

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
30 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 5	9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 19 vv 5-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040
7 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 6	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 66 vv 10-14 p753 Galatians 6 vv 1-16 p1172 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041
14 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 7	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 9-14 p209 Colossians 1 vv 1-14 p1182 Luke 10 vv 25-37 p1041
21 <sup>st</sup> July Trinity 8	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 8
	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 1-10a p17 Colossians 1 vv 15-28 p1182 Luke 10 vv 38-42 p1042
28 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 9	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 16-33 p18 Colossians 2 vv 6-19 p1183 Luke 11 vv 1-13 p1042
4 <sup>th</sup> August Trinity 10	9.30 Family Communion	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-23 p668 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1044
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
30 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 5	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	I Kings 19 vv 5-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040
7 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 6	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Genesis 29 vv 1-20 p30 Mark 6 vv 7-20 p1008
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 66 vv 10-14 p753 Galatians 6 vv 1-16 p1172 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041
14 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 7	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 9-14 p209 Colossians 1 vv 1-14 p1182 Luke 10 vv 25-37 p1041
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Genesis 32 vv 1-30 p35 Mark 7 vv 1-23 p1010
21 <sup>st</sup> July Trinity 8	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen	Genesis 18 vv 1-10a p17 Colossians 1 vv 15-28 p1182 Luke 10 vv 38-42 p1042
28 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 9	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 16-33 p18 Colossians 2 vv 6-19 p1183 Luke 11 vv 1-13 p1042
4 <sup>th</sup> August Trinity 10	8.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 50 vv 1-26 p56 Mark 6 vv 45-52 p1009
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-23 p668 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1044

Wednesday Holy Communion at Cuxton 9.30 am		Thursday Holy Communion at Halling 9.30 am	
3 <sup>rd</sup> July S Thomas	Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 Ephesians 2 vv 19-22 John 20 vv 24-29	4 <sup>th</sup> July	Genesis 22 vv 1-19 Matthew 9 vv 1-8
10 <sup>th</sup> July	Genesis 41 from v55 and 42 Matthew 10 vv 1-7	11 <sup>th</sup> July S Benedict	Genesis 44 v18 – 45 v5 Matthew 10 vv 7-15
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Exodus 3 vv 1-12 Matthew 11 vv 25-27	18 <sup>th</sup> July	Exodus 3 vv 13-20 Matthew 11 vv 28-30
24 <sup>th</sup> July	Exodus 16 vv 1-15 Matthew 13 vv 1-9	25 <sup>th</sup> July S James the Apostle	Acts 11 v27 – 12 v2 Matthew 20 vv 20-28
31 <sup>st</sup> July S Ignatius of Loyola	Exodus 34 vv 29-35 Matthew 13 vv 44-46	1 <sup>st</sup> August Lammas Day	Exodus 40 vv 16-38 Matthew 13 vv 47-53

[roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk) <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

There is an **After School Club** at St John's on Thursdays at 3.45. **Saints Alive** (formerly Sunday School) meets in the Church Hall, Cuxton at 9.30 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month in term time. There is a parish lunch to which all are invited every first Wednesday at 12.00 in the Church Hall. If you are prepared to **gift aid** your monetary contributions to the Church, please use one of the envelopes provided. Contact Jack Payne to *gift aid* all your donations.

**Copy Date** August Magazine: 12<sup>th</sup> July 8.30 am Rectory.

# !!!??? Two Quizzes ???!!!

Both: 7.30 pm in the Church Hall Cuxton

Both: including Ploughman's

(please bring own drink)

Both: Teams of 6-8 or come as an individual and join a team.

For Either or Both: Book with Rector

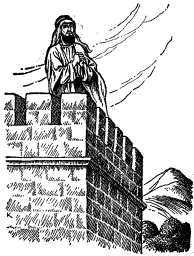
(contact details inside cover)

21<sup>st</sup> September

Quiz in Support of  
Christian Aid £7.00.

19<sup>th</sup> October

Quiz in Support of Parish  
Funds £7.00.



## Heartfelt Religion

I don't mind admitting that I'm one of those old-fashioned Englishmen who doesn't do emotion. Deep down inside it feels to me like weakness to let my emotions show. I remember being told as a child to let the whole world know when you're

happy, but to keep negative emotions to yourself. I do enjoy laughter and I'm always pleased to share a joke, but I shouldn't want to make you miserable by sharing my sadness with you. Displays of emotion all too easily get in the way of doing our duty. You can't see through the tears. You can't hold steady if you're trembling. I know all this is supposed to have changed since the public outpouring of grief at the death of Diana Princess of Wales but I am going to be even more controversial and note what I said at that time. *If I were ever bleeding to death following an accident, I'd rather have Princess Anne tearing up her blouse to make bandages than Princess Diana holding my hand and weeping.*

I'm often doubtful about the sincerity of displays of emotion. Why should anyone ever need to say *I love you*? If you really love someone that should be evident from the way you treat her or him. Maybe this is why I never married! Hugs and kisses spread diseases!

It's not just displays of emotion that I naturally distrust, but also the emotions themselves. If you're angry or fearful, desperately in love, tremendously excited, jealous or bitter, you are setting yourself up to act irrationally. If you act on impulse, if you follow your heart, you might

thump the person who has annoyed you or marry the entirely unsuitable woman with whom you've fallen helplessly in love. If you are ruled by your heart rather than your head you are liable to do some remarkably silly things. To act emotionally is not to act wisely.

And if I'm uncomfortable with personal emotions, what about the emotion of crowds – or mass hysteria as we might less charitably call it? Many people seem to enjoy immersing their own personality in the throng of a football crowd, or the audience at a rock concert or even the congregation of some kinds of churches. Individuals lose themselves in the multitude, abandoning self-control to the spirit of the crowd. At a clergy meeting recently, we were shown a video of thousands of people singing and dancing as one at a U2 concert and then hanging on Bono's every word. Many of the vicars present seemed to regard such a concert as a more spiritual experience than what we do every day in church. Maybe I'm suffering from some kind of deficiency, but I just couldn't see it. We are always responsible for ourselves – for our actions, words and thoughts. How can we exercise that personal responsibility if we surrender to the crowd? It is like getting drunk or taking drugs. It's no excuse that you were acting out of character or that you didn't know what you were doing. You did wrong when you surrendered your self control to the bottle or to the multitude. I've never forgotten the terrible night years ago in a local pub when we were watching an England versus West Germany match on the pub TV and the solitary German supporter present was quite badly beaten up by a group of normally decent

local lads who had surrendered their own sense of personal responsibility to the mob.

However, having done my bit for the old stiff upper lip (and I do think there is a lot of truth as well as hyperbole in what I have said above) I'm now going to defend emotion in religion. Normally I try to write these articles from an intellectual point of view. I write about the historical or scientific facts. I try to explain what the teaching of the Church means and why it is rational to believe in God and to trust the Bible. I write about the reasonableness of faith and hope and love, and why eternal life makes sense. Or if I don't try to justify or explain Christian doctrine rationally, I try to draw out the logical implications of what we believe for the way we behave. I try to consider, if not to explain, contemporary political, moral and ethical issues in the rational light of Jesus the Word made flesh. The Greek word for Jesus the Word is Logos (Λογος) and it is logical, reasonable, to live in accordance with His teaching and example. *And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee.* (BCP based on Romans 12<sup>1</sup>).

More generally, I feel the need to fight the widely held misconception that faith is essentially irrational, emotional and merely a matter of personal choice.

But now I'm going to defend emotion in religion. You wouldn't marry someone you didn't love solely because, rationally speaking, she appeared to be the ideal wife. You're very unlucky if you have to do a job you don't care about emotionally just for the wages you need to live on. You wouldn't study a subject that didn't matter to you emotionally as well as intellectually. You wouldn't make music or produce great art. You wouldn't pursue a hobby or an interest. The head can't motivate. It's the heart which makes you get up and go. I have been known to say that marriage is like a pint of beer. The froth on top is the passion, the emotion. The liquid part is the strong rational underlying values that sustain you as you go through life together for better, for worse. A pint of beer with no froth isn't worth drinking, but a pint that's all froth isn't a drink at all. The same with marriage. The same with religion. The same with pretty well every other human activity. The liquid sustains us on our journey through life, but the froth inspires us.

So how about some emotion in religion? It can't be all reason – though of course you can love wisdom, as indeed we ought to.

For some people the obvious place to start is awe. Awe is what we feel when we contemplate everything that God has done – the incredible universe we inhabit, the miracle of our own bodies, the amazing facts of the Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. We are awed by the world we live in. We are awed by our sense of what it is to be human. We are awed by the thought that God loves us so much that He sent His Son into the world to die a cruel death for us. Awe. Surely awe elicits from us praise – to worship God simply because He is God – and awe elicits thanksgiving – to thank God for everything that He has done.

And doesn't awe also elicit fear? How could we be worthy to stand in the presence of such a God? Awe quite rightly links to fear. God is infinitely great. God is infinitely just. Is there no room for fear? *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

Also there is wonder. How can it be that God loves me? How can it be that *our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us?* How can I dwell in God and He in me here on earth? How can it be that I shall dwell with Him eternally? There is a sense of intimacy with God. We talk to Jesus in our daily lives as we say our prayers. He reveals Himself to us in acts of love, small and great.

Quite rightly also there is shame, sorrow at the thought of how far short we fall in our Christian lives – that we are such sinners. And there is more wonder in that He forgives us every time. He washes us clean. He makes us new. He makes us fit for His company. He makes us fit to serve Him.

There is also empathy. As we learn to see the world through God's eyes, we are filled with compassion for people in every kind of need, we are filled with concern for the well-being of all creation.

And then there is love – pure, simple, undefiled love, the relationship between God and the Christian. What more can I say? Roger.

Forthcoming Attractions.

29<sup>th</sup> June: Rectory Barbecue from 6.00 pm: £7.00/£3.50.

30<sup>th</sup> June: St Francis Strood 6.30 pm Evening Service & Refreshments: Sister Gillian invites us to join her in celebrating 25 years of ministry as a Church Army Sister.

31<sup>st</sup> July 12.00: Barbecue 95, Pilgrims Road, North Halling.

8<sup>th</sup> September: Preacher @ 9.30 & 11.00 The Archdeacon of Rochester.

21<sup>st</sup> September 7.30 pm: Quiz in Support of Christian Aid Church Hall.

29<sup>th</sup> September: Confirmation at St Michael's 6.30 pm. Please see Rector if interested in being confirmed this year. Classes will begin early Summer.

6<sup>th</sup> October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper Jubilee Hall.

19<sup>th</sup> October 7.30 pm: Quiz in Support of Parish Funds Church Hall.

**COMPUTER PROBLEMS?**

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**WEST KENT DOWNS COUNTRYSIDE TRUST**



**WKDCT**

Registered  
Charity No.  
1083121

**The Trust is an organisation for people who care passionately about our local countryside.**

At present we are concentrating on acquiring the fragmented area of Cobham woods, locally known as the "leisure plots". The aim is to bring the area under one ownership, to protect the diverse wildlife habitats and allow public access for sympathetic countryside recreation.

We are a voluntary organisation that depends on membership support.

If you would like to join the Trust please contact Roger Savage on :  
01634 723027 or visit our website [www.wkdct.org.uk](http://www.wkdct.org.uk).

**Annual Rectory Barbecue**

**29<sup>th</sup> June**

**From 6.00 pm**

**£7.00 and ½ price children.**

## From the Registers

### Baptism:

2<sup>nd</sup> June

Declan Duncan Coad

High Street

### Wedding:

26<sup>th</sup> May

Paul Alexander Reid & Rebecca Jean Harding

Cuxton

### Funerals:

13<sup>th</sup> May

Yvonne Culverwell (63)

Scholey Close

4<sup>th</sup> June

John Philip Davis (83)

formerly of Cuxton

St Michael's Draw: £10 each to Dennis Hills, Patricia Dowling & David Fenton Scott; £5 each to the Wilson family and Martin Mills – drawn by Rene Barker.

St John's Draw: £25 to Mrs Fennemore (71) & £10 each to Mrs Fuller (78) & Mrs Rogers (164) –drawn by Mrs Mattingley.

### **Nature Notes May 2013**

Written in Early Spring William Wordsworth

I heard a thousand blended notes  
While in a grove I sat reclined,  
In that sweet mood when  
pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link  
The human soul that through me  
ran;  
And much it grieved my heart to  
think  
What Man has made of Man.

Through primrose tufts, in that  
sweet bower,  
The periwinkle trailed its  
wreaths;  
And 'tis my faith that every  
flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and  
played,  
Their thoughts I cannot measure  
But the least motion which they  
made  
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out  
their fan  
To catch the breezy air;  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,  
If such be Nature's holy plan,  
Have I not reason to lament  
What Man has made of Man?

The first day of the month brings golden sunshine and bright blue skies brushed with white cloud driven by north west winds. A holly blue butterfly hovers over the ivy in the garden and a comma butterfly settles on fresh green nettles at the side of the garden nearest the embankment. I sit on the edge of the patio wall drinking in the warmth of the sun. A bee-fly gathers nectar from a pansy and a peacock butterfly settles on a flower. The beautiful weather continues and morning temperatures on 3<sup>rd</sup> reach 17°C. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy, where all is fresh and green and the sun shines brightly from a clear blue sky. Later, in the afternoon, I watch an orange tip butterfly hovering over the garden and then a heron flies overhead. In the garden at home the lilac flowers are in bud and the pansies are a riot of colour. The 4<sup>th</sup> is full of early morning sunshine then westerly winds drive billowing grey clouds across the sky. There are a few spots of rain when I walk to Church Fields where golden buttercups bloom in profusion. Cow parsley is in first flower. I walk into Mays Wood where I see the first bluebells. I skirt the field of crops and return through Six-acre Wood. Spring flowers brighten the

wood-garlic mustard, shepherd's purse, alexanders, wild cherry blossom, red and white dead nettle, stitchwort, buttercups, bluebells, dog violets, dandelions, celandines, yellow archangel, creeping buttercup, speedwell, cow parsley. The 6<sup>th</sup> is another lovely sunny day when I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. The trees are fresh and green with some bearing blossom. The rippling lake where a coot glides, sparkles in the sunlight. Grey clouds build up for a while but they have cleared when we return home. A lone chaffinch comes to the edge of the patio wall for seed. I hear a blackbird's call as the light fades. On 8<sup>th</sup>, early morning brings freshness to the air before westerly winds disperse the clouds to reveal sunshine especially in the afternoon. Flowers have formed on the sycamores and the lilac is almost in full bloom. The wind strengthens in the late afternoon. The morning of 9<sup>th</sup> dawns bright and sunny with billowing clouds marching across the sky from the west. In the afternoon, the wind strengthens causing the branches of the trees to bend and bow and ripping new leaves from the sycamores and florets from the lilac onto the

grass. The next day I hear a cuckoo's call. In the afternoon of 12<sup>th</sup> I walk to Wingate Wood to see the bluebells. They look so beautiful adorning large areas of the woodland floor and filling the air with sweet perfume. I also hear the song of a nightingale. I am also fascinated by an old tree, the branches of which have bent over to the ground like an iron waterfall. Heavy rain falls for most of the day on 14<sup>th</sup> when I see a pair of turtle doves in the garden. The 15<sup>th</sup> is a blustery day with trees' branches bending in the strong westerly wind. The 17<sup>th</sup> is grey and damp with a chill in the air. Then pale sunshine brings some cheer the following day. The lilac tree in the garden is full of beautiful blooms emitting a delicate perfume. The sycamores on the embankment are also adorned with flowers. Rain has fallen during the night of 19<sup>th</sup> and the following morning is damp and grey which lasts throughout the day. As I walk at Bluewater with Murphy, I observe, in a grassy area not far from the lake, a pair of mallard ducks resting near the footpath. May blossom is beginning to bloom along the roadsides and it brings brightness to an otherwise sombre day. On our way to Larkfield the following day, I see three greylag geese with eight goslings attempting to cross the main road. The traffic comes to a halt as the geese make their way across. Along the verges of the A20 delicate cow parsley and blue

flowers of green alkanet bloom. On 22<sup>nd</sup>, we drive to Northfleet along the M2 and A2 where golden broom and gorse bedeck the banks again bringing brightness to a grey day. The 23<sup>rd</sup> begins with some sunshine but soon grey clouds march across the sky from the west. When the sun shines again, it lights up the grass stems which sparkle. It feels cold despite the sun. A song thrush comes to the garden. Heavy rain falls the next day and temperatures are down to 7°C. The 25<sup>th</sup> dawns bright and clear and the sun shines all day. Billowing clouds drift across the sky in north west winds, bringing a chill to the air. A raven comes to the garden. The sun shines brightly from a clear blue sky on 27<sup>th</sup>. South west winds bring wisps of cloud which drift across the sky, trees sway in the fresh breeze as I walk round the lake with Murphy. I hear the warblers in the reeds. Ox eye daisies and vetch bloom along the verges of the lake and clumps of buttercups raise their golden heads to the sun. By 29<sup>th</sup> the lilac flowers are beginning to lose their rich colour and small petals fall on the grass. The 30<sup>th</sup> is grey and damp but the final day of the month brings some warm sunshine. We drive to St Mary's Island with Murphy. The by-pass is bright with flowers and the hawthorns are adorned with creamy blossom which looks like snow. It is a beautiful sight.

Elizabeth Summers.



#### Bluebell Wood Charity Walk

Patrick Lawry would like to thank all those who took part in this year's walk on 27<sup>th</sup> April and sponsored the walkers. Over £600 has been raised so far for the Eve Appeal. The final figure will be printed in the *Kent Messenger*. About 30 people enjoyed this year's walk. Any further donations may be sent to Pat Lawry at 13, Meadow Crescent. Please make cheques payable to the Eve Appeal. You can find out more on [www.eveappeal.org.uk](http://www.eveappeal.org.uk)



#### Cuxton WI

This month was our birthday party and so hardly any business. Just a few announcements and a warm welcome to fellow WI members who had joined us for the evening. Then we settled down to a delicious savoury buffet which had been supplied by a caterer leaving some free time for the committee who usually "do" the refreshments. After which Mrs Ann Hall gave us some delightful entertainment. She started off looking quite plump as she demonstrated various middle eastern dances dressed in lovely exotic garments which were all made of beautiful soft silk. As the evening progressed she gradually shed the various costumes which accompanied each dance, meanwhile giving us a brief history of the country and the various cultures involved. At last we enjoyed the view of a much slimmer person as she reached her last shining costume. Somebody

asked her how long she had been doing her show and teaching dance and on her reply we all gasped with amazement when we realised that she is in her early seventies! I should think there will be an exotic dance club starting up any minute now - we just could not believe how supple she was. After all that excitement it was time for tea and cakes plus a birthday cake which was cut by our Doris who also played the piano for the singing of Jerusalem and who will be 100 years old, or should I say young, in December. Raffle results and also the table Geography quiz finished our evening, one which I'm sure everyone enjoyed.

Next month we meet on Thursday July 4<sup>th</sup> [Independence Day ] at 7 30 pm in the Church Hall to hear about British Calendar Customs. If you would like to join us you are most welcome. Sheila.



### Thank You

A huge thank you to Jill Sayer and Kay Hutcheson for all the hard work they put into the Big Lunch on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, and also into which they put endless hours of planning. Also a big thank you to all the stallholders, and a special thank you to Richard who worked tirelessly all day, to all the people who turned up at 8.30 to help get things organised, and to Adam, Simon and Peter who manned the beer tent and kept everyone well oiled. A wonderful day was had by all.

An Appreciative Parishioner.

**Christian Aid**

A Division of The British Council of Churches



### Christian Aid Collection 2013

Our street collection this year amounted to £1,350 + £65 from the Lent Lunch – an excellent effort. Well done, collectors and caterers, and thanks to all those who gave. There were quite a lot of roads in the parish where we couldn't collect this year. There are too few of us! We need more people to do the Lord's work in Cuxton and Halling. You can enrol any Sunday 9.30 & 11.00. Don't forget the quiz for Christian Aid to be held in the church hall 21<sup>st</sup> September – a pleasant and easy way to raise money in a good cause.

### **EATING IN THE FIFTIES**

Pasta had not been invented.  
Curry was a surname.  
A takeaway was a mathematical problem.  
A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.  
Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.  
All crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.  
A Chinese chippy was a foreign carpenter.  
Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.  
A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.  
Brown bread was something only poor people ate.  
Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.  
Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.  
Coffee was Camp, and came in a bottle.  
Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.  
Only Heinz made beans.  
Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.  
None of us had ever heard of yogurt.  
Healthy food consisted of anything edible.  
People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.  
Indian restaurants were only found in India.  
Cooking outside was called camping.  
Seaweed was not a recognised food.  
"Kebab" was not even a word never mind a food.  
Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.  
Prunes were medicinal.  
Surprisingly muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.  
Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.  
Water came out of the tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it they would have become a laughing stock.  
The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties .. was elbows!

### Hymn Writers 6

John Newton

1725 – 1807

Picture the scene. Enjoying the sunshine on the side of a river where your family have lived it seems for ever. You have brought up your family here and taught them well the ways of life. It is not easy to grow food here and you have very few animals but you and your family get by on the land. The place you live in isn't much either but with stick walls and a thatched roof the hut is home. You have built a boat and you fish the river when the flow is easy and you consider yourselves self-sufficient. It is always hot here. One day, into the river sails the largest boat you have ever seen. It's not paddled but it has large sheets of material which seems to propel it along. The vessel is huge and as it heaves to in the middle of the river, a smaller boat is lowered and the white man rows ashore. What happens next is too horrible to imagine but this is the beginning of what history calls 'the triangular trade'. You and your family are subjected to a brutal attack on your freedom of life as you are taken by force onto what these white

men call a ship. Those who resist too much are cut down and killed by these men and you are taken beneath the decks of this ship, chained and restrained into very small areas and beaten if you resist. And here you stay until the ship arrives in the 'New World' where you are sold into slavery and it is a possibility that you will never see your family again!

The slave trade killed sixty million black people from Africa alone who never made it to the American and Caribbean plantations but died in the diseased and squalid hold of the ship. Ten times that of the holocaust and five hundred years of slavery that hardly anyone seemed to see or did anything about. Into this world was born John Newton; he took part in it and eventually rid himself of it because of a belief that he had been saved from a watery grave by God himself. Suddenly he saw why his occupation was wrong, and he changed his ways and tried to show others the way of Jesus. Described by himself as a *wretch*, and by some biographers as *wild*, Newton went through much suffering before he came to the end of his outrageous life-style and his headstrong nature had come under the control of God. He knew little of his father who was often away at sea usually in the Mediterranean. His mother taught him hymns, passages from the Bible and the catechism. She hoped that he would enter the church but she died when John was only seven years old. With his mother gone and his father at sea he had to look after himself as best he could. He managed to attend school for about two years but then fell in with the wrong friends and his life became increasingly dissolute. At the age of eleven he joined his father's ship and five years later, when the ship was in port, a press-gang forced him aboard a British man-o'-war. At the very first opportunity he tried to desert but was caught, flogged and reduced in the ranks. Recovering from this, he remembered his faithful first love Mary Catlett and her influence on him and his thoughts of one day marrying her prevented a downward spiral of despair. At length he found himself working on the ship of an unscrupulous slave-trader off the coast of Sierra Leone who put him through a monstrous time of hardship and degradation. John nearly starved to death, but the slaves in their chains pitied him and secretly gave away their scanty food to keep him alive. Newton escaped the ship as it foundered in a terrifying storm and, remembering his mother's words, cried out for God's help and repented his evil ways. The John Newton who arrived eventually back in England was a new man devoted to God.

He married Mary in 1750 and in his leisure time studied mathematics, French and Latin. He continued as a commander of a slave ship for a time, but it began to dawn on him how inhumane the slave trade actually was and, after being influenced by the speeches of William Wilberforce, Newton quit the sea and became tide-surveyor in Liverpool. He continued to study the Bible in Greek and Hebrew and, influenced by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield, applied to the Archbishop of York for holy orders in 1758 but was refused. Finally at the age of thirty-nine, he was offered the curacy at Olney through a friend's influence and was eventually ordained as a priest. William Cowper settled in the parish at the urging of Newton and they together spent time collaborating on the 'Olney hymns' (1779) which are an important contribution to evangelical hymnody. With his eyesight and health beginning to fail friends suggested that he stop preaching. "What," he exclaimed, "shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can still speak?" and he was still preaching at eighty-four years of age. Near the end of his life he was so fragile that a friend had to be with him in the pulpit to help him stand and read his sermons but he still proclaimed loudly to his listeners "Jesus Christ is precious" and his hymns bear witness to it:

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds and drives away his fear*

*Great shepherd of Thy people hear, Thy presence now display;  
As Thou hast given a place for prayer, so give us hearts to pray.*

*May the grace of Christ our Saviour, and the Father's boundless love,  
With the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above.*

JGB

*Amazing Grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now I'm found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

*Saviour, if of Zion's city  
I through grace a member am  
Let the world deride or pity  
I will glory in Thy name.*

**STAMPS - Thanks to all who have been supporting our initiative. Please bring your used (and even unused) stamps into us. We are still collecting them and are about to send off our next consignment to OCD-UK for their use in providing funds to help those suffering. They are really appreciated and in a good cause!! JGB.**



### News from Cuxton Community Infant School

Dear Friends of our school,

It has been extremely busy in the Cuxton schools since the May half term. Sadly Miss Terry, Head teacher of Cuxton Junior School resigned and the authority have asked me to step in as Interim executive head teacher of both schools, a position which I am very excited about. I am therefore spending my time between both schools, being well supported by my deputy, Mrs Street, in the Infants.

The Junior school is therefore undergoing a period of change. We are all extremely positive about this and staff are continuing to work extremely hard. In particular we are looking forward to both schools working even more closely together.

As the Summer term draws to a close we look forward to many events including sports days, school trips, and explorer day, arts week at the Infants, and Leavers assemblies. Staff in both schools are busy writing end of year academic reports for all children and soon I will be busy reading them!

We continue to be well supported by the FCS, our PTA and do join the schools on July 6<sup>th</sup> for the Summer Fayre. As always if you wish to contact the school please do, or have a look at schools websites to learn more about us. (The junior school website has been updated). I hope to have more news for you next time. Wishing you good health and some sunshine! Sandra Jones, Head teacher.

Within the churchyard, side by  
side,  
Are many long low graves;  
And some have stones set over  
them,  
On some the green grass  
waves.

Full many a little Christian  
child,  
Woman, and man lies there;  
And we pass near them every  
time  
When we go into prayer.

They cannot hear our footsteps  
come,  
They do not see us pass;

They cannot feel the warm,  
bright sun  
That shines upon the grass.

They do not hear when the  
great bell  
Is ringing overhead;  
They cannot rise and come to  
Church  
With us, for they are dead.

But we believe a day shall  
come  
When all the dead will rise,  
When they who sleep down in  
the grave  
Will open again their eyes.

For CHRIST our LORD was  
buried once,  
He died and rose again,  
He conquer'd death, He left  
the grave;  
And so will Christian men.

So when the friends we love  
the best  
Lie in their churchyard bed,  
We must not cry too bitterly  
Over the happy dead;

Because, for our dear  
SAVIOUR'S sake,  
Our sins are all forgiv'n;  
And Christians only fall asleep  
To wake again in Heav'n.

This sweet little children's hymn by the great Mrs Alexander (author of the better known *All things bright and beautiful*, *There is a green hill faraway*, and *Once in royal David's city*) I have never actually heard sung in church, nor sung myself. I wonder why? Some people would say that it is mournful or gloomy, but not so if you read it to the end. Quite the reverse in fact. It is full of hope – the only hope we have!

What it says is perfectly true. We shall all die. They used to say that the only two certainties were death and taxes. Now it appears that only ordinary people are certain to pay tax. The mega rich can afford to avoid or evade tax (whatever the subtle difference may be). Death, however, truly is certain for rich and poor alike. And while most of us are no longer buried in the churchyard, we shall all be buried somewhere if we are not ultimately cremated, which amounts to much the same thing.

So, if what the hymn says is true, why do we not sing it? Many people try not to think about death at all. They say it is morbid! They don't even like to make a will or to talk to their families about what will happen when they die, what sort of medical treatment they would like to receive when they are past being able to speak for themselves, what kind of funeral they would like, which family member should have which precious possession, what blessing they would like to bestow on their children and grandchildren. Why do people hide their heads in the sand when it comes to talking about death, the only universal certainty?

Some people of course believe that death is the end, that consciousness ceases and that is it. Life is over. If you think like that, death must be a truly terrifying or at least depressing prospect. You cease to be. In a couple of generations you are forgotten. Everything that you have achieved slowly crumbles to dust and ashes. If that's what you obstinately believe, I can't help you. I'm quite happy to discuss with you, however, why I don't believe that is the case and to give you some reasons for believing that, when we die, the best is yet to come.

Some people of course fear death because they are afraid of what is to come. There is judgment for the way we have lived on earth and people may well be scared of being found guilty. Whether you think the sentence you will receive on the Day of Judgment is eternal torment, banishment from the presence of God or straightforward annihilation, it might well be something you would prefer not to think about.

But, then again, you might have the Christian *sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ*. How can I have this hope, you may ask? The answer is simple. Put your faith in Jesus. Repent of your sins. Accept Baptism in His Name. If you do that you can share the belief Mrs Alexander puts into words in the last four verses of this children's hymn. You don't need to be afraid of death. You don't need to be afraid to think about death or to talk about death. If you do really have this hope in you, however, it will determine the way you think about everything else in your life – how you spend your time, how you deploy your talents, what you do with your money, the way you treat other people. If you live in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, you won't put self first and others second and God last if you ever get round to thinking about Him at all. If you believe in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, it will be **J**esus first, **O**thers second and **Y**ourself last. And we all know what that spells, don't we? Roger.

P.S: Another of Mrs Alexander's verses we never sing (this one from *All things bright and beautiful*) is this: *The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate, GOD made them high or lowly, And order'd their estate*. If God didn't make us and order our estate, who did? Or was it just chance. Or was it by our own efforts? The notion that God made us who we are and gave us everything we have seems to me to endue us with enormous responsibility to make the best of our lives and to do our best for God and for other people. If it's all by chance or it's all what we have earned ourselves, why be thankful and why feel responsible for the way we use what we have?



#### Max's Tail Piece

Since I was a puppy of six weeks old I have slept in my basket in the Rectory kitchen. However, in the last few months, I have become increasing restless at night. Master has heard me whimpering and whining and scratching on the glass doors. Paw prints up the walls suggest that I have been up the wall too! Master has been frantic to find out why I keep waking him up and I can't tell him. At first he thought I might be getting too old to last the night and he would take me round the garden at three in the morning. But when I didn't *do* anything, he concluded that wasn't the reason. Then he wondered whether I had eaten something that disagreed with me or drunk dirty water and had tummy ache. So he carefully watched my diet and my drinking habits, but no correlation there. Next he thought that maybe I had been woken up by intruders in our garden. Council tree officers aren't the only people to trespass in the Rectory grounds. Master says that when public servants break the law with impunity it is unrealistic to expect any better of the village jobs! (His plan is to photograph any he catches and put their pictures on the lampposts with the adverts for missing cats.) His last idea was that maybe I had been disturbed by other animals or birds in the garden. So he stopped putting crumbs and scraps out near the back door. None of this worked, however, and still I was waking up in the night and waking him up and he does need his beauty sleep. So these last couple of weeks, Master, has been leaving the kitchen door ajar instead of closing it firmly. When I'm ready, I follow him upstairs, sometimes before he's even finished cleaning his teeth. Then I lie down on the bedroom floor and go to sleep. Master isn't unreservedly delighted with this new arrangement. Dogs don't sleep through the night. We get up, scratch ourselves, shake ourselves, prowl around for a bit, check whether Master's awake. He keeps reminding me that my basket is much softer than his carpet and that the kitchen is warmer than his bedroom where the windows are almost never shut. What he just doesn't get is that I don't want to be on my own any more. I want to stay close to him! (Well he's the only human I've got). Max, the Rectory Spaniel.

**21<sup>st</sup> September**  
**Quiz in Support of**  
**Christian Aid**  
**£7.00.**

**7.30 pm in the Church**  
**Hall Cuxton**

**including Ploughman's**

**(please bring own drink)**

**Both: Teams of 6-8 or come as**  
**an individual and join a team.**

**Book with Rector**

**01634 717134**

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