

Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
3 rd December Advent Sunday Gift Service Year B	9.30 Family Communion (see p9)	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 3-9 p1144 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019
10 th December Advent 2	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002
17 th December Advent 3	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 I Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1063
	6.30 Nine Lessons and Carols	
Monday 18 th December	7.00 Scout & Guide Carol Service	
24 th December Advent 4 / Christmas Eve	9.30 Holy Communion	Romans 16 vv 25-27 p1143 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1026
	5.00 Christingle, Nativity Play & Crib Service	
	11.00 Midnight Mass	Isaiah 9 vv 1-7 p693 Titus 2 vv 11-14 p1199 Luke 2 vv 1-20 p1027
25 th December Christmas Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Hebrews 1 vv 1-4 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
31 st December Christmas 1	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 ¹⁰ – 62 ³ p748 Galatians 4 vv 4-7 p1170 Luke 2 vv 15-21 p1028
Saturday 6 th January Epiphany	9.30 Holy Communion (followed by brunch)	Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746 Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966
7 th January Baptism of Christ	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p4 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002
14 th January Epiphany 2	9.30 Holy Communion	I Samuel 3 vv 1-20 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-10 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51 p1064
21 st January Epiphany 3	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 14 vv 17-20 p15 Revelation 19 vv 6-10 p1247 John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
28 th January Epiphany 4 / Septuagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 18 vv 15-20 p197 Revelation 12 vv 1-5 p1241 Mark 1 vv 21-28 p1002
2 nd February Candlemas	5.00 pm The Bread of Life and the Light of the World (followed by tea 5.45)	Malachi 3 v vv 1-5 Luke 2 vv 22-40
4 th February Sexagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Colossians 1 vv 15-20 p1182 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
11 th February Quinquagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	II Kings 2 vv 1-12 p369 II Corinthians 4 vv 3-6 p1160 Mark 9 vv 2-9 p1012
14 th February Ash Wednesday	7.30pm Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 1-12 p744 II Corinthians 5 ²⁰ – 6 ¹⁰ p1161 John 8 vv 1-11 p1073
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
3rd December Advent Sunday Gift Service Year B	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 13 vv 8-14 p1140 Matthew 21 vv 1-13 p988
	11.00 Holy Communion (See p9)	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 3-9 p1144 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019
10th December Advent 2	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 John 18 vv 1-27 p1086

17th December Advent 3		11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 I Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1063
24th December Advent 4 / Christmas Eve		11.0- Holy Communion	Romans 16 vv 25-27 p1143 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1026
		3.00 Christingle, Nativity Play & Crib Service	
25th December Christmas Day		8.00 Holy Communion	Hebrews 1 vv 1-12 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
31st December Christmas 1		11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 6110 – 623 p748 Galatians 4 vv 4-7 p1170 Luke 2 vv 15-21 p1028
7 th January	Epiphany 1	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 12 vv 1-5 p1139 Luke 2 vv 41-52 p1029
	Baptism of Christ	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p4 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002
14 th January Epiphany 2		11.00 Holy Communion	I Samuel 3 vv 1-20 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-10 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51 p1064
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 57 vv 1-21 p743 Acts 8 vv 26-40 p1101
21 st January Epiphany 3		11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Genesis 14 vv 17-20 p15 Revelation 19 vv 6-10 p1247 John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
28 th January Epiphany 4 / Septuagesima		11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 18 vv 15-20 p197 Revelation 12 vv 1-5 p1241 Mark 1 vv 21-28 p1002
4 th February Sexagesima		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Corinthians 11 vv 19-31 p1165 Luke 8 vv 4-15 p1037
		11.00 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Colossians 1 vv 15-20 p1182 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
11 th February Quinquagesima		11.00 Holy Communion	II Kings 2 vv 1-12 p369 II Corinthians 4 vv 3-6 p1160 Mark 9 vv 2-9 p1012
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Genesis 12 vv 1-20 p13 Acts 26 vv 1-32 p1123
14 th February Ash Wednesday		9.30 am Holy Communion	Joel 2 vv 12-17 p912 Matthew 6 vv 16-21 p970

Holy Communion 9.30 am St Michael's Wednesdays		Holy Communion 9.30 am St John's Thursdays	
December 6 th S Nicholas	Isaiah 25 vv 6-10 Matthew 15 vv 29-37	December 7 th S Ambrose	Isaiah 26 vv 1-6 Matthew 7 vv 21-27
December 13 th S Lucy – Ember Day	Isaiah 40 vv 25-31 Matthew 11 vv 28-30	December 14 th S John of the Cross	Isaiah 41 vv 13-20 Matthew 11 vv 11-15
December 20 th	Isaiah 7 vv 10-14 Luke 1 vv 26-38	December 21 st	Zechariah 3 vv 14-18 Luke 1 vv 39-45
December 27 th S John the Apostle	I John 1 vv 1-10 John 21 vv 19-25	December 28 th Holy Innocents	Revelation 14 vv 1-5 Matthew 2 vv 13-18
January 3 rd	I John 2 v29 – 3v6 John 1 vv 29-34	January 4 th	I John 3 vv 7-10 John 1 vv 35-42
January 10 th William Laud	I Samuel 3 vv 1-20 Mark 1 vv 29-39	January 11 th	I Samuel 4 vv 1-11 Mark 1 vv 40-45
January 17 th S Antony of Egypt	I Samuel 17 vv 1-51 Mark 3 vv 1-6	January 18 th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	I Samuel 18 v6 – 19 v7 Mark 3 vv 7-12
January 24 th	II Samuel 7 vv 4-17 Mark 4 vv 1-20	January 25 th Conversion of S Paul	Acts 9 vv 1-22 Matthew 19 vv 27-30
January 31 st	II Samuel 24 vv 2-17 Mark 6 vv 1-6	February 1 st	I Kings 2 vv 1-12 Mark 6 vv 7-13

Don't miss Candlemas (2nd February) at St Michael's at 5.00 pm.

Holy Communion will be celebrated daily at St Michael's at 9.30 am from 25th December – 1st January except 28th December when it will be at St John's. No other services Christmas week

There are two sets of readings available for use in the Church of England – the ones from Common Prayer and the ones from Common Worship. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. We use Common Worship Communion readings at 9.30 & 11.00 on Sundays and on Wednesdays and Thursdays. We use Common Prayer readings for Mattins & Evensong and for Saturday Communion and for 8.00 Communion on Sundays and very often on weekday festivals. This is a slight change from previous years and is intended to provide both consistency and variety.

Copy Date February Magazine: 12th January 8.30 am Rectory.

St Michael's Draw (November): Prize-winners Dennis Hills (31), Sue Hughes (39), Shirley Crundwell (25).

St John's Draw (October): £5 each to Mr S Head (4), Mrs M Smith (49), Mr R Mitchell (69) & Mr P Pratt (97) – drawn by Mrs Gyde.

Both these draws are a bit of fun to raise money for church funds. If you'd like to join either or both, please contact Mary Pitt for St Michael's or Betty Head for St John's.



What Do Vicars Say at Christmas?

If they're feeling grumpy, they moan about the commercialism and the fact that the shops are already full of Christmas things when Summer is hardly over. Of course, the two things are related. Commercial concerns want your money. We're more generous and more spendthrift at Christmas. So, the sooner Christmas comes, the better for the retailers. It's a pity if vicars are grumpy, however. Christmas is above all a celebration. Christmas is to be enjoyed! We're meant to have fun.

God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray
Oh tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
Oh tidings of comfort and joy.

Vicars are also inclined to make you feel guilty at Christmas. Why should you be having so much to eat and drink when there are people starving in the world? How can you justify buying so much stuff in view of the environmental crisis? Aren't you foolish to get into deep debt over a frivolous festival which will soon be over in the New Year? How can you be so happy having fun with friends and family when there are lonely people out there, homeless even? Well, of course, Christmas does remind us to be charitable. Charity is another word for love. God is love. Jesus is God made

flesh. Love was born in the manger at Bethlehem. Love is what we are celebrating. So, of course, we should give generously of our time, our talents and our money – to care of other people. We maybe should give generously to organised charities and we should certainly take care of one another – especially people who are having a hard time of it, the people we love and the people we find it hard to love. But you don't need some old misery of a vicar to make you feel guilty if you don't. It isn't guilt which motivates us to love. It is love that engenders love. If we know the love of God, if we understand what Christmas really means, we are thankful for everything which we have received. If we are people of love and praise, it is our joy to fulfil our duty of love towards God and for one another. We aren't charitable because we feel guilty about being selfish. We love because we are loved. We give because we have received in such abundance. Guilt might be the first step on our journey towards faith, but, if it's the only step we take, we've missed the bus. If guilt leads to confession and repentance, what follows is forgiveness and a fresh start as a son or daughter of the living God in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. If, however, all we know is guilt, then we are slaves to sin and death. It means nothing even if you all your goods to the poor but you have not love. The Truth shall set you free.

Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank,
possessing,
You who now will bless the poor shall yourselves
find blessing.

We're also apt to review the news of the past year: the wars and natural disasters; the political crises; the appalling crimes; the widespread incidence of chronic poverty, endemic sickness, ignorance and

unbelief; family breakdown and poverty and their consequences for neglected and even abused children and old people; the ever present threats to the survival of this fragile planet. Just what you need to cheer you up at a time of celebration. This wicked world needs a Saviour, we repeat year after year, week after week. It certainly does. We, you and I, need a Saviour. In all the moaning and gloom, the clerical disapproval and righteous condemnation, it is too easy, however, to miss the point. The point is that there is hope, genuine hope, hope for the world and hope for you and me. The world does need a Saviour and we have a Saviour. God has given us a Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. There is always hope because God loves us this much! There is faith. There is hope. There is love. God is love.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling years,
Shall come the Age of Gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And all the world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

We clergy might also have a moan about people coming to Church at Christmas but not the rest of the year. But vicars grumbling all the time don't make for happy churches which people want to belong to. Moaning at people doesn't bring them to faith in God. What we have to do is to make it easy for people coming to Church at Christmas to catch the vision, so that they will experience something that they want more of, the love of God made flesh in human hearts. We Christians have to be as Christ to them, God's love in human form, welcoming not condemning. Just as guilt doesn't make us charitable or loving, neither does it lead us into God's Presence to worship Him. It is not guilt, it is the joy of forgiveness; it is not being nagged by human beings; it is the freedom we have in the Holy Spirit which moves us to worship. Nagging can sometimes change our behaviour, but it can't change our character. It can't set us free. Only God can do that.

Psalm 110. The Lord said unto my Lord : Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion : be thou ruler, even in the midst among thine enemies. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship : the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning. The Lord sware, and will not repent : Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech. The Lord upon thy right hand : shall wound even kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies : and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way : therefore shall he lift up his head. Glory be

O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels!
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord.

Finally, we ministers might try to explain the Theology. Theology is faith seeking understanding. So it's a good thing. But, obviously, you can't explain God and it would be foolish to try. If we're not careful, we religious professionals turn the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation into puzzles to be solved rather than wonders which undergird our worship and our commission to serve the world which He has made. Yes, the Son of God became the Son of Man. Yes, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Yes, He became human so that human beings might become divine. Yes, He is God and Man, one person two natures. But these are not puzzles to be solved. They are mysteries such that we cannot help but worship God in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christ, by highest heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King."

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John 3.16.*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,
Roger.

to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Pets (Especially Dogs)

Impact on health and wellbeing.

Dogs have been shown to have many effects on people's health and wellbeing. In particular, the most cited positive outcomes include 'lower risk factors for cardio-vascular disease, such as coronary heart disease, higher chance to survive after myocardial infarction, less need of physician services during stressful life events and a highly significant reduction in everyday minor health problems during the first months after acquiring a pet'. There is evidence to suggest that dogs have the potential to increase physical activity for both dog owners and non-owners, and the presence or absence of dogs will not have a standard effect across the physical and social environments of all neighbourhoods." In addition, research has been conducted on prisoners, the elderly and children. Pets have been shown to meet emotional needs by providing people with self-respect, support, security, affection and appreciation through the pet's presence. In short, there is a vast amount of evidence illustrating the potential positive relationship of engaging with a dog for either long or short periods of time. (from *Theology* November/December 2017 – Holt and Walker).



CHILDREN'S SOCIETY NEWS

Firstly, can I thank everyone for their donations to this year's collection for the Children's Society? The total was £293.30, an excellent amount given that there are not quite as many of us collecting as there used to be. Thanks to Sue

Cockburn for helping me to count it and also to the Co-op for exchanging the coins for notes. It makes the trip to the bank so much easier!

For anyone who does not know, the money is saved up as loose change in boxes in our homes, which is a very easy and convenient way to contribute. We count it once a year and when it is put together with all of the other (approx. 5,000) collections from parishes around the country, it amounts to around £1.7 million.

The Children's Society uses this money to help children and young people who are vulnerable for a variety of reasons including abuse, neglect, poverty and family breakdown. It has a long history of supporting children, having been founded in 1881 by Edward Rudolf, a young Sunday School teacher. He was shocked to discover that two of his pupils were begging for food on the streets and this opened his eyes to the problems faced by poor children in those days. He did not want them to end up in workhouses and went on to open a home for Waifs and Strays, followed by other small-scale homes for up to 10 children.

The charity grew and developed, in partnership with the Church of England and supported by other denominations. Edward Rudolf retired from running the charity in 1919 due to ill health but continued to have a role in guiding its progress. From about the 1970s, the emphasis shifted towards helping children in the situation they find themselves in rather than removing them from it. The Children's Society then began to open day-care centres and family centres so that help was provided in the locality and families were more likely to be able to stay together. Since then, along with its practical work with young runaways and child refugees, the Children's Society has become increasingly involved in campaigning for social justice to deal with the root causes of child poverty and inequality. For the past twelve years it has also produced the "Good Childhood Report", in collaboration with the University of York. This is a high-profile report which is widely respected and often quoted in the media. It is an in-depth investigation into children's well-being and the pressures faced by young people today.

I am hoping to be able to arrange for a speaker to come to a meeting of the Mothers' Union, possibly in March or April, so that we can hear more about the work of the Children's Society in our area and be encouraged to continue with our fundraising. If anyone would like to join in our efforts before then, please contact me and I can provide you with a box. It really is a good way to raise funds and I hope it will continue until we one day end up with a "cashless society" when we will presumably have to think of something else! Julia Wells 01634 727424.



Sian Williams to host 'Carols at Christmas'

Mark the start of the festive season on December 8th with 'Carols at Christmas' – a special musical event in aid of Hospice in the Weald. Hosted by journalist, broadcaster and author Sian Williams, this exciting new event is being held in the historic Church of King Charles the Martyr in Tunbridge Wells. Guests of honour will include the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells and the Bishop of Rochester.

Kindly sponsored by the Tonbridge-based educational resource supplier Commotion, the programme features performances by, among others, the Royal Tunbridge Wells Orpheus Male Voice Choir, a quartet comprised of members of the Tonbridge Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) and the Senior Chamber Choir of Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School. Music will be interspersed with readings and conversations between Sian Williams and people connected with the Hospice.

The evening starts at 6.30pm, and is followed by refreshments in the church hall. For information and tickets, visit www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk (enter 'carols' in the search bar top right of the page) or phone 01892 820588.



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Advent Course
Cuxton Community Church will be holding an advent course on Tuesdays at 7.30pm from Tuesday, 28th November until 19th December entitled "Advent Reflections". It will take place in their hall in Bush Road.

Epiphany and Candlemas – Light in the Darkness

How do you make the most of important Christian festivals which fall on weekdays? What makes them special. One year, we were celebrating Epiphany with an evening communion service. There was a power cut. We found a volunteer to hand pump the organ and gave everybody a candle. This was appropriate and special. Jesus is the Light of the World and Epiphany (the 6th January, the visit of the Wise Men) celebrates Jesus being made known to all nations. In 2018, we shall celebrate Epiphany, as we have in recent years, with a 9.30 am Communion service at St Michael's, followed by brunch in the church hall. People seem to be fascinated by the fact that the Rector can scramble eggs in a microwave and there will also be bacon rolls (much more skilfully prepared) and toast and marmalade. Do come along. All welcome.

Officially, the Last Day of Christmas is Candlemas (2nd February) when Mary and Joseph took the 40 day old baby Jesus to Jerusalem for His Presentation in the Temple and Mary's Purification. It too, is a festival of light – Jesus the Light of the World – and traditionally the church candles were blessed at this service. Two very elderly people – Simeon and Hannah – recognised the baby Jesus for Who He truly is and Simeon sang the song we call Nunc Dimittis. In 2018, we shall meet at St Michael's at 5.00 pm (after school for the children, not too late for older people who might not want to be out at night.) There will be a "different" Communion service, followed by tea in the Rectory. Again, all welcome.

A Ghostly Tale

A man and his dog came out of the pub one night and were run over by a bus. The man got into heaven OK but the dog was told he couldn't come in because he'd lost his tail in the accident. So he returned to earth and asked the barman to fix it back on for him. "Sorry, sir," the barman replied. "I'm not allowed to retail spirits after 11.00!"

From the Registers

Baptism:

29th October

Eleanor Louise Franklin

The Chimneys

Funerals:

20th October

Vera Lilian Rowles (96)

Kent Road

27th October

Colin William George Crow (88)

formerly of Halling

28th October

John Clifford Gilbert (87) (cremated remains)

formerly of Cuxton

3rd November

Gerald William Henry Piper (85)

Bush Road

For Your Diary

Wednesday 6th December:

12.00 Christmas Lunch **Church Hall, Cuxton.**

All welcome.

Saturday 9th December:

10:00 am: Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning in the **Church Hall, Cuxton.**

There will be a variety of stalls, including old favourites and some new, beverages and pastries, a grand raffle and a visit from you know whom.

1.00 pm: Christmas Festivities at **Halling Community Centre.** Please look out for details.

7.30 pm: Christmas Music in the **Church Hall, Cuxton.** An evening of light-hearted Yule-tide entertainment. All welcome.

Friday 15th December:

5.30 onwards: Lighting of Christmas Tree lights and open air Carol Singing at **Cuxton Library.**

Christmas Spirit

The vicar was fond of cherry brandy, but some of his parishioners disapproved of alcohol. A friend promised him a bottle of his favourite tippie for Christmas, but only if he promised to acknowledge the gift in his parish magazine – which he did. “Thank you for the kind gift of fruit and the spirit in which it was given.”



www.themothersunion.org

Mother's Union Meeting on 18th October Overseas Adventure

Mary Pitt addressed our meeting in October. She told us about her adventures, earlier this year, in Australia and Singapore! Mary is a martial arts enthusiast. She started to learn GKR Karate when she retired at the age of 56 and still trains regularly in several dojos in Kent. In 2010, Mary took part in her first UK national competition and achieved a silver medal for kata in the 55+ years female beginners. This was an exciting beginning and the start for many subsequent competitions as well as meeting and developing a whole new sporting 'family'!

GKR Karate holds a Karate World Cup Competition every two years. One year the event is held in the UK and then two years later the event is held in Australia. In 2015 Mary competed in her first World Cup Competition in Liverpool. (Mary was born on the Wirral.) She entered the 55+ years female 4th to 6th

The Pilates Element

Pilates is a body conditioning exercise programme suitable for all ages and abilities. My classes are friendly, fun and enjoyable.

Emily Pollington, member of
FHT, qualified instructor.

Pilates classes are held in the church hall on Tuesdays from 7.00-8.00 pm. For more information, please contact instructor Emily Pollington, 01634 256942, 07940233296, emilypollington@btinternet.com Also on Facebook.

kyu event and won two silver medals - one for individual kata and one for individual kumite. The World Cup was an inspiring experience which sowed the seed of an idea: 'What would it be like to take part in Australia in 2017?'

Joining a fellow local competitor, Zoe, Mary decided to go to Australia for the World Cup earlier this year. First of all, they both needed to qualify for the event. Then the next tasks were to research planes, hire cars, book accommodation and pack! That took time and effort!! Mission accomplished!

Entry qualification achieved! Singapore Airlines booked! Accommodation booked! Car hired for Australia! Australia Visa acquired! Passport - up to date!! Currency for Australia and Singapore!

So On Monday 31/7/2017 they set off for Brisbane Airport with a stop-over in Singapore. All went well and off to Hertz car hire desk. Good news - a brand new white Kia car awaited them in the designated car park. The Australia adventure began. Switch the SatNav on and find Main Beach on the Gold Coast. But.... car did not have its own SatNav. So onto the mobile phone and good old Google Maps! Success and an 80 minute drive through Brisbane then Southport (not on Merseyside!) and then Main Beach. Wow! Miles of golden sands and loads of surf. It may have been Australia's winter but it was just as hot as UK summer during the daytime!

The World Cup was held in a place called Coomera. (This will be a venue for gymnastics and netball during the Commonwealth Games in 2018.) The competition began with a parade of all the competitors from Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA. Lots of flag waving as well as shouting and cheering from enthusiastic competitors and spectators alike. The opening events were for teams from each country. The UK teams did well and achieved several medals especially the junior teams (under 18). After the team events were the events for individuals beginning with the yellow and orange belts followed by the green, blue and red belts then the brown belts and finally the black belts in the age divisions and the open categories. There were hundreds of competitors and many opportunities to make new friends!

During the event there was a break from competition and an unusual opportunity to learn how to break a pine board with a single 'chop' and to raise funds for the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse cancer research hospital in Australia. This event was led by Glen Coxon who is a black belt Australian karate expert. He was attempting the Guinness World Record for breaking 1,000 pine boards in the fastest time. Glen Coxon smashed the previous record and went on to train 500 karate enthusiasts, who paid \$20 to the charity, and smashed a board so that they achieved a Guinness World Record for 'the most people breaking pine boards simultaneously in a single location'. Mary showed a board which had been broken during this session and it was quite thick and solid!!

In spite of some tough opposition, Mary managed to win a bronze medal for individual kumite. The competition concluded with presentations and many, many votes of thanks to all the organisers and competitors!

Mary and Zoe spent the next 4 days exploring the Gold Coast area. They went to an animal sanctuary in Currumbin and met up with several karate friends from UK and Australia as well as meeting lots of kangaroos, wallabies, koalas and emus. They travelled further south along the Gold Coast to Byron Bay. This is the most easterly point of Australia. Another excursion was into the Gold Coast hinterland. Some 30km from Gold Coast lies Tamborine Mountain with breathtaking scenery and pristine rainforests. Sadly, most of the wild life remained hidden but the trees and ferns in the rainforests were spectacular. Finally, off to the beach and watch the magnificent surf. The 'Safe Bathing' flags were flying but there was a notice warning of 'dumping waves'. Mary discovered just what 'dumping waves' were when whilst close to the shoreline a great wave came along, swept her off her feet, upended her and finally 'dumped' her on her back on the sand! Not elegant!!

The next adventure was in Singapore. Mary and Zoe planned a week's holiday before returning to the UK !

They took a night flight to Changi Airport and went out to explore Singapore City from 6.00am. Even at that time the air was warm and by 10.00am it was time to seek an air-conditioned building. Singapore City is an amazing place. It has fantastic modern skyscrapers and beautiful old colonial buildings like Raffles Hotel and St Andrew's Cathedral. It would have been a mistake not to visit these older buildings. St Andrew's Cathedral was serene with fabulous floral displays and very welcoming. Raffles Hotel was something else. The hotel was gorgeous and steeped in history of which Singapore is very proud. Luckily there was just enough time to absorb the atmosphere, culture and to sample a Singapore Sling (or two!). The people of Singapore are proud of their heritage and people. They enjoy celebrating their culture and so they party at every opportunity. They join together and hold regular festivals for all religions, National Day and celebrate big sporting events (F1 Grand Prix). The local taxi drivers do their best to encourage tourists to spend money pointing out various shopping malls, Sir Stamford Raffles statue, Singapore Zoo, Marins Bay Casino, Gardens by the Bay, satay stalls and Sentosa Resort Island. All well worth visiting. Some of the attractions were established fairly recently and built on reclaimed land. The floral displays at Gardens by the Bay were magnificent. Zoe and Mary felt that they could have visited this large area several more times both in daylight and night time! After a week's holiday it was time to return to UK. A good time had been had by all but, no matter whom they met or whatever amazing sights they had seen, there is no place like home!!

Gift Services

The services at 9.30 & 11.00 on 3rd December are our annual gift services. If you wish to contribute, there will be an opportunity to donate unwrapped Christmas presents (new, please) to be given to people (especially children) who might not otherwise receive presents at Christmas.

A Disabled Lavatory for the Church Hall A Grant from the Co-op Local Community Fund

It has been decided that we shall provide a disabled lavatory in the church hall and baby-changing facilities. The two most promising looking plans involve removing the partition wall between the toy cupboard and the existing gents' and remodelling the area to accommodate a self-contained disabled lavatory, a reconfigured gents' and discreet baby-changing facilities. This awaits PCC approval but I think it is the best plan so far advanced.

We have been promised a grant from the Co-op Local Community Fund. The size of this fund depends on how much, over the next year, Coop members spend in the Cuxton shop and present their membership cards. Many of us are already Coop members (though we might occasionally forget our cards). It isn't hard to join and there are other benefits in belonging. Ask in the shop.

Bible Notes

The Bible is a difficult book. It's bound to be as most of the action in it takes place a long way away from here and a long time ago. It's good that it's difficult. It challenges the way we think. What use would it be if it only told us what we already know or confirmed our prejudices? It's worth very much more than any other challenging book, however. The Bible is the Word of God. God speaks to us through its pages. Thus we should read it every day, although we might find it hard to do so. I try to do my bit to help people to read the Bible by producing daily bible notes to suggest what you might read and to offer some thoughts about the passage in question. These notes are available in printed form in church or I can deliver them to your home. I can also email them to you. Or you can find them at <http://cuxtonandhalling.org.uk/> under *teaching*.

Cuxton and Halling Foreseen

We quite often include people's reminiscences of what Cuxton and Halling were like in the past and some of the great characters who lived here. Any further such contributions would be most welcome. We don't live in the past, however, and it occurred to me that it could be worthwhile to have a go at thinking what life might be like in the future here. I didn't get too far with this, but I'd welcome anybody else's ideas as to what the parish might be like in years to come or what they think it ought to be like. My main fear is that, because people don't know where they're going, they've lost their way. Hence the obsession with things which don't really matter. The danger is that we spoil our enjoyment of life on earth precisely because we mistakenly believe that it is all we have and so we get everything out of proportion. My confidence of course is in God. "We know not what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future." Roger.



Tommy's Talking Points

Master's letting me do the *Flora and Fauna* bit this month as he says he hasn't noticed much change apart from a slow drift towards Winter as this year's Summer has clung on through Autumn. So where do we start? It was very exciting one night when we encountered a badger in Cuxton churchyard. It's surprising how fast they can move! I quite often get agitated of a dark evening and want to chase whatever is in our garden. Master doesn't know whether it's a badger or a fox or the black cat which he can't see at night but I can hear and smell. As long as it's not human trespassers. He's been on about for ages when is the best time to see the Autumn leaves, but this year there haven't been many harsh frosts to change them all at once or high winds to blow them off the trees. So it's been a gradual goldening over many weeks and we've enjoyed day after day of what he calls autumnal sylvan peripatesises and most people call woodland walks.

It got darker and darker in the mornings and we started going out a bit later, but we've still often been up long before sunrise and, while I can find my way perfectly in the dark, he's wandered off the path more than once. He says it will be easier to see when there are no more leaves on the trees. Meanwhile a white shape a few yards ahead of him in the path helps, unless I run on too far ahead. I'm much better about not running off now, but he says, if I do get lost in the half light, I should make it the morning when it is getting lighter, not the afternoon when night is falling. He doesn't want to be looking for me all night. Moonlight is great too. Clearings are as clear as day, though the woods may be in deep shadow. The boundary between light and dark is much clearer under the moon than under the sun and sometimes you can see hundreds of stars above. You changed the clocks and we gained an hour of light, though the afternoons are now closing in. Fog's a funny thing. One morning he lost sight of me altogether in Bush Valley in a thick fog and then Dean Valley was perfectly clear. Whatever the weather, I still run and bound around and spring up in the air from cheer exaltation. When Master told the vet about our big garden and its easy access to the open countryside, she said I live in spaniel heaven. People we meet say what a happy dog I am. So he's doing his duty towards me, which I suppose is also his duty towards the people of Cuxton and Halling – their happiness on earth, their eventual home in Heaven.

The temperature's been very up and down. The 16th October was incredibly hot and sunny in the morning. We had a wonderful walk with another of Master's friends and finished up for lunch in the "White Hart" garden. While we were there, the sky turned deep red and it grew quite dark. Master started to worry a bit. As it turned out, this eerie phenomenon was the result of air pollution, but he was reminded of a time years ago when one evening there was an adult Baptism and Confirmation preparation at St Michael's. It was very hot and the doors at both ends of the church were open. Quite quickly, the sky turned dark green, and, all of a sudden, both doors slammed shut in a terrific blast of wind. Heavy rain didn't so much fall; it was blown sideways by the gale and entered the church between the roof and the walls to run down the inside of the building. This was a tornado or whirlwind which swept through the village. When they had finished in church, it was night time and they discovered that one of the big trees in Master's garden had fallen into Rochester Road, severing the power lines and partially blocking the highway. They had to try to move some it in pitch blackness in order to prevent an accident. Tree Preservation Orders don't prevent accidents. Neither does the council accept responsibility for preserved trees. That remains with the owner even though council officers get to make the decisions which make accidents more or less likely.

That wasn't the only whirlwind Master has experienced in Cuxton. On another occasion, they were setting up an event in the Recreation Ground. On one side of the area where he was, there was only a lively breeze, but, the tables on the other side were abruptly overturned and all the popcorn on the popcorn stall was swept up in the twister only to fall back on the field, from whence it was picked up, put back in the container and later on sold to an unsuspecting public (not by the Church!). It would have been quite amusing only one poor person was hurt by a table which fell on her.

We've also had the odd very cold day with a sharp frost. It's funny how he puts on layers of clothing depending on the temperature and a waterproof when it rains, but I cheerfully and uncomplainingly go out in all kinds of weather wearing exactly the same fur coat.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Tommy, the Rectory Spaniel.