

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
June 2 nd Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
June 5 th Easter 7	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Samuel 23 vv 1-5 p330 Mark 16 vv 14-20 p1024
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12-14 p1220 I Peter 5 vv 6-11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
June 12 th Pentecost	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 I Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153 John 7 vv 37-39 p1072
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Joel 2 vv 21-32 p913 Acts 2 vv 14-38 p1093
June 19 th Trinity Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion Stop! Look! Listen!	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
June 24 th Nativity of St John the Baptist	7.30 pm Confirmation	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 Luke 1 vv 57-66 & 80 p1027
June 26 th Trinity 1	11.00 Holy Communion Andrew Daunton-Fear	Jeremiah 28 vv 5-9 p788 Romans 6 vv 11-23 p1133 Matthew 10 vv 40-42 p976
July 3 rd St Thomas	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Samuel 15 vv 17-21 p320 John 11 vv 1-16 p1077
	11.00 Holy Communion	Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Ephesians 2 vv 19—22 p1174 John 20 vv 24-29p1089
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
June 2 nd Ascension Day	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
June 5 th Easter 7	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12-14 p1220 I Peter 5 vv 6-11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
June 12 th Pentecost	9.30 Holy Communion	Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 I Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153 John 7 vv 37-39 p1072
June 19 th Trinity Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity
	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
June 26 th Trinity 1	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Jeremiah 28 vv 5-9 p788 Romans 6 vv 11-23 p1133 Matthew 10 vv 40-42 p976
July 3 rd St Thomas	9.30 Family Communion	Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Ephesians 2 vv 19—22 p1174 John 20 vv 24-29p1089

Wednesday Communion 9.30 @ St Michael's		Thursday Communion 9.30 @ St John's	
1 st June Rogation Day	Acts 17 v15 – 18 v1 John 16 vv 12-15	2 nd June Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 Luke 24 vv 44-53
8 th June	Acts 20 vv 28-38 John 17 vv 11-19	9 th June	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17 vv 20-26
15 th June	II Corinthians 9 vv 6-11 Matthew 6 vv 1-18	16 th June	II Corinthians 11 vv 1-11 Matthew 6 vv 7-15
22 nd June St Alban, Ember Day	Genesis 15 vv 1-18 Matthew 7 vv 15-20	23 rd June Corpus Christi	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 6 vv 51058
29 th June St Peter & St Paul	Acts 12 vv 1-11 Matthew 16 vv 13-19	30 th June	Genesis 22 vv 1-19 Matthew 9 vv 1-8

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton on the last Wednesday of each month also at 2.00. **Saints Alive!** (formerly Sunday School) is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's. **Copy Date** July Magazine: 10th June 8.30 am Rectory.



So Why Is Whitsun Like Christmas?

Because everybody forgets it's a religious holiday. No, not really; Whitsun is like Christmas because it is about Emmanuel. So what is Emmanuel? Well, El (אל) is one of the Hebrew words for God. You also find El meaning God in names like Michael and Nathaniel. Emmanu (עמנו) is Hebrew for "with us". So Emmanuel (עמנואל) means "God with us." It is one of the names of Jesus.

At Christmas we celebrate the fact that the Word was made flesh. The Son of God became the Son of Mary. Jesus is God with us. He shares everything that it is to be human. He knows what it is to be a baby and a child. He knows what it is to grow into manhood. He experiences pain and tears, opposition, abandonment by His friends and downright treachery. He also knows what it is to be blessed by a mother's love, to play with other children, to learn a trade, to go to parties and to have good friends. He enjoys the beauties of nature and the good things of this world. He is tempted just as we are in every respect, though He does not sin.

So, in Jesus, we can feel that God is with us. He understands us. Our prayers make sense to Him. He knows what life is like for us. We can feel close to Jesus every day of our lives and through Him we can talk to God and experience answer to prayer.

Jesus is God with us, Emmanuel, and He shares everything it is to be human. In fact, in Jesus not only do we see what God is like; we see what it truly is to be human. Jesus is not only God; He alone also is fully human as human beings are meant to be.

Jesus is one with us in living a fully human life. He is also one with us in death. Jesus dies as one of us. That is one reason that we Christians do not have to be afraid to die. He has already died for us. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.*

I mentioned that Jesus alone is fully human as human beings are truly meant to be. That is because Jesus alone truly loves God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength and Jesus alone truly loves his neighbour as himself. Human beings are made in the image of love and to be less than perfect love is to be less than truly human. To fail to love with heart, soul, mind and strength is to fall short of being the person you are meant to be. It is to fail to reach your potential. It is to miss your true goal. It is sin and *the wages of sin is death*.

God is perfect love and nothing less than perfect love can stand in His presence, but in the absence of God there can only be death. *So the wages of sin is death*. Jesus is God with us and Jesus dies with us and for us. He does not die because He deserves to die. He does not deserve to die because He is perfect love. But, because He is perfect love, He chooses to die in order to redeem us (the rest of mankind) whose humanity is defiled by our rebellion against God, our unpreparedness to yield our lives to Him and to other people in perfect love. We are so used to our imperfection that we talk about sin and failure as being "only human" or as "human weakness". All human beings except Jesus do fail in this way, but such failure to love is nevertheless failure. It is what we are all used to, but it is not what we are meant to be. Failure is what human beings universally are, but it is not what it truly is to be human. To be a complete human being is to be like Jesus. To be truly human is to live for ever in eternal love or, if you like, to love for ever in eternal life.

Jesus dies with us and for us. His death takes away our sin. What we have to do is to repent and to be baptised in faith. When we do that, we are redeemed; we are set free from sin and death. We are set free to live for ever lives of eternal love.

We remembered Jesus' Death on Good Friday and His descent into Hell on Holy Saturday - the way He overcame Death through perfect love and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

On Easter Day we commenced a seven week celebration of the Resurrection. Jesus, God with us, Emmanuel, by His Death had overcome all the forces of darkness and death, of hatred and hell. He is alive and reigns for ever at God's Right

Hand. He is alive and lives for ever in us and we live for ever in Him. As the hymn says,

*Christ is risen, we are risen;
Shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory~
From the brightness of thy face;
That we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel-hands be gathered,
And be ever, Lord, with thee.*

In Christ we come into our inheritance as human beings, as the children of God, life in eternal love.

But, on the fortieth day of this seven week celebration of Easter, we keep Ascension Day. We know that, having shown Himself risen from the dead to His apostles and hundreds of others by many infallible proofs, He was parted from us. He ascended into Heaven and took His Seat at the Right Hand of God. We know that He prays for us at His Father's side. We know that our prayers come to God through Him. We know that He will return in glory to judge both the living and the dead. We know (in the words of a favourite Christmas hymn),

*And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.*

But what about His promise, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?* How can the risen, ascended, glorified Christ be Emmanuel? How is He still God with us?

And the answer is Whitsun or Pentecost – the fiftieth day of the Easter feast. God sends His Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of the Risen Christ. He dwells in us and we in Him. He works in the world today. He fills the Church. He is another paraclete (comforter or advocate), Jesus Christ being our advocate (paraclete or comforter) with the Father. The Holy Spirit is everything that Jesus is. The Holy Spirit is God with us – Emmanuel (עִמָּנוּאֵל). And that is why Whitsun is like Christmas. At both festivals, we celebrate the fact that God is with us. God is with us,

For Thought

Herbert McCabe sums up the New Testament's moral teaching thus. *If you don't love, you're dead, and, if you do, they'll kill you.*

April Church Hall Draw: £40 to Shirley Houlan, drawn by Pam Schofield.

April St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Brown (50), Mrs Parris (53), Mrs Warman (56) & Mrs Cheeseman (135) – drawn by Mrs Chidwick.

making it possible for us to be what we ought to be, the children of God, dwelling with Him for ever in an eternity of love.

On 12th June this year we celebrate Pentecost (or Whitsun). On 19th we celebrate Trinity Sunday, when we stand amazed that the one, eternal God, is for ever three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Perhaps more on that some other time, but what we praise God for in the doctrine of the Trinity is effectively this: *The Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods: but one God.* God is with us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Emmanuel.

*Alleluia, not as orphans~
Are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia, he is near us,
Faith believes, nor questions how:
Though the cloud from sight received him,
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget his promise,
"I am with you evermore"?*

I asked myself if some of what I have written this month is just too much, too hard for any of us to comprehend? Should I write something more shallow (and briefer maybe) that you and I can both grasp better? I think not. The wonder of God is infinitely beyond human understanding and yet it is there for all of us to approach, to enter into His presence, how ever humbly, how ever uncertainly even, with whatever trepidation, awe or doubt. We shall not do more than begin to comprehend until and unless we meet Him face to face in Heaven. Till then we have a lifetime to get to know Him, a lifetime of contemplation and wonder. I urge you to read the Bible and to pray every day and to participate frequently and regularly in public worship, especially Holy Communion. God is mystery, but to know Him is to have eternal life. Don't be put off or give up because my writing and preaching might seem obscure, or because of discouragements in your daily life, or because of busyness, or for any other reason. God is mystery. Plumb the depths of that mystery. The goal is eternal life in eternal love. Every blessing in your spiritual journey. Roger.

J. Williams tree care

All tree surgery work:

Pollarding
Crown reduction
Crown lifting
Tree removal
Stump grinding
Coppicing
Forestry work
Hedge cutting and shaping
Thinning and deadwooding
Grass cutting and strimming

*** FULLY INSURED *** 6 YEARS TREE CLIMBING EXPERIENCE ***

The Chief Rabbi on our English Bible

“The texts a culture teaches its children shape their landscape of literacy, their horizons of aspiration. People who can quote the Bible walk tall. They carry with them a treasure no one can take away from them. They sing with the tongues of poets, walk with the wisdom of Solomon, find solace in the soul music of the Psalms, and hope in the blazing visions of the Prophets. In an age of blogs and tweets, the King James translation remains the Beethoven of the soul, the imperishable music of spiritual grandeur.”

And Professor Richard Dawkins of All People!

“To lack knowledge of the King James Bible is to be, in some small way, barbarian.”

Halling Bell Ringers

Rochester District Striking Contest took place at Halling Church on April 14th. Four teams took part, followed by tea and meeting. Thanks were given to Phyllis, Donna, Sam, Julia and Janet at the meeting. Well done girls. Peter Silver.

Cuxton Bell Ringers

A quarter peal was rung at Cuxton on 29th April to celebrate the marriage of HRH Prince William of Wales and Miss Catherine Middleton.

Easter Thanks

Another wonderful Easter! Thank you to everybody who worked so hard to clean the churches, wash the linen, set up for services, serve, read, arrange flowers, provide music and bells and to participate in any way whatsoever in what is the greatest festival of the Christian year. Also for the Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Monday in my garden where a good time was had by all in the beautiful Spring sunshine. Roger.

Do Right and Wrong Change or Is It Us?

This is the topic for the next open free debate in the URC Chapel Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton, at 7.30 pm on Thursday 16th June. All welcome.

ST JOHN'S WEEKEND 24TH-26TH JUNE

Friday 24th: 7.30 pm. Confirmation Service with Bishop Stephen

Venner. Please remember our candidates in your prayers: Zoë Topson; Declan Sbrocchi and Esme Weiler-Grove.

 Saturday 25th: 7.30 pm. Concert by Brook Orchestra & the Marlowe Singers.

Sunday 24th: Andrew Daunton-Fear to preach at 11.00 service and to speak (with slides) about his work in the Philippines at 3.00, followed by tea.



Over the whole weekend there will be an exhibition in the church of the activities of a variety of village organisations. All welcome.

Forthcoming Attractions 2011

24th June (Nativity of St John the Baptist): 7.30 pm Confirmation and Patronal Festival Eucharist at Halling.

25th June: 7.30 pm Brook Orchestra Concert and the Marlowe Singers at St John's.

{Also this weekend a Halling Exhibition in the church.}

26th June: Andrew Daunton-Fear preaches at 11.00 service at Halling and gives a slide presentation of his work at 3.00, also at St John's. Event to include tea.

9th July: Parish Barbecue

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

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

15th October: Quiz in Church Hall.

Snakes in the Bible

Last month I said I would have a go at explaining what the Bible has to say about snakes if anyone asked me. Well someone has asked. So here goes. The best known story about a snake is probably the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2&3). God has given Adam and Eve everything they need in the Garden. All they have to do is to walk with God. They do have a choice, however. There is the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They are told not to eat it, but they are free to choose. Freedom carries with it responsibility, however, and choices have consequences. If they choose not to walk with God (the Lord, the Giver of Life), they will surely die. *The wages of sin is death.*

In the story, the snake tells Eve that she can do as she likes. Nothing will happen if she goes against God. A jealous God is just trying to limit human potential with His *Thou shalt not's*. Eve believes the snake. God and His Law, she thinks, are simply killjoys and she and Adam can do just whatever they feel like doing. They only need to be concerned about themselves and their own personal fulfilment and happiness. God is irrelevant. Religion makes no practical difference. So Eve eats the fruit and gives some to Adam. But there are consequences if we refuse to accept God's Way of love and Adam and Eve find themselves cast out of the Garden of Eden. They wanted to be independent and now they've got to work for their own living. Lives lived without God will be *nasty, brutish and short*. Adam and Eve represent the whole human race.

Thankfully, God does not give up on them (which means He doesn't give up on us). He continues to care for them and the prophecy (Genesis 3¹⁵) is that the woman's descendant (Jesus) will *bruise the head* of the serpent (representing the devil). So even this story of the beginning of humanity's disobedience contains the promise of our redemption. By His Death on the Cross, His giving of Himself in love, Jesus will overcome the evil one and restore the gift of eternal life to all who repent of their sins and come to God through Him in faith.

The next big snake story concerns Moses. When God tells Moses to return to Egypt and become the liberator of the Hebrew slaves, he is given signs to authenticate his commission. One of these signs is to cast his staff on the ground. When he does so it becomes a snake. When he picks up the snake by its tail, it turns back into a stick. Pharaoh's magicians can also turn their staffs into snakes, but Moses' snake eats up their snakes – a demonstration of the superior power of our God over all the powerful empires of this world, with all their wealth and military might and the other vanities in which human beings so often put their trust.

There is then a curious story in Numbers 21. By this time, the Israelites have escaped from Egypt through the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, where they have received the Law. Having been too frightened and faithless to trust God and enter the Promised Land straightaway, they are now wandering in the wilderness for forty years. God is still caring for them, however, and they are being fed on the manna, what they call *bread from heaven*, which appears each day with the dew. This manna prefigures Jesus Who is the true bread come down from Heaven, the Bread of Life (Read John 6!) and it also prefigures the Bread of Holy Communion

in which we receive the Body of Christ, the Bread of Life, each Sunday. In Numbers 21 the Israelites, who, like most of us, are never satisfied, complain that they are fed up with wandering in the wilderness and that they are fed up with this *light bread*. [I cannot help but draw parallels with Christians who seem to be fed up with our Christian pilgrimage and are happy to be enslaved again to the lifestyle of this passing age and with those Christians who decline to receive Holy Communion faithfully and regularly or want some other service only requiring a weaker degree of commitment to replace it.] Anyway, the people rebel against Moses and God and God sends snakes to bite them. (Give them something to cry about?). As is so often the case, when the people are in real trouble, then they have time for God. When they are bitten by the snakes, then they pray. And God tells Moses to make a bronze serpent and to set it up on a pole. When the people look at the snake on the pole, they are cured of the snake bite and don't die.

Later on (II Kings 18⁴) another generation of faithless Israelites (They were so like us!) will worship this bronze snake as an idol, a false god, and the good King Hezekiah will have to destroy it.

The best known verse in the Bible is probably John 3¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. The story mentioned above from Numbers 21 is probably much less well known, but Jesus explains His own life's work in terms of Numbers 21 in this well-loved passage in John 3¹⁴⁻¹⁷. Moses lifted up the snake on a pole so that all those dying because they had been bitten by the snakes in the desert (the consequence of their rebellion against God) could look at the snake on the pole and be healed. We have rebelled against God in our rejection of His perfect Law of Love. We have been bitten and poisoned by that old serpent, the devil, and we are therefore dying. In order to be healed, we must look to Jesus lifted up on the pole of the Cross - the descendant of Eve, Who bruises the serpent's head. All humanity has fallen in Adam and we have all condemned ourselves to death by our rejection of God's love. God's love is so amazing, however, that it provides the means for us to return to God (in spite of our rebellion) through the Cross of Jesus Christ. That is your choice today - to turn to Christ, to repent of your sins and to renounce evil, or to continue to reject Him. The one way is the way of life; the other is the way of death. Your choice.

In Jordan on Mount Nebo (Pisgah), where it is believed that Moses died, there is now a sculpture of a snake on a pole, which is also a crucifix.

Finally (and I could hardly miss this out when one of our parish churches is dedicated to St Michael and All Angels) is Revelation 12. There are many ways of interpreting this passage. The woman might be Eve or Mary or Mother Church. The child could be Adam, or humanity, or Jesus, or the Church of God. The serpent is certainly the devil. As in Genesis at the beginning of the Bible, so in Revelation at the end, the devil in the form of a snake seeks to destroy humanity and so to defeat the purposes of God. The war in heaven when Michael and his angels defeat Satan and his angels corresponds to the Cross of Jesus. It is by His sacrifice of Himself on the Cross that the great High Priest establishes His reign as King of Kings and incorporates into His Body, His Temple, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the whole of redeemed humanity, as He opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. It is love which defeats the power of the devil. So those who share Christ's Victory, the Church of God, all who believe in Him, are said in 12¹¹ to have overcome *by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony (their martyrdom in the original Greek); and they loved not their lives unto death*.

We began this study with humanity's self-centred rejection of God and we have ended it with God's self-sacrificing restoration of our eternal communion with Him. The snake has symbolised the bad guy throughout this long conflict between good and evil. It's not the snake what done it, however. It's our choice. I know Whom I have chosen to believe. What about you? Roger.

P.S.

I surprised the congregation the other week when I told them I thought I would like to be more charismatic. They were less surprised more recently when I told them I would like to be more traditional. I then added that I would also like to be more up to date, more catholic and more evangelical. This on snakes is me being evangelical. But think about it. Shouldn't we be more open to the Holy Spirit? Shouldn't we value what we've inherited from the past? Shouldn't we welcome new ideas? Shouldn't we venerate the Church as what she is, the Body of Christ? Shouldn't we be firmly grounded in the Scriptures and long to share our faith? All parties and denominations within God's Church have something to contribute. The tragedy is our disunity which undermines our ability to profit by one another's insights.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

17 th April	Harry George Cocup	Maidstone
Easter Day	Lily Anne Costen	Bush Road
8 th May	Alexander Fletcher Chatfield	Petchart Close
8 th May	Oliver Ronal Chatfield	Petchart Close

Weddings:

15 th April	David Ram & Hannah Jane Bowles	Cuxton
29 th April	Alexander Nicholas John Payne & Gemma Elizabeth King	Halling
1 st May	Matthew Joseph John Griffiths & Wendy Jane Hedger	Cuxton

Funeral:

3 rd May	Peggy Eileen Goodger (83)	Meadow Crescent
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Birth of a Great Grandchild

22nd March: Lillie Briony Irene a daughter to Kimberley-Anne Manser and Alan Jordan Stanley, great granddaughter to Will & Pat Harrison of Cuxton.

Thanks For Your Support In Paying Our Debts

Donations continue to come in towards paying off our parish share debt. The hope is that every adult in the parish will donate £5 to keep us financially viable. So far we have collected £1,407. So there is still a long way to go, but thanks to all those who have donated so far. Any further donations please to rector, treasurer or churchwardens. Any cheques should be payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC*. If you can *Gift Aid* your donation, that adds considerably to its value. Our financial situation is truly terrifying. Roger.

Thanks Also

For donations towards grass cutting in Halling Cemetery and Cuxton Churchyard. Thanks to both Parish Councils for their support and to individual donors. Thanks also to those who take their rubbish and dead flowers home with them and to those who clear up other people's mess and to those who generally tidy up our burial spaces. Medway Council look after Halling Churchyard because it is legally closed.

All donations are very welcome (to me, churchwardens or treasurer, please). Cheques should be payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC* and it helps a lot if you can *Gift Aid*.

I am sorry to say that there has been quite a lot of vandalism at Halling. If you notice anything, please report it to the police and the police say watch out for lead thieves in both churches.



Halling WI

At the April meeting Halling W.I. had a real treat, or not, according to how you look at it. I was their speaker for the evening. Margaret opened the meeting with a few apologies from one or two members, Jerusalem was sung with gusto, and the minutes read, the usual routine. Financially we are keeping our heads above water, just. Betty Head and Ann Hayward decided to have coffee mornings or tea afternoons in the summer to boost our funds. Then it was my turn. It's very hard to write about one's self. First, I did a couple of flower arrangements, as programmed, to show the

girls how easy it is, whether it is in a thimble or a large church pedestal, the same principle applies to both. You either think big or small. Delphiniums are O.K. for pedestals, but daisies and violets for thimbles or sea shells. I then proceeded to show off my six pennants I have made for the Olympic Games 2012, rainbows, boats, laurel wreaths, baskets of flowers, bumble bees and a oast house with hops. I just couldn't get inspired, but, when I did, now I can't stop thinking of ideas, but "Quilts for London" who are organizing the pennants need 14,000 so that every athlete including the Paralympics can be given a pennant. Goodness knows where my flags will

end up in the world. Lastly, I showed the girls my little birds, and animals I had knitted to sell for our church's depleted funds. I had made over 70, and had no intention to sell them at the W.I., but many of the ladies wanted them. After the Easter Egg Hunt in the rectory garden I had sold over £70. I was very happy with the result even though it has left me with a very crook wrist. It will get better. I think the girls were happy with the evening and I was warmly thanked by Ann Hayward.

The competitions were judged, not by me. Betty Head won the Apple pie in a saucer and I won the flower of the month with my *Triandrus alba narcissus* which had FIVE blooms on one stem. We finished the evening with a chat and putting the World to rights. May is the Annual meeting and Resolution which are, by the way, all about Mega Farms, or not to have them and the closing of libraries. What will the National Federation come up with next!!! Phyllis.

110th, 400th & 350th Anniversaries

We had a wonderful time celebrating the 110th anniversary of the Mother's Union at Evensong at Cuxton on May 1st. The Diocesan Chaplain and Rector of Stone, Rev'd Kenneth Clark, gave a very inspiring sermon, giving us examples of what can be done when people really put their minds to it. We know that Cuxton MU is exactly 110 years old this year. We cannot find the start date for Halling MU, though we found a reference to its being considered in 1891 in an old parish magazine. Can anyone help? See also p12.

The same day we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible by taking all our lessons in Church from the 1611 KJV. As an AV addict myself, I was surprised that the AV now seems quite strange to some people. People's personal copies seemed to be in tiny print – suggesting either that people had better eyesight in the past or that they didn't read them! Anyway, it doesn't matter what version you read so long as it is an accurate translation of the original Hebrew and Greek. Just be thankful that we have the Bible in English and read it daily.

I mentioned a couple of months ago that St Bartholomew's Day (24th August) 2012 is the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and that I hope to celebrate that event with a BCP sung Communion service on that day. Someone stopped me while I was out walking with Max to enquire about this event. It is on track, but, for those of you who cannot wait that long, don't forget we have a BCP celebration at 8.00 am at St Michael's on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Of course we come to worship God *in spirit and in truth* and we ought not to make too much fuss about whether the form of service, choice of music, etc. are to our taste. We don't come to church to please ourselves! We come to please God! However, I must admit I do enjoy BCP and, if you do too, there is no harm in making a point of coming on those 3rd Sundays at 8.00.

So Why Do So Many Still Love the King James Bible?

I've been puzzling about the enduring quality of the KJV. Here's my theory, for what it's worth. Obviously people like me like the KJV because we've grown up with it. We're used to it and have loved it from childhood. Equally obviously, 1611 was in a good period for the English language. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time for literary masterpieces: Shakespeare and the Book of Common Prayer to name but two more. This explains why so many people rave about the KJV for its English style.

I have another theory, however. Modern Bible translations suffer from a tragic division in the human consciousness which didn't really occur till one hundred and fifty or so years after the KJV. This is the division between spirit and intellect, between faith and reason, between Church and university. At the Enlightenment (C18), people got the idea that faith and reason are essentially in conflict with one another. Faith, people tend to think, is necessarily irrational and faith therefore is the enemy of reason, and reason likewise has nothing to say to faith. Church and University are therefore in competition rather than partnership in humanity's quest for the truth. Your brain and your heart, soul or spirit essentially deal with different aspects of your life. Rational thought is distinct from emotion and faith is essentially emotional.

The consequence of this split between reason and faith for modern bible translators is that the people who work on the more scholarly translations (RSV, NEB, etc) have to set aside their faith in order to retain their academic credibility. They have to translate the Bible exactly as they would translate any other ancient text or as an atheist would translate the Bible. There is no room for the passion for the text which can only come

from faith and belonging to God's Church. On the other hand, the compilers of the more popular modern Bible translations are completely committed to expressing their faith in the way they translate the Bible, but they are suspicious of the academic and intellectual and therefore their translations lack respect for scholarship. That's my theory anyway.

The KJV was compiled before this tragic split between brain and soul. Faith and reason were rightly understood in those days both to be gifts of God's grace. Faith and reason are both God-given means to bring us to the ultimate Truth. The men (and maybe one woman) who compiled the KJV used the very best academic scholarship which was available to them and they worked as faithful members of the Church, committed to the Bible as the Word of God. Because it is God's Word, they believed, the task of translating the Bible demanded all the resources of reason and faith; of scholarship and personal devotion; of heart soul, mind and strength; of the Church and of the university. What the KJV has that modern scholarly versions lack is unashamed Christian commitment and what the KJV has that modern popular translations lack is rigorous scholarship. That is why I think the KJV retains its value in a world in which there is a multiplicity of much more up to date biblical translations. It has both faith commitment and academic integrity, whereas modern translations, in my opinion, tend to have one or the other.

When we were still at school a friend of mine suggested that, instead of this multiplicity of translations, our present Queen ought to commission a new Authorised Version, which we would all use and get to know and love like the old KJV. I doubt if this is possible, however. Even in C21 we still have the old C18 Enlightenment division between faith and reason, though I think we are gradually rediscovering their essential harmony and necessary complementarity. Even so, we are too unwilling to accept authority or even leadership in the interests of unity. If the present Queen were to commission a new Authorised Version, traditionalists would insist on retaining the old one as well. Many individual Christians and churches would stick to their personal favourite translations whatever anyone said. Popular translations would be justified as being for the sake of mission to outsiders and scholars would demand the right to make and use new academic translations for themselves. The *everything must be made simple for children* brigade would insist on a simplified version for children (which these days seems to mean everyone under 21). So if there were a new AV I think it would probably merely join all the other translations on the dusty bookshelves of the clergy as one of many *scripture resources* and I suppose we must accept that the days of a single excellent translation known and loved by all English-speaking Christians are probably irrecoverable. Roger.



Cuxton WI

Our meeting in April was a small gathering of only 22 members, a great many of us either being on holiday or having health problems. Fortunately, several members stepped in to help as several committee members were away on various holidays. A good evening was had with a talk by Mr Phillip Petty about his life and career. Our May meeting was well attended with 33 members and 3 visitors and included our AGM. Resolutions from the national federation which were put to the meeting and the decisions to be passed on to our delegate at the national AGM in Liverpool. Apart from one member, the committee is staying the same but

after 5 years Dorothy Drew has decided to stand down as our President but will stay as a committee member. Patricia Reynolds was nominated to be the next president and this was agreed by the members. Thanks were given to Dorothy for all her hard work and commitment over the years. We had no speaker on this occasion and finished the meeting with Cheese and Wine and a lively quiz set by Sheila on the Royal Wedding. Our next meeting, on the 2nd June, is our birthday party for members and it is to comprise a "tea at the Cuxton Ritz" and members are asked to wear "posh" outfits and hats or fascinators if desired.

Pat Reynolds.

Nature Notes April 2011

The morning of this new month is grey with quite a brisk westerly wind. We walk Murphy at Bluewater where I'm aware of beautiful greens bursting forth along the banks and blossom on trees. Daffodils nod their heads in the breeze which ripples the waters on

the lakes. A single Canada goose glides on one of them. The next morning is beautiful with very warm sunshine beaming down from blue skies. The following day I notice that the sycamores on the embankment have burst into leaf. The 4th is a bright

and breezy day when the countryside is gradually becoming green with the bursting of leaves. We drive to Cobtree Manor Park with Murphy and along the way I marvel at the fresh greens of hawthorns, weeping willows and horse chestnut trees. The leaves have unfurled revealing the different shades of green, so tender and delicate. In the park daisies, violets, and speedwell adorn the grass while celandines, wood anemones, cuckoo flowers and a few bluebells bring colour to the woodland. On 5th, along Pilgrim's Road, field maples have burst into leaf and the new leaves of horse chestnuts hang limply like newly awakened butterflies' wings. The 6th is the hottest day of the year so far with golden sunshine beaming down from a blue sky brushed with high cloud. In the garden I watch bees one of which is a red tailed bumble bee collecting nectar from the flowers particularly the comfrey. In the afternoon of the 7th I take Murphy to the river. The banks are covered in lush green grass, and cowslips, dandelions, daisies and grape hyacinths bloom. I also see two bluebells. A pleasant breeze blows off the rippling river. The beautiful weather continues and the next day we walk again at Bluewater along the grassy paths where cowslips bloom on the banks near the lake on which a Canada goose glides. Red dead nettle, daisies, speedwell, dandelions and dovesfoot cranesbill bloom in the grass. The 9th is another glorious day of blue skies and golden sunshine. I walk across the fields up into Mays Wood and on to Wingate Wood to see the bluebells where I am rewarded. Along the way I see blackthorn as white as snow, fields full of golden buttercups and carpets of red dead nettle. Hawthorns, still bearing a few haws and elders reveal their tight flower buds. I gaze across the valley and feel the warmth of the sun. In the distance, the cathedral and the castle stand strong in the town. The wych elm bears green leaves and beneath it a carpet of speedwell blooms. Celandines and wood anemones are in flower in Mays Wood and further along the way dog violets, dog's mercury and a few bluebells bloom among carpets of wild garlic. Wood spurge and sanicle are to be seen. Wild cherry blossom scatters its petals and cuckoo flowers are dotted along the edges of the path. Yellow archangel flower buds will soon burst into flower. Near them are field maple saplings and wild strawberry flowers. I hear the call of a pheasant, the strident call of a chiff chaff and the yaffle of a woodpecker. Sheep bleat down in the valley and a robin sings from the branches of a hawthorn. I reach Wingate Wood and soon come upon the carpets of bluebells almost in full bloom but still filling the air with their beautiful perfume. I linger a while among them before re-treading my steps home. As I reach the fields again, bees are hovering over golden dandelions and calling gulls circle overhead. An orange tip butterfly hovers over some fresh brambles

and a pair of speckled wood butterflies dance on the air. Horses graze in one of the fields while winds from the east drive a few white clouds across the blue sky. I finally reach home happy and uplifted by all I've seen of nature's beauty. The next day I watch a collared dove collecting nesting material from the front grass. While on my way to Snodland Choral Society the following evening the contrasts of light in the sky are beautiful. Dark grey clouds frame the hills but to the west golden sun shines and a rainbow forms across the sky. Golds, greys and pale blues light up the countryside. It is a glorious sight. On 13th, because of the very warm weather, all the leaves have "rushed" into fullness so that the areas of countryside are seas of green. Warm dry days continue, and by 19th temperatures have reached 25 degrees Celsius. It rises by another degree the following day. On 22nd I watch dandelion seed heads floating on the air across the gardens. Temperatures rise again on 23rd to 80 degrees F. I walk the grassy paths with Murphy at Bluewater. Vetch, speedwell, dovesfoot cranesbill, dandelions and golden broom adorn the way. Oxeye daisies are in bud. Horse chestnut spikes, and May blossom bring their special beauty. The lake, where I see a Canada goose, sparkles in the sunlight. In the evening while sitting quietly in the garden, I watch a wood pigeon feeding and a magpie hopping among the lilac branches. Moles have been busy forming hills in the grass. The morning of 26th is cold and grey for the hot weather has vanished. However, by the afternoon the sun is shining but it remains cool with north east winds driving white clouds across the sky. A blackbird sings in the holly tree and a robin, forcefully, by its chatter, defends its territory - the elder, where flowers are now in bloom. A beautiful red admiral butterfly spreads its wings on a lemon balm plant, while a brimstone butterfly and two small white butterflies dance together near fresh green ivy. A pair of magpies comes to the pond to drink. The 27th is another beautiful day. We take Murphy to Cobtree Manor Park which is in its Spring glory. In the afternoon I drive to Halling then walk by the river in the direction of Snodland. It is a walk I have not been able to enjoy for a number of years. I am not disappointed despite changes which have been made. Along the way the river is low and swans congregate on the mudflats while gulls circle in the air. May blossom, like snow, adorns the hawthorns along the tracks, dandelions and speedwell, ground ivy and vetch bloom in the grass. Frothy cow parsley sways in the breeze. Dog roses have bloomed early while last year's teasels stand tall and brown. I watch butterflies hovering - a small white, a brimstone, and orange tips. One settled quite near me on a garlic mustard plant. Birdsong fills the air and I'm privileged to hear nightingales singing. A white throat soars up into the air like a skylark and I hear warblers in the reeds. I

walk a narrow path by a clear stream and hear and see a small waterfall. More beautiful may blossom delights my eyes as the sun filters through fresh green leaves. I hear the songs of a blackbird, a black cap and a chiff chaff. Back by the river a cormorant flies overhead and a shelduck takes flight from the water, calling raucously as it flies. In the nature reserve marsh marigolds bloom and on the verges red dead nettle and white campion are in flower. A large dragonfly hovers over hawthorn leaves and its wings glisten in the sunlight. I finally make my way back to the car, having enjoyed the beautiful spring countryside. The morning of 28th is overcast and chilly with a north east wind blowing I watch a wood pigeon standing guard over bread I've put on the top of the patio wall for the magpies. A magpie comes but the pigeon will not allow it near the bread. Eventually the pigeon flies away and the magpie bravely returns to its feast. On the last day of the month I walk beneath a clear blue sky and golden sunshine. Quite a strong north east wind blows through the branches of trees causing them to bend and bow. Cow parsley, garlic mustard, elderflower, may blossom, forget-me-not and white dead nettle adorn the path leading to the fields where I see fumitory and where golden buttercups and more cow parsley bloom in profusion, such a beautiful sight. May blossom adorns the hawthorns where I hear birdsong. Dog roses bedeck the wild rose shrubs. I gaze across the fields towards the river beyond which oil seed rape flowers glow in

bright yellow. As I enter Mays Wood which is rather dark now that the trees are in full leaf, I'm aware of cow parsley and brambles which have now replaced the celandines, violets and wood anemones. Sadly, bluebells are fading as the warm weather has hastened the progress of nature's beauty. Branches crackle against one another in the strength of the wind. As I make my way through the wood, I see carpets of fading bluebells, white ramsons emitting their perfume, yellow archangel, blue bugle, white woodruff, sanicle and fresh green wood spurge. Ground ivy, a single clump of primroses, creeping jenny and two celandines attract my gaze. I hear the song of a great tit and watch a red admiral butterfly hovering over leaves. As I return, I see a fallen oak tree brought down in the gales of 1987. How wonderful nature is, for from this now horizontal trunk, new branches have grown and they are now full of fresh green leaves. Despite the tree's position, a few roots have remained in the soil, thus promoting the new growth. I see more bluebells which still look beautiful. In the space of a month, beautiful spring flowers have come and gone because of the warm temperatures. May and elder flower together. In the field purple vetch takes my eye and a flax flower has now produced a feathery head. As I cross Church Fields again I am very aware of the strong north east wind and am glad to regain the shelter of the church path. The walk has been so enjoyable.

Elizabeth Summers

Pippa's Song from Pippa Passes by Robert Browning

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;

The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn
God's in His heaven-
All's right with the world!

NEWS FROM CUXTON COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

Dear Friends of our School

We celebrated the Royal Wedding, having three days of 'doing and making'. We learned about the Royal family tree, designed Kate's dress and wedding cake, also a postage stamp to commemorate the day. The children made bunting, union jack flags and said who they would invite to the wedding. Some favourite names were David Beckham, Cheryl Cole, Simon Cowell, Lady Gaga, Steven Gerard, Alan Sugar and Scooby Doo! Children made sandwiches and cakes, decorated biscuits and having eaten it all, had jelly and ice cream wearing their decorated crowns!

Back in school once again, we have a busy 11 weeks ahead. We have our final numbers for September, and have written to the new parents. Our year 2 children are about to have their second playtime visit to experience playtime at the Junior school.

We are learning about keeping healthy, exercise and eating, and after half term we focus on the seaside as a topic, taking the whole school on a trip to St Mary's Bay towards the end of term. Everyone is very excited well the children are! The staff will be the day after! I hasten to add ... we will not be swimming!

I look forward to bringing you more news next month.
Sincerely, Sandra Jones, Headteacher

110th Anniversary of Mother's Union

The Halling Magazine article regarding the foundation of the Mothers' Union in England is from August 1891. Whether anything was done about it in Halling at the time, we do not know. This is what it says. What would we want to change of these rules today (if anything)?

The object of this Society, recently established in the Norwich Diocese, is to impress upon parents a deeper sense of their great responsibilities towards their own children. The rules are as follows:-

“I resolve by God's help-1. To pray morning and evening and to teach my children to pray. 2. To be careful about the cleanliness and modesty of all household sleeping arrangements. 3. To discourage profane talk and bad words in the home and among neighbours. 4. To be careful that my children do not read bad books or police reports. 5. To avoid as much as possible sending out girls alone after dark. 6. Never to speak of sin as a misfortune. 7. To do all I can to make home bright and happy, as God would wish it to be, and to strive to bring up the children given me by God to be pure, obedient, truthful, honest and temperate in all things.”

Education Without Religion

(from the same magazine)

A recent visitor to Paris says that he found the great prisons of the French capital full to repletion with juvenile offenders, because the French had taken such infinite pains to eliminate religion from education.

A Waking Thought

My bedside clock projects the time in big red figures onto my bedroom ceiling so that I can see what time it is without sitting up or putting on my glasses. When dawn is early, however, and the new day is bright, I cannot see the artificial light of the clock numbers for the real light of the sun. This made me think fancifully this morning of the way time will be swallowed up in the light of eternity when we go to Heaven.

Sitting up to get right up close to the clock to see the time on these bright mornings wakes me sufficiently that I then get up whatever the time is! So you see. Seeing things in the light of eternity stirs us up to get on with what we have to do in this world as well. Roger.



Max's Tail Piece

Ah! Freedom! Master believes in freedom. Like St Paul, he regards the Law as a dubiously effective way of getting bad people to behave well. Good people behave well just because they are good and have no need to be kept under surveillance, constrained by regulation or threatened with punishment.

I'm glad to say he believes in freedom for dogs too. He likes to see me happy. He likes to see me run free, wagging my tail, sniffing in all the interstices there are in the woods. “Leads are for bad dogs!” he says. “But that's not fair,” I say. “Some of us over eager dogs aren't bad. We're just too exuberant to exercise self-discipline.” Generously, he concedes my point. For years he's reluctantly kept me on my lead in the woods because otherwise I hang back to investigate, bound on ahead to catch up with interesting smells, and deviate from the pathway just to see what's there. Admittedly, I also like rolling in what he doesn't like the smell of and eating grass which he thinks makes me sick. Also, when I was young and foolish, I did tend to jump up on any walkers we met – the ones who objected as well as the ones who made a big fuss of me – and gave chase to mountain bikers. In my defence, I've never tried to catch any game, farm animals or wildlife. Rabbits don't even bother to run when they see me. Master says that nevertheless he keeps me on my lead for my own safety and to keep me out of mischief. He says he knows that I could always find my way home if I got lost, but he doesn't trust me not to get distracted and forget to come home and he's afraid I might get trapped in the undergrowth as I have done once or twice in our garden. Have you ever got your legs wound up in the stems of old man's beard?

Anyway, now I'm older, ten next birthday, he's been giving me a bit more freedom and I've been behaving responsibly, walking with him in the woods, keeping to the path and staying where he can see me. What he doesn't know is whether I've really matured or am I lulling him into a false sense of security? And I don't know either! Max, the Rectory Spaniel.