



Centuries-old church in crucial search

St Mary's parish church, dating back to Norman times, is facing the most crucial and testing time in its recent history, with three of the key posts ensuring the smooth operation of the regular congregations all needing new appointments.

Since the Rector, the Revd. Roger Castle, left last September, the church authorities have been going through the opening chapters in the process of selecting a replacement. A list has been sent to the Diocese and is being prioritised before the first name is returned to the Patron for further action. In the meantime, the parish is indebted to Associate Rector Ruth Bierbaum and to David Jones.

Two other vital posts to back up and support the Rector are becoming vacant. Lynda Twaite, one of two churchwardens, and husband David, the treasurer, have decided not to stand for re-election as they plan to move. Both have given huge service to Hunton over nearly 20 years, and their varied duties have always been carried out efficiently and to the full. The parish will miss them as a couple and for their contribution to church life.

Non-Stipendary Minister, the Revd. David Jones says: "Sadly, when someone leaves, they leave behind a vacancy which others are not always able to fill. When *two* people leave, the void is even greater. People in Hunton have always been faithful to their church and usually someone comes forward in due course to fill the void and life moves on again. We all seem to become busier as we get older, and voluntary tasks become more demanding; those able and willing to offer their services become fewer and the vacancies take longer to fill. In many of the churches in this country, this is true. We are not alone in Hunton in facing these challenges. Is there a solution?

"Perhaps the way forward could be for people to share the tasks that have in the past been the responsibility of the 'one post holder.' The task of churchwarden or treasurer could be shared in some way. Already this is happening, but we still need people to hold the titles of churchwarden and treasurer. Maybe there is someone in the village who might enjoy the important task of being church treasurer, but is reluctant to offer help because they need, say, assistance with transport to get to the bank. Maybe there are people who would love to join the Parochial Church Council but feel they haven't the necessary talents? If that is the case, come and find out and you'll soon see how, when we act together, each of us has talents and contributions to make. Churchwarden Alison Ellman-Brown (820288), Lynda (820739) or any member of the PCC is willing to give help and advice. The challenge is ours to grasp, and the way forward is in our hands. So, if you value the church in the village, then come along to the church at 8pm on Monday 11 April to play your part in the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting."

Truck forces Landrover through fence

Fears of a major accident in West Street due to speeding traffic were realised in a hit and run incident at 11.30am on Wednesday 9 February - a few hours earlier schoolchildren could have been crossing the road and been injured.

An eyewitness reported: "A Landrover was hit by a truck, causing it to crash through the fence. The truck then hit a parked car, before racing at high speed up West Street, where it narrowly missed several other cars. The truck was unmarked, open-backed, with a red body and white cab. It had a grab-type crane on the back and there were three men inside. Police attended, and are investigating. The driver of the Landrover was shaken but unhurt." The parish council has been pressing for the speed limit to be lowered on this stretch of road.

Your Local Contacts:

Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
Village Hall:	820309	Village Hall Booking: Lisa Danch	820322
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Under-5s Playgroup:	741951
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829
Maidstone Police:	608186	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683	'Potholes' concern (MBC): Graham Steady	602000
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866**	Churchwardens: Lynda Twaite	820739
also: Revd David Jones	741474**	Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	813527	Organist: Philip Moore	749356
Rectory:	747570	**not available on Fridays	

Dates for Diaries:

9 March: Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm Village Hall (814445)	2 April: Mayor's Concert (see page 3)
13 March: Performing Arts Festival (see School item, page 3)	18 May: Parish Council AGM (814445)
19 March: Yalding Farmers' Market (814109)	12 June: Open Gardens (see page 3)

All items for the April issue to the Editor as soon as possible, and by 14 March, please

Everything is broken - but there's hope

As some are force-fed greens or syrup of figs, I was, for a time, force-fed Bob Dylan! This was by a friend who was convinced it would be good for me. Maybe it was, because the scratchy-voiced singer did make some interesting observations on life. One such observation was that "Everything is broken."

Sometimes it feels like that, doesn't it? I suspect you wouldn't have to go too far to put your hand on something that is broken near you right now. If dilapidated things in the physical, external world get us down, then how much more are we encumbered by things in our inner lives which are broken? It's a rare day that the media reports no broken relationships, whether between nations or individuals and, as we head towards a General Election, allegations of broken political promises increase.

And then we can look at ourselves; again, in different ways our bodies and minds and sometimes hearts are broken. With all the revisiting of Charles' and Camilla's history, we are reminded, (as if we needed it), that our own relationships are often broken too. Everything is broken.

What then about our relationship with God? Too often, that seems broken: as if a huge chasm lies between us and our Creator. Good Friday is about the mending of that relationship; of Jesus laying down his own life, over the gap. Holy Saturday is about living in anticipation, and faith in God's power to heal us, and Easter Sunday is about celebrating the holy wholeness we will have in Jesus, as he shares with us his Resurrection life.

Bob Dylan told only half the story. Everything might be broken, but in Jesus there is a restoration, a hope, and new life. Have a beautifully restored Easter!

Ruth Bierbaum

Not just a 'Cry for Help': *Papyrus*, used by the Egyptians to symbolise youth, joy and eternal life, is the name of the charity set up in 1997 by a group of parents who had lost a young son or daughter to suicide. In the UK, two young people a day end their lives in this way.

Setting out to promote awareness of the importance of emotional health and wellbeing, *Papyrus* encourages an understanding of the unique contribution made by parents, families, and carers to suicide prevention. Often it is hard to talk about fears and feelings even to those we love and who love us. For those who know someone who is feeling suicidal, *Papyrus* produce a practical booklet 'Not Just a Cry for Help', while 'Thinking of Ending it All?' is specifically for young people.

The charity continues to build relationships with other help organisations such as the Samaritans, YoungMinds, CALM and Bereavement Support Groups. Those wanting to know more should contact Joy McLoughlin (820551), while the open collection at St Mary's on Mothering Sunday will support *Papyrus*.

The tale of the mystery dog of Oludanez *The final instalment of Anke Way's 'Out & Out Abroad' series*

"After watching the daredevils descend from the mountain-top, we took the next transport down, bumping along the road. For some reason I was considered unusual, the driver said, as I had loved looking at the rocks, while most tourists closed their eyes and would rather fly down than do this journey twice!

That evening, David was fine and we joined the gliders for a delicious meal with lots of camaraderie and joking about how many flights they had taken, with their slim and sporty as well as fat and frumpy tourist passengers!

Then the dog of Oludanez was mentioned who, in July and August, when the temperature is at its highest, jumps on a jeep and hitches a ride to the top. No one invited him, and no one knows who he belongs to, but everyone feeds him. He lies in the shade of the small hut on the summit and always knows when to catch the last transport down. Where he sleeps at night no one knows, but next morning he is there for another trip. What a cool dog!

By-pass 'won't solve town congestion': A Leeds/Langley by-pass would lead to an increase in traffic through Hunton, according to parish councillor Gary Thomas. "Those backing this multi million pound by-pass scheme say that it would solve all the local traffic problems - but it won't. They say it will ease the traffic flow through Maidstone town centre - but it won't. It would in fact see more vehicles coming through our village." Seeking borough councillors' support to oppose the by-pass, Mr Thomas told the latest parish meeting that he felt a far more advantageous plan would be to improve the dangerous crossroads by *The Plough* at Langley and to widen the narrow bridge near the entrance to Leeds Castle.

Borough councillor Adrian Brindle, commenting on the plans put forward many years ago and now renewed for a footpath to make it safer for pedestrians walking between Bensted Close and the Village Hall, suggested appealing to county councillor Eric Hotson. "He has a large devolved budget and it may be helpful to seek his support."

Councillors have received details of an outline planning application for the erection of a retirement village on land at Lime Farm, Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea, comprising residential development and leisure facilities.

Website is full of interesting features: Those readers who have not taken the opportunity of logging on to photographs highlighting several areas of the village including the main street, the Village Hall and Club as well as show The site's author would like to receive more contributions from residents, such as more photos, details of local clubs or reports for the school and Hunton and Linton's Under Fives pre-school. Recent additions to the site are details of the of the 'Herald' available for download. For further information, email webmaster@hunton.org.uk or fill in one of the t

Speeding traffic has always been a danger: Roland Day, a past resident of Hunton for 50 years until 1995 and now living in West Farleigh, where he was born nearly 90 years ago, says that careless speeding by drivers through the village has been a problem over the years.

This is one of the issues that Roland has taken up in responding to the *Herald's* call for 'budding reporters' and he has put pen to paper with fond memories of Hunton while always thinking of the welfare of residents.

He writes: "Firstly, Ron Porter's article in the *Herald* expressing concern about speeding traffic was well written and I trust that many parishioners (if not all) thought the same as he did. I do not like criticising the Parish Council as I was a member for several years and I know what good work they do. However, I would like to know if the Council is applying enough pressure on the authorities; from my perspective it appears to be too much talk, all write, and no action.

"Secondly, on the article suggesting that a mystery visitor was placing cones in West Street alongside the playing field, I rather thought this person was doing a good job. The cones should curtail speeding traffic and lorries from driving too near the hedge which is in danger, if the cones are not there, of being pushed into the ditch and so cause the road to flood. I suggest the mystery person should replace them or at least move them away from the King George V playing field, where they look unsightly. If drivers were sensible and stuck to the speed limit then the cones would not be a problem at all.

"Finally, on the growing problem of fly tipping and the increasing amount of rubbish that appears all over Hunton, it is difficult to know what to do, as it is generally dumped at night. Dumpers should experience this resulting mess around their own homes. Magistrates should be more severe when dumpers are caught and while I know their powers are limited I feel it is time they became unlimited!"

Open Gardens will be summer highlight: Preparations for what should become the gardening event of the summer, the Hunton Open Gardens scheme, are well under way with the date now set for 12 June.

Our *Out & Out* correspondent Christine McSweeney has contacted a number of keen green-fingered parishioners who are willing to open their gardens to allow neighbours and visitors to "pop in and wander round."

Christine says: "Those getting involved do not have to have exquisitely manicured lawns and flower beds. This is all about everyone getting involved and welcoming others to share in their efforts, perhaps displaying plants not seen in other gardens, as well as other highlights. I hope this will be an event to rival the Yalding Yuletide Fair in size but with better weather! Visitors to our neighbouring village last year queried why we could not stage such a display. Well, now we are going ahead with our own *Open Gardens*, despite the fact that our village is more spread out. So those who are not already signed up and would like to be involved, perhaps by opening their gardens or if they are linked with a local good cause which could benefit from this event, then I would like to hear from them. We will also need offers of help on the day with donations of plants to sell and cakes for afternoon teas," says Christine, who can be contacted on 820852.

Pupils' shoe box collection for Tsunami: January and February have been busy months at Hunton Church of England School. The safe return to school after the festive break made everyone aware of the devastation suffered by so many in the tsunami disaster. Mrs Sian Smith kindly organised for children to donate shoe boxes of essentials for the children and babies in Sri Lanka and, thanks to everyone's generosity, 70 boxes were sent via The St John Ambulance in Herne.

The school won the Maidstone Swimming Gala, with proud girls accepting a trophy from the Mayor of Maidstone, and were runners up in the Kent Police poster competition. With 300 entries, two Hunton girls came in the top 19! Lower school had a talk on road safety and the school is currently working hard putting together a travel plan to help with the key issue of children's safety at the school entrance. Those with ideas to improve the issue should write to the school by 11 March.

Year 5 and 6 children will take part in the Performing Arts Festival at Mote Hall on Sunday 13 March in conjunction with other schools and the Cornwallis Performing Arts group. The theme is 'The History of All Time' and Hunton children will perform 'The Big Bang' (the beginning of time) in conjunction with Year 7 pupils at Cornwallis.

Sue Wood

Mayor's Concert for Kenward Trust: The Mayor and Mayoress of Tonbridge & Malling, Cllr. Peter and Mrs. Evelyn Homewood, are hosting a Night of Brass Band Music in the E M Forster Theatre, Tonbridge School on Saturday 2 April, in a bid to boost the *Kenward Trust's* New Building Fund. *Kenward Trust* is a registered Christian charity with almost four decades' experience in offering the best in professionally operated recovery programmes, for people suffering from drug and alcohol abuse problems. The night will feature the Kent Messenger Brass Band, one of the country's leaders, and tickets priced at £12.00 (plus 50p p&p) are available from the Box Office on 01732 361908.

the new village website should give it a go on www.hunton.org.uk It is full of interesting features, with a series of wing the impressive Hunton sign - now in glorious colour!

r events etc. There are links to lots of sites of local interest, such as Hunton School and copies of the latest OFSTED e parish council, with copies of the reports from the bi-monthly meetings - and there are even electronic back-copies forms on the site.

At St Mary's Church in March

Notices

Brass Cleaning: Mrs Leonard & Mrs Oliver
Flowers: 26th: All helpers for Easter, please - 9.30am
Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am)
 6 March: Mrs Simmons
 3 April: Mrs Redfarn & Mrs Weston
Church Cleaning Rota: Mrs Lamont & Mrs Ensoll
PCC Meeting: 7.30pm, 2 March, at Downs Farmhouse
Annual Parochial Church Meeting: 8pm, 11 April, in church

Sunday Club -Mike and Jenny's welcome to The Square

Hunton Sunday Club is to meet on Sunday 20 March at Mike and Jenny Taylor's home, 4 The Square, from 5.15 - 6.45pm. Apart from usual activities, including tea and games, the theme of the evening will be connected with Easter. The Club is open to all children of primary school age; those interested should contact David Jones on 741474.

Services

Sunday 6th - 4th Sunday of Lent

11.00am Mothering Sunday Service *Revd R Bierbaum*
 OPEN COLLECTION FOR PAPYRUS

Sunday 13th - 5th Sunday of Lent

9.15am Holy Communion *Revd D Jones*
 Readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14 John 11:1-45

Sunday 20th - Sunday next before Easter

11.00am Morning Prayer *Mr D Barnes*
 Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a Matthew 27:11-54

Thursday 24th - Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Benefice Holy Communion Service, Coxheath

Friday 25th - Good Friday

9.15am 'An Hour at the Cross' *Miss C Bostock*

Sunday 27th - EASTER DAY

9.15am Church Family Service, *Revd D Jones*
 followed by Holy Communion
 Reading: Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday 3 April: Church Family Service 11am

The Lent Course 2005 continues at Lantern Cottage, Barnhill from 7.45-9.30pm on Mondays 28 February, and 7 & 14 March, following the Course 'Better Together,' a study on relationships. The meetings will look at 'Relating to strangers', 'Broken relationships' and 'Our relationship with God.' A course book is available at £2.25.

Easter Services: On Maundy Thursday (24 March) there are services of Holy Communion at Holy Trinity, Coxheath at 10.00am and 8.00pm

On Good Friday (25 March) at 9.15am 'An hour at the Cross' at St Mary's, then, on Easter Sunday (27th) at 9.15am there will be a Church Family Service, followed by a shortened form of Holy Communion at about 10.00am.

'Churches Together': A Good Friday Evening Service at the United Reformed Church in Week Street, Maidstone, at 7.30pm - 'Olivet to Calvary'. As well as coming to the service, singers are welcome at rehearsals on Friday nights March 4th, 11th, and 18th, from 7.30-9.00pm at URC Church. Contact Freda Crispin (726193) if you are interested in singing.

Why not investigate Alpha in April? Looking for answers? The Alpha course is an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith. It consists of a series of talks addressing key issues relating to the Christian faith. It is for everyone, especially those wanting to investigate Christianity - and it's free! There are more than 28,700 courses running all over the world - and the next one in this Benefice will be at lunchtime on Tuesdays from 12 April, in Coxheath. Call Ann on 757570 to register an interest and find out more.

Services at the other churches in our group:

March	6th	13th	20th	24th	25th	27th
Coxheath	11.00 Mothering Service	9.15 MP	11.00 HC	8.00pm Maundy Thursday	2.00pm Good Friday Devotional Service	11.00 HC
E. Farleigh	10.30 Mothering Service	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	11.00 Parish Worship 6.00pm 'Olivet to Calvary'	Benefice Service	2.00pm Good Friday Devotional Service	10.30 HC
Linton	9.15 Mothering Service	8.00 HC 11.00 HC	9.15 HC	of HC	9.15am Good Friday Devotional Service	9.15 HC
W. Farleigh	9.15 Mothering Service 6.00 EA	11.00 CFS	9.15 HC	at Coxheath	11.00am Good Friday Devotional Service	11.00 HC

10am every Thursday - Holy Communion (1662) at Coxheath

HC: Holy Communion MP: Morning Prayer CFS: Church Family Service EA: Evening Alternative

For Weddings, Thanksgivings, and Baptisms, please contact Revd David Jones (741474)