish. It is a later start than usual - 11.00am at the Club and only 1.5hours, finishing at about 12.30pm back at the Club. There is no need to be a regular Hunton Group Walker to join in, maybe a chance to try us! A buffet lunch will be available from about 12.30pm for £15 a head for non-members of Hunton Club or £10 a head for members. Membership of Hunton Club is only £25 a year and application forms are available from bar volunteers or on the Club website <https://huntonvillageclub.com>

You and your family and friends are welcome to simply walk or just join the lunch. Either way, please contact Lesley on 01622 820210 or lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com to book places. If booking for lunch please let her know at least one week before if you, or those coming with you, have any food allergies. If you would like more information about the Walking Group, contact Jane Langdon on ejanelangdon@yahoo.co.uk. Or you could come to the Village Club to the Meet Your Neighbours event when members of the walking group will be there to welcome you.

Jane Langdon and Lesley Lee.

Hunton Ladies

At their February meeting the ladies in Hunton made cards using the teabag method of folding paper with a different print on each side. They all looked quite different and we were pleased with the results.

The Hunton Ladies will meet on Tuesday 23rd in April and not on the usual last Wednesday of the month. This is because the meeting is an open meeting when Sam Andrews and Astrid Cunningham will be speaking about their experiences of volunteering as Doctors in Africa. The doors of Hunton Club will be open at 7:30 for the meeting commencing at 8pm. All are welcome. There is a voluntary donation of £5 towards the Charity that Sam and Astrid volunteered for and some light refreshment will be available along with the usual bar. All are welcome.

Chris Summersgill

Benefice Service Rota – April 2024				
Church	7th	14th	21st	28th
Coxheath 11:00 am	Communion (1+2+3) <i>CD</i>	Morning Worship (1+3) <i>LF</i>	Communion (1+2+3) <i>DJ</i>	All-age worship (Preacher's choice) <i>BP</i>
East Farleigh 9:30 am	Morning Worship <i>SE</i>		Communion <i>CD</i>	
West Farleigh 9:30 am		Communion <i>LF</i>		Morning Worship+ APCM <i>LF</i>
Hunton 9:30 am	Communion <i>DJ</i>		Morning Worship +APCM <i>LF</i>	
Linton 9:30 am		Morning Worship <i>DJ</i>		Communion <i>CD</i>
Midweek Services				
Coxheath - Every Thursday; Holy Communion, 10:00 am; Linton - Holy Communion last Wednesday of each month, 12.00, followed by soup				
DJ – David Jones, BP - Becky Parnham, LF – Lorna Faulkner; CD – Clinton Davis; SE – Sue Elliott; BW – Bertie Woodward				

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