

Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 3 rd July S Thomas	9.30 Family Communion	Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 John 20 vv 24-29 p1089
Sunday 10 th July Sea Sunday & Commemoration End of World War II Trinity 7	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 55 vv 10-13 p742 Matthew 13 vv 1-23 p978
Sunday 17 th July Trinity 8	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 28 vv 10-19 p30 Matthew 13 vv 24-43 p979
Sunday 24 th July Trinity 9	9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 3 vv 5-12 p338 Matthew 13 vv 31-52 p980
	6.30 Evensong	Deuteronomy 30 vv 11-20 p208 Mark 5 vv 21-43 p1007
Sunday 31 st July Trinity 10	9.30 United Parish Eucharist with Very Rev'd Adrian Newman, Dean of Rochester.	Isaiah 55 vv 1-5 p742 Matthew 14 vv 13-21 p981
Sunday 7 th August Trinity 11	9.30 Family Communion	I Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 3 rd July S Thomas	8.00 Holy Communion	Ephesians 2 vv 19-22 p1174 John 20 vv 24-29 p1089
	11.00 Holy Communion	Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Ephesians 2 vv 19-22 p1174 John 20 vv 24-29 p1089
Sunday 10 th July Sea Sunday & Commemoration End of World War II Trinity 7	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 55 vv 10-13 p742 Matthew 13 vv 1-23 p978
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	II Samuel 7 vv 18-29 p311 Luke 19 v41 – 20 v8 p1054
Sunday 17 th July Trinity 8	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Genesis 28 vv 10-19 p30 Matthew 13 vv 24-43 p979
Sunday 24 th July Trinity 9	11.00 Holy Communion	I Kings 3 vv 5-12 p338 Matthew 13 vv 31-52 p980
Sunday 7 th August Trinity 11	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 10 vv 5-15 p1137 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
	11.00 Holy Communion	I Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981

Copy Date August Magazine: 15th July 8.30 am Rectory.

You will receive a warm welcome at any of our services and, of course, you are equally welcome at St John's and St Michael's whether you live in Cuxton or Halling. The 9.30 at Cuxton on the first Sunday of the month and the 11.00 at Halling on the third Sunday are family services.

On Thursday afternoons we have a Mother & Toddler service at Halling at 2.00.

Sunday School is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays).

A Prayer For Those Who Want to Receive Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Saviour and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, just as He promised.

<http://www.journeyofjoy.com/start/six.html>



Rolling Stone

The speaker at our United Parish Eucharist on 29th May was called Peter, which means “rock” or “stone”. His surname is Moss. Hence the heading for this letter.

Anyway, Peter is from the Bible Society and came to tell us about their work.

The Bible Society celebrated its 200th anniversary last year, having been founded in 1804 by William Wilberforce and his friends. We often think of the early nineteenth century as a low point in the life of the Church in England, but that is to forget the enormous achievements of people like Wilberforce who worked untiringly for social reform and the abolition of slavery, for the spread of the Gospel at home and overseas, and for higher standards of personal and corporate holiness in the English Church.

This wasn't a history lesson, however. What does the Bible Society do today? One of their main activities is making the Bible available to people. You might find it hard to believe, but there are people in the world desperate to receive bibles, people who will run great personal risk and expend a great deal of money and effort to get bibles for themselves, for their churches and to distribute the scriptures to other people. It is also our Christian duty to offer the Bible to those who don't yet know they need it. But what are the impediments to people owning bibles? Overseas, I think there are three main problems.

- The Bible is not available in the language the people speak. I think Peter said there are about 6,000 languages in use in the world today. The Bible has only been translated into a fraction of those languages. So a big part of the Bible Society's work is in translating the Scriptures and printing them in foreign languages.
- People can't afford to pay for books. The Bible Society seeks to make the Scriptures available cheaply or even for free.
- Anti-Christian governments prohibit or restrict the distribution of bibles. Some brave Christians try to defy these bans, by smuggling bibles into such countries. The Bible Society prefers to negotiate and find legal ways to carry out its work.

The main things we can do to help are to pray and to give money. We can, for example, join the “bible a month” scheme for £3. This enables the Bible Society to provide one much needed copy of the Scriptures each month. You can find out more from the Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG, 01793 418100, www.biblesociety.org.uk.

What about the work of the Bible Society in this country? After all, bibles are freely available here. There are many good English translations of the Bible. And most of us can easily afford to buy a Bible. Indeed, the Bible remains at the top of the best seller list. So what would be the Bible Society's aim for England? Well, to get us to read it! It seems that, whereas people will do anything to get the Bible when they can't have it, when it is freely available, they can't be bothered. Yet we miss out if we don't read the Bible. It is the Bible that tells us what Jesus did, what He taught and Who He is. It is the Bible that explains who we are and what is our place in the scheme of things. The Bible gives us hope. It warns us. It guides us as to how to behave. It teaches us how to respond to other people. It is our main source for the knowledge of God. We miss out on one of God's greatest gifts to us if we don't read the Bible.

So why don't people read the Bible more? I can think of four reasons.

- They don't have time. People spend hours in the gym, shopping, preening themselves in front of the mirror, watching TV, playing computer games, eating out, pursuing hobbies etc etc. Can it in fact be true that we have no time for something really important like reading the Bible?
- It's hard to understand. There is help here. Not only is the Bible available in many different versions – some very well-printed and in easy to understand language – there are also notes and commentaries and all sorts of guides to help you. Try looking in a Christian bookshop. I produce quarterly notes which many people find helpful in daily bible reading. These are available in church for just 50p*. It also helps to study

* If you e mail me, I'll send you these notes free as an attachment. The 50p is only to pay for the paper!

the Bible in a group with other people. We lay on a monthly group. The next one will be at the Rectory at 7.30 pm on 27th July. The July meeting is under the auspices of the Mothers' Union, but it is open to everyone and you would be most welcome. If you would rather listen than read, the Bible Society has put the New Testament on tape. You may borrow our parish copy or ring the Bible Society for your own.

- You're afraid your friends would laugh at you. Well, they crucified Jesus. Sometimes we just have to do what's right even if it doesn't please other people.
- It's too challenging. I think some people don't read the Bible because they are afraid it will change their life. Well, that's up to them.

Roger.

Foreign Coins

Some people seem to have acquired collections of foreign coins they don't want. It was suggested that, if anyone who collects coins would like them, they could get in touch via the Church.

Church Hall Draw: The result of the April draw, which got lost was as follows:- £40 to Di Maxwell, drawn by Matthew Wells. The result of the May draw, was as follows:- £5 to Gill Bogg, drawn by Emma Siranyi; £5 to Elizabeth

Summers, drawn by John Bogg.

St John's Draw: £25 each to Mrs Swatton (6) & Mrs Botten (160), £10 to Mrs Stevenson (47), drawn by John Bogg.



Halling WI

May is "Resolution" time for W.I.'s in West Kent, and Halling W.I. is no exception. Our W.I. advisor, Mrs Jenny Papadopulus was indisposed (hurry up and mend ,Jenny) so Mrs Ann Griffith popped over from Yalding to help us with the resolutions this year. May is also one of our busiest birthday months. We've got quite a few Taurus's and Gemini's. Mary presented us all with a pink rose. Apologies were dealt with. Eileen Knight was sunning it in Cyprus, Maggie was laid low with a cold, and Joyce had had a fall. Other than that for resolution meeting attendance wasn't too bad. Correspondence was dealt with and names were taken for our thirty eighth birthday party which we celebrate this month. The two resolutions this year are very straight forward, Farm Gate milk prices, and Caring for the Countryside, not a lot of debating needed for either of them, but some very surprising facts emerged. Everyone should try to recycle more, to save the land fill sites and we can only make people aware of the raw deal farmers get with regards prices for their produce not just

milk. The day after we had this resolution, I had brussel sprouts for lunch. Where did they come from? AUSTRALIA! Bad mark Phyllis. That didn't do the British farmers any good.

Back to W.I. Resolutions and refreshments sorted, Ann judged our competitions, something beginning with H. First was a very fresh herring which I had for my tea the next day, we also had a sample of Handwriting, a Hosta, a Horse (not a real one or a rocking one) hearts and hammers, but no Hippos.

Flower of the Month was won by Eileen Buss with a big pink peony.

Time allowed us to have a quiz, put together by Mary, all very enjoyable, but we're not so clever as we thought we were. Another happy meeting, next month, the birthday party, when we will once again be joined by some of our friends from Bleangate.

Phyllis.

2nd July

Barbecue

Rectory Grounds

From 6.00

From the Registers

Baptisms:

5 th June	Louise Daisy Callaway	Bush Road
12 th June	Anabela Roson	Scholey Close
12 th June	Lucy Goodwin	Demelza Close

Wedding:

4 th June	David Russell Abbotts & Ann Elizabeth Haynes	Cuxton
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Funerals:

20 th May	Monica Florence Stockford (81)	formerly of Halling
3 rd June	Harold Pugh Lott (83)	Stake Lane
8 th June	Daisy Eileen Ingram (86)	St Paul's Cray

Realistic Tips for Real Women (as opposed to ladies)?

Ladies: If you accidentally over-salt a dish while it's still cooking, drop in a peeled potato and it will absorb the excess salt for an instant "fix-me-up."

Real Women: If you over-salt a dish while you are cooking, that's too bad. Please recite with me The Real Women's motto: "I made it and you will eat it and I don't care how bad it tastes."

Ladies - Cure for Headaches: Take a lime, cut it in half and rub it on your forehead. The throbbing will go away.

Real Women: Take a lime, mix it with tequila, chill and drink. You might still have the headache, but who the heck cares?

Ladies: Stuff a miniature marshmallow in the bottom of a sugar cone to prevent ice cream drips.

Real Women: Just suck the ice cream out of the bottom of the cone, for goodness sake. You are probably lying on your back on the couch, with your feet up anyway.

Ladies: To keep potatoes from budding, place an apple in the bag with the potatoes.

Real Women: Buy boxed mashed potato mix and you don't have to worry about the potatoes growing arms and legs.

Ladies: When a cake recipe calls for flouring the baking pan, use a bit of the dry cake mix instead and there won't be any white powdery mess on the bottom of the cake.

Real Women: Go to the bakery, they'll even decorate it for you.

Ladies: Brush some beaten egg white over pie crust before baking to yield a beautiful glossy finish.

Real Women: Sara Lee frozen pie directions do not include brushing egg whites, so don't do it.

Ladies: If you have a problem opening jars, try using latex dishwashing gloves. They give a non-slip grip that makes opening jars easy.

Real Women: Go ask the very HOT neighbour guy to do it.

And finally the most important tip...

Ladies: Don't throw out all that leftover wine. Freeze into ice cubes for future use in casseroles and sauces.

Real Women: Leftover wine? Hello!

And remember....A good friend will come and bail you out of jail...but, a true friend will be sitting next to you saying, "Wow...that was fun!"

Nature Notes : May 2005

On the first day of the month there was plenty of sunshine and it was very warm summer weather, in fact. In the afternoon we went to Addington where the trees looked beautiful in their spring freshness. Birdsong filled the air and bluebells bloomed in a nearby field. Sam walked round the cricket ground with me but I think the heat had sapped his energy.

May 2nd. was sunny and warm again. We went to Halling Marsh where may blossom and willow flowers, frequented by bees, bloomed. We walked beneath the golden sunshine, blue skies and billowing white clouds. I watched a chaffinch singing among the branches of a hawthorn. Large areas of grass were covered with cut-leaved cranesbill, golden buttercups and daisies. Along the banks, vetch bloomed in profusion. The cormorant, plagued by gulls, eventually left the water to fly up the river which was ebbing, while a pair of shelduck waddled up on the mudflats towards the water. I could hear reed warblers chirping in last year's straw-coloured reeds. We sat listening to the birds and watched the shadows of the clouds move across the hills and fields. The 3rd. was a day of sunshine and showers. I heard a cuckoo for the first time this year.

The following day was dull and chilly with an easterly wind. I took Sam to the Snodland lakes where we walked along by the stream. A pair of coots were caring for a chick, a moorhen swam by the bank and two swans were sitting on nests. A heron flew overhead. Swallows were darting and diving over the lake and heathland. On the 5th., after an overcast morning with a rather chilly east wind, the afternoon became sunny as we walked by the lakes at Snodland. Snails and beetles perched on the nettles, small wild cherries had formed on the cherry trees, a swan and coots glided on the lake, a heron flew overhead and water boatmen were on the edge of the lake. Ox-eye daisies were in bloom along with a carpet of blue speedwell. A nightingale sang in the hawthorns which were beautiful with blossom. Wild garlic mustard bloomed as we passed a dead tree stripped of its bark. It would be home to many small creatures. A rabbit hopped across our path. I saw, too, an orange tip butterfly, the speckled wood butterfly and a peacock butterfly. The morning of the 10th. dawned with clear blue skies and bright sunshine. Clouds built up, however, as the morning progressed and the afternoon became overcast with showers. I took Sam along by the river which was high and wide, and the banks were adorned with daisies, hoary alison, hawkweed, and more meadow buttercups. A pair of Canada geese flew overhead, calling as they flew. Some rain fell. Cows with their calves, some grazing, were in the adjacent fields and they fixed their gaze upon us as we passed. The 11th. was a beautiful spring day of blue skies and golden sunshine, but with a sharp east wind. As we walked in woodland, having turned off from Tomlins Lane, I found sanicle was blooming and a tiny green caterpillar hung from a web near to where we walked. The following day the sun shone brightly again, but still the east wind blew, stronger than the day before. In the afternoon I drove with Sam to West Malling Country Park where the variety of greens on the trees was so beautiful to observe. We walked the paths where I found clumps of crosswort, a carpet of stitchwort, speed well, meadow buttercups, may blossom, horse chestnut spikes, both cream and deep pink, a few bluebells and lesser celandines. A nightingale sang, a robin perched on the trunk of a fallen tree and a thrush flew into white hawthorn hedge as we

approached. Fluffy clouds were being blown across the sky by the wind. It was so good to walk among so much beauty. While in Mays Wood on the 13th. ramsons and lily of the valley bloomed on the slope while further up sanicle, bugle and woodruff bloomed. The bluebells had almost faded. When we reached Church Fields we found that cows were grazing there. I took Sam to West Malling Country Park on the 14th. during the morning. The skies were filled with high grey clouds and the air was very fresh. As we began our walk, I observed a beautiful bullfinch perched on an ash tree branch. Some of the ash trees had yet to break into leaf while others were displaying fresh green leaves. An oak, probably struck by lightning, had put out new branches, the twigs of which were full of fresh light green leaves. Swifts dipped and dived over the parkland.

While at Addington on the 15th., which was a beautiful warm sunny day, I saw a pair of goldfinches perched on a branch. North winds were blowing on the 17th. and a frost was forecast for that night. The sun shone brightly on the afternoon of the 18th. when I took Sam to Snodland where we walked by the stream. The coot was busy collecting stalks and the swan was on her nest. We took the path by the lake, and along it cow parsley, buttercups, vetch and dove leaved cranesbill bloomed. On the heathland at the other end of the path, hedge cranesbill and forget-me-not were in bloom. Rabbits scuttled into their hedges as we approached. We crossed the railway line by the stiles to find more hedge cranesbill and ox-eye daisies. May blossom was beautiful. I heard blackbirds and a nightingale singing.

On the 19th. I went with a friend to Hever Castle. On arrival it began to rain and didn't stop for the rest of the day! However, having been all round the castle which was very interesting, we proceeded to walk round the beautiful gardens where there was an array of azaleas and rhododendrons and many other beautiful flowers which took away the greyness of the day. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. As we drove back the roadside verges were adorned with wild garlic mustard and cow parsley.

Rain fell again on the morning of the 20th when I took Sam, in the morning, round the lakes at Snodland where swallows and swifts were dipping and diving over the water. A heron flew up from the reeds where I could hear the chirping of reed warbler chicks. A pair of swans, proudly displaying six cygnets, were very protective of their young. Three coot chicks scrambled after their mother. Along the path I heard nightingales, blackbirds and some baby birds which I could not identify. I peered into the bushes but I could not see them. A chaffinch flew across our path. The cow parsley had grown tall along with hogweed which had yet to bloom. The fading may blossom was giving way to the elder flowers. Herb robert, hedge cranesbill, daisies, buttercups and a carpet of forget-me-nots bloomed. The wind was now blowing from the west. While walking in Six-acre Field the following day, I noticed that green wild cherry fruit had formed and there were indications of hazelnuts. The night skies were clear and lit with a bright moon.

The 22nd. was a breezy day with sunshine and an occasional shower. I took Sam to Halling Marsh where cows grazed and their calves lay on the grass. Dark clouds passing over the sun cast large shadows over the area where Canada and greylag geese surveyed the river as it ebbed towards the estuary. One heron stood motionless at the water's edge and another flew up river. As we approached the old stile, the sun emerged from the cloud and its warm rays beamed

down on us. The wind, from the west, was quite strong. Celery-leaved buttercups, meadow buttercups, daisies, vetch and clover bloomed. May blossom still adorned some hawthorns.

The 23rd. was sunny with golden sunshine, blue skies bedecked with billowing white cloud and blustery west winds. I took Sam to Halling and the Snodland side of the marsh where the sun sparkled on the fast-moving water ebbing towards the estuary. Ox-eye daisies, buttercups, broom and yellow crucifer bloomed up the steep bank. The wind sighed in the straw-coloured reeds of last year. New reeds were growing from where I could hear young reed warblers. Birdsfoot trefoil provided a golden carpet of flowers while red clover, common speedwell, garlic mustard, green alkanet, forget-me-not, ground ivy, black medick, wood spurge, white and pink campion and spear thistles bloomed along the way. I found a few tiny cut-leaved cranesbill and a carpet of wild strawberry flowers. We crossed the field above the school and I was able to view the river meandering through the valley. I could imagine the scene without any man-made objects, and I looked across to Cuxton where the church nestled in the hillside.

The 24th. was grey, with drizzle that lasted into the afternoon, as I took Sam to the other side of the marsh, where drizzle fell again and a very strong west wind blew. Sam was full of beans. He trotted along the paths and from time to time broke into a gallop. A flock of starlings kept moving ahead of us, chattering as they flew, while Canada and greylag geese strutted on the riverbank. In the evening, I watched a blue tit, a robin and a chaffinch bathing side by side in the garden pond.

As the day developed on the 25th. so the temperatures rose, and the afternoon became very warm with golden sunshine. I walked with Sam through Six-acre Wood which was adorned with tall lacy cow parsley. Horses grazed in the fields leading from Mays Wood and cows grazed in the lower fields where may blossom was fading and where elder flower was bursting from its buds. I sat at the top of the valley drinking in the peace of the countryside and the melodious sound of birdsong. The 26th. was a hot day with plenty of sunshine. I took Sam to Snodland where we walked round the Brookland lake. Within a few yards along the concrete path, I watched a heron take flight, various snails perched on stinging nettles, ladybirds on nettles, a

newt darting across the path and a blue damselfly. I could hear reed warblers but could not see them. Along the way, plenty of damselflies hovered over the grasses, a red admiral and a holly blue butterfly flew ahead of us. Elder flowers filled the air with their aromatic perfume. I heard a cuckoo and nightingales, plus blackbirds. As we made our way back, I saw a mallard duck with three ducklings then, just before the bridge I saw a family of wrens in the ivy by the wall.

It was so hot on the 27th. that we took our walk in the early evening along the top path of Six-acre Wood and back across the fields where the westerly wind blew warm air over us. The following day there was plenty of blue sky and sunshine, but the temperatures were much lower than the previous day. The air was fresh, such a relief from the humidity of the day before. We went to Addington in the afternoon where the westerly wind was quite strong. Sam and I walked along the footpath lined with nettles, speedwell and pink campion, to the sandpit where the gorse has faded and the broom was golden. Ground ivy and forget-me-not bloomed in profusion, brambles bore buds. Horses grazed in the field.

Another contrast of weather occurred on the 29th., for the day was overcast and chilly. I drove with Sam to West Malling Country Park where the birds sang. I watched a blackbird perched on a branch. Speedwell and golden buttercups bloomed and pink clover and cow parsley also adorned the scene. We walked round the park as some light rain fell, then made our way around the orchard where pears were beginning to develop. The skies remained grey all day.

The 30th. was quite warm but heavy showers fell from time to time. The last day of the month was warm, with variable cloud and some sunshine. I took Sam to Snodland where we walked round the lake. The pair of swans were watching over their now five cygnets and coots bobbed along the rippling water. The elderflower was now in full bloom and I picked flowers to make elderflower cordial. As we walked up the slope by one of the lakes I was aware of the beauty of the tall willows bordering the lake. The leaves, a grey-green, were almost the colour of the grey water which reflected the colour of the sky.

This month has certainly provided us with a full contrast of temperatures, sunshine and rain.

Elizabeth Summers



www.themothersunion.org

Mothers' Union

ATTENTION YOUNG FAMILIES: We will be arranging a Teddy Bear's Picnic in the Rectory Garden on Tuesday 19th July at 1.45 for all mothers (and fathers, grandparents etc if they like) with babies and toddlers. All are welcome to come and have a cup of tea and a chat while the children play and the babies sleep or kick their legs in the air in the sunshine. Please bring a teddy if you can.

[If you would like a regular weekly pre-school children's service and social occasion at Cuxton like our *Thursday's Children* at Halling, this would be an opportunity to plan it.]

I hope as many MU members as possible will come along and help with the teas etc.

July 20th is our meeting day. So it is hoped we might have a trip to the coast for our annual fish and chips meal, which might be well deserved after the picnic the day before!

Please note these future dates for your diaries. Please ask Shirley Crundwell if you would like details of any of the following.

- 1st – 5th July is the *Wave of Prayer*. Our deanery have been given 1st July to cover and our branch has 3.30-4.00. If you cannot manage to use your leaflet at this time, please use it at 12.00 on any of the five days. Indoor members will be doing the same.
- 20th July. Outing to the coast. Details to be announced.
- 24th July Evensong at St Michael's. There will be a Christian Aid theme and refreshments afterwards. MU members might be invited to assist.
- 27th July Bible Study at Rectory 7.30. Also open to non-members.
- 16th September. Prayer Workshop at Kemsing.
- 17th September. Fourth Women's Day Conference at Rainham.
- 24th September. Marriage celebration service at the Cathedral.
- 3rd October. Archdeaconry Mothers' Union Service at Christ Church Gravesend.
- 14th-16th October. MU retreat at Edenbridge.
- 19th October. Deanery Overseas Evening at St Francis Strood at 7.30.

Please try to support all our meetings, particularly deanery events, when it is good to meet with other branches and share news etc. Five of us went to Hoo St Werburgh on June 1st for an evening Communion followed by some super refreshments. It was a lovely service and we enjoyed exchanging greetings, and, what do you think? We all came home with a raffle prize!

We are looking forward to welcoming Katharine Broughton on September 21st with her dog Althena. We hope that by then she will have recovered from the long illness which caused the repeated postponement of her visit. Member and non-members will be most welcome at the Church Hall at 10.45 for her talk on Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. The 9.30 Communion service at St Michael's that day is the MU Corporate Communion and, of course, everyone is welcome to join us for that. Shirley Crundwell.



Cuxton WI

This month our meeting was a very special one – our 60th Birthday. We had been raising funds to pay for this event for a very long time and it was well worth the effort. We had everything sorted out and all was going well until we arrived at the hall in the afternoon to find it was double booked! The caterer had arrived, but took the situation in his stride, and we adjourned home until later on. At 5.30 pm we got the hall ready to seat 56 members for a sit-down meal. The tables looked very colourful, with yellow and mauve flowers and dark blue serviettes, which the caterers had folded in readiness. Each member was given a china coaster with the WI logo on it in gold, and a rose buttonhole, either in yellow or mauve. On arrival, sherry or juice was available. We sat down to eat at 7.00 and had a really excellent meal – starter, roast beef, choice of sweet, followed by cheese and biscuits and coffee. We were all impressed by the quality of the meal and the efficient service

of the waitresses, considering the limited facilities of the church hall kitchen. We would be pleased to recommend *Exclusive Catering of Rochester* to anyone. (Telephone number available on request.) Our President, Ann Saunders, cut the two birthday cakes, and then introduced the entertainer *Alive And Kicking*, who sang songs from the 50s, 60s & 70s. He soon had most of us dancing and, when we needed a rest, we joined in some of the songs. While he had a break, the raffle was drawn and then we finished the evening with more energetic dancing. It was certainly a night to remember and immensely enjoyed by everyone.

Future events include a garden party in the President's garden, a walk around Leybourne Lakes (with coffee at Tesco's) and a visit to Medway Little Theatre.

Next meeting: Thursday 7th July at 7.30 in the Church Hall: Mrs Pauline Dewick, *A Fortune in Your Attic*. Ann Harris.

Teddy Bear's Picnic

Babies and preschool children are invited to bring their teddy bears and mothers and/or carers to a picnic in the Rectory grounds on Tuesday July 19th at 1.45 pm. Share a picnic and meet other families. We'll look forward to seeing you there. All welcome. Roger Knight, Rector.

Time To Give Up.

We have decided, after organising the monthly lunches in the Church Hall for the past five years, that it is time for us to give up and maybe let someone else take a turn. We have not made this decision without a lot of thought and certainly we do not do it without thanking all those of you who have supported us over the years, those of you who contribute to the lunch with cheese scones, sausage pies, scrummy puddings etc. from time to time. Also a big thank you to those who willingly get on with the washing up and to those who help by coming early to put the finishing touches to the table, and thank you to those who take the table cloths away to launder them. You have all been a great team and we will never forget the few who came even when it snowed or it was so hot we hardly felt like moving. We have all enjoyed the fellowship of these lunches and, between us, we have managed to raise money to support several projects. We have paid for the new side altar at St Michael's and bought an altar frontal and pulpit and lectern falls for St John's. We have supported Christian Aid with Lent Lunches, every Wednesday in Lent. We supported the Sudan Appeal and, for the last two years, our CMS link mission partners, Sue and Marc. We also paid for a month's grass-cutting in Cuxton churchyard. Sundries include supporting the Easter Egg Hunt and we still have been able to give a few hundred pounds to the Church General Fund, which we all know is always in need of a top up.

So, well done all of you! A big thanks from us to all our friends who have made these things possible. We know you will support whatever might be done in the future. We know we will. Shirley & Peter Crundwell.

[I am sure everyone will join me in thanking Peter and Shirley for all that they have done. We would certainly miss these opportunities to meet together socially in a convivial atmosphere. If nothing replaces the lunches, we shall also miss the income they generate. Churchyard cutting costs nearly £200 a time and we rely on voluntary donations to pay for it. And our General Fund! Always in the doldrums, always barely keeping our heads above water. And all those charitable purposes too! So what do you want to do for the future? Marie Hendey has very kindly agreed to co-ordinate the lunches until Christmas. If we all muck in I am sure we can keep them going on a long term basis. Roger.]

Proceedings of the PCC 7th 2005

After the opening prayer, we appointed Shirley Crundwell as **secretary** and re-elected Peter Crundwell **vice chairman** and Valerie Brown **treasurer**. We decided the **Standing Committee** should consist of the four churchwardens, the treasurer and the rector.

Under correspondence we heard details of the **Diocesan Conference at Bognor** from 30th January to 2nd February next year. It is well worthwhile going with good speakers and the opportunity to mix with people from other parishes. Booking forms from me. The possible drawback is the cost of £250. The Bishop, however, does not want people to be deterred by the cost and assistance is available if you apply to The Diocesan Treasurer, Diocesan Office, Rochester, ME1 1SL by 15th July.

We agreed to continue our present **Child Protection Policy** with a couple of refinements to meet changing regulations and official advice.

The **treasurer's report** was very bad. We are actually overdrawn at the bank. This is because of a bank error in making a payment too soon, but it shows how close to the wind we are sailing. We still owe £2,367 on last year's parish share (quota) and we have paid nothing off this year's £6,450. We have remained solvent by paying bills with money actually allocated for other purposes. So this will have to be repaid. Owing to the generosity of our supporters, we are quite well off regarding money for the buildings. In fact we are going to ask whether we can have back some of the money we set aside out of our General Fund for future repairs to the buildings in order to pay off some of this parish share debt. It is no good maintaining two mediaeval buildings just as heritage. We might as well hand them over to English Heritage straightaway. If we want living churches rather than empty shells, we've got to keep the General Fund going to pay for heating and lighting, to pay our minister and to fulfil our financial obligations to the wider church to which we belong and indeed to expand our Christian service to the community and the world.

My dilemma is this. If I ask existing supporters to give more, I may be bullying people who are already giving as much as they can, whereas, if I ask new members to give money, I am likely to be told that nothing puts people off the Church like being asked for money. They say the wallet is the last part of a man to be converted! Anyway, I had been considering increasing my monthly contribution to the Church and I am now going to put it up by more than what I originally intended. It will be wonderful if you can help in this way. If tax-payers will only gift aid their contributions, the church gets about a third more than what you give. Please talk to Marie Hendey about planned giving and gift aid. We decided to ask David Noakes, the diocesan stewardship adviser, to come and talk to us about Christian stewardship.

St Michael's building is due a quinquennial inspection in January. The architect wants to do this in the Autumn to avoid the short days. We suggest putting off to the Spring.

We discussed a **sound amplification system** for St Michael's. I began by expressing my anxieties that an inadequate sound system or a poorly used one might be worse than no system at all. Feedback and distortion can make it very hard to hear what is being said. I have quite a loud clear voice which most people can hear most of the time. Not everyone can hear me, however, and some of the other people who read or speak in church have much softer voices than mine. Hearing aid users can be helped very much by a loop system. So we agreed to experiment.

We were pleased to hear that the **church notice board** in the scout hall grounds is being renovated. We can't expect people to come to things they don't know are happening.

Jobs continue to be done at **St John's** as recommended in the last quinquennial report. The electrical system is now so safe that it will trip out if you are even thinking of doing something risky like boiling water in a superannuated kettle.

The **Church Hall** is fine except the roof still leaks. The churchwardens will apply for the **entertainment licence** we now need. There was a slightly inconclusive debate about performing rights licences. It seems doubtful that we should spend more money for a licence to hold a concert than we are likely to bring in in revenue. On the other hand, concerts are very entertaining and bring more people into the church. This was rather left to the churchwardens.

The **Social Committee** are planning a buffet lunch, a coffee morning, tea, and cheese & wine in the Summer. The first of these is 16th August at 95, Pilgrims Road. The others are tba. There will be a quiz for church funds in the Autumn.

We heard that **Diocesan Synod** had received a presentation on women bishops. (The arguments for and against are much the same as for women priests only more so.) They had also learned about refinements to child protection policy. The Diocesan Synod had also discussed the budget. If we do everything we ought to do as a Church we set the quota at level which parishes cannot pay. So where do we go from here?

The **Deanery Synod** had a presentation on "Mission Shaped Church" – a document available from Church House Bookshops which might answer some of the questions raised earlier in this report.

Finally, we heard how we had collected over £1,700 for **Christian Aid** this year. This was an excellent effort, but we must cover all the roads in the parish next year. There is to be a deanery quiz for Christian Aid in August.

RIK

From the Family of Charlie Haines RIP

Marjorie, Steve and Gill wish to thank everyone who attended Charlie's funeral at St Michael and All Angels' Church on 12th May; also all those who sent flowers, cards and donations to Macmillan Nurses. Special thanks to Roger for service and his kindness during this sad time and to Clark's Funeral Service. Thank you, Bob and Simon. Charlie will be sadly missed for his humour and love of life, and his kindness, but he will never be forgotten.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society is concerned that **Jeskyn's Farm** in Cobham has been acquired by the Forestry Commission with monies provided by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, ostensibly to be used as a community woodland. The Society is concerned that the land in question is GRADE 1 agricultural land which should be conserved not lost. The Society would see some advantage in the re-establishment of hedgerows and coppices on the farm, but its primary function should remain the production of food. The Society is monitoring

developments.

Medway Council's Archive Office is interested in any articles, booklets, letters, etc pertaining to the **Cliffe Airport Campaign**. They would be please to receive any such articles members may be able to offer.

Kay Roots.

Christian Aid



A Division of The British Council of Churches

Christian Aid

Didn't they do well? Brucie would say. *Could do better*, a school report would say. Both comments would have been true. Those who did the house-to-house collecting this year did very well indeed. The total raised

was £1,743, about the same as last year. Well done!

If only we could have had enough volunteers to collect from the ten roads not covered, we could possibly have reached £2,000. Perhaps next year.....

Mary Acott.

Letting Off Steam Over Nanny Knows Best

I don't know if you have been following the saga of the Health Authority that wanted to remove bibles from hospital bedside tables or the authorities who tried to take away crucifixes, crosses and other Christian symbols from hospital and crematorium chapels? For the time being, common sense has prevailed, but no doubt the political correctness brigade will take another shot when the newspaper spotlight has been removed. Part of their case was that taking a cross down off the wall and putting it back was a health and safety risk to staff and that bibles in hospitals might spread MRSA, though it was not explained why bibles were more dangerous in this respect than other items in wards like, say, library books. The main reason, as usual, given for removing Christian objects was that they might offend those of other faiths. In fact people of other faiths are quite happy for Christians to have their holy books and icons provided that they are allowed their own. The real reason, I am sure, is that there is a powerful lobby in this country determined to remove religion from public life.

I think that this is an aspect of the nanny state. Regulations and red tape multiply. We are increasingly kept under surveillance and told what to do because the bureaucrats who run this country genuinely believe that they know best. If we do what we like, we'll probably harm ourselves and other people, they think. So it is in our own interests to be told what to do by the experts who know best. Whether they are arranging an abortion for our 12 year old daughter without telling us or limiting our choices of beaches on which we may exercise the dog, the point is that they are so sure that they can run our lives better than we can that they feel they have the right to enforce their advice by law.

Nothing we do is without risk. So *health and safety* provides an excuse for bureaucracy to pry into every area of our lives, to licence and regulate our activities and to ban everything from games of conkers to hanging baskets. Hot taps in new houses are to be controlled so that you can't run a bath hotter than health and safety officers consider safe.

We are told that the European Union is a wonderful ideal because it prevents the nations of Europe from destroying one another in war as happened through so much of the 20th Century, yet it is turned into a mechanism whereby bureaucrats can regulate the curvature of bananas from Athens to Aberdeen. Interestingly, however, it appears to be only Britain that enforces these regulations with unbending inflexibility. I am told that you can buy sprouts by the pound in Brussels, whereas Sunderland Trading Standards officers would have the stall-holder in court before you could say *Maastricht*.

You may wonder why the proposed British ID card is ten times as expensive as the plain simple cards required in other countries. The answer is that it is intended to be part of a national data base, enabling the Home Office to keep tabs on every one of us. Government wants to know where you live, what you do, how much money you've got and how you earned it, what medical conditions you suffer from and, judging by the questions on the official census and

plans for satellite tracking of cars for road pricing, what race and religion you are and where you are wherever you travel. Of course officials genuinely believe that this level of surveillance and supervision is all for our own good.

Time was when the authorities could not impose any legal penalty on you without proving in court beyond reasonable doubt that you were guilty of some specific offence. In the last few years, loosely drafted legislation has allowed officials, police officers and even a politician, the Home Secretary, to decide for themselves what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and to impose fines and/or restrictions on liberty without the need to prove in court that any offence has been committed. Britain has recently been criticised by the European Human Rights Commissioner for this development, but the Government presses ahead. Anti-social behaviour (for the purposes of imposing an ASBO) is defined ever more broadly to include any behaviour bureaucrats don't like. Under the latest proposals, a 17 year old moving into a flat won't be able to buy a set of table knives unless accompanied by an adult. There isn't even any logic to the control freakery of it all. The same Licensing Act that requires us to get a licence before we can run a children's party in the church hall, also opens the way for 24 hr drinking dens in city centres. The Gaming Act restricts one armed bandits in fish and chip shops where you can lose a few pounds, but promotes 24 hr casinos where you can gamble away the family home and business. I've just seen the Medway Wardens' van parked on the pavement so people had to walk in the road!

I think there is an irony here. The bad behaviour we see on the street is a direct result of the fact that so many children are brought up with no sense of self-discipline. Bureaucrats have deliberately dismantled religion and the other traditional sources of authority and self discipline in society. They are left with a considerable proportion of the population who think *me! me! me!* is the only measure of behaviour and the only defence the bureaucrats can think of against the resulting disorder is to threaten with ASBOs and fixed penalty notices, curfews and other restrictions which bear down more heavily on the innocent than the guilty.

I think religion is a particular problem for these people who want to be in charge of our society. True, they pay lip service to the rights of religious communities. Colourful religious ceremonies are welcomed as part of the cultural life of the borough. Exotic dishes brought in by immigrant groups are a welcome change to meat and veg. The presence of minority religions gives secular local authorities a stick with which to beat the traditional Christian community. They do not, however, respect religion. They have no more intention of allowing communities to be run on Moslem or Sikh lines than they have of allowing Christian values to dominate. National and local government want to run the country according to their own values, what they consider to be modern secular values. To that extent all religion is a threat to the bureaucracy because it offers people an alternative set of values and the opportunity to think for themselves. After all, St Augustine's *Dilige et quod vis fac* ("Love and do what you will") hardly supports the bureaucratic imperative to tie up all our lives in red tape. The Christian model gives us responsibility and freedom. The bureaucratic model deprives us of the latter because it doesn't trust us with the former. Roger.