

| Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> December<br>Advent Sunday<br>Year C                        | 8.00 Holy Communion<br>Jubilee Hall                     | Joel 3 vv 9-21 p914<br>John 3 vv 1-17 p1065  |
|  | 11.00 Family Communion & Gift<br>Service & Holy Baptism | Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796<br>I Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187<br>Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057 |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Advent 2                                       | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Malachi 3 vv 1-4 p961<br>Philippians 1 vv 3-11 p1178<br>Luke 3 vv 1-6 p1029            |
|  | 5.30 Evening Prayer<br>Jubilee Hall                     | Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723<br>Luke 1 vv 1-25 p1025   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Advent 3                                      | 11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy<br>Communion           | Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947<br>Philippians 4 vv 4-7 p1181<br>Luke 3 vv 7-18 p1029        |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> December Advent 4   | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Micah 5 vv 2-5a p933<br>Hebrews 10 vv 5-10 p1207<br>Luke 1 vv 39-55 p1026              |
|  | 3.00 Carol Service, Nativity & Crib Service             |  |
| Christmas Day  | 8.00 Holy Communion                                     | Titus 3 vv 4-7 p1199<br>Luke 2 vv 1-7 p1027  |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Christmas 1                                   | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | I Samuel 2 vv 18-26 p273<br>Colossians 3 vv 12-17 p1184<br>Luke 2 vv 41-52 p1029       |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany  | 8.00 Holy Communion<br>Jubilee Hall                     | Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746<br>Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966  |
|  | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746<br>Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174<br>Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966           |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Baptism of Christ                              | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Isaiah 43 vv 1-7 p728<br>Acts 8 vv 14-17 p1101<br>Luke 3 vv 15-22 p1029                |
|  | 5.30 Evening Prayer<br>Jubilee Hall                     | Isaiah 55 vv 1-13 p742<br>Romans 6 vv 1-11 p1132                                       |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany 2                                     | 11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy<br>Communion           | Isaiah 62 vv 1-5 p748<br>I Corinthians 12 vv 1-11 p1153<br>John 2 vv 1-11 p1064        |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany 3                                     | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Nehemiah 8 vv 1-10 p492<br>I Corinthians 12 vv 12-31a p1153<br>Luke 4 vv 14-21 p1031   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> February<br>Sexagesima                                     | 8.00 Holy Communion<br>Jubilee Hall                     | Genesis 1 v1 – 2 v3 p3<br>Matthew 6 vv 25-34 p971                                      |
|  | 11.00 Holy Communion                                    | Genesis 2 vv 4-25 p 4<br>Revelation 4 vv 1-11 p1236<br>Luke 8 vv 22-25 p1037           |
| Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton                                 |   |  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> December<br>Advent Sunday<br>Year C                        | 9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service                    | Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796<br>I Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187<br>Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057 |
| Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> December  | 7.30 WI District Carol Service                          |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Advent 2                                       | 9.30 Holy Communion                                     | Malachi 3 vv 1-4 p961<br>Philippians 1 vv 3-11 p1178<br>Luke 3 vv 1-6 p1029            |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Advent 3                                      | 8.00 Holy Communion                                     | Epistle & Gospel BCP Advent 3  |
|  | 9.30 Holy Communion                                     | Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947<br>Philippians 4 vv 4-7 p1181<br>Luke 3 vv 7-18 p1029        |
| Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> December   | 7.00 Scout & Guide Carol Service                        |  |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> December Advent 4   | 9.30 Holy Communion                                     | Micah 5 vv 2-5a p933<br>Hebrews 10 vv 5-10 p1207<br>Luke 1 vv 39-55 p1026              |
|  | 6.30 Nine Lessons & Carols                              |  |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Christmas Eve                                 | 5.00 Crib Service, Nativity & Christingle |  |
|   | 11.00 Midnight Mass                       | Isaiah 9 vv 2-7 p693<br>Titus 2 vv 11-14 p1199<br>Luke 2 vv 1-20 p1027               |
| Christmas Day                                 | 9.30 Family Communion                     | Hebrews 1 vv 1-4 p1201<br>John 1 vv 1-14 p1063                                       |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Christmas 1      | 9.30 Holy Communion                       | I Samuel 2 vv 18-26 p273<br>Colossians 3 vv 12-17 p1184<br>Luke 2 vv 41-52 p1029     |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany           | 9.30 Family Communion                     | Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746<br>Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174<br>Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966         |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Baptism of Christ | 9.30 Holy Communion                       | Isaiah 43 vv 1-7 p728<br>Acts 8 vv 14-17 p1101<br>Luke 3 vv 15-22 p1029              |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany 2        | 8.00 Holy Communion                       | Epistle & Gospel BCP Epiphany 2  |
|   | 9.30 Holy Communion                       | Isaiah 62 vv 1-5 p748<br>I Corinthians 12 vv 1-11 p1153<br>John 2 vv 1-11 p1064      |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Epiphany 3        | 9.30 Holy Communion                       | Nehemiah 8 vv 1-10 p492<br>I Corinthians 12 vv 12-31a p1153<br>Luke 4 vv 14-21 p1031 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> February<br>Sexagesima        | 9.30 Family Communion                     | Genesis 2 vv 4-25 p 4<br>Revelation 4 vv 1-11 p1236<br>Luke 8 vv 22-25 p1037         |

| Holy Communion 9.30 Wednesdays at Cuxton                       |   | Holy Communion 9.30 Thursdays at Halling                       |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> December                                       | Isaiah 25 vv 6-10<br>Matthew 15 vv 29-37  | 6 <sup>th</sup> December                                       | Isaiah 26 vv 1-6<br>Matthew 7 vv 21-27    |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Ember Day                         | Isaiah 40 vv 25-31<br>Matthew 11 vv 28-30 | 13 <sup>th</sup> December                                      | Isaiah 41 vv 13-20<br>Matthew 11 vv 11-15 |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> December                                      | Judges 13 vv 1-25<br>Luke 1 vv 5-25       | 20 <sup>th</sup> December                                      | Isaiah 7 vv 10-14<br>Luke 1 vv 26-38      |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> December<br>S Stephen                         | Acts 7 vv 51-60<br>Matthew 10 vv 17-22    | 27 <sup>th</sup> December                                      | I John 1 vv 1-10<br>John 21 vv 19-25      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> January  | I John 2 vv 22-28<br>John 1 vv 19-28      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> January  | I John 2 vv 29 – 3 v6<br>John 1 vv 29-34  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> January  | I John 4 vv 11-18<br>Mark 6 vv 45-52      | 10 <sup>th</sup> January                                       | I John 4 vv 19 – 5v4<br>Luke 4 vv 14-22   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> January                                       | Hebrews 2 vv 14-18<br>Mark 1 vv 29-39     | 17 <sup>th</sup> January                                       | Hebrews 3 vv 7-14<br>Mark 1 vv 40-45      |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> January<br>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity | Hebrews 7 vv 1-17<br>Mark 3 vv 1-6        | 24 <sup>th</sup> January<br>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity | Hebrews 7 vv 25 – 8 v6<br>Mark 3 vv 7-12  |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> January                                       | Hebrews 10 vv 11-18<br>Mark 3 vv 31-35    | 31 <sup>st</sup> January                                       | Hebrews 10 vv 19-25<br>Mark 4 vv 21-25    |

On 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> December at Cuxton and 27<sup>th</sup> December at Halling Holy Communion will be celebrated at 9.30 am and there will be no other weekday services. Normal service resumes on 1<sup>st</sup> January – 7.30 am Holy Communion for Naming of Jesus. Other festivals are Conversion of St Paul (25<sup>th</sup> January) 7.30 am Holy Communion and Candlemas (2<sup>nd</sup> February) 8.00 am Holy Communion – all three at Cuxton.

Shortening days,  
enclosed by dark,  
Evenings early, mornings  
black,  
Swirling darkness, empty  
chaos,  
Moving spirit, Advent  
Light.

Colliding hadrons,  
bursting star,  
Shortest day and longest  
night,  
Waking nature, plants  
and creatures,  
Men and women,  
Christmas Light.

Growing boyhood, holy  
manhood,  
God apparent, Gospel  
lived,  
Gifts of love, abundance  
sharing,  
Humankind, Epiphany  
Light.

Lifelong journey,  
constant brother,  
Teacher, friend,  
answered prayer,  
Atonement made, eternal  
life,  
Sweet communion,  
Endless Light.

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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> 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** February Magazine: 11<sup>th</sup> January 8.30 am Rectory.



### Wonder

What fills you with awe? Some of us are awed by this wonderful universe we inhabit. For some of us it is the miracle of life. Or is it human relationships which are just so amazingly astonishing? Now consider that the Creator and Sustainer of whatever moves you to wonder must be infinitely more awe-inspiring than the most awe-inspiring thing which He has made.

The Bible teaches that such a God made everything that there is. Such a God breathes into us the breath of life. Human beings relate to such a God in prayer and praise, in confession and thanksgiving. Instinctively we know that there must be something more, an ultimate explanation for everything that is, Who (equally) is an ever present friend whatever might happen to us. We may say that God is both transcendent and imminent. He holds the whole world in His Hands and He is our closest friend and confidante.

But how could we stand in the presence of such a God? He is infinitely mightier than we are. He is so much holier than we are that we could not possibly presume to approach Him. Even though we may know God we also know that He is infinitely greater than anything we can imagine. Even if we say God is good, God is beautiful, God is holy, we are not speaking the truth because what we understand by good, beautiful and holy falls so infinitely far short of what God is.

Although instinctively human beings reach out to God even at the same time as we reject His Love, the only way we could know such a God would be if He made Himself known to us. The Good News of Christmas is that God reveals Himself to humanity in the most profound manner possible. He identifies Himself with us. God becomes a human person. The gulf between the *immortal, invisible God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes* and ordinary everyday human beings like you and me is bridged by Jesus Who is in every respect God and in every respect human. Everything which belongs to the divine nature belongs to Jesus. He is not created. He is incomprehensible (beyond understanding, beyond being mastered). He is eternal and almighty. Otherwise He would not be the true and complete revelation of God. Jesus is also everything which a human being must be, with a human body, mind and soul. If He were not fully human, we human beings would not be fully redeemed in Him. We would not be completely sanctified. We can only become divine and inherit eternal life in the divine love because Jesus is fully human as well as being completely God.

Pondering these mysteries the Church (led I believe by the Holy Spirit Who, Jesus said, would lead us into all truth) came up with the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation as she pondered what the Bible says about Jesus and her own experience of God in our Christian fellowship of worship, prayer and service. None of us can understand these doctrines at least so long as we remain on earth. They are not meant to be comprehensible. It would be blasphemy to claim to comprehend God. Whatever we might imagine would be an image and an image is necessarily a falsehood because God is infinitely more than the most we can conceive. The doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are not definitions of God. That would be impiety. The purpose of these teachings is to say what cannot be so if the Christian Good News is true.

We know that the Father is God and that Jesus is God. We know that there is one God. So we cannot say that Father and Son are two gods, but neither can we say that either the Father or the Son is not wholly and completely God. If they were not wholly of the same nature, Jesus would not be the authentic revelation of God. So the Church speaks of the Father and Jesus as two persons of one being or of one substance, but the

words person, being and substance cannot mean exactly the same as these words mean in everyday conversation because the being and personhood of God are infinitely greater than anything we can talk about and comprehend. Person, being and substance are words which point us in the direction of beginning to understand the mystery of God Who is essentially Unity but Who exists eternally as three persons in eternal love.

Which brings us to the Holy Spirit, but before we consider the third person of the Godhead Who bears witness to Christ and the Father, we must say a little more about the nature – or rather the natures – of Jesus. As we have seen, Jesus is God just as the Father is God and the Holy Ghost is God. Otherwise He would not be the complete revelation of God. Jesus is also everything that it is to be human. He understands us completely because He completely and authentically experiences a human life. He was hungry and thirsty. He wept. He felt pain. He died. He was tempted in every way that we are tempted. He absolutely sympathises with our human condition because He absolutely shares our humanity. He sanctifies humanity, breaking down the wall which we have built between us and God by our disobedience to God's perfect Law of Love. Because Jesus came to earth and died for us, through faith in Him, we may rise with Him and go to heaven. Jesus is like us in every respect except sin – which is our failure to love – to love God with all hearts and to love our neighbours as ourselves. It is not unreasonable that the Son of God is also human because human beings are made in the image of God to be the children of God. Christ fulfils what it is to be truly human. In Him (through faith in His Blood) our humanity is fulfilled and we become divine.

So Jesus is one person with two natures. He is God and Man. He is everything that God is and everything that a human being should be. One person, two natures. This is the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Whereas the doctrine of the Trinity is that God has one nature, or substance, or being and He is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sing in the Christmas carols that Jesus is Emmanuel, which means God with us. When He was about to die and to rise again and to ascend into Heaven, He promised that He would not leave us comfortless. He would send another Comforter. (Jesus is the first Comforter.) This other Comforter, of course, is the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, Who bears witness to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit dwells in us Christians and we in Him. He prays with us and for us. The fellowship of the Church is the fellowship of the Holy Ghost because it is He Who unites us in love for God and for one another. The Spirit leads the Church into all truth. He enables us to do greater works than Jesus did. He supplies us with the spiritual gifts by which every one of us is empowered to do the good works God has prepared for us to walk in, to complete the apostolic mission which the Father gave to Jesus and Jesus gave to the Church, to set the whole creation free from the bondage of sin and death. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. This is the Spirit Whom Jesus breathed on His apostles and Who came in a mighty rushing wind and with tongues as of fire at Pentecost. Studying the Scriptures and by prayerful reflection in Christian fellowship, the Church realised that this is the same Holy Spirit That moved on the face of the waters at Creation and spoke by the prophets and enabled the saints of the Old Testament to play their part in God's plan for the salvation of the world. The Holy Spirit is none other than the third person of the eternal Holy Trinity – the Triune God.

One last thing. The Bible teaches that God is love. The unity of God is the eternal loving relationship of the three persons of the Trinity. This same God relates to the whole of Creation in love. He relates to us in love and we to Him. His Will is that we should relate to one another in love so that the Church too might be one in Him and the whole world converted, transformed into the likeness of God made man, Jesus Christ our Saviour, in an eternal unity of love.

This isn't a mathematical puzzle or a philosophical conundrum. It is the logical outworking of what we celebrate on 25<sup>th</sup> December each year or, to put it more simply, the fact that Love Came down at Christmas.

Roger.

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, love divine  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine,  
Worship we our Jesus;  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Christina Rossetti.

## From the Registers

### Baptism:

4<sup>th</sup> November

Isabella Elizabeth Rossini

Charles Drive

### Confirmation at Cliffe:

17<sup>th</sup> October

Andrew Morris

Iris Crew

Kent Road

Bush Road

If anyone is considering confirmation next year, The Bishop of Rochester is coming to Cuxton for this purpose on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Preparation will begin in the Summer. Please discuss with Rector if interested.

### Thanks

The Medway Looked After Children (MILAC) team thank us for our harvest gifts which they will be gratefully received by the young people in their care.



#### **SILVER DAISY - FLOWERS**

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#### 17<sup>th</sup> Century Nun's Prayer

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody: helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and less cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen.

#### Prayer on the Wall of an Old Inn

Give us, Lord, a bit o' sun,  
a bit o' work and a bit o' fun;  
give us all in the struggle and sputter  
our daily bread and a bit o' butter;  
an' a bit to spare for others' sake:  
give us sense, for we're some of us  
duffers,  
an' a heart to feel for all that suffers;

give us, too, a bit of a song  
and a tale, and a book to help us along.  
An' give us our share o' sorrow's lesson  
that we may prove how grief's a blessing  
Give us, Lord, a chance to be  
our goodly best, brave, wise, and free,  
our goodly best for ourself, and others  
till all men learn to live as brothers.

St Michael's Draw: £20, Mrs D. Taylor, £10 Mrs I. Crew, £5 Mrs. G. Bogg – drawn by Dave Maxwell.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Chidwick (9), Mrs Smith (49), Mrs Catchpole (79) & Mrs Court (150) – drawn by Mrs Smitherman.



# Christmas Minimarket (Christmas Coffee Morning)

This will take place at 10.00 on  
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December at the Church  
Hall Cuxton with all the usual stalls,  
refreshments and attractions plus ???



**The  
Children's  
Society**

## Children's Society

This year's box opening yielded £374.74. Well done everybody. If you like a Children's Society box in your home to save your loose change for a good cause, please ask Julia Wells 727424.



## Halling WI

We were minus our chairman at our October meeting but Betty and Ann took the meeting as best they could without her. After Jerusalem, the minutes were read and signed and buttonholes were distributed to the birthday girls. Correspondence. We have been asked to make a SCRAPPY SAM, a figure made out of anything recyclable e.g. yogurt pots, cotton reels, ring pulls or anything that we throw away. The figures will be exhibited at the Friars next year for the Federation's 95<sup>th</sup> year celebrations. We have also been asked to make a pincushion, any medium, for the same celebration. We also had notification of a National Quiz. I don't think we are going to enter. A meeting had been arranged at Aylesford Community Centre to discuss the constitution which the National Federation is upgrading. (I don't think many ordinary members even know that we have a constitution.) Betty and I will go to see if we can make head or tail of it.

Our speaker this month, and yes he did turn up, was Mr Porter. He came to tell us about the Suffragette movement. Sounds a boring subject, but after listening to him, no woman should ever say "I'm not going to vote". Although Emily Pankhurst was to the fore in the Suffragette movement many, many more women were involved getting the vote for us. It took 40yrs before it happened. Many women all over the country were involved. Some were put in prison. Others were force fed. Some were beaten. Then they began to be violent against the police. Mr Porter was a very good speaker and made a boring subject extremely interesting. Betty won the competition with her box of Inn signs and I won Flower of the Month with my Nerine.

Our speaker for November will be Mr Spear talking about "Going to school in Japan" and we really must talk about the new constitution. I will make it as painless as I can, but I don't think it will make any difference to our little W.I., but don't forget next month's letter is J. Phyllis.

## **Nature Notes October 2012**

(I have chosen the following poem as I often see this graceful bird flying over the water at Bluewater. )

### **Heron by Ruth M.L Walker**

This long-legged bird,  
Stands motionless  
As a shroud  
Partially submerged  
In the sluggish current.

Long after the wailing gulls  
Have ceased their chatter,  
It maintains its vigil  
In the darkening light,  
Neck held erect,  
Spear beak ready  
To pounce.

Then it pierces the water,  
Transfixing the trout  
At a glance, raises  
Its throat, then,  
With hoarse, croaking cry,  
Flies off to its  
Tree-top nest.

The first five days of the month are spent in the beautiful countryside of Wiltshire where billowing clouds march across the vast expanse of Salisbury Plain. Up in the fields of Orcheston, where we are staying, I hear the strident song of a great tit which I normally associate with Spring, and marvel at the beautiful colours of the leaves as they change their green tresses of green to red, gold, yellow and purple. Sheep graze nearby then glance up to watch my passing before resuming their feeding. I find a few wild flowers then elders and hawthorns laden with fruits much needed food for the birds. Fields have been ploughed for new crops to be sown; thus the cycle of nature's bounty begins again. I walk along The Ridgeway breathing in the fresh westerly winds and marvel at the views extending to my left and, again, watching billowing white and grey clouds casting their large shadows as they march across the sky. On 4<sup>th</sup>, which is a glorious morning of blue skies brushed with tiny wisps of cloud, golden sunshine and fresh westerly winds, I walk along by a nearby ditch, across the field and up to rolling hills which are magnificent in the sunlight. I'm aware of birdsong in the hawthorns and the cawing of rooks in the beeches. Along by the ditch footpath, I watch red admiral and comma butterflies sucking on nectar from ivy flowers. I see more red admirals along the route. I stop to gaze at the beautiful views. More clouds gather in the middle of the day, a few drops of rain fall then the evening becomes clear. I walk with Murphy at Bluewater on 6<sup>th</sup> to see how many wild flowers remain. I find pink and white clover, lucerne, sans foin, viper's bugloss, yarrow and bristly ox tongue. In the garden at home, a great spotted woodpecker comes to feed. The next day a red admiral butterfly hovers near the kitchen window. Chilly North West winds blow on 10<sup>th</sup> when we drive to Larkfield and I'm aware of the beautiful colours of the trees along the Halling by-pass. I see a proliferation of slugs in the garden on 11<sup>th</sup> as well as the mole hills by the bird feeders. The early morning of 12<sup>th</sup> is grey as westerly breezes drive billowing clouds across the sky but eventually the skies become a beautiful blue with golden sunshine beaming down upon the earth. It lifts the spirits. I feed the birds and watch pigeons and collared doves as they join the greenfinches. Sunny, but cool days follow and while out with Murphy I notice beautiful cloud formations which, when seeing such shapes as a child I imagined castles and

mountains. Then they would rapidly change shape. A cock pheasant finds its way into the garden the next day and it tries to get over the fence. Needless to say, Murphy soon made it move. The next three days are wet. Then fog settles over the countryside on 22<sup>nd</sup>. On 23<sup>rd</sup>, also damp and cold, I see spiders' webs draped on rosemary and cotoneaster twigs. They look so fragile and beautiful but there is no sunlight to cause them to glisten. Temperatures are quite mild. On 25<sup>th</sup>, I watch leaves falling from sycamores on the embankment, lilacs shedding their leaves in the garden. A goldfinch comes to the niger seed and magpies peck at the bread on the patio wall. North West winds in the afternoon drive grey clouds across the sky bringing cold air. Heavy rain falls on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> is bitterly cold. Bright sunshine lights up the garden for a while before another shower falls. The next day I read of disease affecting the ash trees. Our eco system could be badly damaged. We already have disease in oaks, larch and horse chestnut trees. British summertime ends on 28<sup>th</sup> bringing us dark mornings and long, dark evenings. Nature begins its winter sleep. The 29<sup>th</sup> is bright and breezy when I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. The banks and tree-filled areas have been cut for the winter and all the dead grasses and flowers have been erased. Billowing clouds of white and grey march across the sky in the westerly winds and the sun shines brightly. I see toad stools growing in the grass. There is warm sunshine on 30<sup>th</sup>. So I give the grass what I hope will be its last cut. On the last day of the month I am encouraged by a reading by Eddie Askew a Christian writer and artist who had worked for The Leprosy Mission in India. He is no longer alive but lives on in his paintings and his many books of Christian writing. He also broadcast for BBC Radio Nottingham and his thoughts for the day were put into book form. His advice is to take time to stand and stare at the beauty around me. As I lookout into the garden and up into the sky, I watch clouds part to reveal a patch of blue. The trees and shrubs are still, for as yet, there is no breath of wind. Clouds drift across from the west. Rain is falling when we drive with Murphy to Bluewater and our walk in the rain which Murphy does not like. When we eventually drive home, the sun is shining from a blue cloud-brushed sky and the trees in Autumn dress look beautiful. The wind strengthens in the afternoon and the skies are grey. Another month comes to a close. Elizabeth Summers.

### Spirited Response

Although some members of his congregation disapproved of all forms of alcoholic drink, the vicar did enjoy a nice liqueur. Teasing, a member of the congregation promised him a bottle of cherry brandy for Christmas if he'd put the *thank you* in the parish magazine. The vicar agreed, received his Christmas present and wrote in the next issue of the magazine, *I should like to thank AB for his kind gift of fruit this Christmas and for the spirit in which it was given.*



### Cuxton WI

Fewer members at the WI this month but then we remembered that it was half term and many people have voluntary duties as baby sitters and child entertainers at this time. However we were pleased to see one visitor who has said that she would like to become a member and she will join the several new people that we have welcomed into our ranks this year. Our speaker was Mr Porter who is a reporter ! He also writes factual books. He proceeded to give us a talk exposing some of the myths that have grown up around prominent Victorian characters. The Titanic disaster, Jack the Ripper, the Suffragette Movement and Florence Nightingale were amongst his characters. I think the one that stirred us the most was that when all women were eventually given the "vote" Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer was not at all in agreement with this - so much for the war efforts that so many women helped with during both world wars.

After Mr Porter we settled down to business as usual. Poor Pat and Marion had been to a long and complicated meeting about various alterations which are going to be applied to the WI constitution. Nobody in charge seemed to understand very much about these and I think we are all mainly of the opinion that what has worked well so far really does not need many changes. All our groups are going well and the Craft ladies will be leading a show of various crafts at our January meeting which any members can join in with as there are a lot of people who are very talented but prefer to not join groups. So it is lovely to see their work in our displays.

Next month is our Christmas Party - this is for members only so hurry up and join. We are hoping to go to a London show in March and perhaps a visit to the Hazlitt Theatre as well. So, no matter what the elements throw at us this winter there are always some good times to look forward to in the New Year. The Cuxton WI wish all our enthusiastic readers a very Happy Christmas.  
Sheila.

### Halling Historical Society

Thursday December 13<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm Jubilee Hall. Mrs J Mattingley will speak on the subject *The Jubilee Walk*. Visitors welcome.

### **Cuxton Community Infant School News**

Dear Friends of our School,

We were very grateful for the amount of tins sent into school for the Caring Hands homeless appeal. Ranscombe class (year 1) collected the most and received some games! The whole school entertained their parents by singing Harvest songs, reciting poems and showing paintings. Our environment morning was a great success. The weather was kind, and we managed to weed, clear, rebuild plant containers, and plant bulbs and winter flowers/plants. Each child was fully involved, and do look at our website for some stunning photographs (and a 'movie' in due course).

Maths has been a bigger focus than normal this half term, with a Maths Week of practical work including data handling, shape, space and measure, and problem solving. The Happy Maths Puzzle Company descended upon us, and the children had a thoroughly enjoyable time working together to solve various puzzles. We will be holding a maths and literacy workshop morning for parents shortly, to see how reading is taught in school, and also to experience the maths curriculum at foundation stage and key stage 1 levels.

Now into the second term we have already as a staff planned 'Christmas plays', the party, Christmas lunch and the arrival of the Christmas tree, which the children enjoy decorating. The children are enjoying the crispness and colours of the leaves from our many trees, and have mentioned snow ..... whilst it is pretty and fun, we keep our fingers crossed it won't come yet!

Yours sincerely, Sandra Jones, Headteacher.



### Max's Tail Piece

Unlike a lot of you Master and I have rather enjoyed the road closures around Cuxton and Halling. Life has been so much safer and more pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists. I did, however, nearly pull Master into the path of one of the very few cars on Pilgrims Road the other day and he told me off for having more enthusiasm than prudence. Perhaps that's why I'm so much more cheerful than he is. Maybe you can be too careful saving your life to enjoy it properly! Anyway soon be Christmas. I love unwrapping presents, other people unwrapping theirs as well as opening mine for me. Extra and more special food. Good company. Merry Christmas everybody from Max and Master says, "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" to all of you as well.  
Max, the Rectory Spaniel.