

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 7 th August Trinity 11	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 10 vv 5-15 p1137 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	I Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
Sunday 14 th August Trinity 12	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 56 vv 1-8 p742 Matthew 15 vv 21-28 p982
	5.30 Evening Prayer (following tea at 4..30) Jubilee Hall	2 Kings 4 vv 1-37 p371 Acts 16 vv 1-15 p1111
Sunday 21 st August Trinity 13	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 51vv 1-6 p738 Matthew 16 vv 13-20 p983
Sunday 28 th August Trinity 14	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 15 vv 15-21 p774 Matthew 16 vv 21-28 p984
Sunday 4 th September Trinity 15	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Acts 19 vv 1-20 p1115 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 33 vv 7-11 p864 Romans 13 vv 8-14 p1140 Matthew 18 vv 15-20 p985
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 31 st July Trinity 10	9.30 United Parish Eucharist with Very Rev'd Adrian Newman, Dean of Rochester.	Isaiah 55 vv 1-5 p742 Matthew 14 vv 13-21 p981
Sunday 7 th August Trinity 11	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	I Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
Sunday 14 th August Trinity 12	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 56 vv 1-8 p742 Matthew 15 vv 21-28 p982
Sunday 21 st August Trinity 13	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 51vv 1-6 p738 Matthew 16 vv 13-20 p983
Sunday 28 th August Trinity 14	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 15 vv 15-21 p774 Matthew 16 vv 21-28 p984
Sunday 4 th September Trinity 15	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Romans 13 vv 8-14 p1140 Matthew 18 vv 15-20 p985

Copy Date September Magazine: 12th August 8.30 am Rectory.

You will receive a warm welcome at any of our services and, of course, you are equally welcome at St John's and St Michael's whether you live in Cuxton or Halling. The 9.30 at Cuxton on the first Sunday of the month and the 11.00 at Halling on the third Sunday are family services.

On Thursday afternoons we have a Mother & Toddler service at Halling at 2.00.

Sunday School is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays).

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/rogerknight/myhomepage/newsletter.html>

Log on to our home page for up to date information on what is happening in the parish. In addition to notices etc, other items such as Proceedings of the PCC and sermons are from time to time displayed on the web page. Daily Bible notes are available electronically if you send me your e mail address. If possible, these too will appear on the web page.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

18 th June	Francesca Ellie Tamsin Anderson	Snodland
3 rd July	Tarik William Ryan-Hosier	Pilgrims Way
3 rd July	Zachary Peter Ryan-Hosier	Pilgrims Way
10 th July	Amelia Hannah Young	Pilgrims Way

Wedding:

18 th June	Carl Williams and Karlee Bullen	Cuxton
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Wedding Blessing:

18 th June	Les & Jan Anderson	Halling
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Funerals:

20 th June	Phyllis Kathleen Chapman (92)	formerly of Halling
5 th June	June A'Bear (68)	Harold Road
6 th June	James Keith Jones (58)	Demelza Close

Harold Lott RIP: The family and friends of Harold Lott would like to say thank you to everyone for their kind thoughts and prayers in their sad loss.

June A'Bear RIP: Dennis, Alison, Christopher and Vanessa wish to thank all the friends and neighbours who attended June's funeral on 5th July. The donations received are going towards the Sensory Garden at Abbey Court Special School in which June showed a keen interest. Our thanks also to Roger for the service and the professional way in which Clarke's Funeral Service carried out their duties.

Terrorist Attacks on London

The whole country was united in sorrow at the bomb attacks on innocent people going about their daily lives in London. Death is always a tragedy especially when it comes suddenly. When there is war, it is accepted that it is legitimate to kill enemy combatants. The terrorists' victims, however, were not combatants. They were not at war. They had no quarrel with the men who targeted them. Some of them may even have sympathised with some of what seem to be the terrorists' aims, such as an independent Palestine and British troops out of Iraq. There is no justification for these attacks, political or religious, and they are to be condemned unequivocally.

We commend those who have died to God's eternal love. We pray for the injured and the bereaved. We pray for any who may still not know what happened to their loved ones. We can take pride in the way our security and emergency services handled the situation. We pray for God's Blessing on them: people like doctors and nurses who are devoted to the care of the sick and injured; police, fire-fighters and members of the security forces who risk their lives for our safety; also for people like ambulance workers and people in the transport industry whose jobs should not entail the risk of violence but only too often do. We remember the painstaking and distressing work of the pathologists and forensic scientists and the detectives whose task it is to find out exactly what happened and to bring the remaining perpetrators to justice. We can also take pride in the behaviour of those many ordinary people who found the strength not to panic, but to carry on in an orderly way, helping others to get away from the danger.

We also admire those who went straight back to work and carried on. We must not let these evil people deflect us from our normal lives and, while we must be vigilant and support the police to safeguard against outrages such as these, we also must not be frightened into surrendering our civil liberties or taking away those of minority groups within our society.

What is a Christian response? We must pray. We must trust God. The Bible is full of the conflict between evil and good and contains the promise that the Kingdom of God will triumph. We know that we do not have to fear death if we trust in Jesus. Terrorist and victim might remember the words of Jesus: *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (Matthew 10 v28).

We must also win the moral victory. There must be no scape-goating, blaming other people of the race or religion of the attackers for what happened. Suspects must receive a fair trial so that the guilty and only the guilty are punished. The sentences must reflect the demands of justice, not revenge. As Christians, we cannot forget that mercy is always tightly woven with justice. Will there come a day when we can say with Jesus, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do?* (Luke 23 v34). Only by winning the moral victory can we win the real and eternal victory. Roger.



From the Rector

August 6th in the anniversary of the dropping of the Atom Bomb on Hiroshima. The bomb dropped on Nagasaki was on the 9th. August 6th is also the date of the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord.

Twenty odd years ago, when I was a young curate at Orpington, the Cold War was still very much on. Britain and America were updating their nuclear arsenals with cruise missiles and Trident submarines, while local authorities were instructed to make arrangements for civil defence. At least some people in Government on both sides of the Atlantic believed that a devastating war with the Soviet Union was a real possibility.

On the other hand, CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) was experiencing something of a revival. There was an explosion in membership. There were major rallies again against the bomb and peace women camping out at nuclear bases such as Greenham Common.

The country was divided between those who believed that the best way to avert war was to have weapons capable of destroying the enemy and those, who for various reasons, were totally opposed to the nuclear deterrent. The movement against nuclear weapons was really a coalition of different view points.

- Some of those who opposed nuclear weapons were pacifists, who would oppose war in any circumstances, thinking that the horrors of war could never be justified how ever good the cause.
- Some people were prepared to fight, but not to fight dirty. The Geneva Conventions, Just War Theory, etc protect non-combatants, outlaw weapons which kill the enemy unnecessarily cruelly, demand that measures taken in defence are proportionate to the evil we are trying to avert, and don't leave the enemy's territory in an uninhabitable condition. These conditions of "civilised warfare" cannot be guaranteed in a nuclear strike.
- Some opposed our stockpiling of nuclear weapons because they believed, in particular, that American bases made us more, rather than less, likely to be attacked.

- Some people thought that the billions of pounds spent on weapons would be better spent on relieving poverty.

As a priest in the Church, I felt the need to be informed about these issues so that I could make up my own mind where I stood in the national debate and, in my preaching, to try to point to what the Word of God would be saying to us in these circumstances from a position of knowledge rather than ignorance. Among my reading on the subject, I read accounts of what happened to the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima when the bombs dropped. Their sufferings were so horrible that I came to the view that nothing another nation might threaten us with or do to us could justify our doing that to them.

This was not the same as saying *better red than dead*. People who said this were pragmatists. They had done the calculation and decided that it was indeed better to live under communism than to die fighting it. That is a calculation. Most people would agree that there are circumstances when it is better to die as a martyr or to die as a soldier for your country than it is to live with some evil. I was not making a calculation. It seemed to me that whatever the enemy did to us, even if they nuked us, we just could not be justified in inflicting that degree of suffering on them.*

I expressed this opinion in a sermon once and a member of the congregation, without a word, lent me a book about Poland in the Second World War. It went into great detail about the horrors suffered by the Poles when Stalin marched into their land and the worse horrors when the Nazis drove out the Russians and established their own

* The answer to this given by some ministers was that we never would nuke the enemy. Their point was that our having overwhelming capacity to destroy an enemy made it impossible for an enemy to attack us. For deterrence to work, of course, we had to tell the enemy that in certain circumstances we could and would annihilate his entire country, but in reality we would never do it, because the enemy would never put us to the test. Indeed, there was less likely to be war if the enemy believed that he would be totally annihilated than if he thought he could achieve his warlike objectives while sustaining acceptable losses. The Soviets, of course, thought the same. So both sides maintained enough weapons to destroy the other's country. This was called Mutually Assured Destruction, in a spirit of irony, given the acronym MAD. I never could decide whether it was morally acceptable to threaten to do something that was morally unacceptable even if it was true that to do so might prevent the evil of war.

tyranny. The implication was that it is only by the threat of overwhelming force (and the willingness to use it if necessary) that the good can ensure that the bad don't use their power to bully those weaker than themselves.

So where does that leave us? Are we supposed to stand by while a Hitler sends 6,000,000 Jews to the gas chambers, while a Stalin murders all those who oppose him, killing even more than Hitler, while the Japanese commit savageries in the parts of China they have occupied? Or are we prepared to sign up to total war, culminating, if necessary in Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

The Feast of the Transfiguration commemorates the occasion when Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a high mountain. The disciples are dazzled by the divine light shining in His face. People have pointed to the bitter irony. The first effect of the atom bomb was a tremendous flash of light which blinded people even though their eyes were closed. Good light and evil light.

Moses and Elijah stand with Jesus representing the Bible as they then had it. The Voice of God is heard saying, *This is my Son whom I love. Listen to Him.*

Ah yes, if only people would follow the commandments of God in the Bible, if only people would listen to Jesus, there wouldn't be war; there would be no need for weapons; the money saved could be spent on relieving world poverty. If only people would listen to the voice of Jesus! But they don't, or at least not all of them, not even most of them, most of the time. So what do we do? There is evil in the world. Do we just accept the evil in the world or do we fight it? If we fight evil, do we become evil ourselves? St Paul tells us, *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

It is very hard to know what to think is right but I am sure the clue lies in what Moses and Elijah discussed with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. They talked about His Death at Jerusalem – the death that at the same time brought forgiveness to the wicked and set us an example of self-sacrificial goodness.

At first the disciples were told to keep to themselves the wonderful mystery they had been shown. After the Resurrection they were told to tell it to the world. Let's do it!

Roger.

Political Correctness American Style

Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule
For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd.

If Scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.
And anytime my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now.

Our hair can be purple, orange or green,
That's no offence; it's a freedom scene.
The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.

For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all
In silence alone we must meditate,
God's name is prohibited by the state.

We're allowed to cuss and dress like
freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks.
They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the
Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.

We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,
And the 'unwed daddy,' our Senior King.
It's "inappropriate" to teach right from
wrong,
We're taught that such "judgments" do not
belong.

We can get our condoms and birth
controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires and totem
poles.
But the Ten Commandments are not
allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.

It's scary here I must confess,
When chaos reigns the school's a mess.
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:
Should I be shot; My soul please take!
Amen

* Romans 12 v21

25 Years A Deacon

It was on 22nd June 1980 that I was ordained deacon in Rochester Cathedral by the Rt Rev'd David Say. That was a great day for me when I became a clergyman in God's Church. There are three orders of ministry in the Church of England – bishop, priest and deacon. The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word for a servant. It can be argued that each order of ministry represents an aspect of Christ's own ministry. He came to serve, to serve God, to serve the world, to serve the Church. He is our high priest, mediating between God and the human race, interceding for us. He is the source of all authority, the focus of our unity and our leader in our apostolic mission. All Christians share in Christ's ministry. We are all called to serve God and the world. We are all called to pray for the world, to open the world's eyes to God and to be channels of God's grace to the world. We are all called to mediate Christ's authority, to live in His unity and to reach out with Him in mission to the world. We are thus all, in a sense, bishops, priests and deacons. Baptism is, if you like, a universal ordination.

Traditionally, the first deacons have been thought to be Stephen and his friends who were commissioned in Acts 6 to help the apostles by taking over the administrative tasks that were impeding their preaching. The deacons themselves were soon preaching and it was the deacon Stephen who was the first martyr. Later on, deacons seem to have been the ministers specially commissioned with caring for the sick and the poor and taking Communion to the housebound. Later still, it came to be that almost all deacons were men who were subsequently expecting to be ordained priest. Typically there was a year between the two ordinations and that year spent as a deacon was an apprenticeship for the priesthood. We do not cease to be deacons when we are ordained priest and that servant ministry remains a very important aspect of our vocation.

It is often suggested that the Church should revive a permanent diaconate, ordaining people deacon with no expectation that they will become priests. In the Roman Catholic Church, some married men are ordained to a permanent diaconate, because married men are not allowed to become priests. When women were not allowed to be priests in the Church of England, some women were ordained to a long term diaconate.* I am not sure generally about the usefulness of a permanent diaconate. Parishes need priests to administer the sacraments and I always think there is a danger of diminishing the full time ministry of all the baptised if we have a plethora of official ministries. But I may be wrong. I think I am in a minority on this one!

I have been trying to think whether 25 years on things have worked out the way I would have expected. To be honest, I have never had much idea about what the future might hold. Only God knows the future and we just have to trust Him. We do the best we can, by His grace, with each day as it comes, but only He knows the long term. So I never really had any clear idea of where I ought to be or would like to be in 25 years time. I haven't much idea about 25 weeks from now! Generally speaking, I think being a country clergyman is the best thing I could possibly be and I can't imagine doing anything else.

I suppose, like most young men, I thought it would be possible to do a lot more and to achieve a lot more than has actually turned out to be the case. I think I imagined visiting every home, being involved in everything that happened in the parish, taking a lively interest in diocesan and national affairs. I naturally hoped to be able to pack the church. In reality of course I don't have the time, the energy or the talents to do everything I would like. Neither is it a one man band. It doesn't matter what you offer people if they don't respond. You can't achieve much without the co-operation of other people. You are foolish if you don't value their ideas and their talents as you hope they will value yours. The Church is a body, the Body of Christ. The ordained minister has a definite role and so do all the other members. The work is Christ's. Nothing happens without His Holy Spirit. What each of us is called to do is to be faithful and to trust Him for the outcome. We rejoice if we see success, hopefully not forgetting to thank Him, rather than patting ourselves on the back. We continue to trust Him and try to do our duty even when we don't see the results we would like. We can be confident that His Word does not return to Him void.

Wednesday 12th July next year will be the Silver Jubilee of my ordination to the priesthood. Traditionally, that is much the greater celebration. There will certainly be a Eucharist and I hope a party to which I hope you will all come. I'm thinking Halling as my 50th birthday was at Cuxton, but we'll see. Roger.

* A female deacon is not, in the Church of England, the same thing as a deaconess. Ask me if you want an explanation!

Confirmation 2006

We normally hold confirmations on alternate years in this parish. The other year we are invited to go to Higham. If anyone, therefore, is interested in Confirmation in the near future, I shall start classes after Christmas with a view to presenting you at Higham next May. Candidates are normally 12 years old or older (no upper limit). They may be seeking Baptism. They may have been baptised already and now wish to reaffirm their baptismal commitment and to receive the sacramental grace of Confirmation. I will print below the affirmations you have to make at your Confirmation. If you can sincerely make these affirmations, there is no reason why you should not be confirmed. If you are not yet sure, but want to study the matter further, you are most welcome to attend the classes and explore the faith with no obligation to be confirmed at the end.

Roger.

***In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him
Therefore I ask:***

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Let the People Speak

You might have heard about the British and Irish Church Survey that has just been published. 14,000 people responded between September 2003 & September 2004, giving their answers to the question as to why church attendance has declined so rapidly in Britain and Ireland. Perhaps surprisingly, there was a great consensus among those who responded and that consensus, by and large, was that the Church had gone wrong because it had abandoned the old ways. This is the opposite of what we are normally told – that we are irrelevant because we are behind the times and unwilling to change. I'll try to summarize the report as I understand it and I'll also tell you how to obtain a copy so you can read it for yourself if you want to.

People generally wanted more from sermons and other forms of teaching. They wanted what is technically called "apologetics" – the science of explaining why faith is reasonable in the modern world. They wanted preachers and church leaders to be unequivocal in standing for traditional Christian morality. They wanted guidance on living the spiritual life and explaining the faith to others. People wanted sermons to be both biblical and relevant.

There was a sense that we had lost the vision of the holiness of God. Services were taken too casually and with little sense of awe. We so much stress God's love and willingness to forgive that we lose sight of His

Righteousness, the huge moral demands He lays on us and the terrible consequences of living an unrepentant sinful life.

There was a keen sense of loss in that we no longer very often use traditional forms of service like the 1662 prayer book. People wanted the modern, but they did not want to lose the ancient. The same was true for music. New choruses and classic hymns have their place. Congregations were deprived if worship leaders insisted on nothing but the modern or if they refused to allow anything new.

If there were informal family services, respondents stressed that the eternal Gospel must still be proclaimed. Those who attend only family services also need to know about the Cross and the reason why Jesus died.

There was a very strong feeling from many respondents that sermons etc should relate what is going on in the contemporary world to biblical prophecy so that the anxious are consoled and the wicked warned to change their ways.

There was a longing for fellowship and pastoral care. People wanted to be welcomed in church and at coffee afterwards and social events. There were horror stories of newcomers being cold-shouldered or even repelled. A lot of respondents felt uncomfortable with the Passing of the Peace. They found it false, unnatural and embarrassing. There was a strong desire to go back to the days when clergy visited people frequently in their homes – especially the sick and unbelievers. Quite a lot of respondents objected to the idea of someone else from the church coming INSTEAD of the minister. Quite a lot also, however, thought that lay visitors should look after the Christian sick and housebound so that the clergy could be freed up to visit the un-churched.

There was also a strong feeling that the clergy ought not to spend time at meetings, chairing PCCs, producing church magazines and photocopying service sheets. They could all be jobs for the laity, freeing the clergy to visit, teach the faith and visit. People objected to being pressurized about money, but churches that practise tithing claim to have no money worries.

I've tried to summarize the report. I agree with a lot of what the respondents said, though not everything. I'm not sure that it would be practical to deliver everything they ask for anyway. I would certainly need a lot more help if I was to be freed of this keyboard and if we wanted to provide a much greater range of Sunday services in both parish churches. Also, if we stopped doing some of the things the respondents to the survey don't like, we would disappoint a lot of other people. Moreover applying traditional moral values in a compassionate way in a rapidly changing world requires a greater subtlety than many of the respondents seem to realize. Ditto biblical prophecies re contemporary events. I'm not saying it can't be done, *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.**

Anyway if you want to know more, you can obtain the report free, by logging onto www.churchsurvey.co.uk or send a cheque for £3.50 payable to *Ecumenical Research Committee* at Ecumenical Research Committee, 19, Glenfield Road, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7HR.

??? Christian Aid Quiz**???**
5th August,
Halling Church
£5 includes Ploughman's
Details from Mary Acott 243223

Barbecue

We had a marvellous barbecue on 2nd July in my garden. The weather was fine. The food was terrific. The music was excellent. The company was great. The bouncy castle was fun. Funds raised amounted to over £280. Like any of these things which are enjoyed by so many people, a huge amount of hard work went into laying this on. If I mention names, I'm sure to leave some out, but there was activity all day as well as all the preparation in advance and what went on while the punters were actually present. So thanks to all of you very much indeed. Roger.

Wintershall Passion Play

In the end, only three of us made the trip to Wintershall for the Passion Play. We were unwilling to book transport till we knew how many were definitely interested and it appears that people were uncertain about making a definite commitment to come until the arrangements were confirmed. This was a pity because we had such a marvellous time that a lot of people would have enjoyed and got a lot out of. Next year, we'll try to get better organised and make sure that everyone who would like to come in fact does come.

The action takes place in the grounds of a big house on the Surrey Downs. Each arena is a grassy area with trees and hills and often water. The first scene is the angel appearing to Mary. We see Joseph disbelieving and then convinced. Mary goes to see her cousin Elizabeth. Then Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem with a real live donkey. The child is born – a real baby. Shepherds come with their sheep. We see Simeon and Hannah in the Temple. Wise men bring their gifts. Men on horseback massacre the innocents in Bethlehem while the Holy Family become refugees in Egypt. On their return to Nazareth, we see the infant Jesus taken to Jerusalem for Passover and talking with the holy men in the Temple.

At the beginning of Act 2, John the Baptist preaches the simple message of the Kingdom of God to the crowds. He baptizes Jesus. A real dove is set free. Then Jesus preaches. We laugh at the disciples' misconceptions. We boo the villains who oppose Jesus and seek to destroy Him. We hear His sublime words to the crowds. We see some healing miracles. The Act finishes with the feeding of the 5,000, including the audience.

After lunch, Act 3 takes us through the gathering storm to the Last Supper, His betrayal and arrest, the trial and the Crucifixion. Three men really do hang on crosses. We see Jesus taken down and buried.

Then the joy of Easter morning, the empty tomb, His appearances to His disciples. Lastly, we see the disciples fishing on the lake and hear Jesus commission Peter to feed His lambs.

The whole thing closely follows the bible story. It takes about six hours to perform and is obviously performed as an act of worship and witness by the huge cast. It really is worth seeing. This year we went on a Friday. It wouldn't be practical to go Saturday if that clashes with the parish barbecue. What about a Sunday? I could celebrate Communion for those of us who would be going at 7.30 in one or other of our churches and get another priest to take the later services for those who would not be going? Ideas please. See also www.wintershall-estate.com Roger.

Parish Passion Play

There is an idea that we might put on our own passion play at the 10.00 service on Good Friday next year. Interested? Please speak to Rector.



Halling WI

Halling W.I. had a truly International atmosphere for their 38th birthday party. When we arrived at the Jubilee Hall, strangers, women and men seemed to be bustling in and out dressed in what looked like fancy dress, it turned out they were dressed in authentic National costume of Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia. It was one of the hottest nights of the year, the costumes were made of flannel, felt, and linen, very decorative with much embroidery and beads, even the thick woolly socks, the wearers must have been sweltering, but they looked calm and collected. Mary Fennemore welcomed us all, guests from the other institutes in the District and our friends from Bleangate. She then introduced

our "entertainers". They explained to us why they were called the Zivko Firfov Group, formed over 50 yrs ago, although now they are mainly all British. They meet regularly in London each week but most of them live in the Medway Towns. They danced and sang folk songs from three main areas that was former Yugoslavia, all in the native tongue, I might add. With a little bit of imagination you could have been in any village square in that region, it was certainly different as none of us knew what we were going to get. At the end of their performance they encouraged some members and guest to get up and have a go, there wasn't much room, a bit like dancing on a sixpence, but it seemed jolly good fun. They were warmly thanked by Mary. We then tucked into our

usual party fare, tables were heavily laden with a posh ploughman's supper with gateaux to follow, all prepared by the gallant committee. Once again a lovely friendly evening.

Since the party, some of us attended the Malling District Conference, this year held at Kingshill W.I. Mary Clarke was our chairman for the evening and she soon got down to business. We had reports from all secretaries in the District, some institutes seem to do more than others, some couldn't write a three minute report if they tried, but everyone seemed very busy. Our entertainment (speaker) for the evening was Mr Monty Parkin, his subject, contemporary (modern) "ART" especially some of the "ART" in the Tate Modern. He was as amused as most of our mature W.I. ladies as to some of the subjects he showed us on his slides, an unmade bed, (you can see that most days in my house), a pile of bricks, (go to any builders merchants, you can see that for nothing) but a lamb pickled in formaldehyde,

who on earth would want that. One artist made millions from a blank canvas. Seems as anything goes as ART these days, poor old John Constable must be turning in his grave. It was a good meeting, the speaker was there to shock us and make us laugh. I think, not to educate us or turn us into critics. Mary Clarke judged the competition which was won by the host institute.

For our next meeting July 19th, our speaker is Mrs Jill Joyce, her subject The Railway Children of Istore. The competition letter is I, I don't think we shall get many Igloos, we may get a bottle of Ink, this one may be tricky and need a lot of thought. Why not come and join us and see for yourselves, you will be very welcome. Phyllis.

Cathedral Prayers

Thursday August 11th: Our parish will be remembered in the daily prayers at the Cathedral. Please call in for Evensong at 5.30 if you are in Rochester that day.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

A date for your diary. Limber up for Winter. Come to the **barn dance** on Saturday 1st October at Buckland Farm, 7.30 pm (for 8.00) – 11.30. Price £8.50 (children £5.00) includes Ploughman's Supper. Please bring own drinks and glasses. Please 'phone Kay Rootes on 01474 822797 for tickets from 17th August onwards.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Miss Lucas (8), Mrs Fuller (78), Mrs Burren (55), Mrs Ashford (99), Mrs Garrot (123) – drawn by Mr Mattingly.

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Julia Wells, drawn by Ray Maisey
£5 to Dorothy Taylor, drawn by Buffy Maisey

Those wishing to join **St John's Draw** please contact Betty Head 240889. Those wishing to join the **Church Hall Draw** please contact Buffy Maisey on 727126.



Cuxton WI

We had a very good attendance at our July meeting and a member from Larkfield WI came and read her report of the AGM held at the Albert Hall. During the business we were all set up in groups of six to produce items on a tray for a Members' Night Produce Show with a difference in September. Much consulting and discussion with each other resulted during the tea break!!!

Our speaker, Mrs Pauline Dewick, showed us how you can have *A Fortune in Your Attic*. She showed many items which she had collected for a

few pence and which she had now researched and found them to be valuable. She had many collectable items in silver, china, glass, a teddy bear and a bowler hat, to name a few. It was a fascinating and interesting talk and some of us realised that we had similar items at home! We enjoyed the talk very much. The Trading Stall did brisk business in jams and indoor plants.

Several of us attended the District Conference, where we heard reports from all the WIs and plans for future events. Our hosts for the evening, for the first time, were Kingshill WI, just three years old and very up and coming and they made us all most welcome.

A group of us had attended Halling WI's Birthday Celebrations and, as expected, we had a wonderful evening, excellent buffet supper and unusual entertainment.

Eight of the Gardening Group went to see St Michael's Vicarage and Cottage Garden near East Peckham. We intended having lunch at the Brewer's Fayre at the Hop Farm, but got caught in a huge tailback. Some event was on at the Hop Farm! So we made an exit right into East

Peckham and had a good lunch at the pub there. The weather was hot with a nice breeze and the gardens were well worth the visit. Marvellous flower borders, a huge pond (we fed the fish) chickens and cows with new-born calves. We ended a lovely day with tea and cake in the gardens.

Next meeting: Thursday 4th August at 7.30 in the Church Hall. Speaker: Mrs Margaret Davies A
Way With Words.

From Shirley & Peter Crundwell

Shirley and Peter would like to say a big thank you for the magnificent gifts and kind wishes given to them at their last lunch (the last one they organised anyway) in July. It was all most unexpected and certainly took us by surprise. The roses are blooming abundantly and the tokens have become a nice garden seat at which the wine etc can be enjoyed. We have enjoyed the fellowship of you all these last five years and long may it continue in Marie and friends' capable hands. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We can't say it enough times.
S&P Crundwell.

Nature Notes June 2005

The day was rather grey, breezy and with some drizzle. We walked from Halling along by the river towards the Heath. Ox-eye daisies and yellow crucifers provided carpets of yellow and white on the sides of the steep bank, while dog roses, vetch, buttercups and privet bloomed along the path. Young teasels were pushing up their bright green leaves and forget-me-nots formed blue carpets. Biting stone crop grew along the edges of the tracks as we made our way past the ponds to the dyke. Tiny pink flowers of grass vetchling waved in the breeze and a beautiful clump of a maiden pinks bloomed. Catkins hung from silver birches near to the woodland where nightingales were singing. Sam galloped along the dyke as drizzle fell. We took the path by the stream. Elder flowers emitting their familiar perfume bloomed in all their lacy beauty. The waterfall splashed down the stones to the stream. We walked along the stone path which rejoined our path taking us back to the heath and finally to the car. It was a lovely walk with so much to see and marvel at.

In the evening of the 2nd, as the light was fading, birds still sang. Earlier in the afternoon I had watched the song thrush and a blue tit bathing in the pond. The morning of the 3rd was grey. I watched a parent chaffinch feeding one of its young, another chaffinch feeding on the seed I'd put out, and mistle thrush; then three song thrushes in the garden all at once, the first time I've seen that in a long time. A robin hovered over the pond and two doves and a pigeon fed on the corn. Later in the day a bullfinch sang as it perched on the TV aerial. In the afternoon we walked at Snodland and I heard nightingales, reed and sedge warblers and cetti warblers. The sun shone warmly but there was quite a strong westerly wind which rippled the water Swifts flew overhead and a wagtail hopped across the path.

Elder flowers and dog roses were beautiful, while purple vetch, pink clover and golden buttercups bloomed along the grassy paths. In the evening the greenfinch called from the topmost branch of the conifer in the garden. We walked the other side of the railway at Snodland on the 4th and watched a swan on her nest while another glided up stream with a fluffy cygnet. Others probably didn't survive. Coots, moorhens and a grebe were busy on the rippling water. I heard reed warblers then saw a baby warbler on a reed stem. Swifts flew overhead. In the evening a black cap came to our pond. On the 6th I learnt by a Radio 4 nature programme that nightingales now mainly sing in the south-east of England in bushy scrubland.

The weather on the 8th was beautiful with clear blue skies, golden sunshine and fresh northerly breezes. We walked by the lakes and the River Medway at Snodland. Upright hedge parsley and hogweed grew tall and bramble patches were rich in blooms. We took the path to the river, the hedgerows being adorned with pink and white wild roses. Pink clover and birdsfoot trefoil bloomed. I stood for a while listening to the melodious song of the nightingale. Swans glided on the river and a heron flew up from the heronry. Dragonflies and damsel flies hovered over paths and grasses and a lone grebe glided on the lake. I counted 33 ladybirds perched on stinging nettles in just a small area then, later, as we neared the end of our walk I found eight more. The grass and nettles had grown so tall that the area took on a different character. As I walked I heard the songs of a cuckoo, chiffchaff and a great tit. I also saw self-heal, forget-me-nots, yellow irises and a white flower in the water which I then found was water crowfoot. A rabbit dived off as it saw

Sam coming. All the cygnets, six of them, are alive plus three coot chicks. Two pied wagtails were seen. The 9th was another warm sunny day with clear skies in the morning and high cloud developing in the afternoon. I drove with Sam to Halling from where we walked by the river to the heath. A beautiful elder bush emitted the flower's fragrant aroma and a red sailed ship moved down river. Dog roses and brambles bloomed in profusion along with yellow crucifers, ox-eye daisies, vetch, buttercups, thistles, dogwood flowers and red clover. The common blue butterfly hovered over the grasses and a bright burnet moth was to be seen on the heathland where viper's bugloss, forget-me-nots, dog roses and biting stone crop brought a golden touch to the ground. Birdsfoot trefoil and hogweed bloomed up the banks and at the top of the hill overlooking the school. Mallow bloomed there. I heard chiffchaff calling then, to my delight, a skylark hovered and sang above broom. Red poppies, large wood spurge plants and a pink campion with wild mignonette bloomed at the bank.

New reeds grew in the creek. Collared doves called from the woodland. I watched a hen blackbird gathering food for its young which I could hear. At the end of the walk I found hedge woundwort. Earlier, I had seen scarlet pimpernel. On the 10th, when northeast winds were blowing, I walked by the stream at Snodland. A swan still sat on a nest and the male glided along with one cygnet. Coots proudly displayed a chick and later I saw a juvenile coot on the flattened reeds. Later still I saw, on the lake, a pair of Canada geese with their gosling. I heard a Nightingale a chiffchaff and a great tit, then a chaffinch. A pair of mallards glided under the branches of a willow. A heron flew overhead and a sparrow sang in an elder. I noticed, on the 11th, in Six-acre Wood, the cow parsley plants were fading but there were clumps of pink herb robert flowers which raised their dainty heads to the sky. We skirted the field where red poppies were flowering among the crops. The 12th was decidedly chilly with northeast winds and a few glimpses of sunshine. At Addington I saw upright hedge parsley which displayed its lacy flowers and a horse chestnut on which small fruit had formed on the spikes. Green alkanet bloomed. While walking along the lane I saw beautiful foxgloves which were also growing in the woodland. Remnants of bluebells could be seen where oaks, beaches, sycamores and silver birch trees grew.

On the 13th at West Malling Country Park I watched young coots following in the wake of the parent birds. Swans, mallards and moorhens glided through the water. Later we walked round the orchard where pears were forming. On the 14th, we went to a cricket final at Kent College, Canterbury. I walked Sam down to a field which overlooked Canterbury Cathedral. It looked beautiful in the sunlight. The grass was long and bore its flowering seed heads. Pink clover, grass vetchling and buttercups bloomed and dog roses and elder flowers adorned the hedgerows.

The 15th was grey and rather damp. I took Sam along Pilgrims Road from where we climbed up into Mays Wood where the trees' leaves had darkened and where the carpets of dog's mercury had ceased to flower. There were tired-looking cow parsley plants straddled along the paths as we made our way up to Six-acre Wood where elder, herb robert and hedge woundwort were in bloom. In the evening, the song thrush and a robin came to the pond where the fish were quite lively. In Six-acre Field on the 16th, I noticed wild cherries were ripening and elder flowers bloomed, although these are fading and few fruits are forming. This I think is possibly through lack of rain. The 17th was a hot day with plenty of sunshine. I watched three damsel flies hovering over plants in the pond. The fish were very lively then and they basked in sunshine. The next day blue damselflies alighted on the mint leaves in the pond, then a red damselfly, the first sighting for me, joined them. Sam had an evening walk round Brookland Lake where scores of damsel flies hovered over the nettles and grasses. Small snails clung to some nettles, hemlock plants bloomed in profusion along the paths and on the banks. They were beautiful. Hemp agrimony was in bud and brambles bore a wealth of flowers. Reed warblers called but I couldn't see them. A chaffinch and a chiffchaff sang and coots glided on the water with their young. The warm southerly wind blew and the sun was golden on the water.

On the 19th the heat became fiercer as the day progressed, so it wasn't until the heat subsided that I was able to take Sam for a walk through Six Acre Wood and field. I listened to birds singing in the woodland. I noticed, on the 21st, privet flowers along the roadside were fading from cream to a brown, and mallow and dock were blooming along the verges. Elder flower, too, was fading with some fruits forming. In the field, tall grasses waved their seed heads in the breeze. On the 22nd, the weather was beautiful again. It was very hot, necessitating a late walk with Sam. Later in the evening I sat in the garden where I listened to blackbirds singing. I watched the fish feeding in the pond and a frog hopping along the pond's edge. The fragrance of the summer air was beautiful. On the evening of the 23rd, which was another very hot day, I sat in the garden and watched a chaffinch which came to drink, followed soon after by a young song thrush. Calling rooks flew overhead and a lone swift flew in a southerly direction. A wood pigeon came to drink, followed by a second. A blue tit perched in the holly.

The 24th was very hot again. The morning was glorious with blue skies and bright sunshine as I walked with Sam around the lakes at Snodland. Reed warblers could be heard along the banks of the lakes which were mirror smooth. I found bramble flower, pink clover, self heal, ox-eye daisies, common centaury, agrimony, buttercups, bird's foot trefoil, hemlock and knapweed. I saw swans, the coots, the common blue butterfly and a meadow brown butterfly. Dark clouds

gathered after midday and some rain fell but the sun soon shone again. The air was extremely humid. During our walk, a green woodpecker with a magnificent red head flew up inches away from us. There was a complete change in the weather on the 25th. The day was grey and chilly with north-easterly winds. We drove down to Woodchurch on the Weald where it was even fresher than at home. As we neared the village, I observed creamy meadowsweet adorning the verges. When we walked in the afternoon I noticed bedstraw by their hedges. We made our way round the fields through the long grass which was wet with overnight rain. Sheep grazed contentedly. The skies remained grey all day.

The morning of the 26th began dull, but eventually the sun emerged to give a beautiful day. A fresh breeze blew from the north east. I took Sam to Halling where we walked by the river to the heath. Mallow, ragwort, bird's foot trefoil and goat's rue bloomed along the grassy path. Elder flowers were fading and some had produced no fruit. Hemp agrimony was in bud; wild dog roses, black medic and privet bloomed. White clover and yarrow bloomed among the tall grasses and fresh green teasels stood tall amongst last year's brown stalks and heads. Meadow brown butterflies hovered over the grass heads and a six spotted burnet moth flew near us. Ribbed melilot was in flower nearby. The

wind sighed in the reeds and I noticed leaves turning yellow because of lack of rain. On the heath viper's bugloss, vervain and St. John's wort bloomed in profusion along with beautiful evening primrose flowers. Bitter stone crop, creeping buttercup and common centaury bloomed and orchids peeped up among the grasses. Mallow added its deep pink to bring such a wealth of colour to the area. We walked along the field above the river where boats sailed. The breeze blew and the sun beamed down on us.

On the afternoon of the 28th we walked in West Malling Country Park where coots, moorhens, a pochard duck, mallards and a swan were gliding on the lake. Buttercups and green alkanet bloomed, but again I found very few flowers. A large crow flew down to the ground. It looked quite formidable. There was a beautiful fragrance from lime trees.

On the 29th the sun was warm again. We had a picnic at the foot of Oldbury Fort in a beautiful wooded area not far from Sevenoaks. Oaks and beeches grew there. The last day of the month was cold and grey with a very occasional glimpse of the sun. I took Sam to the village then brought him back up the hill in Six Acre Wood and through the churchyard. I found a few herb robert flowers. The ground desperately needs rain.

Elizabeth Summers

Churchyards

Thanks to those who have donated money towards the cost of cutting Cuxton Churchyard. This is much appreciated and we still need donations to see us to the end of the season.

People have commented on how nicely Halling Parish Council have kept Halling Cemetery this year and the way Medway have looked after Halling Churchyard so well. Heartfelt thanks to them.

The next project is to persuade someone (Council? Halling Association? Saxon Homes? La Farge?) to cut down those sycamore trees at the east end of St John's. They make the place damp and make it too dark to see the beautiful stained glass window which depicts the Christmas story. In the long run, I believe the idea is to turn that whole area of the Bishop's Palace site from the church to the river into a pleasant public open space. Let's hope it can be done soon.

Can I ask you to keep the rules, please, respecting the churchyards and gardens of remembrance? The plots for cremated remains are about 14" long and no more than 18" wide. Please do not allow your monuments, floral tributes etc to take up more room than this. It causes distress if monuments are actually on somebody else's grave. The regulations forbid kerbs, stone-chippings etc on graves and cremation plots. When flowers die, please do remove them. There are no professional paid staff to do this! You need permission to place a monument in the churchyard and it has to comply with the Chancellor's Regulations. If you order a monument from a stonemason, he ought to know the rules and advise you accordingly. You or he will have to send me a form for me to sign giving permission and I am sorry to have to say that there is a fee for this. I can say, however, that I have had to turn down very few applications. So it is normally a straightforward matter.

Church Finances

I mentioned last month how desperate these are. I heard a rumour that collections are increasing. This is so necessary and I thank God if it proves to be correct. If you are considering a review of your giving, that is marvellous. Remember Gift Aid adds about 1/3 to the value of your gift. Please speak to Marie Hendey.

Forthcoming Events

5th August 7.30: **Christian Aid Quiz** at St John's: Contact Mary Acott 243223

16th August 11.00: **Coffee Morning & Barbecue** 95 Pilgrims Rd, N Halling.

19th August 7.00: **Cheese & Wine** at the Rectory.

24th August 3.00: **Tea** at 73, Charles Drive, Cuxton.

All these events are to raise money for our beleaguered general fund.

26th August 7.30: **Open Bible Study** at the Rectory.

27th August: Halling Fire Station celebrates its centenary with a **village fun day**.

28th September 7.30: **PCC** meets at St John's. We welcome David Noakes, the diocesan stewardship adviser to help us to understand how we can share what God has freely given to us all to ensure that resources are available to carry out His work in the parish.

29th September 7.30: **Patronal Festival Eucharist** at St Michael's and party.

22nd October 7.30: **Quiz** in Church Hall for parish general fund.

Literature

Don't forget that there are Church Guides available for St John's (£1) & St Michael's (50p), also notelets with pictures of the respective churches, and 2006 church diaries (£1). The sale of these also assists our beleaguered general fund.

Final Thought.

Seven prayer-less days make one weak.