

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
January 30 <sup>th</sup> Epiphany 4	11.00 Holy Communion	I Kings 17 vv 8-16 p358 I Corinthians 1 vv 18-31 p1144 John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
February 6 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent Accession HM Queen	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ephesians 4 vv 17-32 p1175 Mark 1 vv 29-39 p1003
	11.00 Holy Communion	Psalm 121 Joshua 1 vv 1-10 p216 Revelation 21 v22 – 22 v4 p1250 Isaiah 58 vv 1-12 p744 I Corinthians 2 vv 1-12 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 13-20 p969
February 13 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 21-37 p969
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Amos 3 vv 1-8 p918 Ephesians 5 vv 1-17 p1176
February 20 <sup>th</sup> Septuagesima	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Leviticus 19 vv 1-18 p121 I Corinthians 3 vv 10-23 p1146 Matthew 5 vv 38-48 p970
February 27 <sup>th</sup> Sexagesima	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 v1 – 2v3 p3 Romans 8 vv 18-25 p1135 Matthew 6 vv 25-34 p971
March 6 <sup>th</sup> Quinquagesima	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Kings 2 vv 1-12 p369 Matthew 17 vv 1-23 p984
	11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 II Peter 1 vv 16–21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984
January 30 <sup>th</sup> Epiphany 4	9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 17 vv 8-16 p358 I Corinthians 1 vv 18-31 p1144 John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
February 2 <sup>nd</sup> Candlemas	9.30 Holy Communion	Malachi 2 vv 1-5 p961 Psalm 24 (said by all) Hebrew 2 vv 14-18 p1202 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028
February 6 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent Accession HM Queen	9.30 Family Communion	Psalm 121 Joshua 1 vv 1-10 p216 Revelation 21 v22 – 22 v4 p1250 Isaiah 58 vv 1-12 p744 I Corinthians 2 vv 1-12 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 13-20 p969
February 13 <sup>th</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 21-37 p969
February 20 <sup>th</sup> Septuagesima	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion	Leviticus 19 vv 1-18 p121 I Corinthians 3 vv 10-23 p1146 Matthew 5 vv 38-48 p970
February 27 <sup>th</sup> Sexagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 v1 – 2v3 p3 Romans 8 vv 18-25 p1135 Matthew 6 vv 25-34 p971
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[roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk) <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton on the last Wednesday of each month also at 2.00. **Saints Alive!** (formerly Sunday School) is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

**Copy Date** March Magazine: 11<sup>th</sup> February 8.30 am Rectory.

Wednesday Communion 9.30 @ St Michael's		Thursday Communion 9.30 @ St John's	
2 <sup>nd</sup> February Candlemas	Malachi 2 vv 1-5 p961 Psalm 24 (said by all) Hebrew 2 vv 14-18 p1202 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028	3 <sup>rd</sup> February	Hebrews 12 vv 18-24 Mark 6 vv 7-13
9 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 2 vv 4-17 Mark 7 vv 14-23	10 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 2 vv 18-end Mark 7 vv 24-30
16 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 8 vv 6-end Mark 8 vv 22-26	17 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 9 vv 1-13 Mark 8 vv 27-3
23 <sup>rd</sup> February	James 1 vv 19-end Mark 9 vv 38-40	24 <sup>th</sup> February	James 2 vv 1-9 Mark 9 vv 41-end

***Shalom for Medway  
(Healing Services)***

***Where people can come to know the love of Jesus and God's healing power***

**Supported by Churches Together in Medway**

<b>Dates for 2011</b>	
<b>15<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> May</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> June</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> July</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>No meeting in August</b>

**Starting at 7:30pm  
The Emmaus Church Centre  
Clover Street, Chatham, ME4 4DT**

**[www.shalomformedway.org.uk](http://www.shalomformedway.org.uk)**

**Email: [Enquiries@shalomformedway.org.uk](mailto:Enquiries@shalomformedway.org.uk)**

**Phone: Graham or Katy Hill on 07758 607149**



Struggling Through the Snow

Was it Worth It?

I wonder what the weather will be like when you are reading this in February? I'm writing in December when we've already had two weeks of thick snow and freezing temperatures. The roads and railways seized up. The shops ran out of milk and the schools closed. Event after event was cancelled. None of the liturgical services in either of our parish churches was called off, however, and I very much hope that that will still be the case when you read this. Indeed, I hope that it will always be the case. I should be deeply ashamed if I failed to show up for church.

It is, however, worth asking why it should be worth the effort for me to struggle through the snow and open up even if it seems likely that many members of the congregation will be unable to join me and some of those who could come will quite probably decide not to? Would it matter if the church closed one week? Many leisure activities closed. The schools closed. Many businesses closed. The railways shut down. Far

more people were inconvenienced (and worse) by these closures than would have been put out if we had shut the churches in the worst weather. We would have saved on the heating. Those of us who did go would have avoided the risk of slipping over and hurting ourselves. Health and safety is such a wonderful excuse for staying in the warm and letting down the general public that it might seem mad that those of us who could carried on worshipping. Some stalwart souls even cleared the snow from the church paths to help other people and we are all very grateful to them.

But why does it matter to keep open the churches? This is an important question not only in snowy weather, but for the future. Someone recently said to me that he thought that when I retire (late 2024 probably) or die (date to be announced), Cuxton and Halling are likely to be grouped with neighbouring parishes. That might mean one vicar and perhaps a couple of lay ministers trying to keep things going in maybe half a dozen churches. There would in that case be far fewer Sunday services in our villages and much less pastoral care throughout the week. The suggestion was that, if St Michael's will very

probably cease to have weekly services when I am gone, why strive so hard to ensure that they continue so long as I am here? Why not take the odd Sunday off for bad weather? Or sickness? Or holidays?

Let me be clear. If the services of the church are for the benefit of the people who attend, there is no point in holding services on Sundays or weekdays when few or no people are likely to turn up. If people can't get to church because of the snow, or if they choose not to come, if the services were principally for the religious education or spiritual satisfaction of the people who actually attend church, there would be no point in my turning out and slithering and sliding up the path to unlock. I could say my prayers at home as I hope you all do every day anyway.

If there came a time when few people attended St Michael's or St John's at any time, if the services of the church were for the benefit of those attending, it would make good economic and business sense to close St Michael's and St John's and to lay on transport to take the few Cuxton and Halling people who value taking part in public worship somewhere else where the Church is financially viable.

So why don't I go along with this? I believe, you see, that the focus of what we do in church is not the congregation but God. I believe that worship is a duty that all human beings owe to God. In fact worship is our most important duty and all our other duties follow from our duty to worship God. I believe that our hymns and psalms, our prayers and praises, are addressed to God, not primarily to the congregation. There is a similar truth in our public bible reading and preaching. Although addressed to the congregation, they are first and foremost an offering to God. A congregation is not an audience. You may think it is prejudice on my part, but I do not like church congregations to behave like audiences, clapping the "performers" or commenting on whether or not they liked what was done. A congregation is not an audience come to hear the preacher, choir, readers and worship leaders and to offer or withhold its approval. A congregation includes preachers, choirs, readers and worship leaders and what matters is that everyone of them is worshipping God in spirit and in truth. So far I think most thoughtful religious people would agree with me at least in principle.

I will go further, however, perhaps a little bit out on a limb. I believe that public worship is the duty of every community. If a country is a Christian country, then I think that every parish ought to have a church (a body of Christian people) with a minister or priest (or whatever you like to call him) and I believe that the parish church has a responsibility to put on public worship at least every Sunday – the day that Jesus rose from the dead. I believe that Sunday worship is our duty as a parish church to God and our responsibility to the whole community. It is our responsibility to give people the opportunity to join in public worship, to demonstrate to them why they ought to join in public worship and to pray on behalf of those who can't or won't join in public worship.

I did (reluctantly) agree to the cancellation of the 8.00 in the Jubilee Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> December because of snow as I did on 5<sup>th</sup> September when I had such a bad back that I could not get up off the floor the day before. There is an important difference, however. The services in the Jubilee Hall (like the services in St Laurence's Church which preceded it) are for the benefit of those Upper Halling people who might have difficulty getting to the parish church. But the service at St John's is the duty all Halling people owe to God and the responsibility Halling Christians have for the whole village. The same is true of St Michael's with respect both to God and to Cuxton.

We all like to see our churches full, but the services are addressed to God and are no less valid if there is no-one else present to pray with the Rector or to hear the choir sing. Jesus promises to be present if only two or three are gathered together. This very morning I took Communion to someone who is housebound. There might only have been two of us physically present, but our worship was offered with the angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven. Just think about that. What a privilege it is to sing to God or to pray or lead worship or to read or to preach. It is not a matter of the number of people physically present, but a matter of being in the presence of God and of His holy angels and of the souls of just men made perfect.

If the many are absent they do not by their absence undermine the validity of what the faithful few are doing.

I will stick out my neck a bit further and say that if there is only one service on a Sunday, it should be Holy Communion, because Jesus told us to *Do this in remembrance of me*.

When I first came to this parish in 1987, my first thought was to ensure that the Holy Communion was celebrated at least every Sunday in both St Michael's and St John's, as far as possible at a time when people were likely to attend, because I believe that the Sunday Eucharist is our community's duty to God and our churches' responsibility to the communities of Cuxton and Halling. Sharing my secret hope with you now, what I really wanted to see when I arrived in the parish was the congregations in Cuxton and Halling grow to such an extent that we would be offered a curate to help me and that eventually the two villages could once again become independent parishes, each with its own vicar or rector. My only problem would have been whether I wanted to be Rector of Cuxton or Vicar of Halling when a new man took over one of the communities I had served as parish priest!

So far I have been disappointed! From the very start there were people in the parish who believed that the long term future was a permanent merger of the two churches and that we should be encouraging Christians from both Cuxton and Halling to form one congregation, equally happy to worship in either building and possibly eventually to close one of them. I have found it difficult to persuade them to allow me a Sunday Eucharist in both churches every week and to support me in what I have tried to do.

Much more seriously, I was also thwarted in my plans for church growth by the general trend in

England over the last few decades. So many people in this country have decided that going to church just isn't worth it that numbers of regular worshippers have plummeted everywhere. We are by no means the only parish looking at merging, closing buildings and reducing the numbers of priests and ministers.

The question is can this trend be reversed? I believe that it can, but only if we focus on God. If we run our churches to please ourselves, I think we deserve to see them close. If we try to get people to join us by trying to please them, I think we devalue what we stand for and we fail to respect the potential of other people to offer their lives to Jesus as a living sacrifice. The point of Church is to worship God. Schools ought to be generally better at education than Church. Many sports and pastimes are much more fun as leisure activities than Church. Shopping and cleaning the car are more practically useful ways to spend Sunday mornings than Church. If you primarily want to foster your own spirituality, you would do better to find a guru who focuses on your personal needs than to join God's Church. Charities are as good as Church at helping people in need. The NHS might seem a better bet than Church if you need healing.

Actually the Church is pretty good at education, having fun, practical support, fostering spiritual growth, helping the needy and caring for the sick. But we sell ourselves short if we behave as though any or all of those activities were the reason for the Church's existence. The Church exists to worship God. God is our focus. All the rest follows from God.

Roger.

#### A Thought Left over From Christmas

There are three stages in a man's life. He believes in Santa Claus. He doesn't believe in Santa Claus. He is Santa Clause.

#### Joke

Schoolmaster: How do you spell *weather* Thomas?

Thomas: Wiethiour, sir.

Schoolmaster: This is the worst spell of weather we've had since last Christmas.

#### Thanks For Your Support In Paying Our Debts

Donations continue to come in towards paying off our parish share debt. The hope is that every adult in the parish will donate £5 to keep us financially viable. So far we have collected £1,306. So there is still a long way to go, but thanks to all those who have donated so far. Any further donations please to rector, treasurer or churchwardens. Any cheques should be payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC*. If you can *Gift Aid* your donation, that adds about 25% to its value. Our financial situation is truly terrifying. Roger.

## From the Registers

### Baptisms:

5 <sup>th</sup> December	Skye Pixie Colyer-Rous	Loxley House
26 <sup>th</sup> December	Ben Simmonds	Chatham

### Funerals:

16 <sup>th</sup> November	Marjorie Dorothy Rebecca Haines (88)	Rochester Road Cuxton
17 <sup>th</sup> November	David John Hawkes (67)	Ditton
19 <sup>th</sup> November	Florence Edith Thistlethwaite (96)	Vicarage Road
19 <sup>th</sup> November	Audrey Coate (83)	Bush Road
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Doris Annie Gertrude Hooper (85)	High Street
13 <sup>th</sup> December	Mabel Florence Thompson (92)	Pilgrims Road
23 <sup>rd</sup> December	Behram Jehangia Shroff (84)	Vicarage Road
31 <sup>st</sup> December	Irene Beatrice Roots (94)	James Road

### Mabel Thompson RIP

Parishioners were sorry to learn of the death of Mabel Thompson – a long standing and very faithful member of our congregation. Mabel and her husband Arthur regularly attended services as long as they were able and Mabel was a great supporter and leader of our Mothers' Union branch. The MU's promotion of Christian family life was exactly reflected in Mabel's own personal commitment and faith. Roger.

### Mabel Thompson.

On behalf of the family, I would like to thank all who attended Mabel's funeral service on December 13th. St Michael and All Angels church in Cuxton had always been a very important part of Mum's life over the 60 plus years that she had lived within the Parish and we are very grateful to those good friends who made it possible for her to attend certain services and meetings until just a few days before her sudden death. We would also thank those who sent letters and cards of sympathy and donations in her memory. We felt strength and comfort from knowing that we were in the prayers and thoughts of so many at this sad time for us. Colin Thompson.

### Dr Behram Shroff RIP

We were also sorry to hear of the death of Dr Shroff, our local GP for many years. In some ways Dr Shroff was one of the last of the old fashioned family doctors with a consulting room in his own home, providing his own out of hours cover and often mixing up himself the medications he prescribed. He was, however, also at the forefront of technology, with an ecg machine in his surgery before this was usual, for which the funds were raised by Wilf Fennimore in a sponsored walk along the North Downs, itself a thanksgiving for his recovery from heart disease. Behram Shroff took a great interest in Halling and was a benefactor of St John's church. Roger.

### Thanks

Steve and Gill Haines would like to thank family and friends for their kindness and messages of sympathy and also for donations given in memory of Marjorie.

### Christmas

May I take this opportunity to thank choirs and organists, flower arrangers, bell-ringers, snow sweepers, church cleaners, servers and vergers, wardens and everybody else who worked so hard to make our Christmas festival the great success it was? And also to thank all of you for your support of the Church throughout the year? The Christmas tree at St Michael's was donated by Jo Martin from her garden. Might anyone have a similar tree for next year, please? Roger.

### Parish Magazine

The church magazine provides a valuable link between the Church and the wider community. It is a useful source of news and information and it raises valuable funds for the Church. We hope you enjoy it and find it worth reading. Thanks to all those who produce and distribute the magazine.

After many years, we have decided to increase the price this year to 30p or £3.00 for eleven copies. We hope you will still think this is value for money. (I have an idea that the price was fixed at 5/= (25p) when King Charles II was restored to the throne in 1661. Other people tell me it was more recent than that, but it is definitely a very long time since the last price increase and the Church desperately needs the money!) If you think the magazine is a good read, why don't you suggest to your neighbours that they also subscribe?

We thank the people who deliver the magazine. Many have been doing this for a long time. We do need new distributors, please. It entails taking the magazine out before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and putting it through letter boxes. Once a year, you need to knock and ask for the money. It is not a very onerous job, but it is a very useful one. A couple of roads have fallen to me to deliver because there is no-one else and some people have been receiving the magazine late because busy people haven't been able to get them out on time, which means people missing out on the information they need. So please consider helping. If you can help with delivering the magazine, please contact Margaret Guest (240644) or me. Roger.

#### Situations Vacant?

It is a matter for the PCC to decide when, but we must have our AGM by 30<sup>th</sup> April. This year (as usual) we need to elect four churchwardens (at the Vestry Meeting) and ten PCC members (five for each village at the APCM). We also elect this year three deanery synod representatives. So we need one more deanery representative than we have had heretofore. The parish treasurer has said that she will resign this year as has our planned giving secretary. So there will be job vacancies even if everybody else stands again and is re-elected. I am pleased to say that we do have a volunteer to be covenant secretary.

Please give some thought as to whether you or anyone you know could fill any of these posts. I am sure that existing holders will tell you what they entail. Deanery Synod involves three meetings per year (admittedly of variable interest) and gives you the opportunity to vote in General Synod and Diocesan Synod elections as well as some small say on issues like pastoral reorganisation (merging parishes and closing churches), women bishops, etc.. You would also be *ex officio* on the PCC.

The planned giving secretary gives out the envelopes once a year and keeps tally for the *Gift Aid* scheme which adds c25% to the value of our offerings from tax payers. This person may or may not be a member of the PCC. All tax payers should consider Gift Aiding their contributions for this reason.

The treasurer counts and banks the money that comes in, issues cheques to pay bills, keeps our accounts and presents them at the APCM. The treasurer should be a PCC member.

You could of course do more than one of these jobs if you wanted to and the treasurer's job could be split between two people, one doing the paperwork and the other actually handling the cash, so long as they worked closely together. We do have a volunteer who would be prepared to do the bookkeeping part of the treasurer's job if someone else were only prepared to bank the money.

I don't suppose it would really matter if no-one wanted to represent us on Deanery Synod, but, if we can't find a treasurer, responsibility for the money falls on the churchwardens and they have more than enough to do already. So that would be a disaster. There is a lot for the treasurer to do, but it isn't difficult. Roger.

#### Poppy Appeal 2010

The poppy collection in our two churches last year raised £106.89. Well done everybody.

#### Forthcoming Attractions 2011

4<sup>th</sup> March: Women's World Day of Prayer Service 7.00 pm at St John's.

1<sup>st</sup> May: 6.30 pm Evensong to celebrate 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cuxton (now Cuxton & Halling) Mothers' Union. Preacher Rev'd Kenneth Clark, Vicar of Stone and Archdeaconry Chaplain.

25<sup>th</sup> May: 7.30 pm Pastor Norman Hopkins of Waterford House Evangelical Church to speak on 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible at St John's. (Pastor Hopkins has already attracted notice as a speaker at Halling Historical Society.)

24<sup>th</sup> June (Nativity of St John the Baptist): 7.30 pm Confirmation and Patronal Festival Eucharist at Halling. Any interested in being confirmed to speak to Rector without delay.

25<sup>th</sup> June: 7.30 pm Brook Orchestra Concert at St John's  
{Also this weekend a Halling Exhibition is planned to take place in the church.}

2<sup>nd</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> July: Parish Barbecue. (It is anticipated that it will be possible to hold this in the Rectory Garden again this year. The indications are that the coalition government will repeal the rather ridiculous requirement for a licence from the local authority for such modest events. Let us hope that they will get round to doing so in time to help us.\*)

August 4<sup>th</sup>: 7.30 pm Concert by Mean Time (early music group) at St Michael's. (It is hoped that parishioners will be found to offer group members overnight hospitality.)

September 29<sup>th</sup> Michaelmas: 7.30 pm Patronal Festival Eucharist with Rt Rev'd James Langstaff our new diocesan bishop.

\*Actually I think that it will be legally possible to hold the church barbecue in the Rectory garden even if the law is not changed by next Summer. Even under the existing legislation the council cannot stop us holding an event for our members as long as we don't charge. All baptised (=christened) people are church members. This is a legal definition because it is stated in the Book of Common Prayer, which, because we are the established Church, is backed by the authority of an Act of Parliament. So we can have a free event (at which you might wish to make a donation to the Church or to charity) and invite everybody who is baptised (christened). It isn't my wish to discriminate on the grounds of religion or to practise social exclusion, but it might be forced on us by Medway Council if the Licensing Act is not amended in time. Roger.

#### CHILDREN'S SOCIETY NEWS

Last year's collection for the Children's Society, counted in November, yielded £272.76 for which I would like to thank all our box holders. We were saddened by the loss of three of our loyal supporters last year but encouraged by gaining one new box holder. I am grateful to Sue Cockburn for helping me to count out the money and the Co-op for exchanging the coins for notes as it makes the job so much easier. I am aiming to open the boxes in October this year as the date has slipped rather too close to Christmas over the years. If anyone would like to join us in collecting loose change at home (even pennies help!), please contact me and I will give you a box. Julia Wells (Tel: 727424)

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Mrs Taylor – drawn by Mrs Summers & £5 to Mrs Maxwell drawn by Mr Crundwell  
St John's Draw: £25 each to Mr Dance (128) & Mrs Fallows (184) & £10 to Mrs Burr – drawn by Mr Brown. £5 each to Mrs Chidwick (26), Mr Silver (76), Mrs Fuller (78), Mrs Hesketh (115) & Mrs Garrett (123) drawn by Mr Brown.

#### A Local Martyr and the English Bible

2011 sees the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the Authorised (or King James) Version of the Bible in English. It's worth remembering what it cost for us to have the Bible in English. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Bible was only available in Latin in this country (and not a terribly good Latin translation at that!). In the time of King Henry VIII men like William Tyndale were determined to open up the Bible to English people in their own language. The king and his bishops were vehemently opposed to the project and ruthless in their efforts to prevent it from succeeding. The English translators and publishers had to work overseas and smuggle Bibles back into this country. In 1529 Thomas Hitton was detained at Rochester and found to hold Reformation beliefs and to be a Bible smuggler. He was arraigned before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Rochester John Fisher, who was the last Bishop of Rochester to live at Halling, and who himself became a martyr in 1535 when King Henry turned on him. Hitton was sentenced to death for his "crimes" and burned at the stake in Maidstone on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1530. A local martyr for the Bible in English, he is often referred to as the first martyr of the English Reformation. There was a lot more work to do to translate the Bible into English and to get it printed and published. There would be many more martyrs in the cause, including Tyndale himself in 1536. By 1611, however, the King of England and Scotland (James I & VI) was commissioning and authorising an English Bible for the whole nation. What a privilege it is to live in a land where the Bible is freely available and in our own language.

I thought you might like to read a couple of extracts from the account of Thomas Hitton's martyrdom in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, first published in 1563 but reprinted many times over the next couple of hundred years and very widely read along with the 1611 Bible itself, the 1662 Prayer Book and Bunyan's "Pilgrims Progress" (1678), four huge influences on the development of our English culture and language as well as our spirituality.

#### FOXES BOOK OF MARTYRS

THOMAS HITTON of Martham in the diocese of Norwich, an honest poor man and religious, ever fearing God from his youth, and loving his word; when persecution for the same word in the days of King Henry the Eighth grew to be somewhat hot, took his journey toward Rochester in Kent, intending to have gone to Dover, and so to have crossed the seas into France and other countries for a time, where, reposing himself a while, he might be free from the heat of persecution. As he was going on his intended journey, one Thomas Swainesland, bailiff to William Warham archbishop of Canterbury, meeting him by the way, and suspecting him to be (as they called them) a heretic, caused him to be staid and brought before the said William archbishop of Canterbury, his master; who demanded of him from whence he came, and whither he intended to have gone, if he had not been intercepted? The same Thomas answered, that he came out of the diocese of

Norwich, and purposed to have gone beyond the seas, if God had so permitted. Then the bishop asked him, if he had ever been beyond the seas before, and what books he had brought over. He answered, that he had been once beyond the seas before, and had brought certain books with him from thence, namely, two New Testaments, and one Primer in English. The bishop asked him to whom he gave the said books. He answered, he would not declare: "for," saith he, "such is your bloody cruelty, that you would never sleep quietly till you have sucked their blood, as you mean to do mine." The bishop, seeing he could extort no more out of him, and perceiving his constant spirit and fervent zeal to the truth, commanded him to prison till further opportunity might serve for the shedding of his blood.

*(Some time later)* the said archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Rochester, and divers other assistants, called the said poor man before them again, and caused all the former articles, interrogatories, and demands to be read unto him in English, to the end he should either have revoked the same, or else recanted them altogether, using both threats and fair promises, to the performance thereof, but all in vain: for his faith was built upon the rock Christ Jesus, and therefore unable to be removed with any storms of persecution whatsoever. In fine, the archbishop, (with mature judgment you must believe,) consulting with the bishop of Rochester, and others, proceeded to his condemnation, reading the bloody sentence of death against him; and so was he, being condemned, delivered to the secular power, who carried him to the prison; and soon after he was burnt for the testimony of Jesus Christ, as you may see more at large in his story, for whose constancy in the truth, the everlasting God be praised, Amen.



#### Cuxton W.I.

Our first meeting of 2011 was well attended and as our December Christmas Party night had to be cancelled due to the heavy snow, it was decided to have a social evening and we all enjoyed mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies to make up for missing our "party food" before Christmas. The entertainment that had been planned for the party was also performed with poems and sketches from the poetry and drama groups. All ably performed and very amusing. The table quiz that was also

prepared previously was completed by the tables and broadened our general knowledge. Sheila who had prepared the quiz was unfortunately not able to attend due to having broken her arm after slipping on the ice on Christmas Eve and our warm wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to her. Unsurprisingly, there were no entries for flower of the month. A very happy evening was had by all. Next meeting is on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and the speaker is John Yarrow on the Ups and Downs of a Wedding Photographer. Competition to be for a favourite photograph.

#### Is Multiculturalism Beneficial?

An open debate to be held at Bush Road Chapel Hall on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March at Bush Road Chapel Hall Cuxton at 7.30 pm. All Welcome.



## January 2011 News from Cuxton Infants

Dear Friends of our School,

A Happy New Year to you all. We hope it is a healthy one for you all. The children have returned today having had an exciting time at Christmas and certainly a very busy end of last term. We were all exhausted by the end! The snow caused problems in terms of our Christmas play. At one point I thought we may be performing it in January! However, we managed five fine performances.... By the end I think the children were quite confident, certainly Mary gripped the baby quite haphazardly and the gifts were plonked down not as carefully as at the beginning of the week! In truth though, I am not sure I could have learned the actions, words and narrating parts that some of our 4,5, 6 and 7 year olds managed at their ages. I / We are proud of them all. Cook as always provided a lovely festive lunch. Due to the snow, we were unable to share it with the 5 0 Club this year, but look forward to seeing them soon. Children danced at the party, played games and were visited by the special visitor clad in red who had parcels for them all. They then took home their belongings, which consisted of cards, calendars, party hats and table decorations/ tree decorations. Some had made coconut ice and Christmas cakes as well!

We were proud of our year 2 children who were invited to take part in the Valley of Visions project, which celebrated the history of Cuxton and the visions community trail. Again snow upset plans slightly. However the performance went ahead and our children danced with artistically made corn and lanterns. We then watched other community groups perform, before we walked in a procession around the Junior school grounds. The children had a lovely time.

We now have another busy term ahead. It began yesterday with staff in school planning the year and me finding out we had the last remaining lead stripped from our roof! Apparently 26 schools in Medway have had lead taken over the Christmas holidays. Ho Hum!!

Topics for the children this term include toys, how they work, old toys and forces of pushes and pulls. We hope to have a visit from Jeremy at the Guildhall Museum. Following half term we will be investigating Healthy Me, and thinking about foods, exercise and keeping healthy. We are holding a book week in February and a literacy morning for parents. Each class will be hosting an assembly for their parents, over the coming months and we will of course be celebrating Mothering Sunday.

We will be going outside and revisiting the grounds work we did on Environmental day and also we hope to learn more about becoming an Eco School, as I think we are already working hard at recycling, reusing and turning off lights etc!

Busy times ahead! That's all without even mentioning all the planning and assessing that the teachers do, and the budget planning, strategic direction of the school, health and safety, safeguarding etc.

That's all from the Infants for now. If you have access to a computer do look at our website, if not wait for the next news! Take care.

Sandra Jones. Head teacher.

### JANICE BALLARD

I had been hoping she might return to the fold. However, as that now seems unlikely, I would like to thank and pay tribute to Janice Ballard. Janice served St. John's and its Christian community in Halling for over 20 years that I know of (as I enter my 23rd year as volunteer organist!). For much of that time Janice sang regularly in the church choir (she also sings in Snodland Choir, so brought us not just her lovely voice, but also much experience gained under Dr. Ashbee's professional guidance).

So I miss her cheerful face in church each Sunday very much. I miss the time she always took to get everything ready for me – the organ and light turned on, the hymn book pages ready, the readings found and marked for me to follow. And at the end of the service it was often Janice who would tidy everything up on the pews. She never looked for any thanks for all she did so unobtrusively.

But it was not just the choir in which we benefited from Janice's many talents. She would always help with catering, baking cakes, and apple pies for harvest festival each year (whether at Halling or Cuxton). If there was catering to be done in church, Janice would be found making tea, making sure everyone had refreshments, and then tackling the mountain of washing up afterwards.

Then there were her beautiful flower arrangements, usually freely contributed, to complement our worship. Janice had (has) a skill with flowers that I much envy. I used to love looking at the arrangements in the chancel that I could enjoy while sitting at the organ. I am sure others loved them too. And of course she served on PCC for many years.

So Janice, we miss you and I would like to thank you publicly for all you did so generously and so skilfully for the church community in Halling over so many years. Gillian Feraday

## Nature Notes November 2010

There is bright sunshine on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month and it remains mild. I feed the birds and watch them pecking at the seed and nuts. A great spotted woodpecker makes a welcome appearance and a greenfinch braves the presence of a collared dove. The sun continues to shine through the afternoon when the skies are clear. A chill soon fills the air after sunset. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> I open the bedroom curtains to watch rooks as they leave their roosts, calling as they fly. Later, at midday, I walk across sunlit fields where I notice elders which have lost most of their leaves. Cows are lying in the field chewing the cud. Buttercups, hawkweed and speedwell bloom. I take the leaf strewn path through Mays Wood where leaves of yellow, brown and gold drift slowly down to the woodland floor. I skirt the ploughed fields, stopping to drink in the silence and the beauty. I continue through Six-acre Wood to the churchyard lit up by the golden sun. Grey clouds drift across the afternoon sky. The rooks return as darkness falls. On the 4<sup>th</sup> the temperatures reach 18 degrees Celsius and it is very pleasant to be outside in the garden. The sunlight is beaming warming rays down on me as I plant bulbs. The south west winds strengthen as the day progresses and the dipping sun pales against a greying sky. The weather is set to change, first with rain then with lower temperatures. The next morning is grey and mild when leaves are beginning to fall from the sycamore trees on the embankment and from the lilac bush in the garden. The cotoneasters bear bright orange berries. On 7<sup>th</sup>, as I walk to church in pale sunshine, I see bare ash trees which a few days ago were laden with leaves and ripe keys. Some light rain falls soon after midday but the sun shines again in the afternoon. Mid- afternoon, I walk along the top path of Six-acre Wood where slopes have been cleared. Hopefully wild flowers will bloom there in the Spring. The wind has blown leaves from the trees, leaving some of them bare—ash, beech and elder. I skirt the fields, walk the leaf strewn paths of Mays Wood to arrive in Church Fields. I watch the sun beaming across Mill Hill Wood, then turn my gaze to the sky above the fields and across the river where there is a variety of colours—deep blue ,pale blue ,light grey , dark grey and gold - so beautiful. Buttercups and bristly ox tongue bloom in the fields where cows graze. The sun dips low in the sky as I reach home. The 8<sup>th</sup> is a cold, wet day. The wind blows the leaves from the trees as it drives dark clouds from the south. The 10<sup>th</sup> is a beautiful day with blue skies, golden sunshine and a wind from the north. I take advantage of the sunshine to walk across Church Fields where hawthorns have lost nearly all their leaves but with scarlet berries still on their twigs. Mays Wood paths are covered in damp Autumn leaves and the sun's light filters through the trees' branches. I walk down into Dean Valley where silver birch trees look very beautiful and where old man's beard straddles the hedges. I continue along Tomlins Lane then take the path through the copse where I see a badgers' sett. I walk the path the other side of Purty's Shaw to Six-acre Field where horses graze .Finally I climb up to the top path of Six-acre Wood and to the churchyard. Clouds begin to build up in the afternoon but the sun continues to shine. The next day there are beautiful cloud formations in the sky with colours of grey, white and blue. As dawn breaks on 14<sup>th</sup>, I listen to the rooks stirring from their roosts. It is dry when I walk to church but heavy rain falls as I return home.

As, later, darkness falls, the rooks return to roost in the trees near the river. The skies clear, a bright moon shines and the air is cold. The morning of 15<sup>th</sup> is foggy when spiders' webs, covered in rime, lay on the conifer branches by the pond. Fog lingers well into the day only clearing mid-afternoon when there are some periods of sunshine. A clear evening is followed with descending fog and a bright moon is then obscured. The next day, the sun shines brightly in the morning. Wet leaves and grass sparkle in the golden light. Later in the morning, the grass in the front garden sparkles in colours of white, blue and gold. I sit in the shelter and warmth of the sunlit garden for a while at midday. In the latter part of the afternoon, I walk the leaf strewn upper path of Six-acre Wood, climb up to the edge of Mays Wood, skirt the field then enter the silent wood. As I cross Church Fields, where hawthorns and elders are now bare, I look across the mill-pond smooth river to Bluebell Hill. The skies are grey and a few drops of rain fall as I make my way home. When I walk beneath grey skies on the afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup>, I notice some Autumn leaves still adorning trees and shrubs. Swirling fog greets the 19<sup>th</sup> which by midday has dispersed to reveal bright sunshine. The next day, north winds bring grey clouds and dampness is in the air. Gulls circle high in the sky but I hear no cries. The sycamores have lost most of their leaves. Four chaffinches come to feed then a greenfinch joins them. There are a few glimpses of the sun at midday but by the afternoon, the skies become very grey and the air is cold. Darkness falls early. In the afternoon of 22<sup>nd</sup>, I watch two grey squirrels chasing around on the grass and feeding on the nuts and seed. Cold winds continue to blow from the north. Even colder weather is forecast for the end of the week. While walking Murphy at Bluewater on 23<sup>rd</sup> I'm aware of Autumn leaves lying on wet grass, and pale skies of light grey and dark grey clouds as they drift across from the north. As we drive home, shafts of sunlight beautify the golden leaves on trees along the motorway. Patches of pale blue sky are revealed by the parting clouds. This is part of Winter's beauty. On the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> as I watch the golden rays of the sun rise over Bluebell Hill, I hear a robin's beautiful song. Frost lies on the grass which later sparkles in the sunlight. The trees are still as statues for there is no breath of wind. Most of the leaves on the lilac have fallen to the ground. Wood pigeons and collared doves are eating the holly berries but no redwing has appeared. In the afternoon, before the sun sets, I walk along the road with Murphy. Darkness falls and the air is cold. Golden sunshine beams through the windows on 26<sup>th</sup> while frost lies on the grass. Pale blue sky is brushed with very high cloud. Rooks fly toward the woodland. The next day, frost lies on the grass and along the top of the ivy hedge. There is a brief spell of brightness before grey clouds roll across the sky. After darkness has fallen the skies clear to reveal the stars. Frost descends once more. Early on 28<sup>th</sup>, I look up at the sky and see one bright star and the moon. Grey clouds begin to cover the sky but later disperse .I walk to church across frost-covered grass which later, sparkles in the bright sunlight. The 29<sup>th</sup> is a beautiful day with trees, grass and hedges covered in sparkling frost. By late evening, however, large flakes of snow are falling and I wake up to a white world on the last day of the month. More snow is forecast.

More snow has fallen during the night and branches and sides of tree trunks are once again snow-covered. I feed the birds having cleared away snow from the feeders. I then cut down the Japanese anemones as they are snow laden and lying over the path near the dustbin. This I enjoy doing as I feel the cold air on my face. Snow showers continue to fall through the day. On 2<sup>nd</sup>, we wake to deeper snow and trees and shrubs are covered once more. Murphy scampers around in the snow when I go out to feed the birds which I continue to do through the daylight hours. All is still outside with no breath of wind, just a steady falling of snow. The light is fading by mid-afternoon. No snow falls on 3<sup>rd</sup> but it remains very cold. The tops of plants, pots and the dustbin lid are wearing tall snow hats, perfect in shape. The skies lighten during the afternoon and the rawness of the air penetrates one's clothes. A sharp frost is forecast with fog to add to the treacherous conditions. The next day a thaw sets in so we are walking in a slushy car park. At home, birds come to feed and three squirrels scamper around the garden. Rain falls in the evening. By 6<sup>th</sup> more snow has melted but there has been a sharp frost, freezing the pond again. We drive to Bluewater. The trees along the route are silver with frost and the branches and tiny twigs are so beautiful. Fog blankets most of the countryside and it remains grey throughout the day until darkness falls. The poem "In the bleak mid-winter" says "earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone", so true of the weather on 7<sup>th</sup> for the ground is hard with frost and the garden pond is frozen. I listen to bird calls as I am putting out food for them. The air is very cold and the snow is crisp underfoot. A golden sun sets in the west and the trees are still as statues for there is no breath of wind. I watch a little vole scampering across the frozen pond and it feeds on some of the bird's seeds. The next day I notice that a few leaves still cling to a small elm's branches on the embankment. A squirrel leaps from the patio wall onto the seed feeder. A bitter northerly wind drives grey clouds across the sky where there are a few glimpses of brightness. Most of the holly berries have been devoured. The following evening I listen to rooks calling from the trees near the river. On 10<sup>th</sup> salmon pink clouds drift across the sky from the north as the sun rises above Bluebell Hill. Snow still lies on hills and in gardens. A magpie perches on the bare branches of a sycamore tree as I watch golden sunshine beaming across the garden. Before daylight breaks on 12<sup>th</sup>, I listen to rooks calling from the trees by the river. I am up just as light is appearing in the clear skies where one bright star shines. On the morning of 14<sup>th</sup>, pink and grey clouds drift across the sky then golden sunlight beams across the woodland and into the garden. Mist lies over the river. As I walk to the post box on 15<sup>th</sup> I notice that the silver birch trees by Whornes Place still bear some golden leaves. The next day we walk the sodden leaf strewn paths in Cobtree Manor Park. On 17<sup>th</sup> there is a red glow in the sky. A few flakes of snow have fallen during the night and frost whitens the grass. We drive to the Dockyard when skies are grey and by mid-day snow is falling fast covering the car park and pavements, and as we make our way home, driving into the windscreen. The snow continues

to fall and the world becomes white again. Eventually the sun shines melting some of the snow on the patio, but in no time at all the temperatures drop and the melted areas turn to ice. Snow falls for nearly two hours on 18<sup>th</sup> covering the trees, shrubs grass and paths. On the Sunday morning I look out on a beautiful white world. In the evening the churchyard is like a picture postcard with the snow producing its bright light. The branches of the trees there are snow laden. On 20<sup>th</sup>, before the sun rises, the sky is a very pale blue flecked with grey and pink cloud, then the sun rises and its golden light pours into the garden brightening the snow which still lies on the branches of trees and shrubs. Birds flock to the areas of the garden where I have placed nuts and seed. The afternoon skies become overcast with a threat of snow. More snow is falling when I go to Snodland for our carol concert. When we are coming home later, the roads, and the roads are covered with snow. The garden is very beautiful with the trees heavily laden with snow and all is silent. Then comes the shortest day. The next day rain falls washing away some of the snow. The morning 24<sup>th</sup> is bright, crisp and cold. Salmon pink clouds brush the sky. Plenty of birds come to feed. Frost is forecast. On Christmas Day, birds flock to the garden for the food and water I have put out for them. There is some brightness in the middle of the day, then, later, a few glimpses of the sun. The skies become overcast again but then clear to reveal stars when darkness falls. The 26<sup>th</sup> brings blue skies and bright sunshine, but it remains very cold with lumps of snow in the garden turned to ice. The 27<sup>th</sup> is overcast and cold. We drive to Bluewater where we walk round the wild life area with Murphy. Paths have been cleared of snow but the various small lakes warn of thin ice even though it is very white. I notice tiny catkins closely attached to their fine twigs. Temperatures on 28<sup>th</sup> reach 7C the air is damp and drizzle is falling as I feed the birds. Soon fog descends and as darkness falls it feels quite eerie in the garden. There is no sound and I cannot see the sky or lights across the river. The next day I hear the strident call of a great tit and think of Spring. The final day of the month remains damp. As I walk up the path by the church where an ivy tree has fallen almost blocking my way to Church Fields. I cross the fields to Mays Wood where soggy, brown leaves are strewn across the path. As I make my way to Dean Valley, I am aware of maple saplings still bearing leaves. At the top of the valley hazels display tiny catkins on their twigs. Beads of water sparkle on hawthorns which still bear some fruit. Down in the valley silver birch branches are purple against the grey sky. From Tomlins Lane I walk through the copse where a badgers' sett shows activity for white stones lie on the bank and path. Hips remain on briars. I climb up the hill and sit for a while. The loud drone of traffic on the M2 and a plane passing overhead are the sounds I hear. As I make my way to Six-acre Wood I see another badgers' sett. Pink spindle berries are to be seen. I make my way home through the wood and hear a blackbird's song and a great tit's call. Another year ends. Elizabeth Summers.

"From In Memoriam" by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Ring out, wild bells to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go,  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

BROWNIE QUIZ NIGHT : Saturday 19th March, 7.30pm at The Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cost - £6 per head. Tables of 8 max. Delicious Ploughman's included. Bring your own drink! Grand Raffle. Call Liz on 01634 295833 or Sue on 01634 715645 . Everyone welcome!

Cuxton in the National Press.

The *Daily Telegraph* has been running a series on people whose names seem to fit their jobs. Bob Brooks of Worthing recalls that during the War, meals at Cuxton school were served by Mrs Wilde, Mrs Rabbit and Mrs Pye – so much nicer than the tame ones! Who remembers Bob Brooks?