



High Halstow TIMES



Home of the Heron

December 2009



Santa's Gift for



For the seventh year running Santa Claus wishes to come to the streets of High Halstow on Christmas Eve. In time honoured fashion Fairy George and the Parish Elves will be assisting Santa in delivering presents to the children and adults (and animals!) of our wonderful village.

The charge this year will be £2.00 per present with Santa choosing to split the donations between:

1 ***Help For Heroes***

The charity set up to help wounded servicemen and women.

2 ***Cerebral Palsy Care***, The Bradbury Centre, View Road, Cliffe Woods.

The organisation that was set up many years ago to provide both special need services and educational support to people of all ages who suffer from a wide range of disabilities.

Santa's helpers will also accept additional donations for the charities on the night should you have some spare change or give to Derek in the shop. Santa will happily deliver the presents if you do the following:

- 1 You buy your gift and wrap it clearly with the name of the recipient and the address it is to be delivered to (High Halstow only please). If your child is attending the Church Service and would like the present at the Service please just put the address as 'The Church' and Santa will call.
- 2 Pop the present along to Derek in the shop by no later than Saturday 19th December.
- 3 Please note for insurance purposes the value of the present should not exceed £10.00.
- 4 Please do not make the presents too large as Santa is busy at this time of year and would prefer smaller parcels.

Last year we made over 300 deliveries which started at 4.00 pm. Sorry we cannot guarantee a time for any delivery as the time taken is around 5 hours. If you have presents for young children don't forget there is a guaranteed delivery time at the Church at 6.00pm if this helps.

Village Hall

The 'Queen B and The Redfords' evening went down a storm and nearly £500 was raised for the Village Hall. Thanks to all who came and continue to support the work of the HUGH Fund. Next year's programme will be discussed shortly but obviously will have to take into account the planned works. So watch this space.

The Architect is still to complete the final plans but will be available shortly. These in turn will then go to Medway Council to seek Planning permission. In addition the final costings of the work are due to be completed by the time this goes to print which will enable us to seek further funding from other sources. The plan for Phase 1 will likely to be the roof and the back wall but if we obtain some extra funding shortly we will expand this phase to include other parts of the project. Please once again accept our gratitude for your continued support and hopefully we will see the works commence in the New Year.

Village Hall Committee

Village Play Park

Thanks to all the people who commented, either at the Farmer's Market or the Parish Council meeting, on the plans being put forward to revamp the village play park. Medway Council have had all the comments back and the plan is still for the play park to be completed no later than the 31st March. We can assure the people that raised the issue of no swings in the plans that this has been changed and swings and new swings will be here shortly

When the dates for the work are known it is proposed to inform you in the HHT and or by posters as part of the car park will be utilised by the contractors carrying out the work. We will try and keep disruption to a minimum but at the end of all the disruption and work we should have the new play park facilities.

HH Parish Council

2009 Poppy Appeal

Susan Osenton of Dalham Farm would like to thank all those who collected and contributed towards this worthy cause. We raised a grand total of £919.15

Many Thanks

Susan Osenton

Friendly Club

*****Important Notice*****

Starting with our 10th Birthday on TUESDAY 26 January. All meetings will now be on a Tuesday Not a Wednesday, everything else remains the same. We meet from 2 to 4pm, there is a variety of board games, or whist, refreshments and during the final hour we have a variety of speakers or activities. The changes have been made in the hope that it will suit more people.

A lot of friendships were formed during the Open House, and it is hoped that now we have changed our day those friendships will continue with us, we welcome anyone over 40.

Sheila, Pat, Judy, and May wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy 2010, and hope to see you for our 10th Birthday Party.

Pat Hillman

We have an author in our midst!

'Leviathan With A Fish-Hook' by S. L. Russell

It was with a sense of great excitement, tinged with curiosity, that I purchased one of the first copies sold by Sue Russell of the book which I knew she had written. And I started then and there to read it. Well, not a lot of work was done in our house that week! So be warned!

'Leviathan With A Fish-Hook', as a title, was intriguing - and so, as it turned out, was the book. Sue writes extremely well and consequently the text flows easily along. There are many twists and turns as the story, with its impact on, and consequences for, each character unfolds. Sue writes evocatively of their passions, obsessions and frustrations. She exhibits a keen and focussed power of observation of detail, and the descriptive passages of 'the woods', where Eileen meets Christopher, a young man with a mental illness, living rough, is reminiscent of our own Nature Reserve. As Eileen befriends Christopher and gains his trust, she finds her own lifestyle inevitably challenged and disturbed, we feel compelled to read on. What has she done? How and where is this all going to end up? As I implied, Sue's book is a good read and I suggest you try it for yourself! After all it's not every day we can say we have an author in our midst!

'Leviathan With A Fish-Hook' is obtainable from Sue Russell (252324) Price: £9.99

Hazel Beringer

Busy Times Ahead

Our November meeting was different as we did not have a speaker, but had a couple of quizzes and a lot of time to chat over refreshments. It was a real fun evening enjoyed by everyone. The monthly lunch was enjoyed by most of us in the Kings Arms at Upnor. The evening shopping in Lakeland Plastics at Bluewater was great fun, and after spending our money, we went and spent more money on coffee and cake. We were having such a laugh that the time flew by and we were among the last shoppers to leave.

Members had collected items for shoe boxes of goodies that are sent to our troops in Afghanistan. These I delivered to a wonderful lady who is checking, making up, packing and posting them, all on her own (well with the help of her husband). I personally think she deserves a medal.

Christmas is just around the corner and suddenly the diary is filling up. The 7th of December is the District Carol Service being held this year in Borstal, it's a lovely time to meet up with friends from other Institutes. On the 12th a small group is venturing to Margate to see 'The Snow Queen'. No doubt it will include a nice lunch and afternoon tea. Yet to be decided is the monthly lunch club venue, although folks will be busy, I'm sure they will fit it in.

Next month the W.I. is getting artistic as a member will be helping us to create paintings that depict a Christmas scene. Should be good, could be messy. We will also be having light refreshments and carols by candlelight. We end by collecting a pressie from under the decorated tree. If you would like to join us please just arrive by 7:30 and pay £1:50 on the door, we would love to see you.

From the ladies of the W.I. may I wish all of you a very happy and healthy Christmas, and best wishes for the New Year ahead.

Margaret Whitebread

Need to Hire a Hall?

If you are interested in hiring either of the halls in the village please contact :
Memorial Hall - Pat Hillman 251064
Village Hall - Ann Smith 251914

Quiz Nite

December will probably be the last quiz for 2009, although we will be asking quizzers if they would like one just before Christmas.

As usual we try to make this a special evening, with most of the questions related to Christmas. As well as a special Raffle.

We would like to thank all the quizzers for a really lovely year, we have had a good time, and as always ensure that every penny made at these evenings goes towards the upkeep and improvement of the Memorial Hall.

Pat, Margaret and Lesley would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a very healthy 2010.

Pat Hillman

Garden Club

We finished our Gardening year with a really lovely talk; it was the second part of the Saxon Shore line.

We will start off 2010 with our AGM in February, but Members will be receiving letters with details nearer the time.

We are desperate for people to come forward and help on the committee, otherwise this club may follow other clubs and close, which is something we will fight tooth and nail to stop.

Pat Hillman

Note from the Editor

The High Halstow Times is a friendly point of contact and all views expressed are those of the individual. No letter will be published without the name and address of the writer being supplied to the editor, although this information may be withheld from appearing in the HHT upon request. If you have a matter for complaint, it should be brought to the attention of the Parish Council, which meets on the second Wednesday of every month (excluding December), at 8pm in the Memorial Hall. Members of the public are always welcome.

Advertising rates are £15 per quarter page per edition; £30 per half page per edition.

Farmers Market

Last month saw the Play Park plans, the Benefits officer from Medway Council and the visit of Punch and Judy. All three additional items went down well including Mr Punch's benefit application form to the Council and his application was given due consideration. These were three non-regular items to the successful market and if you have any ideas of what other things that would bring YOU out to the market then please let us know.

Our regular stallholders include:

Denis Hills – Quality Meat Suppliers located at 94 Frindsbury Hill, Strood.

He is taking Christmas orders and his leaflet will be available at the next market and deliveries can be made to your door.

The Dairy Farm Fairseat – Hand crafted delicious farm house chocolates

PG Woodcrafts – Handmade pens, ideal Christmas presents etc

Sparkles – Fashion Handbags, Costume Jewellery, Silver Jewellery, Scarves and accessories for all occasions, unique and unusual Christmas decorations. If you can't get to visit us at the Farmers Market each month why not earn some commission and host a home party.

Hall Stalls – Jam, Bread, cakes etc

The High Halstow Calendar – See all the great winning pictures from this years photographic competition in one calendar.

To continue giving you more information on the stallholders please see below details of two of our regulars

Romany Candles - Established 2001

Romany Candles began trading shortly after the birth of our daughter, Romany in 2001. The name was obviously derived from "Roman Candles" and "Romany" which seemed obvious after the blessing of our gorgeous little godsend

Our initial trading was mainly with homemade designs of candles to suit all tastes, which was well received. As time has gone on, although we have continued with the homemade products, we've expanded into ready-made candles, handmade scarfs and ornaments predominately from the fairy and dragon genre.

Crystals also play a part in our set up which has a growing following as people become more aware of their healing benefits and general good karma.

In short, Romany Candles is an intuitive home-run business which has been successfully trading for 8 years and we are always willing to listen to and accommodate all and any of our new or returning customers

Pat Carter

Homemade Cards

Anybody can easily start making cards whether you are a senior citizen, school girl or in-between. I started after retiring by trying to reduce my photographs. I made a card with a photograph of the recipient of my card and from thereon progressed

I then had to source my requirements card, papers in many colours and textures, glue double sided tape, scissors, embellishments, sparkles etc etc. I purchased magazines searching for ideas and watched Create and Craft - not to be missed on Sky TV. However I found the post and packing an expense that I really could do without so turned to suppliers locally like the Papermill shop in the Dockyard, who also have suggestions of what to do with their products. Through trial and error you find

what works for you and what doesn't. Sometimes you have a rough time trying to decide what to write inside but again the internet is a wonderful tool, but I have plenty of sentiments that I use. Card-making is an increasingly popular hobby as a way to express a sentiment in an individual and personal way to a loved one. The fun is in experimenting to create your own unique style

Making cards is a wonderful way to spend time when you are lonely or bored, or indeed take over your life and space in your house if you really enjoy it

There are so many types of cards to make from rubber stamping to Book of Flicks – a card I particular like for say a new baby or wedding, due to the additional pages the main people such as Godparents, best man, Bridesmaids etc can sign them and make them a hugely personalised memory of the occasion. However very innovative cards can be made with die cut decoupage or indeed cutting out yourself. Making and layering are all very popular ways of adding colours and dimension to your card. I really enjoy looking at other crafters ideas and I am sure most people do. Collecting ideas is a very worthwhile occupation and usually a way of using up that scrap of paper cut from a previous creation.

I have now been asked to go and help a craft group in a village outside High Halstow but if anyone is interested in one here I would love to be involved. I am now in a position of being able to supply craft materials for other crafters at cost price – I am only a telephone call away. I would welcome being involved with others in this lovely village which from my experience is friendly, welcoming and a wonderful place to live and extend ones talent whatever it is.

I have been asked to make a card with bees on, bowling green etc – the joy I am told of the recipient receiving a card with their interest on as well as their names makes them feel very special.

So folks get crafting, use your talent and please someone with a greeting to suit them alone, so much more appreciated by the receiver than a mass-produced card.

Oonagh Elliott

Youth Night



A place to just hang out and be yourself
Friday 4th December and
the first Friday each month
Youth Open Night at the Memorial Hall.
7:30-10:00pm entrance free.

Bring your own music, tuck shop will be available, bring suggestions for next year
For more info contact stephengwilt2@hotmail.co.uk

Does This Concern You?

At a recent meeting of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), members of the Council expressed unanimous concern at the sheer level of shrinking numbers at our Church services (on occasion the congregation could be counted in single figures). Firstly the PCC asked me to write a letter to all those who are members of our church, alerting them to this situation. Which I have now done. Secondly the PCC has asked that I write to the High Halstow Times so that everyone in our Parish could be reached and kept abreast of what is happening and the possible consequences.

It is a matter of great concern to us that declining congregations mean less income, so of course we are finding it more and more difficult to balance our books. The congregation is responsible both for paying the stipend of our rector and also financing the repairs and upkeep of our church. You will have seen the scaffolding recently around St Margaret's Church and the cost of those repairs was £28,000.

There is a danger that if we cannot meet our costs we will lose our rector and eventually our own church might close. I think that this would be a calamity for our village. People have worshipped at St. Margaret's for hundreds of years. It is a place where people can come to be married in the presence of their friends, to celebrate the baptism of their children, to hold a funeral service surrounded by loved ones or simply to seek comfort in times of trouble.

I am therefore writing on behalf of the PCC to seek the support of everyone in our village. We are approaching the great church seasons, firstly of Advent, when we anticipate with excitement the birth of Jesus and secondly, of Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour. So we would greatly love to see you come to any of our services. Please speak to Stephen about any problems you may have. Remember you are always most welcome to attend the functions we hold.

If you share our concern we would also ask you to consider contributing to our funds.

The Rector and the PCC wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Fred Beringer.

May this Christmas be a real blessing and joy for you



Christmas service times in December

13th Carols by Candle light, Allhallows	6:30pm
14th Community Carols, Allhallows school	6:00pm
16th Charity Carols Round High Halstow	7:30pm
20th Carols by Candle light, High Halstow	6:30pm
24th The night before Christmas Allhallows village hall	3:00pm
24th The night before Christmas High Halstow	5:00pm
24th Midnight Communion Allhallows	11:30pm
25th Holy Communion High Halstow	8:00am
25th Family service High Halstow	9:30am

Why not come find out about gift that is affordable even in the credit crunch.

For more information contact Rev Stephen Gwilt on 01634 250 637 or Stephengwilt2@hotmail.co.uk

Queen B and The Redfords

"Do I want to see the Queen?"....

"Pardon...did you say 'see The Queen'?"....

'Wow!', I thought 'being a Parish Councillor really does put you in touch with some fairly influential people.'

"Yes - there's a tribute band doing 'The Queen', and they'll be here when you're visiting"

This is part of the phone conversation that took place in September, just after we had confirmed the travel arrangements to visit Mum, in High Halstow. Based on my non-committal reply she'd arrange two extra tickets for me and my wife. And so it came about that I should be heading out on a cold October evening making our way to the Village Hall in High Halstow.

Too many re-runs of the The Vicar of Dibley had coloured my expectations for the coming evening's entertainment. Would there be a sing-along? Who was organising the raffle? Would any Parish notices be read during the interval?

After some introductions at the 'box-office'. We took our places and 'people watched' as the audience mingled and grew. The stage was set with some professional looking instruments and equipment - look!, there's a video cameraman...and there's an audio mixing desk. At least the evening wasn't going to be the Sunday School chorus; or the local 6th Formers first steps to pop music stardom.

Our bartender for the night provided a massive boost to the evening by wanting £9 for a bottle of Aussie Red. (Where I now live, the mark-up is at least 300% plus the taxes!). I was starting to enjoy the evening - I'd even gotten used to the booming pre-concert music.

The Redfords arrived on stage, and got the evening going. Now, my expectations for a group are;

- 1) they know how to play their instruments;
- 2) they know their set; and,
- 3) their sound system is set-up correctly.

#3 is the biggest variable outside their control, and The Redfords managed enough tweaks to accommodate the hall's acoustics adequately. The songs were all classic standards, and as such EVERYBODY knew the tunes intimately...which is a bad thing because a bum note here or a missed chord there stands out like a giraffe in a herd of zebras.

With a line up of drums, bass, lead guitar, and 2 vocalists, the 5 person group coped with all the songs tackled. They had identified their target audience, selected appropriate songs and were going down a storm. No rap, reggae, punk or grunge...just standard Radio 2 fare. Most importantly, the audience lapped it up. The interval passed, and curiously, it looked like The Redfords would play a second set. The lights went down and the sound, of what I figured to be guitars and instruments being tuned, gave way to a familiar Brian May riff. The spotlights came on and we were underway and Paul Jackson's alter ego 'Freddie' was in the house. Paul Jackson has a remarkable talent. He made me forget immediately that I was in a village hall in Kent on a cold October night. I was back at Wembley Arena in September of '84 for 'The Works' tour. Paul grabbed the attention of the 200 or so people in the hall as quickly and firmly as Freddie Mercury grabbed 13,000 at the arena. I have absolutely no recollection of the actual songs performed (Queen songs aren't sung - they are performed). But I can recite the words to every last one of them - how does that work?

Paul's interaction with the audience was the true highlight. Picking on some members of the audience backfired - he really must brush up on his Polish language skills! - but even this was turned to his advantage in a manner that only a consummate performer can handle. Audience participation was limited to some live karaoke, but it never felt (to me) to be a distraction to his routine.

Sure - his Groucho Marx painted moustache is cheesy; the (false?) teeth caused some problems, but was in total keeping with Freddie Mercury's 'ham' acting style. I'd like to think those 2 aspects were subtle tributes too. A 3 or 4 costume change was handled without a break to the act and was dealt with primarily by means of a slow striptease.

As an entertainer, Paul is but a single lucky break from major success. In the meantime he will not be short of work anytime soon...which is a bad thing for those in High Halstow. It means it's going to a while before he can return to allow others to enjoy his skills.

Thank you Paul, and thank you Mum for the chance to go see The Queen.

Philip Hillman

For the slide show and photo's of the night please visit www.highhalstow.org.uk

BEWARE - Bogus Callers.

A number of 'Bogus Callers' have been reported in the area recently, please be on your guard. Distraction burglary, or bogus caller burglary remains a crime of great concern for all families and householders, particularly for a person who considers themselves or a relative to be a vulnerable person.

In these crimes the perpetrator will present him or herself at the door, try to gain access by claiming something had gone into your garden or try to create the impression of being an official of a public service, or from a public utility company. Police, Electricity Service, Water Service, and Social Services are just some of the bogus identities used.

The burglar tries to get an invite to enter the home, then distracts the householder while a fellow burglar enters the home to steal valuables.

Constable Derek Hoyle, a crime prevention adviser, advises all householders to be alert to this crime type.

"Always use the 'Lock, Chain, Check' routine when answering the door to strangers. Lock the door. Use a door chain or bar," he said.

"Check the identity of callers before opening the door. Before answering or opening the front door check and be certain that the back door is closed and locked.

"If you are unsure about the caller, do not open the door and do not let them enter your home."

A single point of contact telephone number can be used to check the identity of callers.

The QUICK CHECK scheme allows householders to call 0800 013 22 90

A call centre operator will answer that number and can quickly check with any service provider if the person at the door is a genuine caller from that company.

Kent Police advice on Bogus callers!

Most people who call at your home will be genuine. But sometimes, people turn up unannounced and try to trick their way into your home to steal your valuables and money.

These are known as 'distraction burglars' and 'bogus callers'.

There are some simple precautions you can take to help ensure you don't become a victim.

Lock back doors and windows

Lock your back doors and windows before answering your front door – thieves are known to work in pairs, one entering through the back door while the other knocks at the front.

Use safety devices

Use a spyhole and ask who the caller is through the door first then keep the door on the chain.

Ask for and check ID

Ask for and check carefully their identification, even if they have a pre-arranged appointment.

Genuine callers will carry one from the organisation they represent.

If you are not expecting the caller and they do not carry an ID card, do not let them in.

To check a caller is genuine you can look up the number in the phone book or a recent bill and check it against the card the caller has given you.

Do not just ring the number on the card - it may be fake.

If you have any doubts about whether the caller is genuine, ask them to leave and come back at a time that is convenient to you and when you have had a chance to ask someone to be with you.

Close your door - Never leave your front door unattended. If you need glasses to read identification or need to go to another room for anything, close the door.

Report bogus callers

If you think you have a bogus caller at your door, call the police on 999 and try to let them know what has happened and give a description of the caller(s).

I am sorry but due to the volume of reports it is not possible to reply to everybody individually but please continue to report all incidents.

Martin Mitchell

HHPC Police Liaison

Plant your Way into the Record Books

On Saturday December 5, people in North Kent will have the chance to do their bit for the environment and contribute to a world record-breaking bid at the same time.

The RSPB has teamed up with the BBC Breathing Places and Guinness World Records for the Tree o'clock challenge, which will see people across the country trying to plant more than 653,000 trees in one hour.

In North Kent, the RSPB are inviting people to come to their Cliffe Pools site between 11am and 12pm to participate in the world record-breaking attempt.

The RSPB is currently undertaking extensive work at Cliffe Pools in order to enhance the site for both wildlife and people. Visitors will join staff and volunteers in planting hawthorn and blackthorn, which will act to landscape the recently opened car park and provide shelter for a number of scrubland bird species such as the chaffinch.

Paul Hyde, the RSPB's site warden, said: "We hope to plant over one thousand trees for Tree o'clock. People coming along will go away knowing that they have contributed towards the redevelopment of one of the RSPB's most important regional sites and should hopefully enter into the Guinness World Records at the same time."

Paul added: "RSPB staff will be on site to help with the planting and to tell visitors more about the work being done at Cliffe Pools. Already this year we have opened a new car park and put in new trails and visitor information boards. The Tree o'clock event will greatly enhance the area around the car park, both visually and ecologically."

People wishing to take part in Tree o'clock should arrive at Cliffe Pools between 10.30am and 12pm on Saturday December 5. The RSPB will provide the trees and a shovel. For further details about this event please ring 01634 222480 or visit www.rspb.org.uk/northwardhillevents

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Rochester, Kent ME3 8DH

INTRODUCINGKevin Mahon - MA, Dip Ed, NPQH
Head of School
Hundred of Hoo School



Kevin Mahon - MA, Dip Ed, NPQH
Head of School

The school has appointed a new Head. Mr Kevin Mahon was made the permanent head of school on October 8th. Dr Gary Holden of the Math School will remain as the Executive Head of the Hundred of Hoo School. They will be working closely together to build on the current programme of improvements that have been put in place to help ensure that the Hundred of Hoo becomes an excellent centre of learning for the students and the local community.

Kevin Mahon had been working within the school since April 2009, when he was brought in as a National Challenge Senior Consultant Leader to help implement improvements when the school did not achieve government targets set for all schools. The expectation is that 30% of students at all schools should achieve 5 GCSE's at A-C, including English and Maths. Unfortunately the Hundred of Hoo achieved 26% so the school became the focus for increased support in teaching and learning and leadership and management.

Born in Liverpool, Kevin grew up in Kirkby, a new town built on the outskirts of the city, the middle son in a family of three boys and three girls. Kirkby is renowned for its toughness, as it was a social wasteland of homes with few facilities. Although he has spent all his working life away from Liverpool, Kevin is proud to be a Liverpoolian, and feels very strongly the spirit of Liverpool. Liverpoolians are part of a very close knit community, almost clannish, and very supportive of each other. He feels it is his spiritual home and is proud to be a scouser! Kevin is proud of his heritage as a working class boy. His dad was a postman and his mum worked as a shop assistant and a school cleaner. Kevin's family, although now spread across the country working in a variety of occupations, remains incredibly close, regularly getting together on family occasions.

Kevin left school and went to Durham University in 1971, where he met his wife. He married Gretta in 1976 in Hemel Hempstead when a fleet of mini buses brought friends and relatives down from Liverpool. Kevin is Catholic and Gretta, who is from Essex, is Church of England. They had an ecumenical wedding when his Parish priest from Liverpool presided over the service in an Anglican church with a Church of England vicar. He has two sons, of whom he is extremely proud. Keiran (25) is an Assistant Producer for film and TV who has a credit on the latest Harry Potter movie and a re-make of "Clash of the Titans". He has also been involved in the production of other films, pop videos and the prequel to Only Fools and Horses. Meanwhile, Laurie (21) is studying English and Drama at University in Hull. He also acts and produces plays, having written and directed a play performed at the Edinburgh Festival this year. It is his final year at university, and is looking to tour with his play.

On leaving university Kevin taught in London from 1974-2003 at a variety of schools including boys, girls, and mixed education at a selection of Catholic, CofE, Grammar and Comprehensive schools. By 2003 he was a school head, but had decided that when he reached 50 he wanted a change, so left teaching to become an OFSTED inspector and consultant with London Challenge – a forerunner of the National Challenge – where any London school achieving below 30% success was helped.

Kevin was extremely successful in this role and enjoyed working alongside heads of schools in extremely

challenging circumstances and using his skills to make them a success. In April this year he was invited to help the Hundred of Hoo. After the previous head teacher Mr. Williams decided to take early retirement, the governors wanted to have an acting head and asked senior leaders and Mr. Mahon to apply for the acting headship. He was appointed to the role and the position of permanent headship was advertised nationally. There was a fantastic response to the national advertisement and he was pleased to be shortlisted to the final six from a large field. The six were subjected to a two day interview process. The final interview for Mr Mahon was a mammoth 2 ½ hour session conducted by a panel of eight people. He was delighted to be offered the position, and on 8 October 2009 became the full time Head of School.

Kevin feels very much at home at The Hundred of Hoo. He feels that there is a warm and welcoming community feeling at the school which made him feel at home immediately. At his first school assembly the youngsters applauded him after he had talked about how his home city football teams epitomize his ambition for the school and the community of the peninsula. He follows Liverpool Football Club who are closely associated with the song "You'll Never Walk Alone". Everton's motto is "Nothing But the Best". These two things are symbolic of what he intends to bring to the school – he says, "we will be part of a strong community, supporting and helping one another to achieve great things for our children and the area".

The Hundred of Hoo is the largest senior school in Medway, with nearly 1700 pupils. It is not only important for the people of the peninsula, but is also an important school for the area too. He and Dr Holden and the new governing body have ambitious and achievable plans for the school. Their first priorities are to get the school out of special measures and to improve performance at GCSEs, by raising standards in teaching and learning and the attainment of the students, and providing strong leadership, which will achieve the twin targets of taking the school out of the National Challenge Category, and crossing the National Challenge threshold.

Mr Mahon says, "We will be out of special measures within a year and inside three years Ofsted will be able to see that we are a very good school. After five years, Ofsted will say that we are outstanding."

The governors, Dr Holden and Mr Mahon want to make the school a real community school in which parents are pleased and proud that their children come here because of the quality of the care their children receive and the progress their children make. The school will also look to be the hub of the community with learning opportunities for all and the school as a focus for support and help in a wide range of services. There are excellent facilities at the school, including the sports pitch, stage, music and IT facilities and the community should be able to enjoy them too. There are plans for health and social support for everyone in the community and the school has started by bringing in a health clinic for students. Students can get advice from nurses at the NHS clinic based at the school. This service could be extended to the wider community. There are other plans afoot, which they hope to implement over time.

The school has become a National Challenge Trust School, and will receive extra funding from the Government. They will have a new governing body, and hope to get sponsorship and new partnerships from industry and make links with other schools and colleges.

"It's a great challenge and a truly exciting one. We confidently expect that we will achieve all our plans for the school and the community we serve. Through effective teamwork and strong partnership, by supporting and helping each other to a high level we will achieve great success together," said Mr Mahon. "The students and parents at the school and the people of the peninsula deserve nothing but the best."

For Sale
Elliptical Exercise Bike
Compact gentle glide exercise bike for sale, hardly used.
Happy to deliver free within the Peninsula
£50
Call Jamie: 01634 254178



IDEAL SECURITY ITEMS FOR YOUR HOME

Neighbourhood Watch is about finding ways to keep ourselves and our property safe. Our Association have built up a range of security items that are of good quality and at an affordable price which can be purchased from the Neighbourhood Watch Office (01634 792131). Please let us know if you have seen any of these items being sold for less or, indeed, any others that you feel would be good for us to stock.

PERSONAL/SHED ALARMS (£4)

This has a clip so that you can attach it to your belt or waist band giving you easy access. It is also fitted with a key ring for fixing to a handbag, case etc., Ideally suited for ladies keeping their bag in the shopping trolley. The alarm activates when the metal pin is pulled out of the unit, giving off 140db (very loud) sound and a flashing strobe light. The light feature can be used independently and is useful when opening a car door at night. It incorporates a fixing point enabling its use as a shed or garage alarm.



MULTI PURPOSE ALARM (£8.50)

Includes all of the functions of the personal alarm but no torch light. Ideal for attaching to doors or windows and is activated by vibration or movement. This makes it excellent for use on sheds or outhouses. It has two forms of "alert" a high decibel "screech" or a pleasant-sounding "melody". Extra security is provided by using a number pad passcode.



KEY RING ALARMS (£2.50)

Take it with you wherever you go and can be attached to your car keys, house keys or to a loop on your clothes, bag or case. When the pin is pulled out, emits 130db of sound to deter the would-be thief.



DOOR RESTRICTOR (£2.50)

Performs the same function as a door chain, but much stronger and firmer, enabling you to partially open your front door until you are satisfied as to the identity of the caller. You need to specify if the door is wooden or PVC.



THE "DOOR SPY HOLE" (£2)

You simply "peep" through it to see who is at your front door. This model has a 200 degree angle of sight which is a lot wider than most others on the market.



VEHICLE TAX DISC HOLDERS (£1)



These tax disc holders are tamper-proof and stick very tightly to the windscreen so that, anyone attempting to remove it, will tear the holder and the disc in half making it unusable in another vehicle.

HEART SHAPED ALARM (£3.00)

Our latest item proving very popular, especially with the Ladies. Powerful 130dB siren & batteries included



SECURITY SAFE CANS (£3.00)

An ingenious idea! They look exactly the same as a tin of branded food (Baked Beans, Spaghetti etc.) Made with a screw top and ideal for keeping cash or jewellery. The food cupboard is one of the last places a burglar would look.



High Halstow Web Site

Did you know you can see the minutes of your Parish Council on our website? If that is not your cup of tea did you also know all the local groups in the village are also advertised? Other local news which does not always make the HHT due to time and space issues. All we ask is that local groups keep us informed of their contact details. If you have any items please send them to the editor in the first instance as he will try and accommodate them in the HHT.

The Web Site can be found as follows:
www.highhalstow.org.uk

Dick Whittington is Coming to High Halstow

*Dramarama will be performing
Dick Whittington
on 18, 19 and 20th February 2010*

*Tickets will soon be available, further details
will be available on the village notice boards
and village shop window.*

Roosting Rooks create a stir at North Kent Marshes

A flock of rooks at the RSPB's Northward Hill Reserve is delighting visitors with their aerial display as they return in their thousands to roost at dusk.

During the day the birds leave the woodland to feed out on the marshes and at dusk they return, en masse, to their woodland roosts.

At a recent event, the RSPB's North Kent area manager Alan Johnson took a group of volunteers on a guided tour around the site. On returning late from the woodland the volunteers were suddenly ambushed by thousands of rooks squawking overhead.

One of the group, George Wise said: "What an amazing sight. As the sun was setting, suddenly the sky turned black and the noise was incredible. We just looked up at the sky dumbfounded."

As well as its rook spectacle, Northward Hill on the Hoo Peninsula, is home to one of Europe's largest heronries and also contains a very sizeable colony of little egrets. In winter, large numbers of wildfowl gather on marshland floods. Wintering thrushes, finches and buntings gather in the scrub and Redwings and Fieldfares can be seen in the orchards.

For further details please ring 01634 222480 or visit www.rspb.org.uk/northwardhillevents.

Sparkles Christmas Shop Tuesday 8th December 2pm - 4pm & 6:30pm - 9:00pm

Sparkles will again be opening a Christmas shop at the Memorial Hall on Tuesday 8th December for a final opportunity to pick-up that perfect Christmas present or special decoration.

We will have our full range of fashion handbags, costume jewellery, silver jewellery and essential accessories on display.

We will be opening between 2pm and 4pm for the early birds, then again between 6:30pm and 9:00pm.

As a special 'Thanks' for all the custom and support throughout 2009, we will be offering a 10% discount on all purchases made on the day.

10% DISCOUNT

Readers Letters (continued)

Burt Marsh

Burt passed away peacefully at home on 5 November. He was a long time canine resident of this Parish and loved village life.

His favourite pastime was to await by his gate on the White Road to have a chat and gossip to his many friends and acquaintances.

One special life long friend was a Miss Sophie Harris also of this Parish, they would often be seen together having a leisurely stroll around the woods. We did not know Burts actual age as the rest home he was residing in, prior to coming to live with us had a fire and all his personal records were destroyed. He seemed to think that he should be getting a telegram from HM the Queen but sadly this will now not happen. Many 'Thanks' to all the staff at Christmas Lane vets for their care and attention to Burt over the years.

Best wishes to all The Mason Family

ps. The goat is alive and kicking and doing very well.

Vacancy for Parish Councillor

There is currently a vacancy for a Parish Councillor, all applicants should contact the Parish Clerk in writing outlining why they want to be on the Parish Council and what suitable skills they bring with them. Should more than one candidate apply there will be interviews held in January. The closing date for applicants is 24th December 2009.

High Halstow Parish Clerk:
Mrs Roxana Brammer 01474 871269

Dear HHT,

Ref: Dramarama Summer Show
Thank you for a fabulous Summer Show. You all work so hard and everything that you do is so very deeply appreciated by such a wide range of people of all ages from our villages. We are lucky to have such a wealth of talent, goodwill and community spirit to inspire us locally. Keep up the excellent work and we are all looking forward to the next performance.

Mrs M Ryan

Dates for Diary

Every Other Tuesday:

Mobile Library

12:30/12:50

Village Hall Car Park

12:55/1:15

Northwood Ave.

Every Wednesday:

Painting & Drawing for Beginners

10.00

Memorial Hall

Every Thursday:

Mother and Toddler's

09.00 to 11:00am

Memorial Hall

Sugar Babes

19.00

Memorial Hall

Every Saturday:

Karmann Dancers

09.00

Memorial Hall

Other Dates

Saturday 1st

09:30 - 11:30

Farmers Market

Village Hall

Wednesday 2nd

19:30 - 22:00

Women's Institute

Memorial Hall

Friday 4th

18:30

Saturday 5th

09:30 - 11:30

Memorial Hall

Farmers Market

Village Hall

Wednesday 24th

16:00 Onwards

Santa's Visit

The Village

HM Government
Real help for homeowners now

300,000 homeowners have got help and advice with their mortgage. Take your First step to joining them.

Even if you are behind with your mortgage payments, it's never too late to take control. Since April 2008, over 300,000 homeowners have received help and advice with paying their mortgage, and so could you. For more information on your options and to find out who you can talk to visit www.direct.gov.uk/mortgagehelp or to speak to a trained adviser at our debt advice partners. Call the National Debtline free on 0800 808 4000, or see our website for more advisers.

It's your home, let's keep it that way.

Financial Inclusion, HM Government, cml, Shelter

Readers Letters

Dear HHT,

The village has lost one of its' most friendly meeting places, "Open House" where we could have a variety of home cooked food amongst firends. It had been running once a month for the last 12 years.

On behalf of all the diners, I would like to say a big 'Thank You' to Sheila and Judy and their willing bunch of helpers for all their hard work over the years. We enjoyed the food and companionship, it will be missed.

Rosemary Collins
Cooling Road

Dear HHT,

I would like to publicly thank the ladies and gentlemen who have given us so much pleasure over the last 12 years. Open House has been an opportunity for friends to meet over a wonderful meal and has been very appreciated. What more could we ask? Good company and excellent service at an economical price. The work this team of lovely people has put in made this monthly date a time to look forward to. I for one am sad that the 10th November marked our last meeting. Thank you so much Sheila, Judy, May, Margaret Bufford, Margaret Whitebread, Sue, Pauline, Derek and Freda. We shall miss you. I would also like to mention Ruth and Iris who both were part of the team until ill health prevented it.

Gill Ellen
Christmas Lane

Your Parish Councillors

George Crozer, Chair 01634 250286

e.mail: george@highhalstow.org.uk

Gary Thomas, Vice Chair 01634 252812

e.mail: jag84@tiscali.co.uk

Martin Andrews 07984 791029

Ray Collins 01634 250105

Pat Hillman 01634 251064

Carl Mitchell 01634 250911

Martin Mitchell 07531 984169

Lesley Munday 01634 250276

Your councillors may also be contacted through the Parish Clerk:

Mrs Roxanna Brammer 01474 871269

High Halstow PreSchool

My family and I would like to congratulate Anita Russell, (the Owner/Manager of the High Halstow Pre-School) and all her team on the wonderful outcome of their last OFSTED inspection. The Pre-School was categorised as OUTSTANDING, which is the highest grade awarded and it is well deserved. In spite of being very poorly Anita has again proved her leadership qualities and all the staff have worked tirelessly to support Anita and together they have clearly demonstrated their commitment to the children in their care.

Having seen first hand all that goes on at Pre-School, I know that every staff member gives of their very best in order to help the children develop their knowledge, abilities, understanding and social skills. The Pre-School lays a superb foundation for the children's future development and I have seen two of my grandsons thrive in that setting. As a retired teacher, I can appreciate all the hard work and dedication that everyone involved with the Pre-School gives to their work, especially with all the extra evidence of the children's progress now required by the authorities.

It has been recommended by OFSTED that a canopy should be provided so that the children can access the outside play area when the weather is inclement so please support the fund raising events for this cause or give a donation, if you feel so inclined.

Anita and all her staff have rightly earned this praise from OFSTED and long may the Pre-School continue to be an essential part of village life.

Diane Welch
Northwood Avenue

Bea Rolland

Bea Rolland's family would like to thank the kind people of High Halstow for their letters, cards and condolences.

Also to say thank you to those who always kept an eye out for her.

With many thanks, her family.

Thank you.

E Cordier

Contributions for February should be sent by 22nd January to:

Carl Mitchell, 8 Marsh Crescent, High Halstow ME3 8TJ

or e.mail to editor@highhalstow.org.uk

The HHT is a friendly point of contact and all views expressed are those of the individuals.

High Halstow 2009 Photo Competition Winners

Flora & Fauna

1st - Abigail Kelly

2nd - John Horsley

3rd - Valerie Plummer



People

1st - Gill Martin

2nd - Ray Collins

3rd - Zeena Murray

Places

1st - Robin Collins

2nd - Ruth Hutchison

3rd - David Harris

Under 16's

1st - Michael Davis

2nd - Oliver Horsley

3rd - Bridie Kelly



Congratulations to all the winners of this years Photographic Competition, some of the winning pictures are featured above. All of the winning pictures are in the 2010 High Halstow Calendar which is available to buy at the Farmers Market.