



Hall improvements

The planning application for the extension to provide much needed additional storage is now being considered by the Borough Council. We hope to be in a position to seek quotations for the work shortly with the aim of getting the extension in place later this year.

The Hall floor has been expertly renovated at a cost of £1950. The wood has regained its original colour to the extent that it looks like a completely newly laid floor. It will not of course be too long before its beauty starts to recede through use but it certainly enhances the character of a building we in the village are very lucky to have.

On a more down to earth issue we report that major repairs have been carried out to the combined drainage system that serves the Hall, Bowls and Football Clubs. The cost of a new service contract, emptying and parts, is in the order of £1400.

Village Hall Committee meetings are held in the Hall on the third Tuesday of each month at 7.45pm. We have a hard working team and I don't expect any of them will mind if it were said that we could do with some new faces and ideas. If you have thought about doing your bit for the village and would like to find out more about the Hall, why not come along?

Alan Bishop

Anyone for Croquet?

Croquet may raise visions of sedate games on the vicarage lawn with cucumber sandwiches and Pimms. Well the Rectory is not available but we could do the sandwiches and Pimms!!

However I am wondering if there would be any interest in a Benefice Croquet Club. No previous experience necessary and you do not need to be a regular Church goer.

This is a good opportunity for us to meet for fun, fresh air, exercise and to enjoy the summer. At this stage I'm not sure where we would meet but if there is any interest I shall explore more seriously. If you are interested please contact Chris Bostock 01622 710881 or any other member of the ministry Team who will pass on your details.

SPEED WATCH

Former parish council clerk Ron Porter's concerns about Speed Watch to check on motorists in West Street has been fully answered by current clerk David Swan.

"A report on the possible use of equipment to check on drivers through rural areas was first discussed at the September, and then the November council meeting, when representations were received from residents including one from West Street enclosing photographs. All were opposed to Speed Watch with none in favour. "Councillors decided they would prefer to see speed being monitored by Police Officers rather than volunteers who would require training and supervision".

It was mentioned that current figures showed the majority of those prosecuted for speeding in rural areas were local residents. "Members confirmed their support of the promised reduction of a section of the West Street speed limit to 30mph in the 2006/7 financial year".

All meetings have an open session (normally for 15 minutes) so members of the public have the opportunity to speak if they wish. "It is hoped that residents with views to air will feel able to take advantage of this." said David Swan

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
Rector: Revd Peter Walker	747570	Neighbourhood Watch:	608173
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum	743866*	'Potholes' concern (KCC): Kim Hills	0845 824 7800
also: Revd David Jones	741474*	Churchwarden: Alison Ellman-Brown	820288
*not available on Fridays		Hon PCC Secretary: Nicky Grainger	815458
		Organist: Philip Moore	749356

Dates for Diaries:

Tuesday 9th May Annual Parish meeting, village hall 7pm

Sunday 21st May - Hunton School May Fayre 11.30am - 3.30pm

Saturday 10th June Council Freighter Visit , 07.45am to 08.45am Village Hall car park.

Sunday 2nd July Annual East Street v West Street cricket match 2pm (820628)

All items for the June issue to the Editors as soon as possible, and by 15th May, please

Dear Friends,

'I believe Lord - help my unbelief'

I recently read an article which posed the question: 'Do those who don't share our views on God, morality, and public policy enjoy being around us?' It goes on to state what we actually believe. Perhaps with Easter fresh in our minds this is the time as spring takes grip and 'new life' once more emerges to think again about our faith.

There can be no doubt that we live in a Post-Christian time and that Christians need to stand-up and be quite sure what they believe in. It is clear that something has gone wrong with the world and that life can often seem unfair and unjust. The Bible acts as the best handbook for living and guidance. Yet even some Christians can ignore it and forget that it is the inspired Word of God which tells a story that resonates with life as we know it. It explains our past and gives us hope for tomorrow.

Christians believe that the Old and New Testaments point forward and backward to the One who came at the time calculated by Daniel the prophet; was born in the place predicted by the prophet Micah; and died in the manner anticipated by Isaiah and Zechariah.

We have belief in the Messiah who fulfilled the holy days of Israel and bought our rescue by His execution on the Jewish feast of Passover; by burial on the Jewish feast of Unleavened Bread; and by His resurrection on the Jewish Feast of First Fruits. We believe that the Messiah will one day bring peace to the world when He returns in power; turns weapons of war into agricultural tools; and laments the loss of those who refused to accept His offer of mercy.

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Teston Traffic Petition: Role Model for Hunton?

Campaigners pressing for action to improve conditions on the main road through Hunton, may be heartened by the success of petitioners in the nearby village of Teston.

After listening to a presentation of the "Safer Roads for Teston" campaign, the Kent County Council highways senior engineer promised Maidstone local board members that traffic calming measures or other action would be implemented this financial year. Mrs Dorothy Phillips, presenting Teston's case, said that the volume and speed of traffic through the village was an urgent problem and more serious than other villages in the area because five people had been killed over the last two years.

"In fact a survey has shown the number of accidents since 2003 has doubled compared with the previous six-year spell. It also showed that 80 percent of motorists exceeding the 30 mph limit were local people."

KCC member Dan Daley said: "On the strength of these figures, Teston seems a prime candidate for action, possibly with speed cameras being installed. And the main A26 through the village has not been improved for the best part of a century, apart from re-surfacing."

Hunton councillor Les Leonard, who attended the Board Meeting, said: "Our case for improving conditions in West Street is obviously not as strong of Teston, which is situated on the main Tonbridge to Maidstone road, but their campaigners have fought hard and seem to have gained some success."

However, in another case, Bearsted has so far been unsuccessful in its year-long battle to try to get the 40 mph limit through the village reduced to 30 mph. Hunton is also going through the same process.

Phone call scam Just something to bear in mind should you get a card through your door from a company called PDS or Parcel Delivery Service with a telephone number to ring....when you ring it you will get a recorded message based in Belize and be charged at a premium rate. If you do receive one, Royal Mail Fraud or Trading Standards should be told, or just do the sensible thing and ignore it!

PC. Gary Shaw

'Community Wardens' and 'Police Community Support Officers' win in reducing and preventing crime in the surrounding villages

Kent County Council Community Wardens and Police Community Support Officers, covering nearby areas including Coxheath, Boughton Monchelsea, Chart Sutton, Loose and Marden, are reporting encouraging results. But presumably Hunton is not large enough to warrant such coverage although now it is receiving a first class service from village policeman PC Gary Shaw.

The warden scheme - an idea which came from Philadelphia in the United States - started in the spring of 2002 with just 12 officers in Kent, but now has a total of around 100 and is continuing to expand, currently with support from the Home Office.

Maidstone Local Board of Kent County Councillors heard numerous reports stating that the wardens and PCS Officers were carrying out wide-ranging duties for young and old from bringing together the people of the community to 'social service type' work and even arranging sporting events.

Filling a gap resulting from increasing pressure on the police, the high visibility of warden patrols was shown to prevent and reduce crime while also providing a multi-agency approach with groups such as parish councillors, police and firemen. In Tovil, surgeries are being arranged where residents can meet their PCS Officer, the village policeman and a community representative to air concerns.

One warden, Chris Lomax, who covers Staplehurst, said that since he had arranged for a Graffiti wall to be installed in the refurbished youth club there had been few incidents of unsightly daubings in the village.

Readers Respond

Thank you to everyone who completed the Herald survey. We received a total of 21 responses. The overwhelming opinion was that the Herald is well read and much appreciated as a source of village news. Of the regular articles, readers found the Parish Council reports the most interesting, closely followed by the Out and Out articles. There were plenty of useful comments and constructive suggestions, which will be discussed at future meetings of the Herald team. Further comments can always be sent to the Editors.

Applause concert featuring 'Caratinga'

The Caratinga concert on 1 April was enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience. Four superbly talented young musicians played a mixture of traditional Brazilian instrumentals and sambas, the latter featuring an excellent and vivacious singer who graced the stage with much charm and style. This was the latest of the Applause events staged in the Village Hall and another resounding success. Thanks to all those who attended and to the dedicated team who got the show on the road; provided the meal at the interval and ran the bar. A profit of around £400 will be put towards ongoing improvements.

The menu for the Autumn season has been received and we hope to put on two events, followed by two more in the Spring.

Alan Bishop

Hunton School's annual May Fayre is on Sunday 21st May between 11.30am and 3.30pm. There will be dancing and karate displays by the children along with all the usual stalls and attractions such as BBQ, beer tent, tombola, bouncy castle, KM brass band, cake stall, cream teas, plant stall, raffle and lots more. So put the date in your diaries and come along and support your local school.

Out and Out

The Alder Tree in spring

Alder trees are quite widespread in Hunton, mainly on the lowland and usually bordering ditches or river and stream banks. Their roots have bacteria-containing nodules that are able to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere thereby enabling the tree to grow in wet ground which is generally nitrogen deficient. The trees play an important role in stabilising river banks and preventing erosion. The wood was traditionally very good for making charcoal, and today fruit farmers' plant lines of the closely related Grey Alder as shelter belts in their orchards.

In early Spring the male catkins release their pollen; the female flowers develop into little cones that are rich in small black seeds which are loved by winter finches such as goldfinches, siskins and redpolls.

The best developed alder trees are along the old stretch of the Beult beside the main road just before Cheveney Mill where some of the trees are over thirty feet tall. On some of the wooded islands in this stretch of river, drifts of snowdrops can be admired from the road, and on many occasions this winter I have seen parties of up to fifty siskins and redpolls feeding busily on the cones.

David Newman

HUNTON BOOK CLUB - MARCH BOOK REVIEW

'THE READING GROUP' BY ELIZABETH NOBLE

The Reading Group brings together a small group of women who love to read and discuss books and they form a reading group to discuss the nuances of books that they have chosen to read.

The group found this book to be a warm, funny, touching novel about a group of women learning to read between the lines. There were some accurate and witty observations about motherhood and marriage but several storylines didn't seem plausible to some of our group. Susan being told in a posthumous letter that her "mother" was actually her aunt seemed strange to most of our group initially but after discussion seemed more realistic. Some of our group found this book emotionally moving at times, causing both laughter and tears. We think *The Reading Group* could make an entertaining film.

Overall, the group enjoyed this book but consider it was a good rather than a great read. We give it 6/10.

Annual Parish Meetings - Date Changes

The two Annual Meetings have been moved from Wednesday 10th May to 7.00pm on Tuesday the 9th (avoiding the Judo Club who have the Hall until 7.45pm on Wednesdays), enabling us to hold both meetings on one evening if we start at 7.00pm. The agendas will be out shortly.

Due to holidays the July meeting has been deferred from 12th to 19th.

David Swan

At St Mary's Church in May

Notices

Brass Cleaning: Lorraine Redfarn & Marian Weston

Flowers: 7th May Mrs Adams
14th May Mrs Adams
21st May Mrs Way
28th May Mrs Way (Wedding)

Church Family Service Coffee Rota:

7th May Forster Family

Hunton Sunday Club:

14th May - 4 The Square, West Street 5.15pm - 6.45pm

Open to all children of primary school age. Contact David Jones 741474 for details

Services

Sunday 7th May - 4th Sunday of Easter

11.00am Church Family Service Revd David Jones
Reading: John 10 v 14-18

Sunday 14th May - 5th Sunday of Easter

9.15am Holy Communion (1662) Revd Peter Walker
Readings: Acts 8 v 26-40, John 15 v 1-8

Sunday 21st May - 6th Sunday of Easter Rogation Sunday

11.00am Morning Prayer Miss C. Bostock
Readings: Acts 10 v 44-48, John 15 v 9-17

Sunday 28th May - 7th Sunday of Easter

9.15am Holy Communion Revd Ruth Bierbaum
Readings: Acts 1 v 15-17, 21-26, John 17 v 6-19

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How can we live lives which still want to respond to His offer? Changed lives can be brought about by setting out to discover how much He has done for us; invite Him to reign in the kingdom of our hearts, and reflect in His power and Spirit the attitudes of Christ.

Jesus said that living as His follower was never going to be an easy thing. Only by His power and grace can we live the life we ought. As Jesus was about to be betrayed and delivered to His executioners, He said to His disciples that they must love one another as He had loved them. It can be relatively easy to love those who share one's same beliefs, but our Christian love must always be distinguished by loving our enemies and blessing those who curse us, and praying for and doing good to those who hate us.

Whilst we acknowledge that it is not our place to control others or impose our beliefs, we should see our mission as one which can make the life-changing wisdom of the Bible understandable and accessible to all. To help people everywhere to have the chance to discover a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to grow more like Him and be involved actively in the great mission of rescue.

A prayer:

God our Father, please forgive us for leaving others with the impression that we think that we are better than they are, or that we would want to impose our values on them, or that we want them to live by faith rather than by their own better judgement. Please help us to make it clear that our calling is to love and inform, not to condemn or control. Amen.

With love, Peter.

Dates for your Diary

Maidstone Bible Convention 2006 Monday 8th - Thursday 11th May, 8.00pm each evening at the United Reformed church, Week Street, Maidstone.

Theme - 'The God who melts mountains' messages from Micah

Speakers: 8th and 9th Derek Tidball - Principle of the London School of Theology

10th and 11th Paul Smith - Superintendent Minister of the Methodist Central Hall, Plymouth

May 7th Confirmation Service at Linton 6pm

May 25th Ascension Day Coxheath - Holy Communion at 10.00am and 7.30pm

Quiet Day at Linton Church Saturday 24th June For further details contact Cilla McKenzie Tel 01622 741318

May	7 th	14 th	21 st	25 th Ascension Day	28 th
Coxheath	11.00 HC	9.15 MP	11.00 HC	10.00 HC 7.30pm HC	11.00 CFS
E. Farleigh	9.15 HC	8.00 HC 10.30 MP	11.00 PW	See Coxheath	8.00 HC 10.30 MP
Linton	9.15 HC 6pm Confirmation	8.00 HC (1662) 11.00 CFS	9.15 PW	See Coxheath	9.15 HC
W. Farleigh	8.00 HC	11.00 CFS	11.00 MP	See Coxheath	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)