

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
4 th August Trinity 10	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Genesis 50 vv 1-26 p56 Mark 6 vv 45-52 p1009
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-23 p668 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1044
11 th August Trinity 11	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	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 II Corinthians 1 vv 1-22 p1158
18 th August Trinity 12	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 23-29 p783 Hebrews 11 v1 – 12 v2 p1210 Luke 12 vv 49-56
25 th August Trinity 13	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 9b – 14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18-29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
1 st September Trinity 14	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 33 vv 13-22 p717 John 3 vv 22-36 p1066
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ecclesiastes 10 vv 12-18 p676 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
4 th August Trinity 10	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-23 p668 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1044
11 th August Trinity 11	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045
	2.00 Holy baptism	
18 th August Trinity 12	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle 7 Gospel BCP Trinity 12
	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 23-29 p783 Hebrews 11 v1 – 12 v2 p1210 Luke 12 vv 49-56
25 th August Trinity 13	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 9b – 14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18-29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
1 st September Trinity 14	9.30 Family Communion	Ecclesiastes 10 vv 12-18 p676 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047

Wednesday Holy Communion at St Michael's at 9.30		Thursday Holy Communion at St John's at 9.30	
31 st July	Exodus 34 vv 29-35 Matthew 13 vv 44-46	1 st August	Exodus 40 vv 16-38 Matthew 13 vv 47-53
7 th August	Numbers 13 vv 1-35 Matthew 15 vv 21-28	8 th August	Numbers 20 vv 1-13 Matthew 16 vv 13-23
14 th August	Deuteronomy 34 Matthew 18 vv 15-20	15 th August The Blessed Virgin Mary	Galatians 4 vv 4-7 Luke 1 vv 46-55
21 st August	Judges 9 vv 6-15 Matthew 20 vv 1-16	22 nd August	Judges 11 vv 29-40 Matthew 22 vv 1-14
28 th August	I Thessalonians 2 vv 9-13 Matthew 23 vv 27-32	29 th August Beheading of St John the Baptist.	Hebrews 11 v32 – 12 v2 Matthew 14 vv 1-12

6th August is the Transfiguration. HC Cuxton 7.30 am. 24th August is St Bartholomew. HC Cuxton 8.00 am.

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

There is an **After School Club** at St John's on Thursdays at 3.45. **Saints Alive** (formerly Sunday School) meets in the Church Hall, Cuxton at 9.30 on 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month in term time. There is a parish lunch to which all are invited every first Wednesday at 12.00 in the Church Hall. If you are prepared to **gift aid** your monetary contributions to the Church, please use one of the envelopes provided. Contact Jack Payne to **gift aid** all your donations.

Copy Date September Magazine: 9th August 8.30 am Rectory.

Please contact Rector for thanksgivings, baptisms, laying on of hands and anointing, pastoral visits, home Communion, blessings, confession and any other of the services of the Church you may require.



Reasons to Believe in the Afterlife

- 1) Most of us are instinctive dualists, which means that we believe that there are two aspects to us - our bodies and our souls or minds or personalities or whatever you like to call them. When people say *I try to look after my body*, the implication is that they are not the same thing as the body which they own and try to look after.
- 2) Children very quickly pick up this way of thinking. They readily accept that they can visit Grandma's grave where her body is buried, but that Grandma is in heaven.
- 3) We believe that we remain the same person even though our bodies change tremendously. I was the person I am now when I was a baby. I should still be me if I lost one or more limbs through accident or disease. Why won't I still be me when I lose my whole body in death?
- 4) We believe that it is right to treat people whose "minds have gone" (say because of dementia) as human persons whom we respect. They are still our parents or our friends or our relatives even if their brains have been damaged by sickness or trauma or are just worn out. I believe quite firmly that they are still the same people, but that their personality or soul no longer engages efficiently with the physical world. The gears are slipping between the spiritual and the physical aspects of their being.
- 5) Most of the people in the world today follow one religion or another and most religions teach that there is life after death. Some believe that the dead person is reincarnated as another person or perhaps an animal. Some believe that ultimately the perfected soul may be absorbed into perfect nothingness – an end to all troubles. Some believe that there is an eternal soul which exists eternally before birth and after death in a realm beyond our comprehension. Others, like Christianity, believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come – a life which depends on the fact that we face judgment for the way we have lived on earth. In fact most religions teach that what happens to us after death depends on how we have lived on earth – whether we have been good or bad.

Most people are at least nominally religious. They pray at least sometimes. They teach their children that deceased relatives are in heaven. They participate in rituals of a religious nature, to which we shall come later. Outright atheism is a relatively rare phenomenon in human culture and where atheism has been forced on people by governments such as Stalinist Russia or Maoist China, as soon as such governments fall religion returns and it becomes clear that it never really went away.

- 6) As far as we can tell from cave paintings, primitive burial customs and the artefacts cultures leave behind them, human beings always have been religious right back to the Stone Age. We humans instinctively believe that there is a God or gods and that death is not the end. We naturally believe in the supernatural as well as the natural – a whole realm of ghosts, angels, spirits and demons.

All this could be delusion or wishful thinking or even an accident of human evolution. Some people say that if God didn't exist we would have had to invent Him because religion is so useful to us. It gives us meaning and purpose in life. It provides a moral code. It promotes community cohesion and sustains families. It gives us a reason to sacrifice ourselves in a good cause. It supplies sanctions against wrongdoing. (God knows what you've done even if you don't get caught.) It motivates us to perform unselfish acts of kindness. Religion is an endless source of comfort in this life. It provides hope even in the face of death.

But, if you think religion is a human invention, consider these two points. How did primitive people come up with such an all-encompassing concept as God? How come religion works so well and has lasted so long if it isn't based in reality?

- 7) Some people find evidence for our continued existence beyond death in ghost stories. I should be very cautious about this. While people certainly do experience phenomena they interpret as ghostly

manifestations, they could be mistaken. They might have generated the apparition or other manifestation themselves. It could be the work of a non-human spirit. There is a theory that events can leave an image of themselves on a place like light leaves an image on a photograph. In any case, one would expect the spirits of deceased humans to be in heaven or hell, not hanging about here on earth. The best advice for anyone who is worried about ghosts or spirits is that God is infinitely more powerful than any of them and we should trust Him to protect us.

8) Again some people find evidence for life after death in the work of mediums and séances. My response to that is that I think that most mediums are either frauds or deluding themselves. If one can communicate with the dead, it is something forbidden in the Bible. The only example of it happening is in I Samuel 28, where Samuel is brought back from the dead by the Witch of Endor and is quite cross about having his rest disturbed.

9) Specifically for us Christians, we have the Bible and the teaching of the Church through the ages that the dead rise and are judged by God and committed to an eternity dependent on whether they have done good or ill in their lives, or rather on what Christ has done for us to forgive us our sins and to make us righteous.

10) We Christians know that there is a Resurrection because Jesus rose from the dead. The Bible is quite clear on that point. If you don't believe the Bible when it says that Jesus rose from the dead, I have two questions for you. If it were not true, why would His disciples make up such an extraordinary story and be prepared to die for their witness to its truth? If Jesus did not die and rise again and pour out His Holy Spirit on the Church, how do you account for the fact that a movement consisting of a few hundred generally despised people grew into this worldwide all encompassing faith that the Church has become?

11) The religious experiences we have here on earth are evidence that there is more to life than this physical world of things which we can see and touch and a foretaste of the good things which God has laid up for those who love Him. What we experience of the Holy Spirit here and now is an earnest (a sample and a guarantee) of the infinitely deeper communion of love which we can look forward to experiencing when our time on earth is over.

12) Finally, in support of religion and the religious interpretation of what it means to be human, I would cite humanist funerals, civil marriages and secular naming ceremonies. We human beings are so intrinsically religious that, even when people deny the existence of God or deny that God has any relevance in their lives, they cannot do without something which looks very much like a religious ritual at the key moments of their lives: marriage, the birth of a child, the death of a loved one.

A few years ago a television programme on archaeology in the land of Israel claimed that the Bible was wrong in its description of Israelite religion before the time of Jesus as centred on the Temple and the ritual described in the Law and the ethical practices demanded by the prophets. On the contrary, the programme claimed, many people in ancient Israel worshipped gods other than the LORD, gods such as Baal, or they worshipped the LORD in ways which Moses and the prophets certainly would not have approved of – even worshipping a Mrs God! Actually the programme was right about what went on in ancient Israel, but the programme makers obviously hadn't read the Bible very carefully. The Bible says just the same thing. People generally worshipped all kinds of false gods or they worshipped the one true God in false ways and they practised elaborate rituals with enthusiasm while neglecting what God requires of us in terms of our behaviour – justice, mercy, generosity, faithfulness to Him and to one another.

Nothing much has changed. Whether a humanist funeral or the worship of Baal, what many people want is the comfort only religion can give them without accepting the obligation to conform their lives to God's perfect law of love. Most people are religious in some sense but unwilling to accept the responsibilities religion brings.

Finally, then, we can neither prove nor disprove that there is a life beyond this one, but it certainly makes sense to believe that there is. The most sensible way to live is to trust God for this life and for the life to come. Roger.

SHORNE CHURCH OPEN DAY

Saturday 14 September 10 am to 6 pm

- Church open from 10 am to 6 pm
 - come & see our lovely ancient church
- Church history tours at 2 pm, 3 pm and 4 pm
 - No need to book
 - No charge but donation to church welcome
- Afternoon teas from 2.30 to 5 pm
- Knitting/crafts sales stall
- On same day as Friends of Kent Churches' *Ride & Stride*

Further information from Andrew Moffat
01474 822280 or aimoffat@btinternet.com
or www.shorneparishchurch.co.uk



Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

This takes place on 14th September. The sponsorship raised is half for our own parish and half for Friends of Kent Churches who help churches throughout the county. If you can ride or stride or man one of our churches for all or part of the day, please speak to Rector.



Church Army

As parish representative for Church Army, may I thank everyone who came to the beetle drive (or should I say 'soldier boy' drive) at the Church Hall on the evening of 15th June. Despite several other events in the vicinity, all the tables were full and we all had a lot of fun, shaking the dice as fast as we could and passing it on to the next pair while trying to record our own soldier boys when we had thrown the right number on the dice. I liked the fact that the lovely children who were there were able to participate on an equal footing with the grown ups. The break in the middle of the games gave an opportunity to chat with new friends and old.

We made a total of £80 and I have forwarded this sum to Church Army, now centred in Sheffield. Their officers work in some very difficult areas in the country amongst considerable deprivation. Proclaiming one's Christian faith in this country is not easy nowadays and to do so in the midst of such deprived areas takes courage. Donating some money to help them is the least we can do, I feel. So thank you, initially to Roger for passing on my request for help to raise funds for this worthy cause, then particularly to Shirley Crundwell who was the driving force to the evening and to Peter for his help too. The social committee also supplied food and support for the event. Jenny Beaney helped us a lot as well especially with the refreshments, and Ray Maisey printed our soldier boy game sheets. A special thank you too to Malcolm who ran a raffle for us which raised a good part of the sum I was able to send to Church Army.

It was good that Gill Martin, who works for Church Army, was able to join us. Sister Gill is attached to St. Francis' Church in Strood and does a lot of good work there. I hope all our helpers enjoyed the evening as much as I did. The game was not too demanding and it was fun to go from table to table (depending whether we won or lost each game) chatting to different people throughout the evening. Thank you for your support. Gillian Feraday

PS Please feel free to read/take the magazines which tell about Church Army's work which are left at the back of both churches.

100th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Great War.

This is August next year. Have you any information about any of the people commemorated on our WWI war memorials? If so, please let me know. Roger.

!!!??? Two Quizzes ???!!!

Both: 7.30 pm in the Church Hall Cuxton

Both: including Ploughman's

(please bring own drink)

Both: Teams of 6-8 or come as an individual and join a team.

For Either or Both: Book with Rector

(contact details inside cover)

21st September

**Quiz in Support of
Christian Aid £7.00.**

19th October

**Quiz in Support of Parish
Funds £7.00.**

Christians Against Poverty

Debt Relief

After Hull, Medway has the worst personal debt problems in the whole of the country. Both rich and poor people can get into debt and it becomes a nightmare when you can't repay your debts. You may lose your home. Goods may be repossessed. The emotional strain can lead to relationship breakdown, ill health and even suicide. Debt can become an unbearable burden and people may feel very alone with their problems.

Christians Against Poverty is a national organisation which works here in the Medway Towns. If you need help call 0800 328 0006 and you can pass on this number to anyone you know who might need it. You will be contacted and receive a home visit from someone who will help you to deal with your debt problems, getting your expenditure under control, prioritising your creditors, dealing with creditors to rearrange payment schedules, etc.. They will also offer to pray for you and with you and some of the people who are helped by CAP may decide to become Christians. CAP is an explicitly Christian organisation which knows how Jesus can turn lives around. However, you don't have to be or to become a Christian to get help. If you don't want to be prayed for, CAP will still help you to manage your money and find a solution to your financial problems.

As well as providing financial advice, CAP offers befrienders to support the people who turn to them for help. CAP is looking for volunteers from local churches to take on this role. You need to be a sympathetic person rather than a financial whiz to become a befriender.

The service is entirely free to those who use it, but of course it does cost money to run and CAP is assisted by donations from Churches and individual Christians.

For more information on helping or if you need help with debt relief <https://capuk.org>

Forthcoming Attractions.

31st July 12.00: Barbecue 95, Pilgrims Road, North Halling.

August 11th 4.30: Peter Holland of Christians Against Poverty to speak at Jubilee Hall tea & service.

8th September: Preacher @ 9.30 & 11.00 The Archdeacon of Rochester.

21st September 7.30 pm: Quiz in Support of Christian Aid Church Hall.

29th September: Confirmation at St Michael's 6.30 pm.

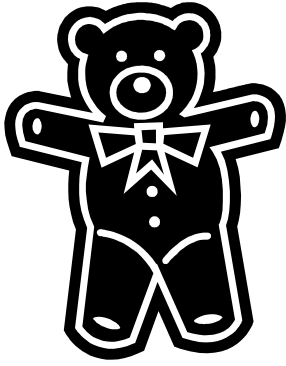
6th October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper Jubilee Hall.

19th October 7.30 pm: Quiz in Support of Parish Funds Church Hall.

6th January 2014: 9.30 am Epiphany Service at St Michael's followed by brunch in church hall.

COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

Call RPJ computers, no fix no fee.
07919 875 909



Teddy Bears' Picnic

This year's event returns to the Rectory Garden and will be held on Wednesday 21st August at 2.00 pm. All children welcome with their parents or carers. Bring along Teddy if you wish - though you don't have to! Tea and games for all. Just come along. No charge.

A poem to make you think

You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer and even once say I.
You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer and even once say 'my'.
You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer and not include another;
You cannot ask for daily bread and not include your brother.
For others are included in each and every plea.
From beginning to end it never once says 'ME'.

Anon

The Bible tells us that we know God by having nurtured in us the instinct to see people and the world as God sees them, and to live in a community that reflects that instinct and awareness. And the law of the Bible is simply a way of guaranteeing that no one is left invisible; that no one is left unheard or forgotten -
Archbishop Rowan Williams

It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbour - *Martin Luther*.

I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three.

Halling Ringers

We should like to thank Cuxton Ringers for organising the outing to Buckinghamshire on 29th June. Lorraine, Pat, myself and others thank Cuxton Ringers for a very enjoyable day out. Also the lovely weather played its part.

We are pleased that we have two hopeful learners from Halling interested in ringing – which we hope will soon make it possible to start a team ringing regularly at Halling. Peter Silver.

Cuxton Church Draw: drawn by Michael Lofthouse - £10 each for J. Harris D. Hills, J. Wilson, and £5 each for S. Townsend and Mrs Horner.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Miss Heighes (88), Mrs Cheeseman (134), Mrs Cheeseman (135) & Mrs Court (150) – drawn by Mrs Haselden.

If you would like to participate in either or both of these draws, please speak to Mrs Harris or Mrs Head.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) on being robbed: “Let me be thankful. First because I was never robbed before. Second because they took my wallet and not my life. Third because, although they took my all, it was not much. And fourth because it was I who was not robbed and not I who did the robbing.”

Judi Dench(1934 -) on being asked to give an after dinner speech: “It has been a wonderful dinner, and as I am no after-dinner speaker, may I offer to do the washing up?”

From the Registers

Baptisms:

16th June

30th June

Frankie May Shannon

Toby Thomas Flint

Walderslade

Wainscott

Wedding Blessings:

15th June

15th June

David and Lesley Hayes

Jeremy and Michelle Hurst

Halling

Cuxton

Funeral:

18th June

Brian Baker (74)

Charles Drive

Memorial Service

15th June

Patricia Chambers

formerly of Cuxton

Common Worship Service Books

We thank Jeremy Hurst for his generous donation to St Michael's Church of Common Worship service books in memory of his late mother Enid Hurst. We are already enjoying using these books.



Halling WI

One sentence could sum up Halling W.I.'s forty six birthday party, "A good time was had by all". Thanks must go to Betty, Margaret and the team for the lovely evening. The first thing I noticed when I arrived at the hall was the pretty little table decorations which had lovingly been made by Ann Heasman, in turn straight away reminded me of Evelyn Low who did them before Ann. Then, our terra cotta table cloths bought for us by Pam Amos many years ago now. Funny how little things remind you of friends long gone. Instead of the usual buffet, the tables were laid out individually, but the legs were still very bowed with the weight of all the good things, hardly any room for the cutlery. The girls had forgotten nothing. The entertainment for the evening had already arrived, so after our lovely relaxed supper we were entertained by the brilliant singing of Martin Harrison. Not only is he a good singer but an all round entertainer popping jokes in here there, and everywhere. Some were "vicar friendly", some a little more risqué. Martin sang songs from the shows through all of Her Majesty's 60 years on the throne, some very familiar, some less well known. As 2012 had been the Olympic year, Martin said he should include something

along those lines, but what? As there hadn't been an Olympic song he said, what were we good at? and immediately burst into song with Rod Stuart's *I Am Sailing*. This made the audience laugh. Then once again he said, what else were we good at? And, perhaps you have already guessed it, he started to sing *Daisy, Daisy Give Me Your Answer Do*. Lots more laughter and it even got Lily Hesketh singing. "Well," he said, "I have got just one more and straight away started to sing *Run Rabbit, Run Rabbit Run, Run, Run*. Yes the farmer's son from the West country did get a gold medal for the shooting. Martin ended with *Thank You for the Music* from Mama Mia and I have my own thoughts on that one. Margaret thanked him on behalf of all of us and a good cup of tea was enjoyed by all. After the raffle and farewells to old friends, we all went on our homeward way.

Such as our parties are enjoyed we had fellow members from all of the other institutes in the Malling district. We are now only a few but lets hope we can get to our fiftieth anniversary. I never thought when I started W.I. in Halling in 1967 we would get this far, but with a new W.I. year, a new secretary, still the same chairman, and not forgetting our loyal treasurer, I am sure we will. Phyllis.

To Make You Feel Old

A little boy asks his grandfather, "Were you in the ark, Granddad?)

"No, of course not," the old man laughs in reply.

"Then how come you weren't drowned?" says the boy.

Christian Healing

The laying on of hands and anointing with oil were not, for some reason, mentioned in the range of services the Church provides listed on the inside cover of the magazine, but these services are available for those who seek them either in church or in their own homes. Please contact me if you would like to know more.

Both practices – the laying on of hands and anointing with oil – go back to biblical times. The healing sought might be physical – the healing of bodies – mental – the healing of minds – and spiritual – the healing of souls. The forgiveness of sins is a healing. Closely allied to this is the healing of relationships both with God and with other people. The latter might include the healing of family relationships or of rifts between friends and neighbours or members of the same Christian congregation. The laying on of hands and anointing with oil may be, but are not necessarily, associated with sacramental Confession and Holy Communion.

The final healing is, of course, death when there is no more pain or sorrow and our friendship with God and with one another is perfected.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit...give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. (CW p281).

What do you need to receive the ministry of Christian healing? Just enough faith to ask for it. Roger.

Nature Notes June 2013

“June” Jean Ingelow.

A cloudless sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;
We two among it, wading together,
Shaking out honey, breaking perfume

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

In the morning of the first day the sun shines and it feels pleasantly warm but clouds build up and eventually envelop the afternoon sky. The air becomes quite cool. A squirrel conquers the squirrel-proof feeder. The sunshine returns for a while then greyness fills the evening sky. On 3rd the sun shines brightly, as in the morning I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Hawthorns are adorned with May blossom and several other trees are bedecked with blossoms, mostly white or cream except for one hawthorn bearing deep pink flowers. A chilly north east wind blows throughout the day. In the late evening a beautiful sunset lights up the sky. The 4th is a day of golden sunshine and blue skies but still with chilly north east winds as I walk round the lake with Murphy. Everywhere looks so beautiful in the sunlight and the sky is so blue. The banks are garlanded with flowers - oxeye daisies, vetch, buttercups, daisies, dandelions. Trees along the banks are adorned with blossom. The evening skies are clear and there is a chill in the air. The next day is beautiful again but the north winds persist. The lilac flowers are turning brown and their fragrance has vanished. In the early hours of 7th, a shower of rain falls bringing refreshment to the garden. Sunshine brightens the day and blue skies are brushed with feathery clouds driven by northerly breezes. The wind strengthens in

the afternoon. I watch a family of long tailed tits as they come to the pond to drink. The evening is very cool. On 8th, I hear a chiff chaff's call and the chatter of a magpie. A handsome jay comes to the garden the next day. This is the first visit to the garden since early last year. The 11th is grey but warm with westerly winds blowing. Rain falls in the late morning and early afternoon. A great spotted woodpecker, not seen for many months, comes to the feeders. The morning of 13th is grey and damp, but it becomes reasonably dry enabling me to walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. The grasses have grown tall and are interspersed with ox eye daisies and vetch. Along the way viper's bugloss, lucerne, buttercups, mouse ear, hawkweed, white campion and birdsfoot trefoil are in bloom. There is quite a strong wind causing trees' branches to sway backwards and forwards. A pair of shelduck glide on the lake. The sun shines at intervals in the afternoon. In the evening, a crescent moon hangs high in the sky. In the morning of 14th, while standing at the kitchen window, I watch a very thin fox as it spies bread put out on the patio wall for the birds. When it sees me it scurries away. I walk to the village via Six-acre Wood where the delicate cow parsley blooms. The morning of 18th is grey but dry. We drive to Rodmersham for a youth cricket match final. The air is warm, such a contrast to recent weeks

of cold north winds. High grey cloud still lingers but the sun shines through making it feel very pleasant. Wild flowers border the verges. Temperatures reach 26°C on 19th. I hear a greenfinch singing in the garden in the evening. The next day I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. The water ripples in the fresh westerly breeze and a skein of Canada geese flies overhead. In the evening the setting sun brings a red-gold colour to the western sky. Bird song sounds beautiful during the evening of the longest day-21st. Three chilly days follow. The 26th is a beautiful day of blue skies, fleecy clouds and golden sunshine. We drive to Wye for another cricket cup final and throughout the day the weather remains beautiful. Later in the afternoon I walk along footpaths bordered by large, creamy elderflowers and aspens rustling in the breeze. Along the way I see green alkanet, herb Robert, mallow and warty cabbage. We drive back through glorious countryside, so green and bright in the golden sunshine. Oxeye daisies continue



Cuxton WI

Two visitors were welcomed this month - Sheila and Brenda and we hope they return soon. We also have two new members on our committee this year - Diane and Mary who are already doing useful jobs to help out. Dorothy had had a bad fall and broken her wrist and we all hope she makes a good recovery. We went through part of the business section as our speaker had failed to materialise. We were sorry to hear that West Malling WI has been suspended which is quite a shock as we now regularly hear of other WIs opening up. All our groups had had a good month with their various activities. June kindly gave us a brief report on the WI 95th anniversary day held at Aylesford. Val one of our own members had arranged the floral displays for this event and they were lovely. There were all sorts of things going on. Arts and Crafts, a display of old kitchen utensils [I've probably still got some in use!] Poetry and drama going on, a maze for orienteering and a chance to play croquet. Altogether a very enjoyable day.

Hymn Writers 7

Isaac Watts 1674 - 1748

Love so amazing, do divine, demands my soul, my life, my all

This comes from my favourite hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" and is from the pen of Isaac Watts who was born, the eldest of nine children, in Southampton. His mother was of Huguenot origin and his father, a scholarly man who taught his own children, was a respected nonconformist twice imprisoned for his religious beliefs. Isaac had a poetic mind from childhood possibly gleaned from his father who wrote a great deal of poetry. Once during family prayers Isaac laughed out loud and when his parents enquired why he had done such a thing, he said he'd just seen a mouse run up the bell rope hanging by the fireplace, and had made up a rhyme on the spot: "A mouse for want of better stairs/Ran up the rope to say

to brighten the verges. The nettles along the garden fence have grown tall and hopefully will encourage butterflies to lay their eggs on them next month. Few butterflies have come to the garden recently. A handsome jay comes to the garden in the late afternoon. A few drops of rain fall in the evening. In the morning of 28th light rain falls as I walk along Pilgrim's Road. In the hedgerows dog roses, bladder campion and hawkweed bloom. And the air feels warm. The afternoon brightens with glimpses of the sun. North west winds drive grey clouds across the sky. A jay visits the garden followed by the pretty collared doves. Ladybirds have settled on the nettles. Melodious songs of blackbirds fill the evening air of 29th. The 30th is a beautiful, warm Summer's day. I walk to church where along the verges, mallow blooms. The sun is warm. Another month comes to a close and we are half way through the year.

Elizabeth Summers.

In September this year the committee have an evening off. So June is busy sorting out a temporary committee and arranging a speaker etc. Sometimes when people take part in this they gain the confidence to go on and volunteer to join the actual committee for a few years so lets hope it works this time. After teas the AGM report from the meeting at Cardiff was read to the members and then we were given a surprise talk by Barbara on the work that goes into the making of a gold ring e.g. a wedding or signet ring. This was just a brief interlude but gave us an insight into how much work goes into just a simple plain gold ring. One can now understand why gold rings are quite expensive and not only because of their gold content. This rounded off a most enjoyable evening which demonstrates how when your speaker leaves you high and dry just turn to the ladies of the WI!

Next meeting Thursday August 1st 7 30 pm with Bob Ogle talking about Life as a Newspaper Reporter.. ..All are welcome. So see your there.

Sheila.

his prayers.” On receiving corporal punishment for this offence, he cried: “O father, father, pity take/And I will no more verses make!” Isaac Watts was only five feet tall, had a large head – looking bigger with a large wig – and small piercing eyes, but he was known for his godliness, humility and generosity. As a young man he proposed to a lovely lady, but she refused him by saying, “I like the jewel but not the setting.” There were many times when he was ill and books were his chosen companions at these times. He also engaged in and maintained an extensive correspondence.

He was unable to go to either Oxford or Cambridge on account of his non-conformity but attended instead the Dissenting Academy at Stoke Newington in 1690, and much of his life then centred around this village, which is now part of Inner London, and he helped trainee preachers despite his continuing illnesses. During one bout of ill health when he was about thirty-eight, he was invited to spend a week on the estate of Sir Thomas and Lady Mary Abney. Sir Thomas, who was Lord Mayor of London, was Watts’ friend and admirer and as his health did not improve, he was invited to stay on longer. He so endeared himself to the family that, on the death of Sir Thomas, he moved in with Lady Mary and her remaining unmarried daughter Elizabeth, staying with them for a further thirty-six years! Abney Park led down to a heronry in the Hackney Brook where Isaac sought inspiration for the many books and hymns that he wrote.

Many of Isaac Watts’ hymns are paraphrases of biblical texts drawn from his rich Christian background. He had complained to his father that hymns sung at the time were so tuneless. Smiling, his father suggested that he work hard to provide something better so at the age of eighteen he wrote “ Behold the Glories of the Lamb” which is regarded as the birth and model of the truly English hymn, just as Ambrose had done for the Latin hymn. Watts’ volume ‘Hymns and Spiritual Songs’ (1707) is regarded by some as the first real hymnbook in the English language. Before this, only Psalms were heard in church generally but he saw no reason why Christian praise should be confined to the actual language of the Bible, as his studies of the French theologian and Protestant reformer John Calvin had insisted, and Watts sought to make it possible for the word of God to be sung by people in poetry and in an understandable language.

During the last thirty years of his life he was more or less an invalid but, living in comfortable and happy surroundings, he was able to use his brilliant mind to continue writing hymns and books. Like Calvin he had a brilliant mind in a frail body and, like Calvin, his literary work was prodigious in spite of weakness and much illness. Watts wrote more than six hundred hymns and many books, but his joyful hymns paved the way for the Wesleys and Whitfield. He also founded children’s hymnody producing the first hymnbook for children, “Divine Songs”.

Watts died in Stoke Newington and was buried in Bunhill Fields having left an extensive legacy of hymns, treatises, educational works and essays. His work was influential amongst Nonconformist independents and early religious revivalists. On his death his papers were given to Yale University in then colonial Connecticut. Samuel Johnson said of Isaac Watts, “Few men have left behind such purity of character or such monuments of laborious piety”. Hanging in Westminster Abbey is a tablet picturing Watts’ writing at a table whilst angels whisper songs in his ear – he was regarded as the most popular of poets and preachers. Three of his best loved hymns are ‘Joy to the World, the Lord is Come’ famously set to music by Handel, ‘When I Survey the Wondrous Cross’ and ‘O God, our help in Ages Past’ but these are just three of many more.

*Jesus shall reign where’re the sun does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, ‘til moons shall wax and wane no more,*

JGB

STAMPS - Please bring your used (and even unused) stamps into us. We are still collecting them –they are appreciated and for a good cause!! JGB.

Speaking of Stamps

When national insurance stamps were a new idea, the master of the house was rather surprised to see that the housemaid had stuck her NI stamps all over her body instead of on the card the government had so thoughtfully provided.

“But Missus said to stick them on meself!” she exclaimed.

See Page 5!

The work of **Christians Against Poverty** in the field of personal debt is extremely important. Peter Holland of CAP will be speaking to us at the short evening service which follows our tea in the Jubilee Hall at 4.30 on 11th August. Please join us if you can for the tea, service and talk. You will be very interested and you may find the help you need or you may find an opportunity to help others. So come along. This is what they say about our speaker.

Peter is the Maidstone Centre Manager and has an incredible heart for the poor in his community. He is also one of our best speakers, and I am sure that you are going to be blown away by what he will bring on the 11th.

You Will Have...

You will have put up your Christmas decorations and taken them down; prepared and eaten your Christmas dinner and enjoyed twelve days of feasting; you will have got presents for your loved ones, given presents out to other people and received presents back; worn the Christmas sweater; been out on the Christmas bike; made a snowman and watched it all melt in time to go back to school and work; but what do you do on 6th January?

What you do is you celebrate the visit of the Wise Men – the Epiphany – and next year we shall do this with a service at St Michael's at 9.30 am followed by brunch in the church hall – and this is a very advance notice to put in next year's diary, obtainable from the Rector at no cost. Just ask.

Halling Historical Society

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15th August at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling. The speaker will be Mrs Sandra Sharpe and the subject BRITISH CALENDAR CUSTOMS. New members and visitors are welcome.

News from Cuxton Community Infant and Junior schools.

Dear friends of our school,

It has been an extremely busy time since I last wrote with many activities and functions taking place. We have enjoyed two sports days and were blessed with good weather on both occasions. It amazes me each year how confidently the children partake in the events. Of course this year I was able to see the skills of the older children in their track events and I have to say we have some talented athletes.

The friends of the school raised a large sum at the summer fete and thank you if you came and supported us. A very hot day and folk were glad of gazebos for shelter. It is always good to see parents and children at these events supporting the schools and my huge thanks to the FCS team for all their hard work on the day and behind the scenes.

The Infants held a fabulous arts week and gallery of all their work produced. They painted, collaged, made clay scenes by using modelling material, did sewing and used charcoal and pastels. Some amazing work that you would be proud to see in a gallery. Staff worked extremely hard to display the work as well and children and their parents delighted in the exhibition.

The Junior school play 'school dazes' has had us all in hysterics! The children and staff have all worked so hard in putting this together and again I am amazed at the talent and confidence of our youngsters who stand and perform so eagerly! The play is based around grandparents who reminisce on their school days and how life is/was for teachers and students. So funny!

We have finally come to the end of our visits for the new children starting in September and the buddying visits to the junior school. All children have visited their new classes and met their teachers and teaching assistants and as always we know this gives them the confidence to start in September to know where they will be.

We end the term with the junior school disco, year 6 prom, and leavers assembly in both schools and a trip to the seaside for the infant children! We won't be swimming..... just a paddle! and hopefully it won't be too windy unlike a few years ago!! The children will have fun whatever happens though!

After the holiday I am sure I will have lots to write and tell you as we prepare for the new year in both schools and plan the diary and events! A time of change, of the schools working more closely together! We will also be coming back to a new garden area to be developed on the site of the pool.

Take care as always and enjoy the Summer sunshine, Sandra Jones, Headteacher.



Max's Tail Piece

I saw a funny sight the other evening when Master took me for my evening stroll round our garden. Because the dustman comes so early, people put their rubbish out overnight. The foxes either open up the bags at the roadside or – more safely for them – drag them across the road and into our garden where they can go through them at leisure in their search for comestibles. Well, a couple of weeks ago, Master noticed a plastic food container on our grass and some stones which had obviously come off the top of the wall. He thought that the fox running down the bank had probably knocked them off. Master picked up the plastic and started throwing the stones back on top of the wall. Whereupon a swarm of what he took to be small wasps emerged from the wall and attacked him. Luckily he escaped with only three or four stings. I stood and watched and made him come back for me. Next morning when it was quiet and cool and the insects seemed to be asleep he quietly finished the job, noticing that something appeared to have been deliberately digging in the wall. He now wonders if the insects were wild bees and the larger animal which disturbed them might have been a badger looking for honey.

Apart from the bees or wasps (which have to live the same as us), our life has been idyllic lately. Master loves these long, light days, especially when the sun is shining. It is light when he gets up soon after 5.00 when he takes me out or goes for a run. It is the one time I don't really mind him going out to leave me. Having slept on his bedroom floor under the new dispensation which I mentioned last month and woken him up several times in the night, I like to curl up in my basket for a snooze while he is out running. Had I realised that he would give in and let me sleep upstairs if I made enough fuss about it, I might have tried it years ago, though he still says I won't like it so much in the Winter and, if I'm sensible, I'll spend the nights in my nice warm basket!

It's still not quite dark when we go to bed at around 10.00. Earlier in the evening, the setting sun shines the length of our garden from Woodhurst Close to the main road. Its golden rays light up the yellow Hypericum flowers and the snow-white mock orange above and behind them. What with the desiccated yellowy green of the grass and the long shadows cast by the trees, truly we live in paradise. He goes out in the garden more in the evening now, despite the mosquitoes, because, although this drier weather means that the grass needs less cutting, he has to water the geraniums and phlox a lot more.

There are two kinds of Hypericum in our garden. Master tends to call them both Rose of Sharon (which is a biblical flower and one of the titles of Jesus) and St John's Wort, but he was warned by a pharmacologist friend not to be too casual with popular plant nomenclature. Although St John's Wort is used medicinally to treat depression, most varieties of Hypericum are poisonous, as indeed is St John's Wort if not properly prepared and in the correct dosage. Self medication is never a good idea. St John's Wort for depression is particularly popular in Germany. A recent survey showed that the Germans are the people most prone to depression in Europe. It has been suggested that this is because they are the richest. Rich people worry about losing what they've got. That isn't a problem for the poor! Anyway this is why at a breakfast or teatime conversation with a German you should always expect the Wurst!

Another funny thing about plant names is that a lot of people call mock orange Syringa, when in fact, botanically speaking, it is Philadelphus. Syringa is lilac. We also have some of that, but the lilac flowers faded some weeks ago. Also botanists call geraniums pelargoniums and what they mean by geranium is quite a different plant. I wonder why?

Master loves nature and the countryside. So he was quite appalled to see the government's plans for another Thames crossing and associated roads. You might want to check it out on

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/lower-thames-crossing> and even take part in the consultation if you think they take any notice of us. Master says he doesn't believe they are serious about A (another crossing near the existing Dartford Bridge) which would in any case bring a lot more traffic to an area which is already jam-packed. B is right near the beautiful places where fifty years ago he was taught to appreciate the beauties of nature and to thank God for this wonderful world He has made. C would destroy the lovely countryside he and I only discovered a few weeks ago on the Christian Aid walk. You can argue that the population is growing, that everybody wants to travel more and that we have grown used to enjoying an ever growing range of goods and services brought over ever longer distances. We must, therefore, Government insists, provide the roads, railways and airports necessary to make all this happen. Our material prosperity and monetary wealth depend on it. But Master says, "Will we ever call a halt to this? Will we ever have enough? Isn't there a risk of destroying the very world we depend on for this mortal life and its enjoyment? Wouldn't it make sense to learn to be content with what we have, to appreciate more the places where we live?" You'll have to forgive him. He's one of those *out of touch* clergyman who has no appreciation of the modern world. I like riding in the car. Though, to be honest, I'd also be sad to see our woods and fields with their commercial crops, wild flowers and farm animals, concreted over and motorways carved through the hills and valleys we love to walk in. What do you think? Max, the Rectory Spaniel.