



Church may re-open before Christmas

After the revelation of asbestos being discovered in the St Mary's organ blower box and air tests looking for evidence of wider contamination had shown "alarming" results leading to the closure of the church, the Herald has learnt that worshippers could again be allowed back inside before Christmas.

Action came after a crisis meeting of the Fabric Committee which commissioned a mapping survey by a UKAS authorised asbestos surveyor with swab tests, at differing heights and distances from the organ, to establish the presence and concentration of asbestos contamination.

The result provided the first good news - no evidence of asbestos dust or fibres were found! But why did the air test provide an alarming picture yet the swab tests gave a clean bill of health? It appears that while the air test was couched in alarming terms and contained a clear recommendation to close the church immediately the fibres counted may not have been asbestos after all! Further tests are being done to establish this beyond doubt.

Pleased with the good news, the church said: "We are cross checking the swab tests with further dust samples taken from the chancel and choir stalls. Tenders are being invited for the removal and replacement of the organ blower box and carrying out final tests to confirm the building is safe to occupy and the organ safe to use.

"Once these tenders have been received the Diocese will be asked for approval to carry out the work. It is hoped the church will be back to full working order by Christmas but this relies on approvals, required work and test results going smoothly.

"We feel progress has been made and are relieved that the underlying problem may prove to be less serious than we were first advised. Thanks go to everyone who offered support and provided valuable advice over the past troubled weeks. It is greatly appreciated and we hope that we will be able to reoccupy the Church much earlier than was initially feared."

Zum 3 to zoom into Hall

After the success of the latest Applause event at the Village Hall the next performance is planned later this month when the Hall Charity Group is presenting another "sensational" production 'ZUM 3' on Saturday 26th November at 8pm.

Hall committeeman Roger Crooks says: "It is described as a 'Gypsy Tango Inferno' from one of the most sensational bands in the country - this really is one not to miss - just look at the quotes! The Times said: 'Intoxicating virtuoso fiddle playing;' while the BBC reported: "A delight to hear and a treat to watch" and What's On in London said: "A vibrant and compelling show."

Tickets are limited and early booking is recommended. Contact Jackie on 820226 or Alan on 820775 (day)/820683 (evenings). Adults £9 children £6. Bar & Refreshments available.

The Village Hall was 'packed' for the latest production from Applause in October when the Blue Chicken Theatre Company was outstanding and provided great entertainment and participation for the families and supporters.

Your Local Contacts:

Parish Council Chairman: Roger Sawtell	820731	Village Club Doug Redfarn	820495
School: Secretary/Head Teacher	820360	Clerk to Parish Council: David Swan	814445
Under 5's Pre-School:	820309	Village Hall Booking: Jackie Crooks	820226
Maidstone Police:	608186	Under-5s Playgroup:	741951
Pond and Tree Warden: Anne Bishop	820683	Pre-School Supervisor: Pippa Fordham	746829
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866**	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
also: Revd David Jones	741474**	'Potholes' concern (MBC): Adrian Hygate	0845 824 7800
Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	813527	Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
Rectory:	747570	supported by Joy McLoughlin	820551
		Organist: Philip Moore	749356

**not available on Fridays

Dates for Diaries:

9th November - Parish Council meeting

12th November Bulky Refuse Collection, Village Hall, 7.45am-8.45am

26th November ZUM, village hall (820683)

14th January 2006 Bulky Refuse Collection, Village Hall 7.45am-8.45am

All items for the December issue to the Editor as soon as possible, and by 15th November, please

Hours in which people's lives are changed for ever

We have all been shocked by the sheer devastation of recent events. Suddenly one day, in one hour the lives of thousands in Pakistan were changed forever. Mothers getting their children ready for school, sending them off with a hug and a kiss. An hour later a shudder from the earth's core and an entire city crumbles, thousands are trapped, thousands are dead. Millions are left homeless. All that seemed stable and secure has gone.

On the gulf coast of America, people knew that Katrina was coming and thousands left as fast as possible. Thousands stayed behind in the belief that they could see it through. In one day, their homes and all of the buildings in some of the towns became but rubble. In one day the lives of thousands are changed forever.

Iraq is trying to find stability and run its own affairs. Men volunteer to serve their country as policemen and queue to sign up. Suddenly a bomb explodes and men are blown to bits and many are injured. In one day, lives and families are changed forever.

No doubt many of us will give, or have given, financially to help the plight of these needy people. These terrible disasters make people question the existence of God. The Bible tells us that these disasters, earthquakes, wars, famines and the like, are signs of the 'end-time'. One may well say that these things have been happening for many hundreds of years, and of course they have. A rapid succession of such disasters may well have us thinking that the end-time is drawing near.

As Christians we must always be ready for, as Jesus also said: "Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or the hour of my return!" (Matthew 25:13). Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. Our relationship with God must be our own.

Sunday 27th November is the first Sunday of Advent when we begin our four-week preparation for Christmas and the first coming of Jesus. It also serves to remind us during this time of the second coming of Jesus – His Second Advent. This will signal the end of all things. For now we must, as faithful Christian people, continue to pray that all come to a knowledge of Jesus as Saviour and Lord and in our readiness for His return, be it in our lifetime or not, exercise a faithful stewardship of what we have been given and in our care of others.

With my prayers for a meaningful Advent.

Peter Walker

Footbridge for walkers to cross Hill?

Plans to build a footbridge across Hunton Hill, suggested by parish councillors, would make it safer for walkers on the Greensand Way trying to cross a "dangerous and busy" section of one of the main roads out of the village.

The suggestions were mooted after a site meeting with Ian Hayes Kent county council's public right of way officer and parish councillors Lorraine Redfarn and Gary Thomas. Hunton council then wrote to him saying: "The problems of safety include the need to walk along a significant length of this narrow road between access points from the east and west sides, and also from the steps onto the hill.



"The only successful way of solving the problems would be to provide a footbridge across the road which is in a cutting some seven or eight metres deep. The cost might be significant, but this is one of Kent's premier footpaths and very well patronized. There would, however, be a need to reroute the path approaches to the road, requiring negotiation with the landowner and planning approval." "As an intermediate step we would appreciate an approach by the KCC to the landowner about this move, with a view in the short term to possibly providing steps down to the road on the western side directly opposite those now on the eastern side."

"Immediate actions to improve the current situation would include removing shrubby growth obscuring the steps from approaching traffic; replacing the present low concrete footpath sign with a finger post; putting a warning sign some 80 metres up the road; and improving the handrail – possibly providing one on both sides of the steps. A barrier just across the foot of the steps where they meet the road would improve safety."

Kent County Councillor Paulina Stockwell says: "With the new Corporate Manslaughter Act coming in early in 2006 in considering issues such as this one at Hunton Hill, councils will have to ensure they are risk assessed and safe. Some of these matters could be a nightmare for any local authority in the future."

Watch out for barn raiders

Hunton residents have been urged to keep alert after a warning from Maidstone and Malling Police about a spate of rural burglaries at premises other than dwellings in the area.

Raiders have been targeting barns and workshops with a view to stealing mechanical plant. This varies from farm tractors and other agricultural machinery to quad motorcycles. Parish policeman Gary Shaw warns: "Residents should bear in mind the fact that some of these thefts occur in daylight when a tractor on the move may not look out of place., so it is difficult to know if a crime is taking place." Police intelligence has come up with the following vehicles that may be used in crime - a red Ford Transit (S364OCU) and a white Iveco box van (R294BHP). "Obviously offenders do change vehicles if necessary but they are not as calculating as it might be thought. They are just good at taking risks or actually quite care free. "Anyone who sees anything suspicious should call the police but should not put themselves at risk. If a crime is in progress they should dial 999," said PC Shaw.

Herald looks to new era with new Editor

Just one issue away from its third anniversary, the Hunton Herald is aiming to build on its short but proud record of service to the local community.

On the threshold of 2006, the parish magazine is looking to go forward with a new editor, as Les Leonard is planning to step down after seeing the publication through its launch and first three years, becoming established as a regular and, hopefully, interesting read for the 350 local households.

The Herald committee is therefore looking for someone to take over the editorship and would like to hear from anyone interested in the position. They should call Wendy Simmons (820875) or Les (820858).

Les says: "The duties mainly involve liaising with the local groups, like the church, parish council, sports clubs, village club and hall, to report their regular activities. Help is always on hand from all the Herald committee members and I would continue to give my full backing to the new editor as he or she settles in.

"For a small village like Hunton I have always been pleasantly surprised by the stories coming in but just do not have the time to follow up some of the tales which I am sure a keen 'researcher' would achieve."

Wendy Simmons says "Les' efforts and enthusiasm have been marvellous in every way and I am sure that you, our readers, will join me in saying a huge 'thank you' to him. Not only has he played a major role in creating a professional publication, but also helped to keep this village together as a community. I am hoping that we will move on into 2006 with a new editor. So, do come forward and help.

In 2004, income for the Herald amounted to £1,136 comprising mainly contributions towards the running costs of £722 and a grant from the Parish Council of £400. Having reduced expenditure to £531 (the cost of each copy of the Herald from circa 25p to 13p) the committee was able to start the year with £604 in the bank. Advertising continues to raise £1,500 for local causes.

In 2005 expenditure has increased again (as a result of printer repairs) and contributions to running costs fallen (so far £430 and £133 respectively). As a result, while funds exist to take the publication through to the end of the year, a fresh approach will be required for 2006.

Children collect 'shoebox gifts' for Malawi

Hunton schoolchildren are establishing an international link by supporting Starfish Malawi this year. This charity helps to build schools, orphanages and clean water wells in the African country and generally helps its people to become more self-sufficient.

The charity's chairman Chris Knott spoke to the children about Malawi and the needs of its people and is organising the transportation of shoebox gifts. The children will collect pencils, sharpeners, rubbers and other useful bits and pieces to send to the children of Malawi. They will also be collecting 20 pence pieces to help towards the building of a new classroom.

Another visitor to Hunton school TV 'star' and Maidstone MP Ann Widdecombe has invited years five and six to visit her at the House of Commons in January.

The invite came after she had spoken to the children about her life in politics and discussed with the upper school pupils the ethics of battery hen farming. On her visit she took the opportunity of sitting down with the children to sample the school meals.

Storyteller Linda Cotterill captivated the children during Book Week this term with her stories of dragons and princesses. She inspired the children to write their own poems, plays and mythical tales.

Thanks were expressed to all the families who contributed to the Harvest Festival this year.

Come to the Club and play Bingo

The increasingly popular Social and Bingo Club Night at the Village Club in West Street is on Mondays when the committee has decided to open the doors to visiting guests and is asking: "Why not take a friend and make friends?" There are no entry fees and the cost of "a book" is only £1.00. The evening session starts at 8pm. Guests will have the opportunity to become club members if they would like to. Visitors are told: "Just ask Rose, the Club Steward, for a form or join on the night. Everyone is most welcome."

The Club's dart team is going from strength to strength, and in their latest success have come in as runners-up in the Combined Brewers dart league. Team members received their cup at the awards ceremony held at Boughton Club.

"The team deserves congratulations - not too long ago they held the distinction of winning the wooden spoon, for coming bottom of the league!" said Doug Redfarn. "New dart team members are welcome to come and sign up. There's no charge and it's a good evening out, visiting various local pub's and clubs. We play throughout the year, on Wednesday evenings, commencing 8.30pm."

At St Mary's Church in November

Notices

At the time of compiling these notices we were unsure as to when St Mary's is likely to re-open. In the event of the church opening its doors again later this month we have therefore listed those who should be carrying out brass cleaning and flower arranging duties. The coffee rota applies to the services whether they are held in the church or the Village Hall.

Brass cleaning: the Simmons family

Flowers: 6th Mrs Ellman-Brown
13th (Remembrance) Mrs Grainger
20th Mrs Grainger
27th (Advent) Mrs Simmons

Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am)

6th November: the Taylor family

Hunton Sunday Club - 20th November at Durrants , West Street. Details David Jones (741474)

Services at the Village Hall

Sunday 6th - 3rd Sunday before Advent

11.00am Gift Service Rev D Jones & Revd P Walker
Reading: Matthew **25:1-13**

**Sunday 13th - 2nd Sunday before Advent
- Remembrance Sunday**

10.50am Remembrance Service Mrs E Doyle
Readings: Micah **4:1-5** 1 Corinthians **15:50-end**
OPEN COLLECTION FOR ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Sunday 20th - Christ the King

11.00am Morning Prayer Miss C Bostock
Readings: Ezekiel **34:11-16, 20-24** Matthew **25:31-46**

Sunday 27th - Advent Sunday

9.15am Holy Communion (CW) Revd P Walker
Readings: Isaiah **64:1-9** Mark **13:24-37**

Sunday 4 December

11.00am Church Family Service

ALTErnativity Advent Meal

Instead of its usual evening Advent Service, Coxheath area Mothers Union is planning an 'ALTErnativity Advent Meal' on Tuesday 29th November at 7.30pm (the first week in Advent). The evening is described as: "A time for reflection and celebration, a time when we can meet together in fellowship and share a simple, but symbolic meal." For more information and ticket availability contact Lesley 01622 745702 or Vera 01622 745950.

Final churchyard clean up

St Mary's church may be closed but the churchyard still remains open! The final Working Party to tidy up the area will be held on Saturday, November 12th. As usual helpers welcome between 9am and 12 noon - they can just come along when they are free and leave when they must! Between the clearing up there's time for a natter - and a cup of coffee! Contact David Way 820876.

Prayer of the Heart

'Wellsprings' gatherings are held for silent or contemplative prayer, sometimes called 'Prayer of the Heart.' The meetings are held at Linton Church Vestry on Mondays at 4.30pm when those attending enjoy half an hour of silence interspersed with spiritual music and readings, scripture, or poetry. Everyone will be warmly welcomed. For more information contact Cilla McKenzie of 741318.

Benefice United Dates

At Coxheath Centre at 7.30pm for bring-and-share supper, fellowship and topical discussion

8th November - Ruth's Journey

13th December - David's Journey

4th Tuesday Bible Study Initiative to help us ponder the depths of Scripture together at the Rectory for 7.30 pm. and after a short prayer we get on down to the business of digging for treasure!

22nd November: Salvation - Humanity's need

November	6th	13th	20th	27th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	10.30 Remembrance Service	11.00 HC	11.00 CFS
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.30 Remembrance Service	11.00 Parish Worship	8.00 HC 10.30 MP
Linton	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.00 Remembrance Service	9.15 HC	9.15 HC
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC 6.00 EA	10.45 Remembrance Service	9.15 HC	11.00 MP

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)