

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 5 th August Trinity 9	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Genesis 50 vv 4-26 p56 Mark 6 vv 45-52 p1009
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13 -21 p1045
Sunday 12 th August Trinity 10	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 11 v10 – 12 v6 p696 2 Corinthians 1 vv 1-22 p1158
Sunday 19 th August Trinity 11	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Jeremiah 23 vv 23-29 p783 Hebrews 11 v29 – 12 v2 p1210 Luke 12 vv 49-56 p1046
Sunday 26 th August Trinity 12	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 9-14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18-29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
Sunday 2 nd September Trinity 13	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 33 vv 13-22 p717 John 3 vv 22-36 p1066
	11.00 Holy Communion	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 5 th August Trinity 9	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Ecclesiastes 1 v2 p668 Ecclesiastes 1 vv 12-14 p668 Ecclesiastes 2 vv 18-23 p669 Luke 12 vv 13 -21 p1045
Sunday 12 th August Trinity 10	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045
Sunday 19 th August Trinity 11	8.00 Holy Communion	2 Corinthians 8 vv 1-9 p1162 Matthew 20 vv 1-16 p987
	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 23-29 p783 Hebrews 11 v29 – 12 v2 p1210 Luke 12 vv 49-56 p1046
Sunday 26 th August Trinity 12	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 9-14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18-29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
Sunday 2 nd September Trinity 13	9.30 Family Communion	Hebrews 13 vv 1-8 p1211 Hebrews 13 vv 15&16 p1212 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/rogerknight/myhomepage/newsletter.html> & <http://hometown.aol.co.uk/RogerKnight/index.htm>

Copy Date September Magazine 10th August 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton on the last Wednesday of the month at 10.45. **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.



Leprosy & Abortion

Uzziah was one of the best of the Jewish kings. (See II Chronicles 26). He came to the throne when he was 16 years old and, according to the Bible, he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD. The result was that things went well during his 52 year reign. He won victories over foreign powers which threatened the peace of Jerusalem. He built up the city and its defences and he improved the

royal farmland around the city by digging more wells.

Unfortunately, to quote the Bible, *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.* The priests tried to restrain him, but he went ahead anyway and, as he was offering the incense, he was smitten with leprosy.

Why? What had he done wrong? We are used to the idea that, when people have everything they could possibly want in this life, they get to think that they can take liberties with God, but what was so wrong about the king offering incense in the Temple? The point is that it was not the king's function to offer incense. That was the priests' job. There was a separation between Church and state in ancient Israel. The secular ruler was not a priest and the priests were not the rulers of the state.

Too much power in too few hands, too much power in one pair of hands, is dangerous. As Lord Acton said, Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. For this reason, the constitution of the United States provides for a clear separation of powers between the Congress, the Judiciary and the President. None of them can act without having regard to the other. The courts see that the President acts within the Law and in accordance with the constitution. Congress exercises democratic control over the executive. The courts cannot, however, pass legislation and neither the Congress nor the President can achieve very much unless both, at least to a degree, co-operate.

In the United Kingdom, the situation is more complicated because we do not have a written constitution. After the Revolution the US president effectively took over the executive functions of eighteenth century British kings. In Britain, it was the cabinet and especially the Prime Minister who took over these functions. Parliament functions similarly to the American Congress and, of course, we too have our independent judiciary. Legally speaking, all these powers belong to the crown, but, in practice, the Queen does not exercise personal power even though theoretically she could, as a last resort.

In the US, President, Congress and the Supreme Court are constrained by the written constitution. As we do not have a written constitution, it is theoretically possible for parliament to do anything it wishes, including dismiss the judges, repeal all existing laws and dispense with elections. There is a certain amount of unease that the present government is prepared to use its substantial majority in the House of Commons to force through legislation which has dubious

moral foundations and to override the courts and other foci of power, wisdom and influence.

Government is not about the governors doing just as they please. Government is about the governors doing what is right. But how do we know what is right?

In Old Testament times, the kings of Israel were supposed to rule according to God's Law. God had revealed the Law to Moses, starting with the Ten Commandments, and then a lot more - all summarised, as Jesus says, in the command to love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself. The king was supposed to meditate on this Law and govern his own life by it and to govern the nation by it as well. When the king of Israel did not obey the Law of God, it was the function of the priests and prophets to tell him so. So the high priest could not be the same person as the king. The people might be subject to the king, but the king was subject to God and would come under God's Judgment if he did not rule according to God's Law.

King David fell for the wife of one his soldiers – Uriah the Hittite. Bathsheba became pregnant and, in order to conceal his adultery, David arranged for Uriah to put in the most dangerous part of the battlefield so that he would die. This was wrong! God sent the prophet Nathan to tell the king that he had done wrong and that he would be punished.

King Ahab wanted the vineyard belonging to his subject Naboth. Naboth would not sell. So Queen Jezebel told Ahab that he, being the king, should just take it. Jezebel arranged for Naboth to be convicted on false charges and executed so that his property was forfeit to the crown. Again, this was wrong! God sent the prophet Elijah to tell the king that he had done wrong and that he would be punished.

Good government is not about governors deciding issues of right and wrong and then doing what they please. Good government is about discerning what is right and then acting in accordance with fundamental principles like justice and mercy.

The principles by which Old Testament kings were supposed to govern are those contained

within the Law that God gave to Moses. The Greek philosopher Plato believed that philosophers should rule because they would be the only people to have a clear understanding of what justice means. (Plato's idea never caught on because, for all sorts of reasons, it is completely impractical, but very few people would defend the view that rulers should not have some sense of justice to direct their actions.)

The US constitution derives its principles from a combination of Christianity and secular Enlightenment philosophies developed in eighteenth century Europe. These beliefs, these values, therefore, both support and limit the actions of President, Congress and courts.

A similar mixture of beliefs underpinned European Revolutions, most notably the French Revolution, but only in the US did they succeed in creating a relatively stable machinery of government without protracted bloodshed.

It is interesting that, although the US maintains a rigid separation of Church and State, the Church is nevertheless much stronger in the US than in almost any other western country. Americans go to church in large numbers and Christians have a real influence in politics. American families know that their children are not going to receive a religious education in school. They know that they themselves will not be regarded as Christians unless they specifically sign up for a church and commit themselves to attending its services and study groups, send their children to the Sunday School, and support their church, its pastoral programme and its mission, with substantial cash donations and a generous input of their time and talents.

In England, by contrast, we have complacently thought of ourselves as a Christian country. Everybody was vaguely "C of E". So we didn't need to evangelise. We left the state to educate our children in matters of faith. Commitment was something of a dirty word and we relied on past endowments to fund our present day activities. Then one day we woke up blinking, mildly surprised to find that this was no longer a Christian country.

Old Testament kings governed by Torah. US presidents derive their status and their authority

from the constitution. In countries, like ours, with an established Church, the moral foundation of government is the Christian faith. When the Scouts promise to do their duty to God and the Queen, the assumption is that duty to the Queen is the same thing as duty to God because, as the Prayer Book (authorised for use by Parliament) says, the Queen is God's minister, duty bound to seek God's honour and glory, and we are her subjects, duty bound to obey her because she governs with God's authority.

If the Queen's government is not inspired and sustained by Christian principles (as some would say it ought not to be in a multi-cultural, post-Christian, secular society in which there are many followers of other religions, quite a lot of atheists and an enormous number of people who can hardly be bothered with faith at all) by what principles is our government inspired, or does modern government in fact make up its own rules as it goes along?

So much for leprosy! Now for abortion! I think a lot of influential people have been mildly shocked lately by those Roman Catholic Bishops who have taken the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act as an opportunity to tell Catholics in government that they ought to be opposing abortion.* Now forty years ago, it was not at all unusual to believe that abortion is wrong. It was the standard teaching of most churches. Abortion is also forbidden by the Hippocratic oath taken by many doctors as the basis of medical ethics and deriving from pagan pre-Christian Greek thought. Abortion was against the Law in this and most

* I do not wish to go into the rights and wrongs of abortion here, but the fact is that the embryo or foetus in the womb is a human life. Human life is infinitely valuable and is not to be extinguished lightly. If you do not think that a fertilised egg is entitled to the basic human right to life, at what point does the developing child acquire such rights? Logic might appear to equate abortion with murder and the Roman Catholic Church opposes abortion in all circumstances. So do many other Christians. Some of you, however, also compassionate humane people, may believe that abortion is the right solution in certain desperate circumstances such as the mother's life being at risk if the pregnancy continues, or extreme handicap on the part of the foetus, or maybe in cases of rape. We should not be unaware, however, that most abortions conducted at the present are not carried out because of such extreme conditions. Thousands of abortions are carried out every year just because many women become pregnant at times when it would be inconvenient for them to have a baby.

other countries in the world. There have been two huge shifts in popular culture. For many people, there is nothing at all exceptional about having an abortion. What was taboo for thousands of years has suddenly become just one of those things. Moreover, it has become generally accepted in many circles that religion and politics do not mix, that specifically Christian morality should not determine the policy of the secular state.

I repeat, however, if our government is not governed by Christian principles, by what principles is it governed? Or are there in fact no principles? Is it simply that might is right?

The Roman Catholic Church would say that a Christian MP's first duty is to God. Could any Church, any religion, say otherwise? If, however, an MP's first duty is to God, there will potentially be occasions when he will vote for what He believes is God's Will rather than for what the people who voted for him want or in accordance with the party whip. But how do you think an MP should decide how to cast his vote? Should he follow his conscience? Should he obey his church? Should he obey the party whip? Or should he do what he thinks most of his constituents want him to do? I can think of problems with all four possibilities!

Modern governments claim the mandate of democracy. They claim that they have the right to carry out their programme because they have been chosen by the will of the people. As Churchill said, democracy is the worst form of government, except that all other forms of government which have ever been tried are worse still. The main point about parliamentary democracy is that we can get rid of them when we have had enough of them (Acton again). Our politicians have no intention of allowing you and me to know what decisions they are taking on our behalf, nor the grounds on which they are taken. We probably would not understand a great deal if it were explained to us. Many of us would not be bothered. And even if we took the trouble to learn all the facts about things and form sensible opinions we could still be wrong. Even majorities can be wrong. They chose Barabbas over Jesus! They voted for Hitler. In fact our politicians often take a pride in not being swayed by what they believe is public opinion – for

example over “Europe” or the death penalty. Rather they see themselves as leaders of public opinion – and rightly so, if they are not too arrogant to consider sometimes that other people might be wiser than they are on some issues.

The Christian will continue to believe that the world ought to be governed by God's rules (the Law of Love). After all, God made the world and it makes sense that the universe will only work properly if we obey the Maker's instructions. We, therefore, will bear witness to God's Law in what we say and in what we do, including what we say in parliament and council meetings, when campaigning on any issue, when teaching or bringing up children and when we vote.

Not so long ago, it would have been generally accepted in the United Kingdom that this country should be governed by Christian principles. Even today, we are not a frightened minority, trembling in a ghetto. Many of our values are shared by the other great world religions. Many of them are shared by people of no religion at all. Christian principles are common sense. They are sensible. They are rational. They go with the grain of the Universe because the Universe was made by the God Who reveals His Nature and His Law of Love by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.

As Britain drifts away from God, you might have to ask yourself what you do when your duty to God seems to conflict with your duty to the Queen, when you cannot render to Caesar what is Caesar's without depriving God of what is God's. What do you do if the law of the land or its customs differ from the Law of God? Roman magistrates used to ask Christians to acknowledge Caesar as lord and god. It only meant saying a few words. Everybody else did it. Why die a martyr's death over a few meaningless words? But, mostly, the early Christians remembered that we only have one Lord and God and that we cannot, therefore, give these titles to anyone else. It was worth dying a martyr's death.

If we are called to choose between our duty to God and our apparent duty to the Queen, it is clear which one we must obey. When you think about it, however, is it not part of our duty to the Queen to point out to her and her government when they are failing in their duty to God?

From the Registers

Baptisms:

10 th June	Kennedi Alice Vera Page	Chatham
17 th June	Liam Michael Psaila	Gillingham
8 th July	Susan Jane Mussellwhite	Strood
8 th July	Maria Shersby	Strood

Wedding:

6 th July	Scott James Wilson & Anne Elizabeth Green	Cuxton
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Funeral:

19 th June (at Lewisham)	Richard Lomax (58)	Bush Road
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Greta Lawry RIP

Greta's family wish to thank all of you who have supported them in their loss and all who made donations in memory of Greta to the Kent Air Ambulance and to the World Cancer Research Fund. Donations amounted to almost £600 to each of these very worthwhile charities – a total of nearly £1200.

R.H. Lightfoot (Bampton Lectures 1934): It seems, then, that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us. For all the inestimable value of the gospels, they yield us little more than a whisper of his voice; we trace in them but the outskirts of his ways[†]. Only when we see him hereafter in his fullness shall we know him also as he was on earth. And perhaps the more we ponder the matter, the more clearly we shall understand the reason for it, and therefore shall not wish it were otherwise. For probably we are at present as little prepared for the one as for the other.

Churchyard Grass

For several years now, we have been grateful to receive donations for the professional cutting of Cuxton Churchyard. The job is too much for volunteers! Recently we have also had to ask for donations to cut Halling Burial Ground following the decision taken by Halling Parish Council that they were unable to fund this necessary operation throughout the growing season. Unfortunately, perhaps because of unusually lush growth this wet Summer, this year we are running out of money. So any donations towards cutting Cuxton Churchyard or Halling Burial Ground will be very welcome. Please hand any contributions to the Rector or churchwardens. Any cheques should be made payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC*. If you wish, you can write what the money is for on the back of the cheque.

Medway Council cut the grass in Halling Churchyard. They do not, however, undertake to get rid of the rats which have been made homeless by the clearance of the Bishop's Palace site and provided with breakfast by people sitting on the seat by the bus stop and dropping food waste. Halling Parish Council are kindly dealing with these vermin.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society is concerned that a lot of the land identified by local authorities for development is low lying. It has been proposed for development because it is not good for agriculture, but it is suitable for alternative uses. This begs the question. Bearing in mind the recent heavy rain and severe flooding which have occurred, pressure may be brought to bear to build in other areas. This could have a severe impact on the

countryside.

Kay Roots.

[†] C.f Job 26 v14: Lo these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand?

Dates For Your Diaries

28th July: 2.30 pm Strawberry Tea with Thelma Partridge at 140, Broomhill Road, Strood.

*31st August: Cheese & Wine With the Rector (The Rectory) 7.30 onwards.

*7th August: Tea With the Wells (204, Bush Road) 2.30 – 4.00.

8th September: 2.30 pm Cream Tea with Thelma Partridge at 140, Broomhill Road, Strood.
Also Christian Aid Quiz at St Francis, Strood.

*14th August: Coffee With Phyllis (9, The Street) 10.00 – 12.00

15th September: 2.30 pm Cream Tea with Thelma Partridge at 140, Broomhill Road, Strood.

21st August: Barbecue With the Beaney's (95, Pilgrims Road)

29th September: Soirée after Patronal Festival Eucharist (6.30) at Cuxton.

23rd August: 2.00 Teddy Bears' Picnic, St John's Church.

7th October: Harvest Supper at Halling.

29th August: 7.30 Bible Study @ Rectory

27th October: Quiz in Church Hall.

On October 13th Frank Smith will be giving a photograph presentation at St John's illustrating Halling over the last 100 years. Watch this space.

*Events marked with an asterisk are to raise funds for Andrew Daunton-Fear our CMS link mission partner in the Philippines.

Please give Thelma a ring on 722093 to say that you are coming to the events at 140 Broomhill Road.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod meeting on 3rd July received a presentation from World Mission Forum – a resource to assist parishes in mission to their own neighbourhoods and in taking their place as part of the worldwide mission community which is the Catholic Church. They gave us a couple of good questions. Their standard question is:

In your church, how obvious is it that as members of the Body of Christ we are automatically part of a worldwide family?

They also told us about a young Christian girl, Rebecca, who visited England from Tanzania. She noticed that English homes were packed with time-saving equipment, but that no-one in England had any time. Rebecca's question was:

Is God your God or is time your god?

The Synod was also asked to consider setting up a Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee. This would have to consider how we parishes can work together to meet new needs such as the foreseen enormous growth in population in parts of the deanery with huge new housing developments, but also how to deal with a lack of people and money in so many of our parishes. Might there be changes involving cutbacks in traditional village parishes in order to provide resources for new estates? If so, who would make these decisions and on what basis? If you and I want to see growth and no cutbacks, the answer is certainly in God's Hands, but we have to consider that we – our time, talents, and money - could be His answer!RIK.

Cuxton & Halling – A United Parish and Benefice

In over 1,000 years of history, the parishes of Cuxton and Halling must have seen many changes in the way ministry has been organised. 30 odd years ago, given a shortage of young men willing to offer themselves for the priesthood, a shortage of people generally committed to the Church in England and a consequent shortage of time, talents and money – it was decided to join the two communities in one united parish and benefice. You could argue that this is the right way forward given that people are much more mobile than they used to be, communities are merging as open land between villages gets built on, and much of the pastoral and educational work once done by the Church is now done by government. On the other hand, you might argue that Cuxton and Halling are distinct communities and that, in an ideal world, both would have churches and a vicar or rector. Whatever we would prefer, the

reality for the foreseeable future is that we are a united parish and benefice and people ought to know what that means, though it seems that some still don't!

It does not mean that Cuxton took over Halling or that Halling took over Cuxton. The two became one, but without surrendering their identities (like a marriage!). Both St John's and St Michael's are parish churches with all the rights and responsibilities which parish churches have. It would be quite wrong for one to attempt to dominate the other. Both parish churches are entitled to and normally get a service of Holy Communion every Sunday. The Sunday Eucharist is the heartbeat of the Christian life and I am deeply committed to providing such a service in both parish churches at prime time on Sundays – 9.30 at Cuxton & 11.00 at Halling (except on fifth Sundays when we celebrate our unity by worshipping all together in one or other of our buildings.) The focus of our work at Halling is the Sunday Communion at St John's and our focus at Cuxton is the Sunday Communion at St Michael's. Nevertheless, people from both villages are of course equally welcome at either church on any occasion.

People who live in Cuxton or Halling are free to marry in either church and to be buried in either graveyard. There is one Electoral Roll and one Parochial Church Council. All the money collected in both churches goes to a common General Fund, from which the combined parish meets its expenses. Cuxton and Halling people are equally responsible for maintaining the work of both parish churches and equally entitled to benefit from their ministry. I live in Cuxton, but I am equally available to and equally committed to both villages and both parish churches. The church hall is located in Cuxton, but it belongs to the Cuxton and Halling PCC. The combined PCC appoint the hall manager. They are responsible for its upkeep. Cuxton and Halling are equally entitled to use the hall and any income it generates is the property of the PCC and they have the final say in its use. The Sunday School meets at Cuxton (9.30 Sundays) and the After School Club meets at Halling (3.45 Thursdays). Children from both villages are welcome at both.

We do collect and hold money separately for each church building, as well as using some money from the General Fund for maintenance. We hold one Annual Meeting at which everybody (except the Rector) can stand for any position and vote in any election. We choose two churchwardens and five PCC members for each church. The PCC elects its officers and it so happens that our secretary and vice chairman worship mainly at Cuxton and our treasurer and mission link correspondent worship mainly at Halling. One deanery synod representative (as it happens) mainly worships at Cuxton, the other about equally at either. All PCC members and wardens share responsibility for the whole parish but we respect the rights of Halling people in the running of St John's and of Cuxton people in the running of St Michael's. Each church has its own choir and team of ringers but these help one another and sometimes combine on special occasions. The Social Committee is made up of people from both churches and arranges events in both villages.

If we include the Jubilee Hall, there are slightly more Sunday services at Halling than there are at Cuxton. Sunday attendance is about equal in the two villages. There are more weekday services at Cuxton, but more people attend on weekdays at Halling. The Christmas Midnight is normally at Cuxton and the Easter Midnight at Halling. Halling has the Three Hour Devotion on Good Friday, whereas Cuxton has the offices and the Family Service. These things could of course all change.

Thirty years ago, there were more people at Cuxton than at Halling and St Michael's church building was in a much better condition than St John's. Now Halling church building is in good condition. Halling village has grown and the congregation is growing, albeit slowly. Cuxton Church is still in good condition, but, unfortunately the Sunday congregation has declined in numbers. This makes both village churches about equal. What we need to do is offer our lives and everything we have in God's service so that we may see His Church grow in both Cuxton and Halling in accordance with His Will. RIK.

Joke: A young man went to a fancy dress ball, carrying his girlfriend piggy back. "What are you supposed to be?" someone asked. "I'm a snail," he said, "and she's Michelle."

Nature Notes June 2007

June 2007

The first four days of the month were sunny and warm. Our riverside walks were most enjoyable as we watched the rippling water glistening in the sunlight. Evening primroses, stonecrop, yellow wort, St John's wort and musk mallow were beautiful additions to grassy banks along the path. I watched gulls and a heron along the edges of the mud flats and viewed skies of blue where billowing white clouds scudded blown by southerly winds. Following days became cool and overcast with rain falling at intervals. The 9th was warm with hazy sunshine and after our walk with Murphy; we drove down from Cobham overlooking the beautiful countryside where the hedgerows were bedecked with bright red poppies, mauve mallow, elderflowers and privet flowers. It looked so beautiful. From then on, the weather remained quite warm but very showery. I continued to hear the cuckoo's song.

June 1994

I drew wild roses, various grasses and the sleeping head of Sam., then a view of the lake at Longwater in Wiltshire. June, a month of golden days and new mown hay. The verges are full of colour, mauve mallow and cranesbill, pink herb robert, golden buttercups, blue speedwell and ground ivy and white ox eye daisies to name but a few. Seed heads of grasses shimmer and wave in the sun and breeze while small creatures busy their way between the stems. Evenings are long with light, prolonged with birdsong beautiful music to the ear.

June 1996

June was a beautiful month of hot sunshine and the fragrance of wild flowers, which adorned the countryside. May blossom and frothy cow parsley edged the paths across the fields and through woodland glades, while the songs of skylarks hovering over the marshes, filled the air with music. On one occasion, we watched a heron diving into a lake for fish, and on another, a kingfisher flashing past in blue flight by the water of a canal. We saw, too, along the canal, swans with their grey feathered cygnets, moorhens and coots with their chicks and mallards with their ducklings. Elderflower, speedwell, vetch, yellow archangel, along with pyramid, common spotted and bee orchids were some of the many beautiful wild flowers seen on our meanderings through the countryside. What more could one want with so much beauty?

June 1997

June has blown itself in with strong east winds, with leaves and twigs flying through the air. The sun shines, however, and the air is fragrant with the pungent aroma of elderflower. The air is also full of birdsong. My favourite song of the skylark is to be heard on the marshes, accompanied by the cries of crows and pigeons devouring seeds from the fields. The cow parsley, now faded, is replaced with poppies, mallow, scentless mayweed and dog roses. Across the river, fields of blue flax resemble lakes shimmering in the sun. I sit on a stile on the marsh listening to the warm wind rustling in the rushes, while the bells of the local church peel across the grassland. Pleasant days of warm sunshine follow with hedge woundwort beginning to flower, and then much needed rain falls day after day bringing a fall in temperatures. Thunder rolls round the valley. The month ends on an overcast note. The beauty of the great spotted woodpecker, however, graces the garden, and at night, our resident glow worm maintains its gleaming presence on the patio. The longest day has come and gone and half the year has been experienced.

June 2007

The 19th was warm with golden sunshine and blue skies for most of the day. In the afternoon I walked to the village then along the lower path of Six acre Wood where hedge woundwort and herb robert bloomed. The field beyond the wood was beautiful with a variety of grasses and blackberry flowers adorned the brambles. Buttercups and herb robert were to be seen along the top path of Six –acre Wood. Out of the ripening crops a young fox appeared in front of me and it disappeared into the hedgerow. It was not bothered by my presence. Upright hedge parsley and hogweed grew tall along the edge of Mays Wood. This year the verges are beautiful with a profusion of mauve mallow and this was to be seen in the field along the line of hawthorns where berries are ripening. Some elderflowers remain but there is now a harvest of green berries. The weather remained warm but there were prolonged periods of rain and I found myself caught in some heavy showers. June 2006 was a blazing month. The final days of the month were blustery and cool.

Elizabeth
Summers.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Burr (11), Mrs Baker (46), Mrs Smith (49), Mrs Warman (51) & Mrs Garrot (123) – drawn by Mrs Summerhayes.

Confirmation 2007: Trudy, Joyce, Sharon, Samantha, Sophie and Philip would like to thank everyone who showed their support on this very special occasion which meant so much to them all. It was lovely to see the church so full with young and old alike. The candidates were especially pleased that everybody, in particular the younger element of the congregation, were able to enjoy this experience and would like to think that this might lead to greater attendance in the future. Bishop Brian managed to make what was such a serious service quite warm and put everyone at ease. Thanks to Donna for organising the wonderful spread after the service. Thank you to Roger, without whom none of this would have been possible and who managed to give us some wonderful words of guidance along the way. Our Friday evenings will never be the same again.

Confirmation 2008: We shall be invited to present candidates at Higham next year. Classes could begin this Autumn if you advise the Rector of any interest!



Halling WI

Halling W.I. celebrated our ruby anniversary in great style with our own members and friends from the District. Evelyn Low had once again done some lovely table decorations and the committee had prepared a grand buffet supper. With a storm raging outside we were entertained by the Maidstone Senior Citizens group. They sang to us. We joined in when we could. The compeer told us some very amusing jokes. Evelyn had made us a lovely cake which we enjoyed with a cup of tea. After the raffle and the "thankyous" we braced ourselves and went home in the storm.

On Wednesday 27th June we had our own ruby celebration tea in Jean Mattingly's garden. Thank you Jean. God was certainly on our side as we had a lovely DRY afternoon just sitting around enjoying our own members' company. What made it more pleasant, we didn't have to prepare anything, it was all done for us. A lovely afternoon tea with sandwiches and savouries, pretty cakes and another lovely cake this time made by Mr Beaney. As the founder president I cut the cake and we will all be looking forward to our Golden anniversary, I might be there, you never know. Phyllis.



Cuxton WI

Our 62nd Birthday Celebration in June was enjoyed by all. We were pleased to welcome visitors from several other WIs. As usual the tables looked very effective and the food was excellent. This year one of our members had made a cake and iced it with the Green WI logo. This was cut by our oldest member, Doris Riggall, who is still attending meetings at the age of 93 and plays the piano for us. Entertainment was a magician who went round to each table doing tricks and causing a great deal of laughter, finishing up with some "mind reading". There were mixed reactions to him, but at least it was something different.

was read out. There was a long list of forthcoming events in the district. So we will be kept busy. Our speaker, Martin Lloyd, gave a talk and slide show on the subject *Seen From My Bicycle*. He has travelled widely around the world on his bicycle and his talk held everyone spellbound. Certainly a big improvement on the usual holiday slides.

At our July meeting we were pleased to welcome a lady from Tauranga WI in New Zealand, with which we now have a link through one of our members who visits her family there. She was quite a character and made herself at home. There was a lot of business to get through and a report from our delegate at the AGM in London

The Walking Group went to London by train and had a guided tour around *Secret London*, which was very interesting and covered a large area. It was a rainy day, but armed with umbrellas we managed to stay fairly dry. After lunch at the Salvation Army restaurant, we strolled back along the South Bank to Charing Cross and the train home. The weather was perfect for the outing to Little Bentley Gardens, hot and sunny. There were numerous stands selling gardening items and plants and many other things. Also an Art Exhibition and beautiful gardens with a huge lake. The only drawback was that we had to queue for everything – our pre-ordered packed

lunch, ice cream, tea or coffee and the loos! Apparently they had misjudged the number of people turning up and were short of helpers. Nevertheless a really lovely day out. The Craft Group have made a tabard for the competition at the Kent County Show and Cookery have made lemon drizzles for the WI Refreshment Tent. Several of us attended Halling's Birthday meeting and had a great evening. Cuxton WI organised a Home Economics evening called *What's in Your Wardrobe?* and everyone was given tips on fashion, body shape, what not to

wear, etc. This was well attended and proved a great success. The Walking Group went on another walk around Hall Place, just off the A2. Once again the weather was perfect and the gardens were a picture. We went into the house and saw an exhibition of craft work, including some items made by one of our members.

Hopefully the weather will be kind to us on the Downe House outing and our Garden Party. News of these events next time. Ann Harris

Wisdom or Knowledge

Edited by Hubert Meissinger, Willem B Drees & Zbigniew Liana.
(Review Article)

This volume (published by T & T Clark) is produced by ESSSAT as part of an ongoing debate regarding "science and theology and the nature of knowledge and wisdom". It consists of extended versions of the five plenary Templeton Lectures given by Manuel Artigas, Celia Deane-Drummond, Lucio Florio, Peter Harrison and Walther Ch. Zimmerli as well as papers produced by Dirk Evers, Michael Fuller, Antje Jackelén, Alexei Nesturuk and Chris Wiltscher at ESSSAT's 2004 Annual Conference – *Streams of Wisdom? Science, Theology and Cultural Dynamics*.

The writers react in a variety of ways to the simple proposition that wisdom is required if knowledge is to be utilised beneficially. In his introduction Meissinger attempts to illustrate the difference between wisdom and knowledge with a quotation from Proverbs 2 vv 10&11: *Wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you; understanding will guard you*. He points out that the heart is the very centre of the person in Hebrew convention and so wisdom should be thought of as fundamental to a person's nature. The Bible relates knowledge to the soul (nephesh) that aspect of us which, according to Genesis, specifically makes us human and different from the animals, which are not said to have a soul, and from God, Who breathes the soul into the man. The Bible associates knowledge, therefore, with fulness and liveliness, not a dry body of facts to be assimilated, which is what knowledge is commonly believed to be. The papers following are largely an account of how these concepts, *wisdom* and *knowledge* have been understood and related over the course of (western) human history.

Theology, science and other aspects of culture (such as art) have all grown up together, influencing one another. Religion is sometimes caricatured as static and relying on the authority of the past and the uncertainty of faith. In fact Christian religion is about the advance of the human soul and the whole cosmos towards God's final consummation. Science has been represented as modern and dealing only in certainties, whereas in reality, scientific truth can no more be proved beyond doubt than the creeds of the Church. All that can be said for science with certainty is that it works!

The monotheistic religions provided the cultural milieu in which modern science developed. It might be that Trinitarian Christianity opens horizons closed down by pure monotheisms. Christian Theology adopts scientific methods in its self-analysis.

Traditionally, the wise person is one whose character is so developed that he can advise on appropriate courses of action. Wisdom develops with increasing knowledge and experience, but it is much more than the comprehension of a large number of facts. Wisdom is more "who you are than what you know". Contributors not only referred to wisdom in the Bible (surprisingly not mentioning the biblical proposition that *the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*) but also to the Socratic tradition that

only the gods are wise. Man cannot aspire to be more than a lover of wisdom – a philosopher. Two contributors identified wisdom as an attribute of the Deity or as hypostasised in the person of Christ Who may be most fully apprehended in the Holy Eucharist.

Science had begun as natural philosophy and become “scientia”. Religion and science had been regarded by Aquinas as virtues, but became, through Reformation and Enlightenment, bodies of belief. The principle of both Theology and science, therefore has drifted from something deep within the nature of the practitioner to a body of acquired knowledge. The recovery of the sense of religion being a disposition to grow in faith, rather than an adherence to a received orthodoxy, could lead to co-operation between the world’s religions, rather than conflict.

Over the centuries, in the Church there have been different attitudes regarding the value of secular knowledge. In the patristic period, the East absorbed much secular (especially Platonic) philosophy, whereas the West thought there could be no commerce between Athens and Jerusalem. In the Middle Ages, western Theology was considerably enriched by the Aristotelian strand of classical thought, but the Reformation brought further suspicion of the ability of unredeemed humanity to come to any worthwhile conclusions.

Wise people are, however, only useful to society if they are respected. Both religion and science have lost authority in contemporary culture. No longer is it generally accepted that clergy have access to a divine wisdom mediated by Scripture and the Magisterium. Subjecting the Bible to analysis is different from accepting it as the Word of God. Neither are scientists always regarded as wise. Whereas it was an Enlightenment premise that †*The Truth shall set you free*, modern men and women doubt that there is such a thing as absolute truth (or anyway that it is attainable) and are uncomfortable with many of the fruits of modern science, from nuclear weapons to CJD. Vacuous celebrities are briefly lauded but no persons or institutions are accorded lasting respect in the face of contemporary iconoclasm.

There is, however, need for wisdom in today’s world as contributors indicate with examples from ecological concerns, food anxiety and the fear of the implications of genetic research. Science itself does not offer answers to questions like *what is it to be human* and *what is the reason for the universe*. Secular philosophies in general have little to offer in the way of ultimate answers.

Evidently the search for wisdom is as urgent today as it was in the time of Socrates or Job and perhaps we can look forward to further contributions from ESSSAT in this area of confluence between the two great sources of modern western culture – Science and Religion.

Roger Knight.

Halling Historical Society

The speaker at the meeting on 21st June was Mr Granville of West Malling and the title of his talk was *And So WE raised the “Mary Rose”*. The *We* was quite correct since Mr Granville and his company had been actively involved in raising the Tudor warship in 1982. He first gave us some background information regarding how the ship was commissioned in 1511 by Henry VIII for defence against the French, how its for then up to date design was the reason for its sinking with the loss of all on board, and about its discovery in the silted harbour of Portsmouth. Mr Granville and his company were engaged to plan and construct the apparatus necessary for the ship’s recovery, including building a replica of *the Mary Rose*. He told with pride how he stood beside Prince Charles on that early morning when the ship came to the surface.

An outing on 11th July to Biggin Hill Museum made for an emotional experience. We then went on to Downe House, home of Charles Darwin, to complete an enjoyable day.

† The quotation is of course attributed to Jesus in St John’s Gospel, where Truth is found in the person of the Logos, an underlying wisdom different from the modern, Enlightenment, meaning of truth, as non-personal and purely objective, and different again from the post-modern notion of purely subjective truths.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 16th August, when Mr P Rose will talk about *The World's Best Buildings*. This will be at 7.30 pm at the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling.

Style 8

Our 8.00 services at St Michael's on the third Sunday of each month have proved so successful that we shall continue with them on a permanent basis.

Colour and Candle II

When can busy young mothers find the time to meet with other mothers, to let their children play together, to recharge their own spiritual batteries and to introduce their children to the Church and what she stands for? Having experimented with a monthly morning meeting for a period, we discussed the issue at our highly successful Teddy Bear's Picnic and have decided to go back to holding our Mother and Toddler Service at St Michael's Church Cuxton every Wednesday at 2.00 from 12th September. The service consists of a few songs, a bible story and a prayer. It lasts about 15 minutes, followed by an informal time in the Church Hall for chat and play and plenty of time to pick up older children from school. Everybody is of course welcome, but the focus is on the needs of mothers, fathers and other carers and their pre-school children and babies.

Children's Parties

Have you realised what a perfect venue the Church Hall, Cuxton, makes for children's parties. The hall is well-equipped, safe, clean and surprisingly cheap. If you are interested in hiring the hall for this or any purpose, please contact Malcolm Curnow on 01634 719585

Bats in Council

Regular readers may well remember the fun and games we had when Medway Council imposed a Woodland Tree Preservation Order on the Rectory Garden: the council's failure to obey the law with regard to access to private property, the untrue statements made by council representatives, council officers' failures to follow correct procedures in obtaining representations from the public, bias; and the probability of predetermination.[§] At the time, I pointed out that the elderly beech trees at my gate were approaching the ends of their lives and becoming a danger to the public. Eventually, the Council accepted that two of these trees had become dangerous and we could cut them down. They even considered ordering us to do so. Unfortunately, this is a task for the Diocesan Parsonages Board which is considerably under funded. It also may involve traffic lights in Rochester Road and cutting off the electricity supply to some houses^{**}. So the job has been put off and put off until now. I thought it was "all systems go" till I had another letter from the Council telling me that if these trees are the home of bats or other protected wildlife we must not cut them down without further permissions from English Nature. I can only suggest that if these trees really are dangerous and there might be any protected wildlife in their branches, the Council had better close Rochester Road till everything is sorted out!

[§] The Council held a public consultation as to whether or not to impose this order. Officers were required to set a closing date for representations. They did this but allowed an extra representation seven weeks after the closing date. This was the only one in favour of the order and was submitted by an officer of Medway Council. There were also supposed to notify all neighbouring landowners of their right to make representations. This the Council failed to do. The consultation was therefore not properly carried out, but the order was imposed anyway.

There are only two possibilities. Either the consultation process is a genuine part of the process of deciding whether or not to impose a TPO or it is not. If the consultation is genuinely a significant part of the process, the order ought to be suspended while the consultation is re-run – this time with council officers following the rules.

If, on the other hand, the council is claiming that the decision was unaffected by its failure to carry out the consultation process according to the rules, it is effectively saying that the consultation did not really matter, that the outcome would inevitably have been the same, even if everyone had been given a fair chance as the law requires. If the outcome was not affected and could not have been affected by the consultation, then the council was guilty of predetermination which is an offence in Common Law.

^{**} I did suggest that as none of them has more than a few years of life left, it would be a good idea to reduce disruption by cutting them all down at the same time, but the Council seem to think that superannuated trees matter more than convenience to the public.

