



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

Memorial Bench for Gilly Devas

In our January edition we announced plans to install a bench in the Old Churchyard in fond memory of Gilly, who contributed so much to our village life. Since then, donations have poured in and the bench has been ordered but, such was the affection in which she was held, we appear to have enough money for a second project, namely the acquisition of a cabinet which could be used in the Church to house and display safely, a rare 1613 printed "She" Bible.

We have discussed these ideas with Gilly's daughter Laura who has been very supportive and agrees that Gilly would have been delighted with both initiatives.

Thank you for your generous support but if anyone missed our first announcement and would like to contribute something towards this fund, please contact either Ron Porter (ronporter@btinternet.com) or James Forster (forsters.hunton@btinternet.com) and we can send you the payment details of the Friends of St Mary's who have kindly agreed to collect the money on our behalf.

James and Ron

Breaking Herald News!

We started the Hunton Herald in January 2003 when printing and the setting out of each issue was done by Kathleen Moore (choir mistress, wife of Philip, our organist, and surprising friend of Miriam Margolyes) and the editor at the time, the greatly missed Les Leonard.

In December 2005 we switched to having each issue printed for us in black & white. At about this time Dudley Farman volunteered to help set out each issue. He has continued to do so for about 20 years and we all owe him (and his family) a huge debt of gratitude.

Very sadly for us Dudley and his family have recently moved out of the village so changes will be required going forward. For now, Dudley has offered to carry on providing support in terms of laying out future issues, while we are going to collect the printing from Hadlams ourselves. Having said this we need to be aware that this kindness may have a limited life span as he establishes a new life elsewhere.

So firstly, thank you Dudley for all you have done quietly in the background to keep the Herald going and for your support in moving to a new reality where you are no longer here to carry on in the way you have done. We will miss you and we wish you and your family every happiness in your new home.

Secondly, is there anyone out there who would be interested in taking over from Dudley, whenever he decides that enough is enough? Experience of Microsoft Publisher or other publishing software would be an advantage.

James Forster

Available for odd jobs!

I have been very lucky to have been selected to attend the World Scout Jamboree in the Summer of 2027 representing my Troop (Coxheath) and District in Poland. I will be one of over 40,000 Scouts from 160 countries taking part.

I am hoping to raise over £2,000 towards the cost of the trip and so I am looking for any odd jobs such as gardening or dog walking. If you have any jobs that I can do to help, please let my parents or me know.

William Odling 01622 820068

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	01622 820403
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	Katie Lam MP	katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk
Churchwarden: Iain Simmons	820875	Assistant to MP Katie Lam	020 7219 8175
	ishuntonchurchwarden@btinternet.com	Village Club: Roger Lee: roger.c.lee@btinternet.com	820210
Community Wardens Team	07811 271021	Reporting HGVs	huntontrafficroporting@gmail.com
Hunton Bell Ringers: Susan Clements	07864 041234		*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, clerk@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk		CLlr Annette Trought - 820448, annette@trought.com
CLlr Tony Stanbridge - 820721, tshuntonpc@gmail.com		CLlr Iain Simmons - 820875, isimmons@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk
CLlr Mike Summersgill - 820429, msummersgill@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk		CLlr Stephen Banks - 07850 545481, sbanks@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk
CLlr Simon Webb - 07878 018997, simon.webb5@btinternet.com		

Diary Dates
1st April - Church work party; 11th April - Village Hall Supper and Quiz; 13th May and 13th June - Church work party; 25th July - Village Hall 100 year anniversary.
Check out www.huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk/events-list for the latest events. If you would like to add an event, email clerk@huntonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pastoral Letter

Well, here we are already in the third month of the year! How did that happen? January seemed to drag on forever and then February rushed by in the blink of an eye and then Whoomp! here's March! Or is it just me?

March marks a significant turning point in the UK calendar. It is the month where we finally say goodbye to the short, dark days of winter and welcome the first signs of spring. For many, this transition brings a sense of renewal and optimism. Maybe this is a better time to start making those 'New Year Resolutions' than in the darkness of January? However, March 2026 is not just about the changing weather. It is a busy month packed with important national days, cultural observances, and global celebrations.

St David and St Patrick have their celebration days, Mothering Sunday is on the 15th; there's World Book Day on the 5th (look out for children going to school in fancy dress!), International Women's Day on the 8th and Comic Relief (Red Nose Day) on the 20th to name just a few of the events. One that made me chuckle when I found out about it is world PI Day on the 14th – a celebration of Mathematics chosen because the equation for PI starts 3.14...

March seems to be a month full of things to celebrate. If you scour the internet long enough there's almost something for every day of the month - local, national and international celebrations, both sacred and secular. On the 29th we will be changing the clocks to British Summer time – remember to 'Spring' forward an hour!

However, it's also Palm Sunday, so in the church we will be remembering Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem when the crowds gathered and welcomed him with shouts of Hallelujah and waved palm branches. So, should you see scurrying shrubbery hurrying down the streets on the 29th your eyes probably aren't deceiving you, don't be alarmed, it's most likely a churchgoer who's forgotten to change their clocks before going to bed and is rushing to join in the celebrations!

So, Happy March everyone, whatever and however you are celebrating.

Becky

Gardening Club Social

A buzzing social evening was to be had at the Hunton Club on the evening of the Gardening Club social meet up in February. With the provision of a delicious hot supper laid on by Lesley and Roger, followed by tasty puddings from Corinne and Jean, all served by Fay and Sylvia with Simon and Zoe on the bar; it was a very convivial evening.

The room was full of chatter as friends caught up with each other whilst puzzling over a dozen or so choice specimens of leaves in order to identify the shrubs. From Aucuba, Elaeagnus, Mahonia, Pittosporum and Yew to name a few.

Anyone is welcome to come along to Gardening Club events as and when they happen, look out for notices in the Hunton Herald. If you can help with Churchyard working parties, please email lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com, churchyard mowing email heatonsue4@gmail.com or community orchard working parties and mowing, please email Barbara at spells.wright@btinternet.com.

Sue Heaton

January Quiz Night

The Club held another wonderful quiz on Friday 30th January, hosted by our irrepressible quiz-master Phil Nichols. Seven teams competed to come up with the most outlandish names and Phil delighted in asking horrible questions that generated head scratching aplenty! There was a new format to some of the rounds giving rise to some curious humming noises (yes, they were!) as we tried to work out if we could hold our noses and still hum – controversy ensued, but as always, Phil's answers were final and no-one fell out! Thank you, Phil, Tricia for scoring and Doug for looking after the bar.

James Forster

Roadside Litter

As I hope you will all have spotted, we have held another litter-picking event with our usual team of volunteers. This was not advertised in the Herald on this occasion as it was arranged in a rush in response to a particularly bad build-up of litter after an earlier than usual event last year.

This took place over the week leading up to 14th February with the intention that Clock House Farm would dispose of the rubbish collected. To our surprise it appears that MBC may have removed the first 33 sacks of rubbish while emptying the playing field bins! We remain grateful to Clock House Farm for disposing of the rest.

Thank you to all who helped out and to those who drove with care and consideration. We collected 65 black sacks of rubbish and the usual collection of gas cannisters and car parts - the outstanding development this time was the vast increase in Stella Artois cans!

Andrea Forster

Next Churchyard Work Party

There will be a churchyard work party on ... Wednesday 1st April! No really, there will be ... to make sure the old churchyard is tidy before the Easter celebrations. As always, we meet at about 9am, have a hot drink and a biscuit at about 11am and finish up by about 12 noon. Other work parties are planned for Wednesdays 13th May and 8th July and Saturdays 13th June and 12th August.

Please do come along and help, they are sociable events and you can choose what you want to do. Also, please email Lesley.a.lee@btinternet.com if you plan to join us so she can ensure that there are enough diet breaking treats to go around!

Village Quiz Night on 11th April!

Have you seen the scaffolding around Hunton church? This spring our beautiful church is undergoing some repairs ... the shingle roof of the 13th century tower has got some holes in it! We have been lucky to benefit from grants to help with the repair costs, but they don't cover all of it - that's why the Friends of St Mary's have decided to run a quiz night to try and raise some funds towards the cost - and to have a bit of fun! Please come along for a social evening - you can make up your own teams of up to 8, or we can find a team to suit you!

When - Saturday April 11th - doors open at 6.30pm, start at 7pm. **Where** - Hunton Village Hall

Tickets - £15/person - includes a sharing platter of food for each table and prizes for the winning team and the "lucky ticket" holder. Tickets to be bought in advance. Fully stocked bar available. Please email Mary Goddard (mary.goddard1@icloud.com) or Ian Pinks (ianppinks@gmail.com) for tickets with "FOSM quiz tickets" in the subject.

Save the date - 25th July 2026

We are very lucky to have secured a booking for Track Dogs on this date. Some of you may remember they gave a great concert about 10 years ago both on the field and in the hall. As 2026 is the 100th anniversary of the Village Hall, the concert could be the finale of a day of celebrations to mark this centenary. From the early returns of the survey, a number of you expressed a desire to help with village events, so this is your opportunity to volunteer! If you would like to help, please contact the Clerk or a member of the Parish Council (details at the foot of page one).

David Heaton Hunton Parish Council

Fluttering around Elm Trees

The White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly relies on elm trees to breed, they are brown with a white coloured letter W on the underparts of their wings, hence the name. They are difficult to spot as they tend to flutter around the treetops, but they do take nectar from brambles, so it is possible to see them lower down from June to August.

Aye there's the rub! With our disappearing elm trees, these butterflies are not known to be in our area.

The Kent County Council 'Plan Tree Strategy' looks at a wide range of issues with regard to tree planting in Kent and improving their associated biodiversity. The funding for the provision of these developed disease resistant varieties of elms has been provided by Network Rail Community Tree Planting Programme in partnership with the Tree Council; and these trees have been made available for planting across the area with the idea of developing corridors to support these and other butterflies that are dependent on them. The Elm Heritage Society has been developing these disease resistant elm varieties and we have been lucky to receive ten of these plants.

As soon as our hedge plants arrive, we are planting four as standards within the hedge line that will cut across the width of our field to make a joined corridor with another hedge and trees at the other end. We have already planted six of them as a broad cluster to create a wooded pasture on the field where the foot path runs through. Anyone using the footpath can watch their progress as they put on height and the canopy expands; and look out for the White-letter Hairstreak Butterflies. The intention is to develop more corridors of elm trees throughout the area and who knows, the White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly may be another butterfly we see around Hunton.

Snowdrop Sunday

It may have rained heavily on 15th February but that did not stop the snowdrops from looking serene in the gloom of a damp afternoon. Moreover, the bad weather did not stop the event from being its most successful so far. To start the day, David Jones led the 'Snowdrop Service' with a collection of prayers, hymns and thoughts about nature and the wonders of our world. The service ended with a snowdrop blessing: *"Into a dark world a snowdrop comes, a benison of hope and peace, carrying within it a green heart, a symbol of God's renewing love."*

Later that day, the church was filled with a buzz of friendly chatter, laughter and enthusiasm to purchase the many varieties of snowdrop on sale. Of course, the most popular was our very own 'Hunton Giant', which sold out almost immediately! Our thanks go to Sue Pinks, Lesley Lee and Helen Towner for donating the snowdrops. Fay Joyce and Helen Towner chatted enthusiastically about varieties, helping us all to recognise the individual shapes and patterns of the tiny flowers, "Wow" was heard several times, as people looked more closely at each flower's intricate emerald markings.

Snowdrop Sunday was truly a joyous community event, one in which we welcomed old friends as well as new people, some travelling considerable distances to visit St Mary's. We lost count of how many actually attended, although judging by the amount of washing up, we estimate close to 80 visitors, including several dogs! So many visitors spoke about their love of snowdrops heralding spring. It was moving to hear also how these delicate flowers capture memories of family who are no longer with us! As William Wordsworth wrote, "Snowdrops, venturesome harbinger of spring and pensive monitor of fleeting years".

Most importantly, we thank you all for your very kind donations of delicious cakes, as well as your help in making the event such a community occasion. For the second year we were very pleased to welcome back Amelie and Daisy, our youngest helpers, well done girls!

There were two particular highlights to the afternoon. Thanks to James Forster and David Jones, many historical artefacts were on display that had been hidden in cupboards for years; this captured the interest of so many. We have just received an email saying how thrilled one of our visitors was to find information about an aunt who died as a child choking on an apple whilst with her family hop picking. At 3pm, the church was filled with a wonderful selection of organ music, as played by our organist Marian Goodsill; this was much enjoyed by all. To end this article, I have to tell you that our takings were £588, which exceeded last year by £176. So, thank you for coming.

Hunton Village Club Opening Hours

Wednesdays 8 – 11pm; Fridays 6.30 – 10.30pm (2nd and last Fridays only); Sundays 8 – 10.30pm

Playing Along with the Scammers

I have had a series of calls from different UK mobile numbers to tell me that my O2 call plan had run out and each time I said I do not take cold calls and asked for my number to be removed. Each time I blocked the number. Then it occurred to me that next time they rang it might be useful to actually write down the conversation with the scammers up to the point where they ask for financial information and then hang up. Having watched BBCs 'scam detectors' many times I had a pretty good idea of how this might go – and I wasn't disappointed. So here, as well as I can remember it, is the conversation:

Me – "Hello" **Him** – "Hello is that Stephen?" **Me** – "Who is calling please?" **Him** – "Hello Stephen, my name is Rajesh and I am calling from O2 customer service about your call plan. Your plan has expired and you will not be able to use O2 unless you sign up for a new plan" (*warning sign #1 – already applying pressure*). **Me** – "OK, before we go on, why does my phone show that you are calling from a UK mobile number?" **Him** – "We do this all the time, it saves O2 money. (*warning sign #2 – O2 do not do this*). Now your call plan has, as I said expired, in fact it expired last year. If you are still wanting to make calls we need to sign you up to a new call plan but to identify the best one for you we need to take some details." **Me** – "What sort of details?" **Him** – "Details about how you use your phone. Number of calls, texts, time on-line that sort of thing". We then had a discussion where I gave him some purely fictitious numbers and general statements about internet usage (somewhat exaggerated I must admit).

Him – "That's great. Well I think I have the ideal plan for you and the good news is it gives you more calls and texts and much more data. Even better news is that it is cheaper than your current plan" (*warning sign #3 – if it sounds too good to be true it probably is!*) I decided to act dumb. **Me** - "how much are we talking about per month?" **Him** – "How much do you pay at the moment?" **Me** – "I can't remember, you must be able to see my record there, can't you tell me?" **Him** – "Er, let me see." He then quoted a range of monthly payment amounts which were nothing like the amount I actually pay" (*warning sign #4 – they did not know what I paid*) "and the new plan is 25% cheaper" (*see warning sign #3*). **Me** – "I need to think about it if that's OK" **Him** – "This offer is a short term one so you need to sign up today if you want to take advantage of it" (*Warning sign #5 – more pressure being applied*). **Me** – "I am not happy about doing this but what do you need from me?" **Him** – "We need to amend your standing order". **Me** - "I am not happy about doing anything financial over the phone. I am close to an O2 shop so I will go in there tomorrow and talk about this new plan. I'd be happier that way". **Him** – "Of course you can do that, but this offer is NOT available through O2 shops. Look let me connect you with the sign-up team and they will be able to put your mind at rest – they do this all the time". The phone went dead for few moments and then a lady came on the phone. (*Scam detectors say this is a common technique with the two people often sitting just a few yards from each other with the second one, usually female, listening in to the original conversation*).

Her – Hello Stephen, I understand from my colleague that you want to sign up to a new call plan. We have all the information on your requirements and all we need is to change your direct debit details. Firstly, can I confirm your email address" (*Warning sign #6 – the address they had was 10 years out of date*). **Me** – "Yes that's right". **Her** – "OK – can I have your bank sort code and account number please?" **Me** – "Sorry, I am not happy giving financial information over the phone. **Her** – "There is no need to worry Stephen, even the postman can find out this information".

I thought it had gone on for long enough. **Me** – "I know you are scammers. I am ending this call now. I have taken notes of this call and will be reporting it to the authorities. Goodbye"

I called O2 and reported this – it is a scam of which they are aware. We are publishing this in the hope that it might just help stop someone being scammed. PS – the phone calls have stopped.

Huntonwatch

Benefice Service Rota – March 2026					
	1 st	8 th	15 th	22 nd	29 th
Coxheath 11:00am	Communion LF	Morning Worship LF	Communion LF	Family Service	
E. Farleigh 9:30am	Morning Worship BP		Communion LF		
W. Farleigh 9:30am		Communion DJ		Morning Prayer SE	
Hunton 9:30am	Communion LF		Family Service DJ		
Linton 9:30am		Morning Worship LF		Communion DJ	Benefice Communion CD & LF - 10:30am
LF -Lorna Faulkner, DJ – David Jones, BP- Becky Parnham, CD -Clinton Davis, SE – Sue Elliott					
Midweek Services					
Coxheath - Every Thursday; Holy Communion, 10:00 am; Linton - Holy Communion last Wednesday of each month, 12.00 followed by lunch					

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