



Next Editors: Wendy & Iain Simmons: huntonherald@outlook.com
All items for the next edition of the Herald to the Editors by 15th March

Snowdrop Sunday

How blessed we were to have such a dry, and even sunny, afternoon after so much rain. Iain and I thank you all for making Snowdrop Sunday a joyous community event and one to which we welcomed old friends as well as new people and returners. The loveliest story was from one man who had visited the snowdrops last year, shortly after his wife had passed away. He told us that his wife loved snowdrops and that his visit had brought back fond memories. His daughter had taken many photographs in 2023 and made them into a montage for her father. Most sensitively, she had superimposed a very discrete picture of her mother looking from the church window towards the snowdrops. Added to that, she had included a small robin in the churchyard because her mother had always loved robins. It was a wonderful, almost tearful moment, when he shared his photo with several visitors to the church. Opening the church like this keeps the church accessible to all, even if they do not attend services. So, here we are, quite tired, but very pleased with the day.



Most importantly, we would like to thank all the volunteers for their very kind donations of cakes, smiling help, snowdrops and time. We were thrilled to welcome three new, very young, helpers: Amelie, Daisy and Nellie. Nellie helped Grandpa Andy Sharp to make the 'Family Fruit Cake', which we loved. While Amelie and Daisy were the best ever granddaughter assistants to Sue Pinks; how we loved their smiles and ability to pack up the cakes to take home. It was very industrious of them to go around collecting the washing up, especially as they later had to help with mucking out the ponies! Well done all the girls, do come and help us again.

The joy of taking photographs was also embraced by Wendy Sharp, who photographed Maude, the German Shepherd, as she sat artistically amongst the snowdrops. Moments of innocent delight were also captured when Wendy and Andy's young grandson peeped into the flower of a 'Hunton Giant', exclaiming... "There is a bee inside." Indeed, the centre of the flower looks just like a bee hunting for nectar. The inciteful innocence of young minds is the creativity that will determine our future. To end this article, I am delighted to report that we raised £412.10, which also included a most generous additional donation. We thank you all.

Wendy Simmons

Plants, Produce and Refreshments Day

Our annual Plants, Produce and Refreshments Day is planned for Saturday 4th May. We would be very grateful if as many people as possible could take cuttings or plant up a few extra seeds and kindly donate any extra plants to this event. Money raised goes towards maintenance projects at the Village Club, such as repainting the outside of the building. Further details to follow but we wanted to get our request in before the planting season starts!

Lesley Lee

Your Local Contacts:		Maidstone Police	690690 or 101
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Village Hall Booking:	www.huntonvillagehall.co.uk
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Huntonwatch: huntonwatch@gmail.com	07907 019996
Pond and Tree Warden: Sam Andrews	huntontreewarden@gmail.com	'Potholes' Hotline (KCC)	03000 418181
Rector: Revd. Lorna Faulkner*	747570	Hunton Ladies: Chris Summersgill	c.a.summersgill@btinternet.com
Hon Associate Rector: Revd. David Jones	741474*	PCSO - none	
Churchwarden: Iain Simmons	820875	Helen Grant MP helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk	0207 219 7107
	Ishuntonchurchwarden@btinternet.com	Village Club: Roger Lee: roger.c.lee@btinternet.com	820210
Community Wardens Team	07811 271021	Reporting HGVs	huntontrafficreporting@gmail.com
Hunton Bell Ringers: Lavinia Thompson	07885 763071		*not available on Fridays
Contact details for other village clubs and organisations are available at www.huntonparishcouncil.org.uk			

Parish Council Contacts		Chairman: David Heaton - 820678, dhhuntonpc@gmail.com
Parish Clerk: Sharon Goodwin - 681238, huntonpc@googlemail.com		Cllr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com
Cllr Jonny Goddard - 820096, jonny@cheveneyfarm.co.uk		Cllr Mike Summersgill - 820429, mshuntonpc@btinternet.com
Cllr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com		Cllr Jean Fuller - 07738 935630, jfhuntonpc@outlook.com
Cllr Iain Simmons - 820875, ishuntonpc@btinternet.com		

Diary Dates	
Sun 23rd March - Quiz Night at the Club;	Tues 23 April - St. George's Day Walk (11am) and/or Lunch (12.30pm);
Sat 4 May - Plants, Produce & Refreshments at Hunton Club - 12 noon to 4pm;	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	

Pastoral Letter

The year is moving on – it's March already and finally the days are a little longer and a little lighter! Perhaps you are reading this with the gentle, warming rays of the spring sun spilling through your windows and the fresh smell of hope on the breeze. Perhaps it's one of those ghastly grey days when you genuinely wonder if the weather has looked at the calendar lately.

Either way, be of good cheer! Winter is out the door (hooray!) and the season of growth and life is upon us. March, history tells us, was named after Mars the Roman god of war. The month was so named as it was the time of year that military campaigns, interrupted by the winter weather, could be resumed with gusto.

Now, I am hoping none of us has a war on hold that we might like to get stuck into. However, I do wonder what we've put on the 'back-burner' of our lives that we might be inspired to pick up again in this season of new beginnings and fresh starts? Something we were enjoying or tackling and have let slide. A hobby? A project maybe? A decision? A question we need to answer? A friendship that needs some investment?

Maybe now is the time to take a deep breath and give it the attention it needs to finally be completed or, if you're 'queen of the good intention' like me, just getting started would be a bonus!

As we approach Easter, we observe the period of Lent, when we are called to consider our lives on a deeper level. We take time to be mindful of all those ways in which we might live better, truer, lives and draw closer to God. The triumph of Easter – life over death, mercy over judgement, grace over condemnation – is a wonderful reminder to us all of the opportunities we have to begin again and to embrace new life from a new perspective. As Christians, we seek to find – and live – life from the perspective of a God who loves us, and loves us with *his* life.

May each of us discover the joy of Spring. May each of us be blessed and re-energised in this season. May we notice opportunities for growth and new beginnings, and may we be inspired to embrace them and the life that comes with them.

Happy Easter, Lorna

Serge Desmarais

As many of you are aware, Serge died on the morning of Friday 19th January. Although he had become increasingly unwell his death was unexpected.

Serge was born near Paris in 1946, into a wealthy French family. He led an eventful life, being an accomplished and daredevil skier as well as show jumping, racing power boats in south west France, driving a yellow Land Rover in African rallies, riding a motorbike into his 60s and driving fast cars always.

He moved to England in 2000, the year after he met Lynda. He acquired Hunton Court in 2008 and spent more than two years on an extensive restoration. Later he helped to protect Bishops Lane from the threat of unwelcome development by buying the 65-acre field on its northern boundary and planting it with 45,000 trees.

He was perhaps most visible in the village at the two historic re-enactment weekends in 2013 and 2014 when Waterloo was re-fought (to French advantage) and Redcoats were seen marching up and down West Street – a most surreal sight!

Although he was a very private man, he always had a ready smile and a wave for those he knew. He was also quietly generous on occasion, whether it was providing CCTV for the Club after a break-in or the gift of a wheelbarrow following a random conversation – it was his thoughtfulness which was memorable.

He left Hunton an even better place and he is missed. Our sympathies go out to Lynda and their families.



Parish Council Elections – Thursday 2nd May 2024

Would you like to be a Hunton Parish councillor? As a local councillor you can become a voice for your community and make real change. Nomination papers can be obtained from the Electoral Commission website at:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-parish-council-elections-england>

Notice of election is published on Friday 22nd March and nominations start on Monday 25th March and close on Friday 5th April at 4pm. Find out what the role involves by contacting the Parish Clerk or Parish Councillor. Contact details are listed on the front page of the *Hunton Herald*. To stand for election you must be: A British or Commonwealth citizen; at least 18 years old; on the electoral register for the parish; or in the past 12 months occupied land or other premises in the parish, or work in the parish, or live within three miles of the parish boundary.

Hunton Parish will now fall within the Marden & Yalding Ward (previously Coxheath & Hunton Ward). Elections for the three Borough councillors will take place on the same day. Term of office is 4 years for both parish and borough councillors. The Polling Station remains unchanged, at the Village Hall.

Chainhurst Chicken Farm – Latest Shenanigans

Three years and three months since Fridays' consultant, DHA, put up the scheme details for 192,000 free-range chickens on the fields adjacent to the River Beult in Chainhurst, the project was placed before Maidstone Borough Councillors for a decision/vote on 15th February...Only it wasn't decided, as the only vote taken was to agree with the head planner's late decision to withdraw their 'rushed' proposal to go ahead with the scheme, and to do further work/analysis before councillors can say yeah or nay at some future date! This is a scheme that has had four versions proposed to date and which was due to be rejected last summer by MBC's planner before Fridays cut the number of sheds from three to two.

This seemed to be primarily because the reaction to the planners' proposal was universally to criticise it for its lack of dealing with outstanding and important issues (like flood risk and chicken poo in the river), as well as confusing content in the MBC document, DHA documents and information that has been fed onto the planning portal in the previous two weeks. As everyone had been led to believe, it would be listed for the March 2024 Committee, so it was a shock to hear on 7th February that it would be on the next week's agenda... After some seriously urgent work and documentation was undertaken by WeLoveChainhurst's volunteer residents' group, MBC asked for the application to be withdrawn a day before the monthly committee meeting.

Two local Marden Borough Councillors spoke eloquently against the decision to withdraw the proposal and to move to a debate on the day. Leader of the Council, David Burton, stressed that the failure to resolve the issue was detrimental to public confidence in the planning system and to residents' health; Claudine Russell gave quote after quote from the planner's document which reported that things had not been finalised yet. Representatives from WeLoveChainhurst were ready to give their 3-minute opinion against the proposal, as were two Marden and Hunton Parish Councillors as well as two more Marden & Coxheath elected representatives. The committee chair took a vote on withdrawal, and this was carried by 7 votes to 5 (along 'party' lines), so the group of 15-20 residents who had gone to the Town Hall to make their views heard got up and left to discuss their next moves and to seek further legal/technical advice.

In the meantime, the SSSI River Beult continues to deteriorate in condition even before any new influx of agricultural pollution from a potential 125,000 chickens ranging outdoors. The Environment Agency has just published its 2022 assessment of the river, downgrading the 'fish condition' from Good to Moderate. This followed the downgrading of the 'chemical condition' from Good overall in 2016 to Fail in 2019. It is perhaps pertinent that the applicant's consultant and MBC's specialist adviser continue to mis-quote the 2016 'Good' status as being its current condition in their technical assessments.

Meeting Report by Mike Summersgill, Parish Council Vice-Chair & Flood/Pond Warden

Hunton Village Club Update

February has already been a busy month at the club thanks to sporting events on the TV, the Gardening Group supper and quiz, a social event for the club's band of volunteers and, as I write, another walk and lunch is still to come.

Maidstone United's FA Cup victory over Ipswich Town was a particular highlight, with a tremendous atmosphere in the club as nervous tension mounted as the game neared its end; the "will they or won't they" question waiting to be answered. We will be screening the next round match against Coventry City.

England's exploits in the Six Nations Rugby are also being followed on the TV by a few rugby enthusiasts, with matches still to be played on 9th and 16th March.

Another highlight was the social evening for the many volunteers who help keep the club functioning. Roger, the club's chairman, and Lesley Lee provided an excellent supper and wine for all to enjoy. We are very fortunate that they support the club in the way that they do, raising funds for projects and keeping the club solvent. We owe them a large debt of gratitude for all the help they have provided. Roger also announced the retirement of Sandra Bullivant from the club's committee. She had been a member of the committee since 2013 and a staunch supporter of the club, helping to raise much-needed funds prior to being awarded a lifetime membership. Roger thanked Sandra and presented her with a pot plant and garden centre gift voucher. To replace Sandra, the committee has co-opted Simon Webb, who had previously expressed an interest in joining.

The gardening group's event included entertainment from Sue and David Heaton who provided a short, fun, plant-based quiz which was educational for us all. Who knew that small bullrushes were sold in Victorian times ... to stuff birds!

The next general "Just For Fun" quiz night will be on Saturday 23rd March. Doors open at 7:30pm for an 8pm start. Teams of up to 6 persons is the normal format – but if you haven't got a team, it is usually possible for you to join a team on the night – so do come along.

Next Litter Pick – Saturday, 23rd March, 2024

We plan to hold our next litter pick on Saturday 23rd March, meeting in the village hall car park at 10am. We suggest that volunteers choose where they are happy to pick up litter and be responsible for their own safety. Rubbish sacks will be provided and there will be pickers and high vis jackets available to borrow but please bring your own gloves if you want to use them. Once again, thanks to Clock House Farm for agreeing to collect bagged rubbish and to dispose of it with their own commercial waste. If you can help, please let us know or just turn up on the day.

Andrea Forster (forsters.hunton@btinternet.com)

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wednesdays & Fridays 8 - 11pm. Sundays 8 - 10.30 pm

Hanky Panky

We're preparing for lambing though, as I write this, it is about six weeks away. When we first started keeping sheep, and lambing, we had six elderly ewes to show us how it was done. That was 2014. We have come a long way since. Our flock has grown in vigour and we're learning lessons year on year; we are a little more confident and less trepidatious come lambing but somehow we still feel like newbies. Every year has been completely different and has brought its own trials and tribulations.

The first year, with our elderly ewes, we had tiny feeble lambs, a high number of triplets and it was hard work keeping these little things going. We were inexperienced and ended up with a lot of tube feeding I seem to remember.

The Schmallenberg virus was around one year, though we were fortunate enough to largely escape disaster. One ewe delivered prematurely but luckily the rest of the flock was unscathed.

One year we seemed to have very few twins and more singles. That was not just experienced by us; the vet thought it might be to do with the weather conditions at tugging. However, we have since had a ram vasectomised, and now tease the flock before tugging to get the ewes ovulating. We have had good results, with even the Herdwicks having twins – not the norm in their native breeding grounds in the Lake District.

Last year was a difficult lambing; most needed help and we thought it was because we had transported them mid-pregnancy, but many shepherds had similar issues. We have had mums not wanting their lambs – probably when we've lambed a greater number of first-timers and they become spooked and flustered. Then we seem to be bottle-feeding their lambs for them from the get-go.

We've learnt that, given a second chance, mums that don't have much milk one year, will still not have much milk the next and we just perpetuate our own bottle-feeding workload. We have made a point of keeping only the best of the bouncy lambs to add to the flock and the robust healthy ewes; the independent mums and the tamer, less flighty girls so, mostly, we have a calm time in the lambing shed these days and a good-looking flock.

This year, however, we have had some hanky-panky going on. One ewe delivered in early January having had a liaison with a ram lamb – fortunately not hers. Then, with lambing still 'officially' six weeks away, we have had a lamb born yesterday! This birth, it seems, was from an encounter through a fence... We live and learn!

We were lucky that Neil, who crutched – when you remove the wool from around the tail and udder – our sheep last weekend, noticed one with a full udder. I am sure we would never have noticed she was due so soon – but the signs were all there. I do recall a ewe lying by the rams' field, with Spud the ram, being very pally (with the fence between them mind) and not particularly wanting to move, even for food. I didn't think anything more of it. Southdown sheep are short in the legs and stocky, not built for jumping, but whatever went on there, there were no witnesses! By the way, mum and lamb are doing well.

Sue Heaton

Record Attendance at February Gardening Social

Although it was another horrid wet night when local flood points were rising, none of those who had booked to attend the Gardening Club Social on 12th February had to cancel due to sudden crises and all forty six locals arrived safely – although a few did leave early to make sure they got home easily.

The evening started as the England v Wales Six Nations Match ended, with drinks and bar nibbles as people caught up with friends. After a relaxed three-course supper, David and Sue Heaton kindly organised a highly entertaining and light-hearted gardening quiz.

New members are always welcome to join Hunton Gardening Club – contact Lesley for more information –

Lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com

Benefice Service Rota – March 2024					
	3 rd	10 th Mothering Sunday	17 st	24 th Palm Sunday	31 st Easter Sunday
Coxheath	11.00am HC DJ	11.00am MP LF with MU	11.00am HC LF	11.00am FS LF	11.00am HC LF
E. Farleigh	09.30 MP LF		9.30 HC CD	9.30 MP LF	9.30 HC LF
W. Farleigh		09.30 HC CD		With East Farleigh	With East Farleigh
Hunton	9.30 HC CD	9.30 FS LF	09.30 FS DJ		11.00am HC DJ
Linton		9.30 MP BP		9.30 HC DJ	09.30 HC CD
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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