

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
2 <sup>nd</sup> February Candlemas		8.00 am Holy Communion	Malachi 3 v vv 1-5 p961 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028
		5. 00 pm Folk Evening Service, Refreshments, Folk Concert.	Malachi 3 v vv 1-5 p961 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 5 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent / Epiphany 4		9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 43 v27 – 44 v4p876 I Corinthians 13 vv 1-13 p1153 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028
10 <sup>th</sup> February 4 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent / Epiphany 5		9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 6 vv 1-13 p690 I Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 p1155 Luke 5 vv 1-11 p1032
17 <sup>th</sup> February Septuagesima		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Septuagesima
		9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 17 vv 5-10 p776 I Corinthians 15 vv 12-20 p1155 Luke 6 vv 17-26 p1034
24 <sup>th</sup> February Sexagesima		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 2 vv 4-25 p4 Revelation 4 vv 1-11 p1236 Luke 8 vv 22-25 p1037
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
3 <sup>rd</sup> February	Epiphany 4	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 13 vv 1-7 p1140 Matthew 8 vv 23-34 p973
	5 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 43 v27 – 44 v4p876 I Corinthians 13 vv 1-13 p1153 Luke 2 vv 22-40 p1028
10 <sup>th</sup> February	4 <sup>th</sup> Before Lent	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 6 vv 1-13 p690 I Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 p1155 Luke 5 vv 1-11 p1032
	Epiphany 5	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Proverbs 3 vv 1-35 p637 Acts 25 vv 1-27 p1122
17 <sup>th</sup> February Septuagesima		11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 17 vv 5-10 p776 I Corinthians 15 vv 12-20 p1155 Luke 6 vv 17-26 p1034
24 <sup>th</sup> February Sexagesima		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 2 vv 4-25 p4 Revelation 4 vv 1-11 p1236 Luke 8 vv 22-25 p1037
Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 am Cuxton		Holy Communion Thursdays 9.30 am Halling	
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Hebrews 12 vv 1-15 Mark 6 vv 1-6	7 <sup>th</sup> February	Hebrews 12 vv 18-24 Mark 6 vv 7-13
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 2 vv 4-17 Mark 7 vv 14-23	14 <sup>th</sup> February Ss Cyril & Methodias	Genesis 2 vv 18-25 Mark 7 vv 24-30
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Genesis 8 vv 6-22 Mark 8 vv 22-26	21 <sup>st</sup> February	Genesis 9 vv 1-13 Mark 8 vv 27-33
27 <sup>th</sup> February	James 1 vv 19-27 Mark 9 vv 38-40	28 <sup>th</sup> February	James 2 vv 1-9 Mark 9 vv 41-50

Copy Date March Magazine: 8<sup>th</sup> February 8.30 am Rectory.

In this month's issue, we've scanned in archive documents from the collection of respected local historian Ted Gowers with reference to the Halling Mediaeval Fayre held September 1983. This is the background for those of you (including me) not around at the time. There have been churches in both Cuxton and Halling since Saxon times and they have seen many changes: the Norman Conquest, the Black Death, the Reformation, the Civil War and two world wars, to name but a few of the most dramatic. In the 1970s, it was decided to put the two parishes together - one parish with one incumbent. Halling had had vicars for centuries because the local priest had been appointed by the monks at Rochester who were legally the rector (the one responsible for the parish and in receipt of its revenues) and Cuxton had always had rectors who held the living in their own right. Since Tudor times, with the dissolution of the monasteries, this distinction has made very little practical difference. So the person entrusted with the new combined parish holds the office of Rector of Cuxton and Halling. The first was Rev'd Graham Lacey, who had previously been Rector of Cuxton alone. The last vicar to hold Halling alone was Rev'd George Adams who retired in 1976.

Rev'd Alan Vousden was the second Rector of Cuxton and Halling and I am the third and current parson to hold this post.

In the mid seventies, St John's church had rather fallen into disrepair. One possibility was to allow it to continue to deteriorate and finally to close, while developing St Michael's church to serve both villages which now formed one parish. Sadly, the numbers of regular worshippers in both villages could be accommodated in one building and it could be argued that the limited resources of the Church should be spent on people rather than on restoring and maintaining mediaeval buildings. In New Testament times, the Church didn't own any buildings at all and Jesus certainly didn't come to found a historic building preservation society.

On the other hand, both Cuxton and Halling churches are very significant buildings. They are beautiful in their own right. The fact that they are there at all is a witness to the Presence of God in our communities. Their architecture and history tell the Christian story. It means something to me and to many other people that many generations have gathered on these two sites for worship and prayer down through the ages. To me, a closed church building is a sign of failure, of giving up on a community, except in those few cases like Paddlesworth and Dode, where there no longer is a settlement around the old parish church.

There is also the point that Cuxton and Halling are two distinct places. They maintain their own civil parish councils. They are communities in their own right. Not everybody agrees with me (Have you heard about somewhere people and anywhere people? I'm very much one of the former.), but I think it is important that, at the heart of any community of people, there is a community of faith – worshipping, praying, witnessing, serving. Preferably, in my opinion, that means a Church with its own minister meeting at least every Sunday to celebrate Holy Communion, as Jesus told us to do, to preach and to teach the Gospel, to enjoy fellowship together and to pray.

So, it was decided by joint meetings of Christians from both Cuxton and Halling that St John's would be kept open, restored, and, to some extent, altered to meet contemporary needs – such as lavatories, kitchens and a meeting space. I came here in 1987 and just missed what followed – huge numbers of people from both villages working together to raise the necessary funds. Long before councils started collecting paper for recycling, the church organised a monthly collection from most roads in the two villages. Residents put out their waste paper to be collected on the designated day or brought it to the giant skips in the Rectory grounds and Hayward's yard. We then sold it to the local paper mills for recycling. This involved dozens of people and enjoyed the support of Walter Hayward's business as well as volunteers of all ages.

There was a stall held monthly at St John's in my time (but previously, I think, weekly) selling produce, books and home made cakes, pastries and pies. These were also sold at the post office and enjoyed a tremendous reputation locally so that people would make a point of purchasing what church members had made for their dinners and teas.

I haven't the details of all the social and fund-raising events organised. As I say, I only came in when the process was nearly complete and the work almost finished. One weekend which is certainly remembered by those who were here at the time is the one Ted Gowers describes below. It was a great time when a lot of people had a lot of fun working together for the glory of God and for the good of the local community.

It's always good to look back thankfully on great times in the past. What of the present and future? Well, they're down to us in our generation. There are some very faithful people in both our churches. God is still faithful. What, I wonder, are His plans for Cuxton and Halling now? I should like to see the congregations in both Cuxton and Halling grow in both number and stature so that we can be more effective in doing God's work in this place, but it is all in God's Hands and what is required of us is that we remain faithful. Roger.

# MEDIEVAL FAYRE HALLING



SEPTEMBER 23 - 25 1983

THIS FRIDAY SAW THE START OF THREE DAYS OF FESTIVITIES, A FLOWER FESTIVAL, MEDIEVAL FAYRE AND SERVICE ON SUNDAY WITH LUNCH IN THE OLD TITHE BARN.

FRIDAY, THE DAY BEGAN FINE JUST THE WEATHER WE HAD BEEN HOPING FOR AFTER AROUND TWO WEEKS OF RAIN.

I ARRIVED AT THE CHURCH AT APROX 9-20 TO FIND IT IN COMPLETE CHAOS OR THAT IS HOW IT SEEMED TO ME, FLOWERS, BUCKETS, BRANCHES OF LEAVES AND EVERYTHING THAT GOES WITH ARRANGING FLOWERS, THESE WERE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE FLOOR ON THE PEWS AND TO WALK ACROSS THE CHURCH WAS A HAZARDOUS AFFAIR. THE WOMEN SOON GOT TO WORK WITH SCISSORS ETC, SEEING THE AMOUNT OF FLOWERS MY IMMEDIATE THOUGHTS THAT THEY WOULD NEVER COMPLETE THE WORK BY TEN O'CLOCK.

AT AROUND 9-45 THE PEOPLE FROM THE ARCHIVES ARRIVED AND AFTER SOME SHUNTING OF CARS WE PROCEEDED TO ARRANGE THE EXHIBITS, THESE WERE QUICKLY DONE AND AFTER I HAD ARRANGED THE FEW ITEMS I HAD TAKEN I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THE WOMEN SWEEPING AND CLEANING UP.

BUT TO ADD TO THE ALARM AND CONFUSION A STARLING THAT HAD BECOME LOCKED IN THE CHURCH STARTED TO PLAY HAVOC WITH THE FLOWERS OBVIOUSLY THINKING THEM A SOURCE OF FOOD AS IT QUICKLY DEVoured BERRIES ETC, EFFORTS BY THE FLOWER ARRANGERS, THE RECTOR, CHURCHWARDENS WERE TO NO AVAIL IN EVICTING THIS AVIAN INVADER. SO THE IDEA WAS TO KEEP HIM ON THE MOVE AWAY FROM THE FLOWERS ETC. THIS

CERTAINLY TIRED THE CHASERS AND THE BIRD RETREATED INTO THE ROOF OF THE CHURCH.

AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR OR MORE WHEN THE CHURCH WAS QUIET I SPOTTED HIM ON THE FLOWERS NEAR THE VESTRY DOOR, I REMOVED MY COAT AND WAVING IT TO STOP IT COMING PAST ME I MANAGED TO GET IT INTO THE VESTRY AND CLOSED THE DOOR ON IT, VERY SOON THE CHURCHWARDEN UNLOCKED THE OUTER DOOR AND A VERY TIRED AND FRIGHTENED BIRD REGAINED HIS FREEDOM.

10'O'CLOCK THE FLOWERS FINISHED ALL WE WANTED WERE THE CROWDS ROLLING IN, AT FIRST A FEW SHEEPISHLY GAZED THROUGH THE DOORS AND WERE SOON GATHERED IN, THE LARGE JARS STOOD AWAITING TO BE FILLED AFTER ALL THIS IS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT. UP UNTIL DINNER TIME THINGS WERE QUIET, IRENE MY WIFE ARRIVED WITH SANDWICHES AND A FLASK OF COFFEE . DURING THE AFTERNOON THERE WAS A REGULAR FLOW OF PEOPLE WHO SHOWED A GREAT PLEASURE AT THE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS AND SOME INTEREST WITH THE ARCHIVE MATERIAL, THIS CONSISTED OF TWO LARGE DISPLAY BOARDS ONE DISPLAYING DOCUMENTS ON THE CHURCH THE OTHER ON THE PARISH. MAPS MOUNTED ETC ALSO DISPLAY CASES WITH SCHOOL LOG BOOK, CHURCH LOG BOOK AND EARLY REGISTERS. MY OWN DISPLAY SMALL BUT PEOPLE SHOWED GREAT INTEREST ON THE EARLY PARISH MAGAZINES THESE CONTAIN A GREAT DEAL OF LOCAL NAMES SO I WAS DETERMINED THAT I WOULD SOMEHOW FIND SOME WAY TO DISPLAY MORE.

BY FIVE O'CLOCK IT HAD BEEN A SATISFYING DAY.



### Saturday & Sunday

ARRIVED AT THE CHURCH APPROXIMATELY 9-30, OUTSIDE EVERYONE WAS BUSY STALLS BEING LAID OUT JARS UPON JARS OF JAM AND MARMALADE CHUTNEYS OF ALL DESCRIPTION STALLS WITH CLOTHES, BOOKS, ANTIQUES, FRUIT, BRIC A BRAC, HEALTH BOOKS. I BELIEVE UP TO SEVENTY STALLS BEING SET UP FROM THE CHURCH DOWN TO THE RIVER, THERE WERE PEOPLE DRESSED IN COSTUMES MADE TO VARIOUS DESIGNS AND FROM MATERIALS FROM OLD CLOTHES TO CURTAIN MATERIALS ETC. MEN DRESSED AS MONKS, WORKMEN BUT THE PRIZE MUST GO TO JACK JEFFERIES DRESSED AS A FRIAR. ENTERING THE CHURCH YARD I WAS GLAD TO SEE THE STOCKS I HAD MADE HAD ARRIVED. IN THE CHURCH THE WOMEN WERE BUSY REFRESHING THE FLOWERS AND PLANTS. I HAD DECIDED THAT THE ARCHIVES EXHIBITION NEEDED TO BE RE-ARRANGED AND WITH THE EXTRA MATERIAL I HAD TAKEN, AND WITH HELP WE MOVED THE TABLE AND RE-ARRANGED THE CASES. I ALSO MADE A DISPLAY BOARD WITH MORE CHURCH MAGAZINES, THIS TURNED OUT A FAVOURITE WITH MANY PEOPLE.

AT TEN O'CLOCK THE PUBLIC BEGAN TO ENTER AND I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE MANY WHO WERE IN THE PREVIOUS DAY AND THIS WAS TO BEGIN A FANTASTIC DAY, AS ON FRIDAY THE FLOWERS WERE THE MAIN ATTRACTION BUT THE ARCHIVES EXHIBITION BECAME A POPULAR ATTRACTION AND BEGAN FOR ME A MOST ENJOYABLE IF SOMETIMES TIRING DAY. BY THE END OF THE DAY I COULD HARDLY TALK AND FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS AFTER I COULDN'T REGAIN MY VOICE.

DURING A LAPSE I TOOK THE CHANCE TO WALK AROUND THE VARIOUS STALLS AND WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE ABOUT AND SPENDING. I MET ON MY WALK MANY VILLAGERS DRESSED IN COSTUME AND WITH THE CHILDREN MADE A VERY COLOURFUL PICTURE, IN THE TITHE BARN THE ANTIQUE DEALERS HAD A VERY GOOD DISPLAY AND I PURCHASED A PINK LUSTRE JUG. ON MY RETURN TO THE CHURCH I FOUND IT FULL AND IRENE BUSY WITH PEOPLE, ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS ON HALLING SO I WAS SOON ENGAGED. IRENE THEN LEFT TO GET SOME FISH AND CHIPS RETURNING LATER, WE EACH SAT BEHIND A CURTAIN IN THE GLORY HOLE TO EAT, MUST BE ANOTHER FIRST FOR THE CHURCH. EATING FISH AND CHIPS IN THE CHURCH.

DURING THE AFTERNOON MORE PEOPLE ARRIVED AND I WAS PLEASED TO MEET AND CHAT WITH OLD FRIENDS AND VILLAGE FOLK I HADN'T MET FOR YEARS, SOME FOR AT LEAST THIRTY YEARS OR MORE. IT WAS DURING THE AFTERNOON THE MAYOR ARRIVED COMING UP THE RIVER BY BOAT AND THEN ENTERING THE CHURCH TO VIEW THE FESTIVITIES. GRADUALLY THE JARS BEGAN TO FILL UP COINS, NOTES AND AT LEAST TWO CHEQUES. AT TIMES THE CHURCH WAS ABSOLUTELY PACKED AND THE RECTOR EXTENUATED THAT AT LEAST A THOUSAND PEOPLE PASSED THROUGH THE CHURCH ON SATURDAY. OUTSIDE I WAS TOLD EVERYTHING WAS GOING FINE AND I BELIEVE MOST STALLHOLDERS WERE DOING WELL IN SPITE OF THE OCCASIONAL SHOWER, BUT AS ONE STALLHOLDER PUT IT "IT HELPED COOL HER DOWN" BY FIVE O'CLOCK WHEN THE CHURCH SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLOSED PEOPLE WERE STILL ENTERING, AND THE CLEARING UP HAD BEGUN. BUT SURPRISING EVERYONE WAS MOST HELPFUL AND THERE WAS VERY LITTLE LITTER AND SO ENDED A MOST FANTASTIC DAY, THIS WAS THE EXCLAMATION I HEARD MANY TIMES. "IT'S FANTASTIC" AND SO ENDED THE SECOND DAY. EVEN IF NO MONEY HAD BEEN MADE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A 100% PLUS SUCCESS, BECAUSE IT GOT PEOPLE OUT AND TOGETHER TO MEET AND TALK TO ONE ANOTHER, IN FACT I WAS TOLD PEOPLE CAME FROM MILES AWAY WHO HAD CONNECTIONS. I SPOKE TO ONE COUPLE FROM HYTHE NEAR FOLKESTONE WHO WERE MARRIED IN THE CHURCH DURING THE WAR AND HAD NOT BEEN BACK SINCE. A GREAT NUMBER FROM SNODLAND, CUXTON, THE MEDWAY TOWNS AND AT LEAST ONE COUPLE FROM MANCHESTER. I WAS DELIGHTED TO MEET ONE OF THE STEVENS WHO LIVED IN THE EARLY DAYS AT THE



FERRY AND LIVING IN WOULDHAM AND HEARING THE SOUND OF THE FESTIVITIES CAME ALL THE WAY ROUND TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON AND WAS OVERJOYED TO MEET MANY OLD FRIENDS WHO REMEMBERED HIM.

SUNDAY AND THE FINAL DAY.

I THINK WE HAVE DONE WELL FOR WEATHER THIS WEEKEND, AS PRIOR TO THIS THE WEATHER HAD BEEN WET, WINDY AND COLD FOR SEPTEMBER. TODAY WE ARRIVED AT CHURCH AT 9-45 TO FIND QUITE A NUMBER ALREADY SEATED FOR THE SERVICE, AND BY THE TIME THE SERVICE BEGAN THE CHURCH WAS AS FULL AS IT HAD BEEN FOR YEARS SOME PEOPLE SITTING ON THE TOWER STEPS.

THE SERVICE CONDUCTED BY THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER Dr SAY WAS AN OLD SERVICE DATING BACK TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND WAS OF GREAT INTEREST AND THE BISHOP DID WELL TO GET THROUGH WITHOUT FEW ERRORS, HIS SERMON RELATED THE CHURCH TO THE VILLAGE AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND OF HALLINGS CONNECTIONS WITH THE PAST BISHOPS OF ROCHESTER FROM GUNDOLPH TO FISHER. Dr SAY MADE A MAGNIFICENT FIGURE BEING APPROXIMATELY 6' 4" IN HEIGHT AND WEARING HIS ROBES, MITRE ETC HE STOOD HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ALL OTHERS. AFTER THE SERVICE THE CONGREGATION REMAINED BEHIND AND WITH THE BISHOP AND HIS LADY WIFE TOOK A GREAT INTEREST IN THE CHURCH AND ALSO THE ARCHIVE MATERIAL.

AS IT WAS 12-30 THOSE WHO HAD TICKETS FOR THE LUNCH IN THE TITHE BARN STARTED TO LEAVE, LEAVING VIC CLARKE THE CHURCHWARDEN AND MYSELF AND WITH FIVE MINUTES TO GO TWO PEOPLE CAME DASHING IN AND ASKED TO LOOK AROUND. VIC SAID IT WOULD HAVE TO BE QUICK AS THE CHURCH WOULD BE LOCKED UNTIL TWO O'CLOCK, SO IT WAS WITH SOME APREHENSION THAT WE LOOKED AT OUR WATCHES EXPECTING TO FIND THE GUESTS INCLUDING THE BISHOP AWAITING US SO USHERING THE TWO OUT AFTER TEN MINUTES WE DASHED OFF TO THE BARN TO FIND WE WERE NOT LATE AS THE BISHOP AND RECTOR AND A GREAT MANY OF THE GUESTS HAD RETIRED TO THE FIVE BELLS OPPOSITE THE CHURCH TO PARTAKE OF THE HOSTS ALES. STILL THEY SOON ARRIVED AND AFTER WELCOMING THE BISHOP BY THE RECTOR AND THANKING THE CATERERS WE SETTLED DOWN TO A GOOD LUNCH WITH MEAD WINE TO HELP IT ALONG. AT TWO O'CLOCK THE CHURCH WAS RE-OPENED AND I DIDN'T EXPECT A GREAT MANY VISITORS BUT I WAS SURPRISED BY THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE WHO CAME AGAIN, OLD VILLAGERS WHO HAVING MOVED AWAY CAME BACK FOR THE DAY AND ALL PROFFESSED THE FLOWERS MARVELOUS, A GREAT DEAL OF PEOPLE WHO WHO ON THE PREVIOUS DAYS CAME FOR THE FLOWERS RETURNED TO SEE THE ARCHIVES AS MANY SAID THEY FORGOT THEIR GLASSES, MY OWN GLASSES MUST HAVE BEEN USED A HUNDRED TIMES BY PEOPLE HAVING NONE OF THEIR OWN.

I WAS KEPT AS BUSY IN THE AFTERNOON AS ON PREVIOUS DAYS MY VOICE GETTING WEAKER AS TIME WENT ON. FIVE O'CLOCK ARRIVED AND THERE WERE STILL FOLK AROUND AND SO BEGAN THE JOB OF PACKING UP, STILL WITH HELP THIS WAS SOON DONE THE FLOWERS WERE LEFT AND SOME SURVIVED UNTIL THE NEXT SUNDAY FOR HARVEST FESTIVAL.

SO ENDED A MOST SUCCESSFUL WEEK-END AND £1400 BEING RAISED FOR THE RESTORATION FUND.

#### Co-op Community Fund

Last year, many of you assigned your 1p in the pound spent at the Co-op to the disabled lavatory and baby changing facility for the church hall. The sum raised was £7,720, a magnificent effort. There was a formal presentation on 24<sup>th</sup> November in both Snodland and Cuxton Co-ops. There was a giant facsimile cheque. There were cakes, badges and pens for those attending. Thank you to the Co-op and their staff. Thank you also to all the customers who designated us as the chosen good cause for the community fund. Roger.

### From the Registers

#### Funerals:

29 <sup>th</sup> November	Elizabeth Anne Carter (79)	High Street
29 <sup>th</sup> November	Peter Pratt-Wood (100)	Stake Lane
28 <sup>th</sup> December	Joyce Rosemary Burt (99)	Canterbury

(service held St. Nicholas' Church, Thanington Without)

### Confirmation 2019?

We shall not be hosting a confirmation service this year, but, if there is anyone who wishes to be prepared for confirmation, we shall arrange to take part in a service in another church. At confirmation, you reaffirm your commitment to the promises made at your baptism – to live by faith in God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit – and the laying on of the bishop's hand is a sign and seal of God's gift of His Holy Spirit. If you have not been baptized already, you will be baptized at the same service. We meet beforehand for a course of preparation. When I know who would like to be confirmed, I shall arrange these classes at a time convenient to the participants. Commitment is expected and participants should attend the classes and Sunday worship unless there are real reasons to miss out occasionally.

### Christmas Thanks

We had another wonderful Christmas in both churches. Thanks to those who care for buildings, keep them clean and decorate them for special occasions. Thanks to the flower arrangers, bellringers and musicians. Thanks also to those who made all those Christingles and produced and took part in the nativity plays both in St John's and St Michael's. Thanks to everyone who is part of our Church for being the person God made you to be. Roger.

St Michael's Draw (December): £10 Mrs Sadler (33) & 2x£5 Mr & Mrs Beaney (20&5).

St Michael's raw (January): £10 Mr Haselden (9), £5 each Mrs Maissey (34) & Mr Curnow (30)

St John's Draw (November): £10 each to Mr S Head Head (4), Miss L Thorne (24) & Mrs M Fuller (78) – drawn by Mrs Baker.

St John's Draw (December): £5 each to Mrs H Baker (46), Mrs A Hayward (80), Mrs A Watts (117) & Mrs D Smitherman (140) – drawn by Ms Heighes.

If you'd like to join either of these draws, please contact Mary Pitt for St Michael's or Betty Head for St John's.

### Appeals.

The total from the parish for the Poverty and Hope Appeal was £362.70 (plus gift aid makes £453.38) and the collections for the Children's Society at the Christingle Services amounted to £347.50. We raised £165 for Demelza in the collection tins at the Scout & Guide Carol Service.

### Science Jokes

Two chemists walk into a bar. One orders H<sub>2</sub>O. The other orders H<sub>2</sub>O too, drinks it and dies.

"Einstein has come up with a theory about space."

"And about time too!"

Heisenberg and Schrödinger are motoring along the US freeway. A traffic cop stops them and asks Heisenberg if he knows how fast they are travelling. Heisenberg replies, "No, but I know where we are." The cop then asks Schrödinger if he knows that there is a dead cat in the trunk? "I do now," Schrödinger replies.

What do call a member of the dog family who is into mindfulness?

Aware wolf.



## Mariner's Hill Loop Trail

Chartwell is a very well known National Trust Property. It was the much loved country retreat of Sir Winston Churchill who lived there for some 40 years. During his residency he enjoyed painting, walking, gardening, writing and entertaining as well as bringing up his family and looking after the marmalade coloured Chartwell cat, Jock.

The house, gardens and studio are delightful but today my interest lies in the walks surrounding Chartwell. There are several well marked walks. One of my favourites is the loop trail around Mariner's Hill. It is a rather short walk (1.5 miles) but well worth the effort.



My outing begins at the far end of Chartwell's car park in the cafe/restaurant. Whilst enjoying my customary cheese scone and latte I study

the walk details given on a sheet from the visitor's centre.

The walk begins at the car park entrance and takes me across the Mapleton Road then up the steep steps to Mariner's Hill. I turn left at the first marker post and walk parallel to Mapleton Road along a well trodden path. There are some benches along the way which afford brilliant views of the Chartwell

estate. I note that today there are several small family groups having refreshment breaks whilst enjoying the vistas.



Moving on, the footpath descends to a four way junction. I turn right and then go up hill for a short way to the next junction where I turn left. This path takes me alongside some fields with cattle and opens out to give stunning views over the Weald. Today it is misty but the cows and partial view of the Weald, including Bough Beech, are still good to see.



Beyond this point the footpath winds around the top of the fields

then goes across a further field and into a lovely wood. On route there is a small stone monument stating, 'This land is given to the



National Trust for places of interest or historical beauty. 1904. In memoriam. J D.'

Apparently, these woods are carpeted with bluebells in the spring however there is no sign of spring growth as yet. The woods are quiet and there are many small sparrows and finches busily eating berries and insects. I can see signs of rabbits and other small mammals. The path is wet underfoot and lined with fallen leaves. The route turns right and joins a bridleway going up hill to a wooden fence. I fork left then walk downhill, carefully, descending the final section and steps leading back to Mapleton Road. The National Trust instruction sheet states: "Continue downhill onto Mapleton Road and the Chartwell entrance for tea and cake in the restaurant'. OK, will do!

Although misty, it has been a lovely dry, fresh day and this walk has been so welcome after spending more time than usual indoors and being relatively inactive. A lovely day out. Holly Croft.

## Buses and Flying Boats

One of our readers recalled that, when the Mercury & the Maia took off down the Medway, a great torrent of water falling off them would soak the traffic on Rochester Bridge. This, we were told, was very exciting if the traffic included the school bus. On reflection, I remember being told that the Cliffe bus was still open top. Any comments?

# 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 6.30-7.30 & 7.30-8.30 pm. For more information, please contact instructor Emily Pollington, 07940233296, [emilypollington@btinternet.com](mailto:emilypollington@btinternet.com) Also on Facebook.

Please book through website <https://the-pilates-element.pilatesnearyou.co.uk/>

## **Nic Boniface Counselling & Therapeutic Services (Medway)**

*Offices in Rochester & Rainham*

Making the decision to step into therapy can evoke many feelings. I appreciate that starting the therapeutic process can be a really brave decision!

If you need someone to talk to, in an environment within which you feel safe, we can build this together supported by the Framework of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy, of which I am a registered member.

If you would like to discuss counselling or counselling supervision, please contact me on:

**[BonifaceTherapyServices@gmail.com](mailto:BonifaceTherapyServices@gmail.com)**

**07865 470014**

Pilates is a wonderful way to exercise and it's really great to get local people working out together as they all have a chat before class so it's great for helping with social isolation. I would run a class for people on a Thursday morning if there were sufficient demand. Please contact me if you are interested. Emily Pollington.

### The Seasonal Steps of our Seers – January and February

New Year's Day – 1<sup>st</sup> January. January is named after the Roman god Janus (Latin for 'Opening') who is depicted on statues as having two faces, one looking back to what has been and one looking forward to what is to come. Children would go out on this day 'apple gifting' with apples stuck with evergreen twigs – rosemary and box – together with grains and raisins, calling from house to house offering 'New Year blessings' in exchange for small gifts of food and money. In Scotland, children would go 'guising', where they soot their faces and sing New Year rhymes in exchange for 'hogmanays' – drinks, gifts and goodies – and leaving a piece of coal behind them as it is considered unlucky to go to a house empty-handed on New Year's Day!

Twelfth Night – 5<sup>th</sup> January. This is the day which marks the end of the Christmas festivities, the time to take down the decorations and to burn the Christmas trees. Counting Christmas Night as the first day of Christmas, the fifth of January is then the twelfth. In pagan times this was an important festival having many old customs – an occasion for games, feasting and general merriment. In the mediaeval Royal court there was much revelry, forfeits, disguisings and play-acting. A 'Lord of Misrule', appointed at the beginning of the Christmas season, held his final court on this day having directed the activities for all the festivities. In Tudor times, a masque or play would often be presented (Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night').

Epiphany – 6<sup>th</sup> January. Epiphany means 'manifestation'. This festival originally celebrated the four manifestations of Christ – to the shepherds, to the wise men, at his baptism and when he changed water into wine. In the western



church it concentrates nowadays on the manifestation of the wise men as they represent the non-Jewish world. The 6<sup>th</sup> January was chosen as it coincided with (and superseded) pagan celebrations of the new year.

Plough Monday falls on that Monday following the 5<sup>th</sup> January when farm labourers, who would only have the Christmas holiday time off from work in the year, would begin ploughing for the next crop. In some places a decorated plough, known as a 'fool plough', would be dragged through the village accompanied by a 'Fool' dressed in skins and with a tail, and there would be dancing, combined with eating and much drinking. The village ploughmen would wear their best smocks for the occasion. At its height in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the smocking patterns on the garment indicated from what agricultural job you represented – tree symbols for foresters, wheels for carters, rams horns for shepherds and so on. The smocks were made from heavy linen which would be water- and wind-proof offering considerable protection to the wearer, even in wintertime.

*Turn out for plow Monday – up, fellows, now  
Buckle the horses and follow the plough!*

January 20<sup>th</sup> is St Agnes' Eve. Agnes was martyred in Rome by Diocletian, for not denying her Christian faith and for refusing to marry. It is traditionally believed that on this eve, girls would dream of their future partners – strange perhaps for a saint who symbolises chastity! In Scotland on January 25<sup>th</sup> is the Burns' Night celebration. Scotland's greatest poet *Robert Burns (1759-1796)*, is celebrated with much merrymaking, much drinking and the eating of haggis. Burns' poetry is recited and usually the evening is concluded with the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne'.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is Candlemas, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. When Mary presented Jesus at the Temple, Simeon said that the Christ would be the light to lighten the world'. To signify this, candles were traditionally lit in windows on Candlemas, and, if not all windows in the house could be illuminated, then just at the kitchen window would suffice. The Catholic Church chose this day as it coincided with the ancient Celtic feast of Imbolc, beginning of the lambing season presided over by the Celtic goddess of youth and fertility, Bride. They renamed Bride St Bridget. Snowdrops, a symbol of purity are also called Candlemas Bells (or St Mary's tapers) and they were dedicated to the Virgin on this day.

*If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, winter will take another flight,  
If Candlemas Day be cloud and rain, winter is gone and will not come again.*

St Valentine's Day is the 14<sup>th</sup> February originating from the time of the Roman feast of Lupercalia. In fact two Valentines were martyred in Rome at this time in 269-270AD and, of course, these have become confused. One was the Bishop of Terni and the other was a physician often invoked by sufferers of epilepsy. Lupercalia was an occasion of fertility rites in honour of the Goddess Februa Juno, and in folklore it was the traditional time when birds began to choose their mates, and the traditional two bluebirds that often appear on Valentine's Day cards represent two lovers bound together in spirit from this day on – a pretty conceit!! It was the Victorians that made St Valentine's Day their own – the sending of cards, of love tokens, cards decorated with real flowers, with lace, bird feathers and even hearts of spun glass. In Lyme Regis, for example, lovers would have their initials entwined and worked together in lace of very high quality and of very slow working. How many romances were finished before the lace was, I wonder? Heart-shaped buns or biscuits were commonly made with iced motives of names or love-heart, and mottos such as "Kiss Me Quick" or "Be Mine".

*Then, Julia! Let me woo thee  
Thus, thus come unto me;  
And when I shall meet thy silvery feet,  
My soul I'll pour unto thee.*

*Roses are red, violets are blue, carnations are sweet, and so are you.  
And so are they that send you this, and when we meet we'll have a kiss!!*

Collop Monday, Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday – The beginning of Lent. 'Luxury' foods such as meat, eggs and butter were forbidden during the forty days of Lent, and Collop Monday was regarded as the last opportunity for eating meat. Any fresh meat still available would be sliced into steaks and salted to preserve it until the end of the period of fasting. Collops, a Scandinavian word, means a slice of meat, and collops and eggs would be traditionally eaten on this day.

On Shrove Tuesday (the last day before Lent) it was customary to make confessions and be absolved by the priest – ‘to shrive’ means to be absolved in old English. It was a traditional day for having fun and organised games, with free-for-all football matches with goals at each end of the village. It was a good excuse to consume a good deal of alcohol and a chance to let off steam! In the North of the country skipping races were held! But predominantly it is a day for making and consuming pancakes thus using up the eggs and butter in the house before the start of fasting begins.

The first fast day of Lent is Ash Wednesday – forty days (excluding Sundays) commemorating Christ’s forty days in the wilderness. The word ‘Lent’ comes from the Anglo-Saxon ‘lengentide’ which means the lengthening of the days. Originally only one meal a day was eaten during Lent, with no meat, eggs or dairy consumed. Weddings are still considered unlucky in Lent and intimate practices were prohibited! On Ash Wednesday, the priest makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the congregation using ashes from the palms from the previous year’s Palm Sunday as the parish looks forward to Easter-tide. JGB

### Mors Janua Vitae

These are the words above the lych gate of Halling Church. The lych gate is the place where the priest meets the coffin on its way to a funeral. The bearers might rest there, sentences of Scripture and psalms are said on the way into the church. I was asked recently what those words mean at Halling and, coincidentally, the meaning is associated with something in JGB’s article above. Janua is Latin for door or gateway, as in January. “Death is the gateway to life” is what those words mean.

At my old church at Orpington, the words were (helpfully!) in English, “I am the Resurrection and the Life” – words of Jesus Himself. The point is the same. For Christians, death is not something to fear. God has something prepared for us which is much better than the life we experience on earth. What we have to is to repent of our sins, to put our faith in Him and to be baptized. Sometimes people wonder if they can still be baptized or christened if they weren’t done as children. It’s never too late. If you give your life to Jesus, you can be baptized at any age. Just ask me. RIK,

### Folk Music For the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February

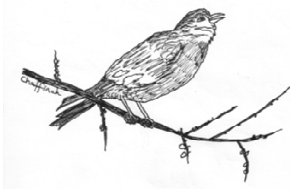
Again, above we are reminded that 2<sup>nd</sup> February is the last day of Christmas – the day the infant Christ is presented in the Temple. He is hailed as a light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of God’s people Israel. He manifests God to us folk. This year we are celebrating on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> with the Tideway Folk Group. The Evening Service is at 5.00 pm in St Michael’s Church will be sung to folk music. Then there will be tea in the church hall, followed by an evening of folk music with Tideway. Do come. All welcome. It should be fun.

Holy Communion for Candlemas will be celebrated at St Michael’s at 8.00 am.

Looking ahead, we are anticipating musical evenings on 30<sup>th</sup> March and 18<sup>th</sup> July, though these are to be confirmed. On 18<sup>th</sup> April, we are planning a Passover meal for Maundy Thursday. On 11<sup>th</sup> May, there will be an evening of anecdotes when people will share some of the interesting or amusing things which have happened to them.

### **Psalm 122.** *Laetatus sum*

**I** WAS glad when they said unto me : We will go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates : O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city : that is at unity in itself. For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord : to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For there is the seat of judgement : even the seat of the house of David. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls : and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes : I will wish thee prosperity. Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God : I will seek to do thee good. Glory be 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.



From the Rector  
6<sup>th</sup> February is the 67<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of the  
accession of Her Majesty  
the Queen to the throne.  
She was born on 21<sup>st</sup>

April 1926 and, until she was ten years old, it would not have been expected that she would become Queen. Her Uncle Edward was the older brother, expected to succeed George V and his children would have been his heirs. Edward never had any children, however. There is a theory that a bout of mumps when he was a child might be the explanation for that. More significantly, however, having ascended to the throne on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1936, he abdicated on 11<sup>th</sup> December the same year. The result was that his younger brother, the Duke of York, the father of Princess Elizabeth and her younger sister Margaret, was duty bound to become King George VI. He, with his wife – the much loved Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother – was our head of state through the Second World War and the Princess Elizabeth was heir presumptive. King George was very ill in 1952 when she and Prince Philip left these shores for Australia and New Zealand via Africa on a royal visit. It demonstrates a remarkable sense of duty that she was prepared to travel so far on behalf of the people of the commonwealth at a time when her father was dying. The news that he had died arrived when the royal couple were in Kenya and they returned immediately to London where her majesty took up her duties as Queen.

I think most people would agree that her majesty has proved a very good queen and we have much to be thankful for in her service to this nation and the wider world. The hereditary principle has worked well for us. It might seem strange, however, on reflection to choose a head of state on the basis of heredity. The candidate might not want the job. I don't think her father did. The candidate might be unsuitable for the position. His or her prospective subjects might not want him or her. Indeed, we decided we didn't want King James II and we deposed him and invited William of Orange to replace him in 1688.

It's a tricky question. We need rulers. If we are not to live in a state of anarchy, we have to be prepared to trust our rulers with power. Yet we know that power corrupts. Some people believe

that the people who seek power over others are the very last people who should be trusted with it.

It seems that in ancient Israel, when the Israelites first settled the Promised Land after escaping Egyptian slavery, there was usually no central authority. God was the King of Israel and every individual Israelite answered to God. Local communities had judges who sorted out disputes between neighbours. Only in time of national emergency was a judge raised up who had authority over the whole land and all the twelve tribes. But, in the time of the prophet Samuel, the Israelites decided that they wanted to be ruled by a king. God told Samuel to warn them that they were rejecting Him and that a king would tax them for his projects, conscript their sons into his army to fight his wars, and make their daughters his palace servants. It was agreed that the Israelites would have a king, but he was supposed to be God's viceroy. He was to study God's Law and govern in accordance with it. Unlike many despots, the king himself was to be subject to the law. He was supposed to be a shepherd to God's people and answerable to God for the way he governed. The king ruled by God's authority but he himself was subject to God. We say the very same thing in our prayer book with reference to the Queen of England. She has God's authority, and she is answerable to Him.

All authority comes from God and Christians are required to respect authority even when those in authority are not good people. Anarchy is almost always worse than even the worst government.

But how do we choose those who rule over us? In the Bible, people like Moses are called directly by God. Kings are chosen on a hereditary basis, but the line is quite often broken when there are very bad kings, especially in northern Israel. In southern Israel, the kings are the descendants of the great King David. In the New Testament, Jesus is great David's greater Son. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – the One who reigns in accordance with God's perfect Law of Love, ruling with justice and mercy, the model of a good ruler.

We cleverly divided the role of head of state from that of government. The king or queen chosen on the hereditary principle stands for our nation but the actual business of government is carried out by



the people we elect. Both elections and the hereditary principle are much better than having rulers seize power by force of arms, but even democracy has its limits. Who should have the vote? We're currently celebrating the centenary of women getting the vote. It wasn't too long before that that most men didn't have the vote either. In my lifetime the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 and there are proposals to reduce it to 16. How should elections be conducted? Proportional representation would probably give different results from first past the post. Can we trust

candidates and what they promise? Are MPs supposed to enact what we want them to or what they think is good for us? Should unelected peers have a role in our legislature? Are right and wrong defined by popular opinion or only by an elite of people who know what they're talking about? Or are right and wrong discerned by moral philosophers or revealed by God? Much to think about and I wish I had space to pursue these questions further. Maybe another time. It was Brexit which set me thinking about these issues. Roger.

### Tommy's Talking Points



It was the last Monday in November when we did some more of our coastal walk, the Viking Trail, partly in anticipation of Master's imminent birthday. As the days were shorter and the weather less dependable than earlier in the year, they decided on a shorter walk – Broadstairs to Ramsgate. As it happened, our train was quite late and, at Faversham, they announced that, in order to make up time, it wouldn't stop again till we got to Ramsgate. So they decided to do the walk backwards. Rain had been forecast and there obviously had been heavy showers in some of the places we passed through on the train, but Ramsgate was dry and quite pleasant. We reached the cliff

top near the Granville Theatre and headed north-west, after listening to Master's reminiscence about Battle of Britain services and parades through the town to the Royal Airforce Association clubhouse when his bike was somewhat less impressive than the mayoral limousine or the cars conveying senior RAF officers. [He was supposed to overtake the procession in order to be first there and greet the dignitaries, but he couldn't get past the marching band which took up the whole of the road.]

Anyway, we got down onto the promenade as soon as we found some steps and continued on our way. When Master had a Church at Ramsgate, he used to enjoy running round there with my predecessor but two, Ben, who was also a springer spaniel. When the promenade ran out, we had to go back up the cliff, because the tide was in and the beach was under water. So I had a good run in the King George VI Memorial Park which is on the cliff top. Last time we were that way, it was half term week and the sun was shining and there were hundreds of people about. Now there were fewer but still quite a lot and many of them had dogs with which I had some fun. I enjoy meeting people and dogs and I do like to be beside the seaside. We descended a grassy slope, made it back to the beach and I made friends with some maintenance men taking a break in a beach hut. They offered me a high vis jacket if I would join them.

When we were in Broadstairs before, we went to a pub which said that dogs were very welcome but that we were too late for lunch. So Master and his friend were looking forward to partaking of their excellent menu as we were much earlier this time. Well, yes, lunch was still being served, but dogs were not welcome so long as they were doing food. So we came out again. We quickly found the Pavilion. That is a lovely modern building with excellent views of the beach and the sea. They both served good food and welcomed dogs and nobody died of dog-poisoning or got bitten by a dog. It rained slightly just after we got indoors. They enjoyed their food and drink and we made for the station.

Like last time, we had to change at Margate where there would have been a long wait. So off we went to the Dreamland pub for another birthday drink on the seafront. Master says that things are very much changed from the good old days of Margate seafront, but there was a moped in the pub, presumably to remind us of mods and rockers. Back on the train to Strood, where there would have been another long wait. As Master has no patience, we walked home. So that was another bonus for me, though there is far too much traffic on the A228. Tommy.