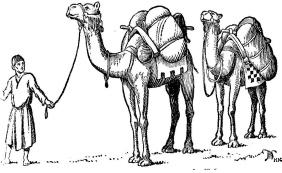


Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
30 th November Advent Sunday Year B	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1145 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019	
	6.30 Evensong followed by Rector's 60 th birthday party in church hall. All welcome.	Isaiah 1 vv 1-20 p685 Matthew 21 vv 1-13 p988	
7 th December Advent 2	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service & Dedication of new south door.	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002	
14 th December Advent 3	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 I Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1063	
21 st December Advent 4	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Advent 4	
	9.30 Holy Communion	II Samuel 7 vv 1-17 p310 Romans 16 vv 25-27 p1143 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1926	
	6.30 Nine Lessons and Carols followed by refreshments in church hall.		
22 nd December	7.00 pm Scout & Guide Carol Service		
24 th December Christmas Eve	9.30 am Holy Communion (Christmas Eve)	Acts 13 vv 16-26 p1107 Luke 1 vv 67-79 p1027	
	5.00 Crib Service, Christingle & Nativity Play		
	11.00 pm First Mass of Christmas	Isaiah 52 vv 7-10 p739 Hebrews 1 vv 1-12 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063	
25 th December Christmas Day	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 17-25 p752 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Luke 20 vv 1-20 p1055	
28 th December Holy Innocents	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Jeremiah 31 vv 15-17 p792 I Corinthians 1 vv 26-29 p1145 Revelation 14 vv 1-5 p1243 Matthew 2 vv 13-18 p966	
4 th January Christmas 2	9.30 Family Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 7-14 p791 Ephesians 1 vv 1-14 p1173 John 1 vv 10-18 p1063	
6 th January Epiphany	9.30 Holy Communion followed by brunch in the church hall.	Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746 Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966	
11 th January Baptism of Christ	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p3 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002	
18 th January Epiphany 2	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel Epiphany 2 BCP	
	9.30 Holy Communion	I Samuel 3 vv 1-20 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-14 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51	
25 th January Conversion of S Paul	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 1 vv 1-10 p755 Acts 9 vv 1-22 p1102 Galatians 1 vv 11-16 p1168 Matthew 19 vv 27-30 p987	
1 st February Candlemas	9.30 Family Communion	Malachi 3 vv 1-5 p961 Hebrews 2 vv 14-18 p1202 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028	
Holy Communion Wednesdays at St Michael's 9.30 am			
3 rd December	Isaiah 25 vv 6-10 Matthew 15 vv 29-37	7 th January	I John 3 vv 22 - 4 v6 Matthew 4 vv 12-25
10 th December Ember Day	Isaiah 40 vv 25-31 Matthew 11 vv 28-30	14 th January	Hebrews 2 vv 14-18 Mark 1 vv 29-39
17 th December	Genesis 49 vv 1-10 Matthew 1 vv 1-17	21 st January	Hebrews 7 vv 1-17 Mark 3 vv 1-6
24 th December	Acts 13 vv 16-26 p1107 Luke 1 vv 67-79 p1027	28 th January	Hebrews 10 vv 11-18 Mark 4 vv 1-20
31 st December	I John 2 vv 18-21 John 1 vv 1-18	4 th February	Hebrews 12 vv 4-15 Mark 6 vv 1-6

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
30 th November Advent Sunday Year B	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1145 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019	
7 th December Advent 2 Year B	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 15 vv 1-13 p1141 Matthew 11 vv 2-11 p976	
	11.00 Holy Communion & Gift Service.	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002	
14 th December Advent 3	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 I Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1063	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Malachi 3 vv 1-5 p961 Malachi 4 vv 1-6 p962 Philippians 4 vv 4-7 p1181	
21 st December Advent 4	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	II Samuel 7 vv 1-17 p310 Romans 16 vv 25-27 p1143 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1926	
	3.00 Carol Service, Crib Service & Christingle.		
25 th December Christmas Day	8.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 62 vv 1-5 p748 Matthew 1 vv 18-25 p965	
28 th December Holy Innocents	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 15-17 p792 I Corinthians 1 vv 26-29 p1145 Revelation 14 vv 1-5 p1243 Matthew 2 vv 13-18 p966	
4 th January Christmas 2	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 12 vv 1-8 p1139 Matthew 2 vv 13-23 p966	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 7-14 p791 Ephesians 1 vv 1-14 p1173 John 1 vv 10-18 p1063	
11 th January Baptism of Christ	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p3 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 42 vv 1-9 p727 Ephesians 2 vv 1-10 p1174	
18 th January Epiphany 2	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	I Samuel 3 vv 1-20 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-14 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51	
25 th January Conversion of S Paul	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 1 vv 1-10 p755 Acts 9 vv 1-22 p1102 Galatians 1 vv 11-16 p1168 Matthew 19 vv 27-30 p987	
1 st February Candlemas	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Haggai 2 vv 1-9 p948 John 2 vv 18-22 p1065	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Malachi 3 vv 1-5 p961 Hebrews 2 vv 14-18 p1202 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028	
Holy Communion Thursdays at St John's at 9.30 am			
4 th December	Isaiah 26 vv 1-6 Matthew 7 vv 21-27	8 th January	I John 4 vv 7-10 Mark 6 vv 34-44
11 th December	Isaiah 41 vv 13-20 Matthew 11 vv 11-15	15 th January	Hebrews 3 vv 7-14 Mark 1 vv 40-45
18 th December	Jeremiah 23 vv 5-8 Matthew 1 vv 18-24	22 nd January	Hebrews 7 vv 25 – 8 v6 Mark 3 vv 7-12
25 th December at 8.00 am	Isaiah 62 vv 1-5 p748 Matthew 1 vv 18-25 p965	29 th January	Hebrews 10 vv 19-25 Mark 4 vv 21-25
1 st January Naming of Jesus	Numbers 6 vv 22-27 Galatians 4 vv 4-7 Luke 2 vv 15-21	5 th February	Hebrews 12 vv 18-24 Mark 6 vv 7-13

Copy Date February Magazine:
9th January 8.30 am Rectory



From the Rector

Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing to have a birthday near Christmas? Some of your friends and family might think it isn't necessary to buy you two presents in the space of a couple of weeks. Even if they want to buy you two presents, they might not be able to afford to. Also your birthday party might disappear in the round of Christmas parties. Even your birthday cards are likely to be somewhat eclipsed by a much larger number of Christmas cards.

On the other hand, if you want a big present which is really too expensive, you can sometimes bargain for a combined Christmas / birthday present. While I didn't suggest it, that accounts for the set top box which actually goes under my television set. Moreover, it can be a good thing to have your party in party season. People are in the mood. Food and drink are flowing freely. And you can keep your birthday cards separate from the Christmas cards, admittedly easier when your birthday is 30th November than it was for my grandmother whose birthday was 18th December. We used to try to keep them separate on the mantle piece while the Christmas cards hung up on strings, but, on twelfth night, we often found birthday cards amongst the Christmas decorations.

It is possibly more of a problem if your birthday is actually on Christmas Day. And what about those of you whose birthday comes just after Christmas, when people are spent out and partied out? We do have one family member like that. I'm not sure how he likes it. We do usually make sure he either gets two presents or one big present worth two ordinary ones.

Another issue I hadn't considered till recently was that a lot of families celebrate children's birthdays with exciting outdoor activities. These might not be much fun midwinter. So, I understand that some winter born children are given a second birthday in the Summer when they can go to the zoo or the beach or whatever. After all, the Queen has two birthdays – one in the Summer when parades are less likely to get rained on.

Then, some families, feeling that it is not fair that winter born children should have two birthdays and summer born children should only have one

birthday, give their summer born children a second birthday in the winter, when they can have winter birthday treats like skiing or going to see Santa. The only day I ever got taken out of school, other than for mercifully rare illnesses, was when my father took me for a 5th, 6th or 7th (I can't now remember which) birthday treat to see the Christmas lights in Regent Street and to visit Hamley's toy shop – an experience which is still worth taking a child to enjoy.

Two birthdays, one Summer, one Winter. To some of you, this will make perfect sense. To others, it might seem like the world has gone mad. I sense that this is my cue (as a Christian clergyman) to rail against materialism, consumerism, over-indulgence, spoiling children and downright greed.

Fair enough. Nobody would want to give their children just enough food, warmth and clothing to survive on – which probably isn't very much. Very few adults would want to live on the bare necessities of life either. On the other hand, I think we are all revolted by excess. Excessive consumption undermines our physical, mental and spiritual health, damages the ecosystem and may well be at the expense of other people who actually don't get enough to live a decent life on.

There is, however, a considerable spectrum between just enough to get buy on and disgusting excess. Where you want to be and where you want your family to be on that line is for you to decide, taking all of the above into account.

I cannot, however, leave the subject of materialism at Christmas without mentioning that the Word actually became flesh. God, Who is Spirit, became a man. The Son of God was born in a stable and laid in a manger. Jesus is both God and man, human and divine. *God so loved the world.* So this world of parties and presents is just as much His domain as is the realm of Heaven. This world in which some have far too much and some have far too little is His home just as much as is the highest place in Heaven. It makes you think both about where we are now and where we hope to be going, about what we do with the lives He has given us in this world and about what He has prepared hereafter for those of us who love His appearing. Merry Christmas, Roger.



FKC Churches Ride and Stride

Thank you all of you who supported Mary and me for this year. Between us we raised £245 of which half comes to our parish and the other half goes to Friends of Kent Churches who arrange the event and generally assist churches in the county.

Mary took the stride option around Tunbridge Wells and Bidborough, calling on 22 churches and not a few cake shops. I took the ride option and managed 30 churches in a cross between a mid life crisis and a trip down memory lane. Someone had suggested I was too old to cycle up Birling Hill. So I had to try

to prove him wrong, taking in both Halling churches and Snodland, before turning up past the cemetery chapel and Paddlesworth and on and up to Harvel. Harvel was a navigation error and, so far as I could see, a church desert. So then Meopham, Sole Street, Nursted (first time I'd seen the interior) and Longfield to Southfleet and Betsham, the hamlet in which I had lived as a child. The pub's gone. The farm's gone. The shop and post office went long ago, as did the garage, which for a few years took their place. Even the 'phone box has gone. It's all just houses now. I thought the one we lived in looked a bit dilapidated, but I guess I too looked fresher fifty plus years ago when my family moved into that then newly built bungalow. In many ways the car is the problem, a garage and drive replacing the pedestrian pathway, flanked by flower beds (Esther Reeds were our speciality) and grass, which we had. Of course the car is also responsible for the loss of the post office and shop and (paradoxically) the garage, just as mechanisation has done for the smaller farms, hop gardens and orchards of standard fruit trees which made Betsham such a pretty place in years gone by. The car also accounts for the fact that the place is dirtier, noisier and more dangerous than it was when I was a child! Betsham never had its own church. Thankfully one of the two churches to which we used to go at Southfleet is still flourishing. How sad that the other is not. From Betsham, via Westwood, High Cross and Bean, and past my least favourite place on earth to Greenhithe, Swanscombe, Northfleet and Gravesend, then Chalk, Higham and so to Frindsbury, where I was baptised (in 1955 not during the bike ride). I returned home via Rochester and Borstal in order to avoid the road works at Darnley Arch, which enabled me to bag four more churches. Roger.



My 60th Birthday

God willing, I shall be 60 on 30th November this year. I shall be celebrating at Evensong at St Michael's at 6.30 pm that day, followed by a party in the church hall. All my friends are invited, which I hope includes all readers of this magazine. So see you there. No presents, please, but a celebratory donation to our church would be much appreciated. (I still need a job!) Any cheques should be made payable to Cuxton & Halling PCC. Roger.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

This traditional carol may seem to be nothing more than a bit of charming nonsense, but actually it is believed to have a much deeper symbolism, teaching the Christian faith and specifically its Roman Catholic form at a time when Roman Catholics were persecuted. (I can, however, only find one "Roman" doctrine in it which is not shared by the Church of England. See if you can spot it. Answer next page) My true love is, of course, God.

The partridge in the pear tree represents Jesus.
The two turtle doves are the Old & New Testaments.
The French hens are faith, hope and charity.
The calling birds are Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
The five gold rings are the Books of Moses – the first five books of the Bible.
The six geese a laying are the six days of creation.
The seven swans are the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit or the seven sacraments.

The eight maids are the beatitudes (Matthew 5³⁻¹⁰).
The ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5^{22&23}).
The ten lords a leaping are the Ten Commandments.
The eleven pipers are the faithful apostles (minus Judas)
The twelve drummers are the clauses of the Apostles' Creed.

Answer: The Church of England believes that there are only two Sacraments – the ones ordained by Christ in the gospels. These are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. The other five regarded as Sacraments by the Roman Catholic Church are Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Unction. It depends what you mean by the word *Sacrament*.

Confirmation 2015

I am pleased to be able to say that we shall be holding a service of Confirmation next year on 24th June at 7.30 pm at St John's Church. This is, of course, our Patronal Festival at Halling.

If you wish to be confirmed, please let me know. Classes will begin in the new year. Candidates should be twelve years of age or older, but, with the bishop's permission those who are ten or eleven may be confirmed if they are ready for the commitment involved. What is required of candidates for Confirmation? Simply that they take seriously the promises we all make at Baptism (or our godparents make for us). The classes are an opportunity to consider what this means at a level appropriate for you.

??? OLDE TYME MUSICAL???VAUDEVILLE???VARIETY SHOW???

Something like this is planned for next year. Do have an act? A talent? A song? A desire to play a part? A musical instrument? Can you juggle, spin plates or eat fire? How are your card tricks? Have you ever sawn a lady in half. If you feel you could contribute in any way, please inform the rector.

Supporting the Foodbank

We are delighted to announce that Medway Foodbank has gone live with 'Just-Giving', which will allow supporters to donate by text. I have provided the link to our website page below that briefly shows how it works (very simple). <http://medway.foodbank.org.uk/donate-text>. As an example, a donator would text **FDBK22 £10 to 70070** to donate £10. We would very much appreciate you sharing this information with your network of supporters. We are grateful for all that you do for Medway Foodbank. We would literally not be here without you.

PARISH CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The King Charles the Martyr annual lecture will be taking place at the Parish Church of King Charles the Martyr, London Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1YX at 2.30 pm on Saturday 31 January 2015. Professor John Harper, Honorary Professor, Liturgy and Music, University of Birmingham and Emeritus Professor, Bangor University, will be giving a lecture entitled *Music in the Chapels Royal of Charles I and his Queen*. Charles had established his own court musicians as Prince of Wales, and then inherited an exceptionally fine body of musicians in both the Royal Music and the Chapel Royal on his accession. Following his marriage to Henrietta Maria in 1625, a new Roman Catholic Chapel Royal was required. In London (and in Oxford during the Civil War) the Chapels Royal of the king and queen were major centres of the musical activity of both English and foreign composers, singers and instrumentalists. This lecture will consider the people, buildings, liturgy and repertoires of the Chapels Royal. The Church of King Charles the Martyr is near The Pantiles, in Tunbridge Wells. There is no entrance charge for the lecture.

Christmas Coffee Morning & Minimarket

Saturday 13th December

10.00

Cuxton Church Hall

Coffee & mince pies, life boat stall, prize-every time, tombola, Santa Claus.

A variety of stalls and games.

From the Registers

Wedding Blessing:

11th October

Neil & Louise Hamilton

Cuxton

Funerals:

21st October

Arthur Charles Woodger (85)

Meadow Crescent

31st October

Margaret June Clifton (81)

Rochester Road Halling

Churchyards & Cemetery

As you know, Medway Council carry out the maintenance on St John's churchyard and you will have seen that we have had no problems this year and it has been generally kept neat and tidy. The only outstanding job which really ought to be done is to thin those trees which hide the church from the road and make some graves barely accessible. If you knew the ridiculous bureaucracy we have to contend with!

Halling Cemetery got out of hand earlier in the year, for which I apologise and would like to thank again the army of volunteers who worked so hard at the beginning of the Summer to bring it back under control. Since then the Probation Service have carried on the good work of maintaining and improving this important area within our parish. They are doing a really good job and it is worth a visit just to see what they are achieving.

We have continued to employ a gentleman to carry out the routine maintenance on Cuxton churchyard and the Probation Service have also been working here, doing much of the rough clearance work, including thinning the trees in the southwest corner to improve access to the graves and seat there. This has been much appreciated.

Please help by keeping your own family graves tidy and removing rubbish. We still need funds to keep up the good work. Thank you all who have donated to churchyard and cemetery maintenance in the past. If you are able to help us towards the costs of next year's maintenance, please pass any contributions to churchwardens or me. Cheques should be payable to Cuxton and Halling. PCC. Roger.

Looking to January and 2015

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

24th January: 7.30 pm Concert at St Michael's to commemorate 1914 Christmas truce.

6th March: 7.00 pm Women's World Day of Prayer service at St Michael's.

Observations

If it were not for the Holy Spirit, the Church would be a dead carpenter's memorial society.

“Focus on the present frees us from bondage to yesterday and fear of tomorrow.” Dorothy Bass.

“The purpose and cause of the incarnation was that He might illuminate the world by His wisdom and excite it to the love of Himself.” Peter Abelard.

“The longest journey is the journey inwards.” Dag Hammarsjold.

How do you make a pumpkin pi? Measure the circumference and divide by the diameter.

Two dogs chatting in the park. One says to the other, “Isn't that a boomerang?” The other dog asks, “What's a boomerang?” The first dog answers, “A boomerang is a stick for someone who can't afford a dog.”

St John's Draw: £5 each to Miss J Thorne (23), Mr R Thorne (32), Mrs M Smythe (49) & Mrs M Burren (55) – drawn by Mrs Fuller.

St Michael's Draw: £10 each Mrs Cheesmer, Mrs Townsend Mrs Beaney, & Jenny Beaney, £5 each Mrs Cosford & Mrs Saunders – drawn by Mrs Harris.



Halling WI

Halling WI had the chocolate lady as our speaker for October as our "booked" speaker was in hospital after a heart operation. Mr Chambers was going to speak on Re-incarnation. Have we lived before? I was looking forward to finding out what I was coming back as. Thinking about it, I'm not coming back unless I can come back as me.

We had a back to front meeting. So Susan, the chocolate lady, went first. She part owns or works at the chocolate shop in West Malling and brought with her some samples of how they pack and present their chocolates, all very pretty. Firstly, Susan had put together for us a fun quiz related to sweets and chocolate. Some of the answers were people I had never heard of before. So it was quite difficult in part. After the quiz, Susan produced some very thin rounds of chocolate and showed us how to do piping, something I have done for years, but some of the girls hadn't. So they were invited to "have a go". After a lot of laughter and not a lot of concentration, they showed me their efforts. Oh dear! Some should have stuck to using one colour as the colours had run into each other making every thing looked bruised, but they were all pleased with their efforts and put them up to set.

We then had our tea and biscuits and my diet went on hold. I haven't had a Kit-Kat for months, but one won't matter, will it? Then the business part

of our meeting began, not a great deal this month but getting nearer to Christmas, some important dates: a District meeting at Larkfield on November 26th to discuss next year's programme; 2nd December the WI National Centenary Baton will be arriving in West Kent Federation from the Essex Federation, crossing the Thames by the lifeboat to Gravesend. It will travel around the county arriving at our District Carol Service at All Saint's Church Snodland, on 6th December, when we all will be able to see it. Then after further venues in West Kent it will be handed over to the East Kent Federation on 9th December at Rolvenden Parish Church Christmas Tree Festival. The District will be having a mini bus to Rolvenden to see the Christmas Trees on that day when over 40 trees provided by the WIs will be on show.

Before Susan went home she judged our competitions. Ann Hayward won the Flower of the Month, and I won the competition for "Something to do with chocolate". My photo of little Lola with chocolate on her face after eating a chocolate muffin must have taken Susan's fancy.

Now, next month, our speaker will be Mr Colin Beech, his subject "Royal visits to Kent". Competition make and wear a tiara. Better get mining to find some diamonds and get cracking with the glue gun. Phyllis.

Nature Notes October 2014

"Heron" 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
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 early morning of 1st is grey but brightens up later. However, I have to give Murphy an undercover walk. By mid morning the sun is shining and it feels quite warm. Grey clouds gather in the afternoon but there is some sunshine. The next day there is bright

sunshine and blue skies in the morning and early afternoon until grey clouds appear from the west and eventually cover the sky and this lasts throughout the daylight hours. Evening skies clear revealing a crescent moon. On 3rd, I drive to Addington beneath

skies of blue and golden sunshine. More trees are becoming Autumnal as they display brown and golden leaves. The night skies are very clear revealing the crescent moon. I walk with Murphy at Bluewater the next morning. Rain falls in the afternoon. The sun shines brightly for most of the 5th. I walk across the fields, where hawthorns are laden with dark red berries. I walk through part of Mays Wood, skirt the field where hedge woundwort blooms and walk back through Six-acre Wood. Heavy rain falls on the morning of 8th. Then sunshine brightens the rest of the day. A jay comes to the garden for food. On 9th, a garden warbler comes to the garden to feed. In the evening an orange moon rises in the east. The early morning of 10th is sunny as I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Dark clouds build up and some rain falls. We drive home through heavy rain. Later, in the early evening, there is a beautiful rainbow. There are some rumbles of thunder once darkness has fallen. The 12th and 13th are mild and grey with rain. The 16th is a fine day after early cloud. We drive to Bluewater where I walk with Murphy. Along the pathways a few flowers still bloom. Trees are displaying more Autumn colours. I feel the warmth of the sun on my face. It is a mild day. I watch a dragonfly as it perches on the garden bench and a red admiral on the window ledge. A robin perches on the handle of the wheelbarrow. Temperatures reach 19C on 17th. The sun shines brightly on the morning of the 18th and strong, warm westerly winds send leaves scurrying across the ground at Bluewater where I walk with Murphy. The afternoon becomes overcast with some drizzle but the late afternoon brings more sunshine. It is 20C on 19th. The 20th is warm and sunny; then rain falls in the night. The sun brightens the next morning but billowing, dark clouds march across the sky, driven by strong westerly winds. Leaves fly up into the air before drifting down to the grassy paths at Bluewater. I watch a very large, dark mass of cloud as it is driven across the sky but, fortunately for me, no rain falls. The colours in the sky of drifting white and grey clouds, and the blue of

the sky are beautiful. The sun shines well into the afternoon. The 22nd is a beautiful, warm day. I hear the call of a tawny owl in the evening of 23rd. The 25th is sunny after early cloud. I walk with Murphy round the lake where clover and ragwort are still in bloom. I continue to enjoy the colours in the trees. A coot and a grebe float on the rippling water stirred by a westerly breeze. The sun continues to shine well into the afternoon when I sit outside enjoying the warmth. I hear a few bird calls. On the evening of 26th, the clocks go back to Greenwich mean time so that darkness will fall earlier. The 27th is a beautiful day of blue skies, wispy white clouds and golden sunshine. I walk with Murphy round the rippling lake at Bluewater where a coot and grebe glide. The Autumn leaves and berries glow in the sunlight. The afternoon remains sunny and warm. As darkness falls, the evening skies are clear. When I walk round the lake on 28th, I notice the willows which are reflected, in the mirror smooth water, beautiful cloud formations and a heron standing quite still in the reeds. The 29th is grey and wet. Then in the late afternoon, rooks fly to the riverside trees to roost. Many birds perch on the electricity wires connected to the pylons. The 30th is warm and sunny and there is hardly a breath of wind. In the afternoon, I walk up the church path and across the fields where deep red haws, bright red hips and bright pink spindle berries adorn the branches. Clover, mallow, buttercups and bristly ox tongue bloom among the lush green grass. I continue along leaf strewn paths in Mays Wood which is silent except for the sound of my footsteps. Then I hear a magpie's call and a little later the cackle of a pheasant. I skirt the field where corn on the cob is being harvested; then cross the fields again. The river sparkles in the sunlight. The last day of the month is warm. I enjoy the sunshine while in the garden and watch a red admiral butterfly as it hovers; then a dragonfly settles on a pot of flowers. The clear skies remain until darkness falls. A westerly breeze blows. As the light fades, rooks fly home to roost. Elizabeth Summers.



Cuxton WI

You may have seen ladies in the village looking very smart these days as we had a visit from the Bon Marche clothing store in October and a lot of money changed hands. It was very enjoyable to be able to see the clothes without having to make the journey into town. November had a different aspect altogether. We met Sir Jeremy Elwes who told us about the Worshipful Livery Companies of the City of London. This was quite fascinating and we learnt that you have to be a Freeman of the city

before joining a livery company. The oldest of these is the Fishmongers and it was started in 1272. They are called worshipful as they originally met in churches. The guild members were usually very wealthy and were able to help the poor of London in many ways. Even now they are extremely charitable organisations and gave over 900 million pounds in charity work last year. Many were lost in the Great Fire of London but have since found new locations and now number 110 companies. The Mercers is one of the very rich because of ownership of land and

properties in London. One member asked if it were possible to go in and view the beautiful halls where they meet and we were told that this is sometimes possible - the Mercers was the favourite choice !

We then got down to business as usual. We had a long discussion on the resolutions for next year's AGM at the Albert Hall. Over the past years these have often had an influence on governments – a very large body of women can have a solid effect on things happening in the country. There were 9 resolutions to be voted on and then our votes join all the others all over the country and the most popular one goes forward.

All our usual clubs have been busy. The craft group are making an Alphabet frieze and also a

new tablecloth for us to use during the 100th anniversary next year, The Walking group decided to go to London on the windiest day of the year to view the Poppies around the Tower. They were wonderful and because of the dry but very windy weather there were not so many people and we were able to get views from all angles. We also got a 41 gun salute just as we arrived - just for us, nothing at all to do with the state visit of the President of Singapore!

Next month is our Christmas party so members only this time I'm afraid but we are meeting again for a social night on Thursday January 8. So come along and meet us all you will be most welcome.

<p>Saturday 20th December. Carol Singing in the Open Air. 6.00 pm – Grounds of Bush Road Chapel.</p>	
An ecumenical event. Please come and join us.	All welcome. Refreshments to follow.



The Children's Society

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY NEWS

I would like to thank all box holders for their fantastic contribution of £464.10 towards the work of the Children's Society. Once again it is higher than last year's total. So well done everyone! Thanks also to Sue Cockburn for her very accurate counting and good company. There is a copy of the Children's Society magazine

at the back of St Michael's church if anyone would like to borrow it and find out more about the work of this charity. They are involved in a wide range of projects, including helping teenage runaways. If you would like to join us in raising money by having a collecting box in your home (or you think that yours is on its last legs and would like a new one), please contact me on 01634 727424 Julia Wells.

Just A Very Simple Thank You

It had been very many years since I had blown out the candles on my birthday cake, when I was greeted with this surprise on Sunday 26th October in the church hall after morning service. May I thank you all for the cake, 80th birthday cars, expressions of congratulation and best wishes, also for the "Happy Birthday" balloon which is still flying at home over two weeks later. My sincere wish is that, in spite of being the oldest male Curnow in three generations (by some 2²/₃ years) I may continue to be of service to you all for just a little while longer. Malcolm.

Food Bank

Always grateful to receive any long dated tinned and packeted foods, but the particular need now is for dried milk, UHT milk, tinned and other long life puddings and desserts, pasta sauces, instant mash, toiletries and Advent calendars. These may be brought to either of our two parish churches.

Autumn Riddle – A Transport of Delight

What's the difference between a deciduous tree and a railway locomotive?

One sheds its leaves. The other leaves its shed!



Unexpected News

Paul, Charitas and Hayoung Cho are back from Manila and living in Oxford. They have returned to England rather earlier than they intended because Charitas is expecting another baby in March. Please remember them in your prayers, especially as Charitas is rather old to be having another child. Hayoung is 14 now. At their leaving party, the seminarians Paul has been training for ministry were able to express their appreciation for all that the family have done for them. As well as spiritual insight, they have also been able to supply spectacles to some students. You may remember that these are in short supply in the Philippines. One area of work to pray for is the attempt to provide training in the Philippines for Anglican priests working in Vietnam and China. In these communist countries, there is still persecution of Christians. There are devoted pastors, but they cannot receive the training they need in their own lands. If you would like to see the whole of the Chos last link letter on e mail, I can forward it to you and I think we shall probably eventually receive paper copies to display in church.

This does raise the question whether we shall have a new link mission partner. It is good to support God's work overseas, to receive information about what the Church is doing in other countries and to enjoy Christian fellowship across the globe. Part of maintaining a link is, however, providing financial support for the partner working overseas. We need to ask ourselves whether we can afford to do this. Or maybe we should be asking ourselves if we can afford not to. What is the Church for if it doesn't support mission?

Hymn Composers 2

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685 -1750

"The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul."

Known mostly as an organist, J S Bach was pushed into the background as a composer by the melodious compositions of his sons. Bach was a clever technician of a musician, but in comparison with others he was not a tunesmith and in his lifetime was known by a relatively small number of important musical people. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that his output of vocal, choral, keyboard and instrumental music, both sacred and secular, was re-discovered by others, including Felix Mendelssohn who quite literally fell over a pile Bach's manuscripts in an organ loft. This new audience was from a different age and admired Bach's unique quality and drive – and this established him as a leading composer after his death.

A glance in the composers/arrangers index of the hymn book clearly shows a large amount of work but, unlike Ralph Vaughan-Williams in the twentieth century who often composed his own tunes or adapted folk melodies, Bach often arranged or harmonised the work (melodies) of others. His style demonstrates that he fully understands both harmonic progression (how chords fit together) and the complicated details of Romantic counterpoint (how different tunes fit together and weave in and out of each other to produce a complete piece of work). In fact he was (is) regarded as the greatest contrapuntalist of all time. However, this eye for detail of complex structure often left him open to being accused of not making his music expressive or having an emotional content. Much of what he wrote directly related to the demands of his life and position. In some periods this meant providing music for the church (where he could develop his organ music) but in others where his position may have been at court, an outpouring of instrumental and works for orchestra was the norm. It was whilst he was living in Leipzig that the widest remit for his compositions existed. As Kantor his duties including writing specific compositions, producing and directing music, for civic events and organising music for the town's four main churches, plus teaching at the Thomasschule. There was a great outpouring of sacred and secular music including cantatas (themed compositions with vocalists and choir sections accompanied usually by orchestra) and motets (small religious choral works) for all occasions and church feast days including five sets of cantatas for the entire church year! Some of these writings are featured, albeit abridged, in our hymnbook, sometimes improving or harmonising the work of other composers. These include *Sleepers, wake!* in Advent, *All Glory, Laud, and honour* in Passiontide, *O sacred head, surrounded* in Holy Week, and *At the Lamb's high feast we sing* at Easter as well as the harmonisation of many hymns including those derived from chorales (a stately hymn often German in origin) like *Come, pure hearts, in sweetest measures* and *Strengthen for service*. I must not leave out, of course, a wedding favourite *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* (which is not included in the hymn book).

His work for the church meant that his orchestral writing took a backward step until he took on the directorship of the "Collegium Musicum" for the weekly concerts for which he revised many of his earlier instrumental works and wrote new works including the *Coffee Cantata* (because the Collegium met in a coffeehouse), *The Art of Fugue* (a fugue is based on a short melody which is then taken up by other parts and developed – and I find the technicalities of this quite difficult to play) and *A Musical Offering* dedicated to Frederick the Great. His sacred music still continued and saw compositions such as *Mass in B minor*, *Christmas Oratorio* and *St Mark Passion*.

Bach was a craftsman in that his formal structures of composition were intricate in detail and of high order. The downside of this was that he could be accused of being over-formalistic. One composition he worked on all his life was *The Well-Tempered Clavier* also known as *The 48 Preludes and Fugues*. The first twenty-four date from 1722 with the second twenty-four coming out twenty years later. The preludes are freely composed and the accompanying fugue is stricter and more complex and are quite challenging to the performer. These may have been intended as technical exercises that explore all areas of the harpsichord keyboard and are written in each of the forty-eight major and minor keys which superseded the modal harmony of the previous century. The piano was only invented in 1709 and so was in its infancy and was probably not available to Bach as a 'serious' instrument. The other composition worthy of note here is *The St Matthew Passion*. Sacred dramas were popular in Lutheran Germany and Bach and his contemporaries enlarged the genre by adding to the chorales the added flair of operatic recitative and aria, plus choir choruses to tell a story. It is a grand work with the text taken from St Matthew's Gospel chapters 26 and 27 with additional texts from local poet Christian Friedrich Henrici and was first performed on Good Friday, 1727. Bach never wrote an opera but the Passions of Matthew, Mark and John are very much in a similar theatrical vein.

Near the end of his life failing eyesight stopped his musical output and with failing health ever present he underwent eye surgery which did no good at all and shortly after a second operation he died. Bach stands at the beginning of a new musical age. His strict attention to detail and to structure laid the foundation that, once he was re-discovered, led to the putting together of sounds that we use even today. The saying that "without Bach there would be no Beatles" is still valid and even though the advancement in modern and un-structured music was prevalent during the twentieth century, the tunes that most of us listen to today have their birth in what Bach did in the Baroque. JGB

STAMPS – we are nearly ready to despatch a consignment of stamps to OCD UK before Christmas so that we are clear to receive your festive collections which will be gratefully received. The collection goes on so please keep your used, or unused, stamps coming in. Thank you - JGB

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS AT ST MICHAEL'S Sunday, 21 December, 2014 at 6.30pm

KERSTBESTAND – THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE – 24th January, 2015 – St Michael's Church – 7pm
In the second half of 1914 the terrible sound of war was heard and soldiers of both sides were being sacrificed in a sea of mud, bad weather and water in often futile engagements. From out of this hell came a moment of hope that was the Christmas Truce (Kerstbestand in Dutch/Flemish) and for an instant there existed peace on earth, and soldiers on guard duty even said they had seen angel in their midst and there was shared humanity for a time. Our concert at 7pm on Saturday, 24th January, brings together the community songs of the Great War for you to join in, some newer songs performed by Tideway Folk Group, and carols and Christmas Music from the church choir together with some readings of poetry of the War Poets. We welcome you to come along to the church and join in with us. There will be a retiring collection and refreshments in the church hall afterwards.



Max's Tail Piece

We were listening to the radio recently and the speaker was wondering how some cave man first persuaded a wolf to become his companion. I reckon it was probably the other way round. Some smart wolf looked at a caveman with those endearing canine eyes and that cute expression we all have when we want to and wormed his way into a place by the fire, a nice bone and regular meals every day. In exchange, he offered a bit of cave guarding, help with the hunting, companionship on walks, a bit of sniffing out and a great deal of love and affection - a perfect relationship, which we still enjoy. Man's best friend indeed. Max, the Rectory Spaniel.