



## All we want for Christmas...

Hunton churchgoers are just hoping and praying for one special Christmas present this year - for St Mary's to be open in time for the festive services, traditionally among the best attended of the year.

Extensive tests have been carried out to check for asbestos dust or fibres in the centuries old church - the latest results coming through on Monday November 20th. These confirmed earlier reports that there is no evidence of asbestos contamination, other than that in the organ blower box which is to be removed in early December.

As soon as possible after this has been done, it is therefore hoped the old oak doors to the church will be opened again at the earliest opportunity, although it will not be possible to use the organ.

But PCC members warn that everything takes time with the Diocese having to be notified and authorisation gained for any further work that is necessary. Maidstone Borough Council's health and safety office will also need to confirm that tests establish beyond doubt that there is no danger to anyone entering the church.

The Rector, the Rev Peter Walker said: "Assuming the all-clear is given then at least we will be able to get back into the building again. Everyone sincerely hopes that this will be the case."

The dramatic closure came earlier this autumn when the organ tuner discovered that the blower box had an asbestos lining and his announcement began a testing time for the church leading to numerous meetings and consultations.

## Herald in danger on third anniversary

As the Hunton Herald approaches the third anniversary of its launch, the Editor has warned that the publication is in danger of failing to appear in 2006.

Les Leonard says: "Unfortunately our plea for a new editor failed to attract anyone in the village prepared to come forward and carry out the editorial duties, so it currently looks as though we may be forced to call it a day. "As I explained last month the duties are not too onerous and mainly involve liaising with local groups such as the church, parish council, sports clubs, village club and hall who are all prepared to send in reports on their activities.

"And full help and a guiding hand would be given to a new editor from the Herald committee while I would continue to give my backing, writing reports from the parish council and other events as well as keeping a watching brief over the first few months."

So if anyone is prepared to come forward to help out editorially, perhaps just playing an assisting role initially, please contact Wendy Simmons (820875) or Les Leonard (820858).

## Looking for a lollipop person

Hunton School urgently requires a school crossing patrol person. This would entail working two hours each weekday, one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon, term time only.

This is a crucially important post for the safety of the children and would suit someone with an hour to spare each day - possibly an active retired person or anyone with an interest in the community and keen to help. For more details please contact the headteacher Mrs Sue Wood on 820360.

### 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:

3rd December Yalding Yuletide Market 5-8pm (814109)

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

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

## **Dorothy founded Burrswood as a Place of Healing**

A group of parishioners recently made a visit to Burrswood – the Christian Hospital and Place of Healing. It was a windswept and rainy day as we arrived and made our way to the Church of Christ the Healer. Each Thursday they hold a healing service at 11.30am and also on a Saturday at 3.30pm. Burrswood was founded by Dorothy Kerrin who had received a miraculous healing when she was aged 22 and suffering with tubercular meningitis and peritonitis. When in a coma she had a vision of the Lord and angels asking 'will you go back?' She was charged to 'heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing and give faith to the faithless.' What a commission from God! Over many years and in due time Burrswood was established and has aided many others to also seek to fulfil that divine commission. People find the healing of Jesus through the skills of the nursing staff, doctors, counsellors and prayer. Stillness and beauty provide space for the Holy Spirit to enter people's lives afresh. The love of Jesus is at its very core. It is the love of God and Jesus which we remember now as we enter the season of Christmas. We read in the Scriptures: 'God so loved the World that He sent His Son'. What great love He has for us all!

As Jesus grew up and began his ministry with his disciples he taught them to do many things but primarily: 'to preach the Gospel to all nations and to heal the sick.' When Jesus left them he promised that He would be with them in a new way in the power of the Holy Spirit. That promise is to us as well – the Good News is preached, the sick receive the touch of the Saviour.

How the world needs Good News – How the people of God's world need His healing touch. What were those words of the angels? 'Behold I bring you good news of great joy.' That news of the birth of the Saviour was the beginning of all that He would do. His life for us with its teaching and healing, His dying on the cross for our redemption, His rising from the dead, His ascension to heaven to prepare a place for us, and His coming again in glory to receive us unto Himself. May you know anew that joy of the Good News and the healing touch of the Saviour this Christmas and in the days to come.

With our love and prayers for a Holy Christmas.

Peter & Diana

## **SPEED GUN COST FEARS ALLAYED**

Residents' fears about excess money being spent on purchasing "speed guns to be used by volunteers" to check motorists driving through the village, are shared by parish councillors.

Members had been told the cost of acquiring the 'speed monitoring equipment' was likely to be £2000 to £3000. And although this cost could be shared by local councils or even be funded by TRAMP a group looking at traffic problems in Maidstone area rural lanes, Hunton councillors felt that checking on vehicles was best left to the police.

In the Speed Watch initiative, volunteers would be trained by police to supervise the equipment on roads known to have a speeding problem. Roadside recordings showing offenders repeatedly monitored above the limit would be forwarded to the police to take action if necessary.

One local resident has suggested that instead of volunteers learning to use speed guns they could come forward to help to operate the school warning lights; control the traffic as youngsters cross the road while also checking vehicles are parked safely. The situation could be improved if an approach to the highways authority to consider reducing the 40 mph speed limit to 30 mph in West Street was approved.

Council chairman Roger Sawtell stressed that it was difficult to see children coming from the school entrance onto the road in the evenings and street lighting was needed to make them more visible. The school has plans for a lighting and improvement scheme if the necessary funding is forthcoming.

The dangers of heavy freight lorries using Hunton Hill en route to farms in the area as well as depots in Paddock Wood and Marden, have also been highlighted. Gary Thomas felt that the authorities should be encouraged to provide routes for walking and cycling as many roads - like Hunton Hill - were dangerous to use.

The Parish Precept for the 2006/2007 financial year was set at £7500, enabling the Council to discharge more of its more urgent tasks from its own resources. Thanks were recorded to the Borough Council for the Concurrent Functions scheme which helped small villages like Hunton with expenditure which would otherwise be outside its means.

## **Flower arrangers needed**

Since the end of September a 10-week Flower Arranging course has been held in the Village Hall on every Tuesdays from 1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

The Course is organised as part of the Kent Adult Education scheme and has been a great success. However for this to continue beyond the New Year it would be good to have some new members. The Course Code Reference for the current term is 4034 MAI-05-F. Anyone seeking more information can contact Sandra Bullivant of West Street on 820855.

## Council 'should pay car damage bill'

The highways authority is being urged to compensate a second Hunton resident, lumbered with a heavy bill for a replacement wheel and tyre after being involved in a driving incident on Hunton Hill.

Ernie Chambers of Bensted Close told the parish council that his daughter was driving on the hill when she collided with a 'boulder' dislodged from the side of the road by a heavy lorry.

"She was on top of it before she saw it and if she had swerved she could have been involved in a collision with an oncoming car or a lorry which take up three parts of the road.

"It was highly dangerous and to make matters worse she had her four month old baby in the car. Finally adding insult to injury she had to pay £160 to repair the damage."

Earlier this summer another Bensted Close resident Judy Vicary damaged her car when hitting a pothole on the hill but so far she has been unsuccessful in her claims for compensation from the council.

Maidstone borough councillor Brian Mortimer suggested that reports made of every incident and accident should be passed on to the highways authority, urging remedial action. "Unfortunately it can take a fatal crash to prioritise improvements."

## Out & Out

### *A few days of breath taking beauty*

Look at any book on winter gardening and there will be pictures of frost clad winter wonderlands with frozen crystals clinging wistfully to a remnant rose, and dead flowers made to sparkle by a mantle of ice.

These days are breath taking in their beauty but are so few that I no longer leave flower heads over winter unless they also look good on the more usual dull damp days.

Some left over foliage on herbaceous plants will be giving shelter to lady birds and other useful insects; seed heads can give much needed food to birds in the winter; and others can look structural in their dying back giving interest to the border.

Taking this into account my winter tidy up is piecemeal thinning out from the borders of what is past its usefulness or has collapsed into a soggy mess but leaving what still gives pleasure.

Another benefit of tidying like this is that you have to stand back and look at the border and it is often at these moments, when the garden is fading back to its bones, that you can judge whether the structure of the garden is strong enough to support the flood of growth and colour to come.

Christine McSweeney

## September 2006 date for next Alpha

Further to a meeting of the Coxheath Benefice Alpha Planning team, it is now planned to run the next Alpha in September 2006 and it will be an evening event in Coxheath.

The Rev. Ruth Bierbaum has apologised for those who have been waiting anxiously and were hoping it would be sooner, but has asked them to still register an interest with names and contact details to Ann at the Rectory (747570).

Ruth adds: "When it comes to Christian belief, God wants us to nail our colours to the Cross. Those ready to do this, should consider coming to Confirmation classes starting at the end of February, for Confirmation on May 7th. "Those who haven't yet been Baptised (Christened) need not worry for no-one is ever too old, and this can all happen in the same service.

"Or maybe you were confirmed awhile ago, but it feel's right for you to reaffirm those promises you made. Coming to the classes does not commit you to anything, so again all you have to do is contact Ann at the Rectory, where adult classes will be held.

"Those between 11 & 16, are invited to a party to launch the Youth Alpha on Sunday 22nd January 2006 at 19 Westerhill Road, Coxheath, from 7-9pm. The course starts on 26th February. This is for any young person thinking about Christianity, and for those interested in being confirmed."

Ruth Bierbaum (743866.)

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Highways problems 08458 247 800

Fly Tipping 602162

PC Gary Shaw's new Direct Dial number at Maidstone Police station for use by the public to contact him  
01622 604391

## At St Mary's Church in December

Rotas	Services
<p><i>At the time of going to press we were uncertain as to when the church is likely to re-open so have included the brass, church cleaning and flowers rota with the hope that the doors will be open to the volunteers.</i></p> <p><b>Brass cleaning:</b> Mrs Johns &amp; Mrs Grainger</p> <p><b>Flowers:</b> 4th Mrs Simmons 11th &amp; 18th Mrs Porter &amp; Mrs Bullivant 25th <b>ALL HELPERS FOR CHRISTMAS, PLEASE</b></p> <p><b>Church Family Service Coffee Rota (11am)</b> 4th December: Mrs Cadel &amp; Mrs Crooks</p> <p><b>Hunton Sunday Club</b> Sunday 18th December (details still to be finalised). Also New Year Party in village hall on Monday 2nd January 4.30pm—6.30pm. Details David Jones (741474)</p>	<p><b>Sunday 4th – 2nd Sunday of Advent</b> 11.00am Church Family Service <span style="float: right;">Rev D Jones</span> Reading: Mark 1:1-8</p> <p><b>Sunday 11th – 3rd Sunday of Advent</b> 9.15am HC (1662) <span style="float: right;">Revd R Bierbaum</span> Readings: I saiah 61:1-4, 8-11 John 1:6-8, 19-28</p> <p><b>Sunday 18th – 4th Sunday of Advent</b> No morning service 6.00pm Carol Service <span style="float: right;">Revd D Jones</span> OPEN COLLECTION FOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY</p> <p><b>Saturday 24th – Christmas Eve</b> 11.30pm Holy Communion (CW) <span style="float: right;">Revd P Walker</span> Readings: I saiah 52:7-10 John 1:1-14</p> <p><b>Sunday 25th – Christmas Day</b> <span style="float: right;">Revd D Jones</span> 9.15am Christmas Day Service for All, followed by Holy Communion Reading: Luke 2:15-21</p>

## Events before, during and after Christmas

Belated thanks have been expressed for the donations of food for the 'Benefice Feast' following the last Benefice service enjoyed by all.

Christmas meeting will be at the Holy Trinity Church on Wednesday 14th December at 2pm when there will be a quiz, games and nibbles.

The 5P Men's Group Quiz is on Saturday 5th December open to all ladies at the Victoria Pub Heath Rd light buffet contact mike Marsh 745702 for those wishing to join in the fun.

If you enjoy singing why not join the ad-hoc group that sings at the annual 'Carols by Candlelight' Service. Let Sue (747621) or Jean (745574) know that you will be coming along.

Over the Christmas period there will be **NO** Wellsprings Quiet Prayer on 19th & 26th December & 2nd January. Meetings resume on 9th January in Linton Church - 4.20 for 4.30pm start. Everyone is welcome - so why not make a resolution to come along? For more information contact 'Cilla on 741318

December	4th	11th	18th	24th	25th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	9.15 CFS	11.00 HC 7.00 Carol Service	5.00 Children's Service 11.15pm HC	10.45 Christmas Day Service for All, followed by HC
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	11.00 Parish Worship 6.00 Carol Service	4.00 Christingle 11.30pm HC	10.45 HC
Linton	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 11.00 CFS	9.15 HC 4.00 Carol Service	11.30pm HC	9.15 Christmas Day Service for All, followed by HC
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC 4.00 Christingle	3.30 Carol Service	9.15 HC	9.30pm HC	10.45 Christmas Day Service for All, followed by HC
<b>The only service in the benefice on 1 January 2006 will be at Coxheath at 10.30am</b>					
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)