

Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
2 nd June Trinity 1	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Genesis 4 vv 1-16 p6 Mark 3 vv 7-19 p1004
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	I Kings 8 vv 22-43 p345 Galatians 1 vv 1-12 p1168 Luke 7 vv 1-10 p1035
9 th June Trinity 2	11.00 Holy Communion	I Kings 17 vv 17-24 p359 Galatians 1 vv 11-24 p1168 Luke 7 vv 11-17 p1035
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Genesis 8 v15 – 9 v17 p9 Mark 4 vv 1-20 p1005
16 th June Trinity 3	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	II Samuel 11 v26 - 12 v10 p315 Galatians 2 vv 15-21 p1169 Luke 7 v36 – 8 v3 p1036
23 rd June Trinity 4	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 1-9 p751 Galatians 3 vv 23-28 p1170 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038
30 th June Trinity 5	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	I Kings 19 vv 5-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
2 nd June Trinity 1	9.30 Family Communion	I Kings 8 vv 22-43 p345 Galatians 1 vv 1-12 p1168 Luke 7 vv 1-10 p1035
9 th June Trinity 2	9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 17 vv 17-24 p359 Galatians 1 vv 11-24 p1168 Luke 7 vv 11-17 p1035
16 th June Trinity 3	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 3
	9.30 Holy Communion 7 Holy Baptism	II Samuel 11 v26 - 12 v10 p315 Galatians 2 vv 15-21 p1169 Luke 7 v36 – 8 v3 p1036
23 rd June Trinity 4	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 1-9 p751 Galatians 3 vv 23-28 p1170 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038
30 th June Trinity 5	9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 19 vv 5-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

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

Copy Date July Magazine: 14th June 8.30 am Rectory.

Holy Communion 9.30 at St Michael's Wednesdays		Holy Communion at 9.30 at St John's Thursdays	
5 th June	I Peter 1 vv 18-25 Mark 12 vv 18-27	6 th June	I Peter 2 vv 1-12 Mark 12 vv 28-34
12 th June	II Corinthians 3 vv 4-11 Matthew 5 vv 17-19	13 th June	II Corinthians 3 v15 – 4 v6 Matthew 5 vv 20-26
19 th June	II Corinthians 9 vv 6-11 Matthew 6 vv 1-18	20 th June	II Corinthians 11 vv 1-11 Matthew 6 vv 7-15
26 th June Ember Day	Genesis 15 vv 1-18 Matthew 7 vv 15-20	27 th June	Genesis 16 vv 1-16 Matthew 7 vv 21-29

Monday 24th is St John the Baptist's Day: Holy Communion 9.30 am at St John's.

11th is St Barnabas: Holy Communion 7.30 am at St Michael's. 29th is Sts Peter & Paul: Holy Communion 8.00 am at St Michael's.

St John's Church Draw: £5 each to Mrs Baker (46), Mrs Warman (51), Mrs Ballard (35) & Mrs Brunger (159) – drawn by Mr Curnow.

St Michael's Draw: £10 each to Mr Harris, Mrs Harris & Mrs Maxwell; £5 each Mr Hills & Mr Payne.



“What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”
“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

Let's start with the Ten Commandments which God gave to Moses on Mt Sinai after the Israelites had been set free from Egyptian slavery and passed through the Red Sea into the desert.

GOD spake these words, and said; I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

Basically, you become what you worship. God made us and everything that there is. God gives us everything that we have. God redeemed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and He redeemed Christians from slavery to sin and death. We owe everything to God. To worship Him is to offer up to Him our very being in love. To offer our very being to anything less than God is unworthy of us as human beings and leads inevitably to death.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.

It's a funny thing. God made us, but we're only too prone to worship the things we have made. Pagans actually do make and worship idols. But it is idolatry just the same if we worship money or power, or if we worship important people or celebrities, or career, or family, or sport, or possessions. We become what we worship and we diminish ourselves if we worship anything less than God.

God is beyond our imagining and so any image we make of God is less than God and therefore false. You wouldn't want to worship a lie.

It seems harsh to say that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, but think about it. People who are badly brought up quite often turn out bad. It isn't inevitable. If we turn to God He sets us free from everything that constrains us, including our background. But it is only too true that those who are brought up to worship the false gods of drugs, sex, rock and roll, etc., and to disregard all God's commandments very often turn out bad and bring up their own children badly too.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain.

Jesus taught us to pray *hallowed be thy Name*. The Name of God is sanctified when the people who claim to be His people keep His commandments. The Name of God is sanctified in that God so richly blesses us all. The Name of God is dishonoured when we are disobedient and ungrateful. If we are truly thankful, we share the good things God has given us with other people and so His Name is hallowed.

God's Name is dishonoured when people commit perjury – swearing falsely in His Name.

God is honoured when we respect His Name. God is surely dishonoured when His Name or the Name of Jesus is used as a swearword or a curse. We hear far too much of OMG and similar expressions. In the Old Testament, the Name of God was only ever pronounced once a year when the high priest entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. Through Jesus absolutely everyone can come into the divine Presence and address God as Father, but surely we should approach in awe and love, not abusing His love by taking Him for granted and dishonouring His holy Name by using it irreverently.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

Does anyone bother about this commandment anymore? We need rest and so do the people who work for us. We and they need time to spend with families and friends. We need to take time for eternity. Life isn't really about work – paid work, housework, school work, gardening. Still less is it really about meaningless leisure activities. Life is about relationships and eternity – eternal relationships in love. Life is really about our love for God and for other people, love which is eternal. We sanctify our time, by consecrating it to the LORD. If we can't find time for God, it is our eternity we are wasting.

The Maker of Heaven and earth can be trusted to look after us. We don't need to sacrifice our lives to earning a living or running a home.

Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Loving relationships is what it's all about. Charity (one Latin word for love) begins at home. It certainly doesn't end there but it begins in our love for our families.

Honouring our parents is not only a matter of obeying them when we are children. It is caring for them throughout their lives even if they become old and difficult. It is about continuing to love and respect them even when they are gone.

Other parts of the Bible speak similarly of our duties to husbands and wives, to children, to neighbours, to employers and employees. The characteristic of all our relationships as Christians is love.

Thou shalt do no murder.

No-one is likely to argue with this commandment. Worth considering, however, how it applies in war or in those countries which practise capital punishment. Does this commandment have a bearing on the abortion debate? Or euthanasia or suicide? Traditionally, the Church has accepted that war is sometimes inevitable, but that it is never a good thing and always to be avoided if at all possible. If we regard life as sacred, we cannot lightly execute anyone or procure an abortion or practise euthanasia or take our own lives. Are there ever cases when the demands of love override our concern for the sanctity of life? I'll leave that for you to answer!

Jesus extended this commandment to forbid all anger and hatred.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

True love is unselfish and unconditional. It is the only foundation for a fulfilled life. It cannot be right to allow a selfish passion to deflect us from fidelity to the person to whom we have promised *for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health, till death us do part*. We need people who love us no matter what happens to us or what we do. Couples who love like that provide the best start in life for children and their homes are the building bricks of the whole community, the human family.

Jesus extends this commandment to forbid all lust – the objectification of other human beings for our own selfish sexual pleasure.

There's been a good deal of pressure from celebrities and footballers to prevent the newspapers reporting their affairs. My answer to that is, If you don't want the reputation of an adulterer, don't commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Again no one is likely to argue with this commandment. It's worth considering however that it covers more than what's actually illegal. Isn't it stealing, for example, when a bank or an energy supplier or an insurance company deliberately overcharges naïve customers or presses them to buy products that are no use to them? It may not be actual stealing, but is it ethical for senior executives and top managers to demand enormous salaries and bonuses when services are being cut, customers are paying through the nose and staff at lower levels are facing pay cuts and the threat of redundancy? The Ten Commandments are not about getting away with the legal minimum for fear of punishment. They are pointers to a morality based on worship – on the offering of self in love, in service to God and to our fellow human beings.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

There may be false witness which benefits our neighbour. For example I think it would be good to mislead the Gestapo as to the whereabouts of the hiding-place of the Jewish children. Generally speaking, however, lying doesn't do our neighbours any favours. And it's just as bad to lie for your employer or to lie in order to obtain political advantage as it is to lie in your private life. Personally I am disgusted by the amount of dishonesty in public life in modern Britain. It may bring about short term advantage to some lucky individuals, but ultimately it undermines the whole notion of community. Years ago, I was told that most people would think I was naïf to believe the promises of businessmen, officials and politicians. Well, I don't anymore, which is as bad for them as it is for me and for the rest of us. You can't have community without trust.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

This brings us almost full circle. Covetousness is idolatry. It is worshipping things. We become what we worship. So we diminish ourselves as well as dishonouring God if we devote our lives to the acquisition of possessions.

If we want what we can't get honestly, we may be tempted to cheat or lie or steal to get it. Even if we can get it honestly it would be foolish to spend money we couldn't afford or to get into debt and it would be selfish if we spent on ourselves what we could have spent on our families or even given to better causes than our own self-indulgence.

If we want what other people have, our jealousy is likely to spoil our relationships with them. So it is if we try to make other people jealous of us. Much better to receive what God gives us thankfully and to share it generously.

When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, He replies: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Roger.

Forthcoming Attractions.

1st June: Christian Aid Wall. Ask Rector for details.

8th June: 10.00-4.00 Deanery Quiet Day at Aylesford Priory. All welcome. No charge, but please indicate if you are coming.

15th June: Fundraising for Church Army. Beetle Drive in Church Hall.

29th June: Bellringers' Outing.

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

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

31st July 12.00: Barbecue 95, Pilgrims Road, North Halling.

8th September: Preacher @ 9.30 & 11.00 The Archdeacon of Rochester.

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

6th October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper Jubilee Hall.

COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

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07919 875 909

Confirmation 2013 St Michael's

Bishop James will be holding a Confirmation at St. Michael's on 29th September at 6.30 pm. Those interested in being confirmed this year, please speak to the Rector. Classes are beginning soon, reading one of the four gospels together as we consider what it means to be a Christian in terms of what we

believe and how we act. Candidates are normally at least twelve years old but there is no upper limit. 29th September is also Michaelmas and BTCS. So a good opportunity for outreach.



Weekend Work Only Wanted

Grass cutting

Building & Garden maintenance

Alan Osborne, Construction Tutor

Weekdays 01795 802173

Night time 01634 711158 or 07855283667

From the Registers

Baptisms:

14th April21st April

Alexander Donald Arthur Joy

Stephen Paul Monck

Lambarde Close

Demelza Close

Funeral:

16th April

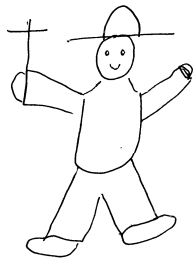
William George Wakeling (98)

Strood

Patricia Chambers RIP

Parishioners were sorry to learn of the death of Pat Chambers in Edinburgh in April. Before moving to Scotland Pat had been a stalwart member of the St Michael's congregation and choir. The children knew her as Aunty Pat for her kindness to them and she used to bake cakes for the choir at Christmas. Pat was also a member of the local Church of England Children's Society Committee and there were always top quality biscuits when it was her turn to play hostess to our meetings.

A Beetle Drive With A Difference



Body 6
Head 5
Hat 4
Arms 2
Legs 2
Eyes 1
Mouth 1
Cross 3

Come and have fun at our Beetle Drive in aid of the Church Army – the difference being that we will be drawing a Church Army soldier instead of a beetle. This will be a family evening. So all ages welcome. The cost will be £2.00 to play and this will cover some light refreshments.

The event will be in the Church Hall on 15th June 7.00 pm. Please come and have fun and help a good cause. Gillian Feraday and Shirley Crundwell..

Cuxton WI



It was our AGM and these always seem to be a bit of a boring evening but this one was very enjoyable, probably helped along with the cheese and wine consumed between sessions! We started with the business section and heard how much the Cookery group plus friends had enjoyed their evening along with Chris Beaney at his bakery. We had made small loaves and plaits etc with our dough. Then they were baked in the modern oven not in the wonderful old ovens in the walls of the bakery. We all enjoyed a cuppa in the Bakery tearoom - worth a visit if you are in Snodland any time. And then took our bread home feeling very proud of our efforts. The painting group put on an exhibition of their watercolours and they also had something to be proud of as they were a really good collection of paintings. Blue pictures - shades of Picasso and his blue period - and other light colours of the landscape and a beautiful one of my favourite city of Venice. We all admired their efforts. We now have plans for the Picnic in the Park on June 2nd. So do bring your children along and let them enjoy time at the "Dabble " stall where they can try all sorts of crafts. The bursary award was drawn and we were pleased to see that Maureen Lauder will use the generous gift

of £300 from the Parish Council for a craft course of her choosing. After the wine etc it was time for the AGM proper. I read the committee report which is a review of the year's activities and it is always a nice surprise to hear of the various things we have been up to and the speakers that we have enjoyed, ranging from Chickens to Pearls with parties etc in between. Our numbers have kept up with 52 members altogether including three new ones this year, We were all sad to remember that Shirley was no longer with us but know how much she had enjoyed her last meeting. Pat then gave the President's speech and thanked everybody for their help over the year including reps of in house clubs. Also the committee and the tea hostesses as we could do little without our cuppa. She mentioned the Time and Tide day where we had helped with refreshments and the WI carol service which had been very well attended and where again we had provided teas etc. Two of our committee are retiring this year but luckily we have two members who are willing to replace them. So we will once again start with a full committee. Pat is back as President and Sheila and Dorothy as Secretaries and Maureen as our valued Treasurer. There was a resolution to discuss for the AGM in Cardiff where Phyllis may be our representative. This was concerning the

decline of high street shops but the general verdict was not in favour of the resolution. This was the end of the formal night but we now have our June party to look forward to which is for members only. Little work for the committee this time as we can afford to use a caterer as we have raised enough money for this in our fund raising efforts



Halling WI

Our April meeting was once again a back to front affair. It only seems right that if our speakers live far away we should let them speak first because the business does go on a bit, sometimes. It was nice to have Margaret back with us and we soon got underway with a good sing. Our speaker for the evening was Mr Paul Beard, his subject Dr Barnardo's, Oops!, it isn't Dr Barnardo's any more because he was never a doctor of any sort. It was in 1845 when Barnardo came from Ireland. He was an Evangelist and went about preaching in pubs and street corners. Having seen the poor kids in the gutters and doorway of the East End, some without parents, some families with so many children they couldn't look after them all, some were just abandoned, and some their parents were in prison. no welfare state in those days..... Barnardo was only 21 when he opened his first school. When he was 23 he opened his first home for waifs and strays. When he was only 31 he built a complete little village at Barkingside, called "GOLDINGS", little semi detached houses so that the children could live like families with a couple of adults attached to each house as adopted parents. Barnardo died when he was 60 yrs old.

Two boys were walking home from Sunday school after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, 'What do you think about all this Satan stuff?' The other boy replied, 'Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your Dad.'

over the year. Soup lunches, strawberry teas and luxury cake teas, Easter chicks, walks and swimming have all brought in funds. So well done everyone. I'm sure we will all have a good party.
Sheila.

By then he had 96 homes, 12 schools and 6000 children had been helped by him.

Mr Beard told us some lovely stories and even though we had had a speaker from Barnardo's some thirty years ago it was too long ago for most of us to remember. Mr Beard judged our competitions before he left. Ann Graves won the Flower of the Month with a Hellebore. Our other competition, N for Nuts, was won by one of our newer members, Kathy Taylor. She had brought along a Novel. Down to business. Next year's bulb forms were given out. Owing to the late Spring all of this year's haven't been out yet. Betty showed us the cheque that the Firemen donated to us. It will help with the speakers' fees which keep going up. I then told the members about the wonderful meeting they had missed at Tunbridge Wells recently with Adam Henson. Next month will be our A,G.M. We will have a new secretary. Thank you Jemma. We need some young new blood. The competition letter is O, Oh Oh Oh,---sounds like some one in pain when it's put like that, a bit like me at the moment. This one is quite a challenge, but our girls will come up with all manner of items beginning with O you can be sure. See you all there. Phyllis.

WEST KENT DOWNS COUNTRYSIDE TRUST



WKDCT

Registered
Charity No.
1083121

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

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

We are a voluntary organisation that depends on membership support.
If you would like to join the Trust please contact Roger Savage on :
01634 723027 or visit our website www.wkdct.org.uk.

Nature Notes April 2013

"Narcissus Fields" Eleanor Farjeon

The fields are in flower in the
West,
The great narcissus fields,
The green-grass wave has a
foaming crest,
And the breath of Cornwall yields
A tide of scent that flows
Over the seaweed smell;
Twixt island and mainland it
blows,

Sea-salt asphodel;

As when, so long ago, Olaf the
Viking rover
Sailed to an isle he did not know,
And the flower breathed like a
lover,
Wooing the pagan king
To light on Columba's shore.

The pagan came from the
Cornish spring
Christian for ever more.

For the gentleness of the flower
Overwhelms the ocean-crest,
And Christ still walks on the wave
this hour
When the fields breathe in the
West.

The first day of the month brings cold winds but the sun shines brightly as I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. The strength of the wind produces large ripples on the water. I see my first cowslip in flower, just a small plant. Hopefully, many others will follow. The afternoon sun lights up the garden, but it is too cold to work outside. Evening skies are clear. The early morning of 2nd brings clear blue skies and golden sunshine. I listen to the strident call of a great tit. Later in the morning, I walk Murphy at Bluewater. The cold North wind continues to blow bringing a perpetual raw feeling in the air. A Canada goose, calling loudly, flies overhead. Later, in a nearby field, I hear the beautiful songs of skylarks. The 3rd is a grey, cold day. I walk along the top path of Six-acre Wood, skirt the field and woodland by the badger setts, through part of Mays Wood then across Church Fields. The wind is raw as I walk back down to the church path. The 4th is grey and cold with flurries of sleet and snow. It is not a day for long walks. I walk to the Church Hall the next day and am rewarded by some Spring beauty, for the churchyard banks are adorned with pale yellow primroses and golden celandines. The afternoon of 6th is beautiful with clear blue skies and golden sunshine and the air is full of birdsong. This is Spring. The 7th is a golden day with lighter winds so that there is slight warmth from the sun. I watch a wood pigeon taking a bath in the pond and other birds feeding on nuts and seed. The lilac buds are showing signs of bursting. There is hazy sunshine in the afternoon as high, light cloud drifts across the sky. In the evening I watch a heron as it flies across to the river in the fading light.

The following day we set off for Wiltshire and the beautiful hamlet of Orcheston. Pale sunshine and dark clouds accompany us on our journey but no rain falls. In the evening of that day, I walk along the lane and up the woodland path to the field where I hear birds singing and watch lambs gambolling up the grassy hill. The bleating of ewes with their lambs greets the next morning. It is raining and it is quite cold as we drive

through beautiful countryside into Somerset. I visit Wells Cathedral with its beautiful ceilings, windows and architecture. In the Chapter House is a display of paintings depicting Christ's capture, Crucifixion and Resurrection leading through to Pentecost. One picture, Travellers on the Road to Emmaus, really impressed me. Rain falls on our return journey when I see some hawthorns in leaf and primroses and celandines on grassy banks. On the morning of 10th, mist hangs over the hills and fields, rooks fly out of the trees and the lambs bleat their morning calls. Yesterday, David guided a lamb back into the field where its mother and sibling had become very distressed. The ewe bleated what seemed like a "thank you" and greeted David the next day. Later in the morning, we drive through the beauty of the Wylie Valley. Although the skies are cloudy, it is still bright and the river sparkles as it flows. Ducks with their young glide on it. I have been reading Clare Balding's book "My Animals and Other Family" and at the beginning she quotes Anatole France "Until one has loved an animal, part of one's soul remains unawakened". Having had our animals I can empathise with that. In the afternoon of 11th we drive across Salisbury plain to Erlestoke to visit a friend. When we are returning there are beautiful contrasts of colour in the sky. There are very dark clouds, golden sun, green fields and a rainbow which has formed after a heavy shower. It feels warmer. In the evening, while walking up to the field, I watch lambs running for joy which reminds me of our previous dog, Sam, who also ran for joy in Church Fields and by the river at Halling. Rain thunders on the roof in the early hours of 12th and the sheep have been restless during the night.

Rain is still falling when we begin our journey home and showers continue through the day. Temperatures reach 12degrees C the next day. The 14th becomes warm and sunny with temperatures reaching 22 degrees C, the warmest day of the year so far. Birdsong fills the air and I hear songs from a chiff chaff

and a greenfinch. It is good to feel the sun's warmth. The 15th is another warm and sunny day but with fresh westerly winds driving billowing white and grey clouds across the sky. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy, where along the banks golden dandelions, daisies, daffodils and cowslips bloom. Wild cherry blossom and weeping willows bearing fresh leaves on their delicate fronds of branches beautify the scene. Hawthorn buds are bursting. Canada geese fly overhead. While on my way along Pilgrim's Road in the afternoon, I view grassland filled with pale lemon primroses and nearby large horse chestnut buds waiting to burst. The river sparkles in the sunlight and the view beyond it is beautiful. On 17th I watch a brimstone butterfly hovering across the garden, then in the evening I watch calling gulls flying overhead. North east winds blow on 18th and it feels chilly. In the afternoon dark clouds build up in the east and a heavy shower falls. Eventually a rainbow forms in the sky. On 20th while at Bluewater I see a picture of pink blossom on the trees in the car park and on the banks round the lake there is an abundance of cowslips. The 21st is a day of clear blue skies and golden sunshine, and in the afternoon, I walk across Church Fields, through part of Mays Wood, round the field of crops and back through Six-acre Wood. I listen to birdsong and see a variety of wild flowers - red and white deadnettle, shepherd's purse, dandelions, daisies, buttercups, mouse ear, cow parsley, celandines, primroses, wood anemones, dog's mercury, violets, ground ivy and pussy willow. I see peacock and brimstone butterflies; hear the

bleating of sheep and the call of a green woodpecker. Such are the beauties of Spring. At Bluewater the next day, the pink and white blossom is beautiful and trees are breaking into their fresh spring green, just what we have been waiting for. The slender branches of the weeping willow are draped towards the ground looking so delicate in the sunlight. Cowslips adorn the grassy banks. The warm weather continues and temperatures reach 72 degrees F. The sun beams down from a clear blue sky, hawthorns have burst into leaf on the embankment and sycamore buds have burst. Birdsong fills the air and bees hover over the grape hyacinths and collect nectar. Just before 9.00pm, I watch an orange moon rise over Bluebell Hill. Rain falls for most of 26th and it feels cold after previous days of warmth. North east winds blow on 27th bringing grey clouds and low temperatures but the sun shines in the afternoon. The next day, in the churchyard, a horse chestnut tree displays its spring leaves. On 29th, at Bluewater, I hear warblers in last year's reeds. The last day of the month is beautiful with warm, golden sunshine, blue skies, patches of white cloud and a cool westerly breeze. I walk round the lake with Murphy. At home, the garden is bright with a variety of flowers and green grass, while on the embankment, fresh green leaves adorn hawthorns and small elms. Sycamores have burst into leaf. Bees gather from the comfrey flowers and a holly blue butterfly hovers over the garden. In the evening, the wind veers round to the north and the skies are a cloudless blue. Elizabeth Summers.

Can You Contribute?

A few weeks ago I happened to be at Rainham Mark with my niece and mentioned to her that Courtney Road is named after my father's (her grandfather's) predecessor as personnel officer at Bowater Flexible Packaging, which was where Tesco's is now. It was that poor man's tragic and sudden death which led to our family moving from Betsam to Wigmore in 1963. Had that not happened, my father might well have been made redundant when the Northfleet Paper Mill closed with serious implications for our family finances. I should have attended different schools and a different Church, made different friends and maybe never have become Rector of Cuxton and Halling. My sister might never have encountered her husband (whom she met at Strood) and, in that case, my nieces and their children would never have existed. A lot of people would regard all this as chance and therefore as ultimately meaningless. Others of us believe that events are in the hands of an omniscient and omnipotent Providence Whose ways are often beyond our comprehension but always an expression of perfect love.

Either way, Courtney Steer's death had a decisive influence on our family and on many other people's lives, especially those of his own nearest and dearest. It is fitting that he is commemorated in the name of a road but such commemoration becomes pointless if even those most concerned don't know why the road is so named. One young lad in Cuxton I was talking to didn't realise that a particular road is named for his great grandfather whom I knew, but he probably doesn't remember. Quite a number of roads in Cuxton and Halling are named for a reason or a person and some of you know what that reason or person is. I thought we could have a series of articles if readers would like to contribute telling us whom are local roads are named after and why. Can you contribute? Roger.

Halling Historical Society

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 20th June at the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome. The speaker will be Mr Dennis Chambers and the subject: HAUNTED PLUCKLEY.

Hymn Writers 5

Bernard of Clairvaux - 1090 -1153

On Sunday, 4th May, we sang the hymn 'Jerusalem the Golden' and, as it is quite a well-known hymn, it was sung well by the congregation of St Michael and All Angels who probably didn't notice that the date of its original writing was when the Norman building of the cathedral in Rochester was just beginning and this church was about to gain its Norman upgrade too. Another hymn in our hymn book comes from the same period but is also very well-known and probably it wouldn't occur to most people that it was written in the Middle Ages and yet it has lasted down the ages and that hymn is 'Jesu, the very thought of Thee' written by Bernard of Clairvaux although we sing it in translation of course. Bernard suffered from ill-health for most of his life, but as his health worsened, his spirituality deepened. He lived an ascetic, yet his life was very busy and this reduced his appearance to skeletal form but nothing apparently dampened his zeal for life. Bernard was born into a noble family near Dijon, now in France, his father a Burgundian knight. With all the advantages of such a birth he had graceful manners, great eloquence and was handsome. Both parents modelled a very high standard of behaviour for their son. His mother taught him the Christian faith well, and on her death he entered a monastery bringing with him several relatives. When only twenty-four he founded his own monastery which became famous as Clara Vallis (Beautiful Valley) which went on to become "Clairvaux" but it was not without its troubles. Bandits terrorized the valley during the construction of the monastery, and Bernard and his companions nearly starved as they fought to complete the building. Bernard would always devote part of his daily schedule to study and particularly the Bible. His knowledge of the Scriptures was remarkable and he became one of the most influential religious scholars in Europe and some said that his preaching was miraculous. His pupils went on to become influential men of the Catholic Church, and kings and important spiritual men sought his counsel. Throughout the ages Bernard's mystical poetry has given comfort and inspiration into the modern world. Scottish missionary to Africa, David Livingstone said, "The hymn of St Bernard on the name of Jesus.....rings in my ears as I wander across the wide, wide wilderness." Bernard is considered today as one of the most prominent personalities of the twelfth century, even of the whole Middle Ages, and of church history in general. Luther wrote of him, "Bernard was the best monk that ever lived, whom I love beyond all the rest put together." No doubt Luther also love Bernard's three magnificent hymns – 'Jesus, the very thought of Thee', 'Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts' and 'O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded' also considered sublime by an admirer whose musical setting of it became almost a signature tune – that of J S Bach. The monks loved Bernard as their father. He was in the true evangelical tradition and followed the doctrine of Augustine. In the darkness of the spiritual decay and moral depravity of the Middle Ages, this pious monk's wholesome life shone like a bright light in the confusion of history.

*Jesu the very thought of Thee with sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see and in Thy presence rest.*

News from Cuxton Community Infant School

Dear Friends of our school,

We have been having a busy time in school. Our focus for this term is Healthy Me and Exercise! We started off the topic with Quantum Theatre coming into school. They told us all about the importance of healthy eating, hidden sugars etc and exercise and looking after ourselves and keeping safe. They were great fun - lots of loud laughter and merriment! Children have been making healthy lunches- sandwiches with healthy combinations, fruit kebabs, fruit smoothies and healthy oat biscuits.

We celebrated St George's day in school. The Foundation stage children had great fun acting out the story in dressing up clothes with musical instruments. They then turned their climbing frame into a castle with dungeons and made shields and a very large model dragon. Fantastic learning! Sundridge Class told us all about England and St George in their assembly to their parents. The children once again stood confidently on the stage, using a microphone independently and spoke aloud having learned their words. They told us about favourite landmarks over the country and about what England is famous for!

The foundation stage children held a fabulous sponsored event morning to raise money for their outdoor classroom and environment. Children donned PE kits and raced around a circuit in the hall to a stopwatch. Folk have been so generous in their donations and for this we are really grateful.

It is that time of year in school when we learn of our numbers for September and begin to look at class and school organisation. This is combined with looking at our budget to see where planned expenditure needs to be. It is always a busy time for senior staff and school governors. We have also begun our transition programme with the junior school of visits for our year two children. The children have experienced playtime in the junior school. They will do more playtime visits, also lunchtime and then class visits to meet their new class peers and teachers. We normally coincide these visits with our new entrants' visits so that the whole school can move around! That way each child will have visited their new class at least three times before September! This means that once the new term comes the children come into school quite happily..... it is normally parents that are wobbly!!

We continue to be well supported by the FCS, our PTA and do join us on July 6th for our Summer Fayre. As always if you wish to contact the school please do, or have a look at our school website to learn more about us. Wishing you good health and some sunshine!

Sandra Jones, Head teacher.

Annual Rectory Barbecue

29th June

From 6.00 pm

£7.00 and ½ price children.



Max's Tail Piece

Bank Holiday Monday was good this year. We walked the North Downs Way eastwards with Master's friend from college days. (Yes he did have one!) The suggested route was from here to Boxley, but that seemed a bad idea on a bank holiday when there are no buses and the plan was to leave the NDW around the Malta Inn and to walk into Maidstone by the river to Maidstone Barracks station and come home by train, having had a pub lunch somewhere *en route*. The best laid schemes! We started off well, nipping round the back of Cuxton, up into the woods and through to Ranscombe, before crossing the motorway bridge to Nashenden Valley and the steepish ascent to the Bluebell Hill Picnic Site, near the *Robin Hood*. Some of it was a bit strenuous for the humans, but I kept far enough ahead that he decided to put me on my lead and then I pulled like a steam engine. Master's friend was trying out a new rucksack, carrying water and other possibly useful items. Master insisted that you don't need to carry anything heavier than a credit card when walking in civilised places. The view is terrific from the top of Bluebell Hill. He said the Kent countryside is his vision of heaven, only infinitely more so, whatever that means! Whatever, the walk went downhill from there metaphorically as well as literally. Having missed the NDW signs, we went off across Maidstone Road and took a very squiggly path which brought us into a housing estate. Master would have led us into Walderslade had his friend's mobile telephone not had a mapping facility which showed we were going in entirely the wrong direction! So we looped around the crematorium and down the Chatham Maidstone Road – OK on the old road now pedestrianised, hellish on the new dual carriage way. He muttered darkly about the broad way that leads to destruction and indeed a notice on the bus stop said that buses no longer stopped there because it was too dangerous. However we got across by means of a footbridge (following the female cyclist who had nearly run us over on the footpath) and miraculously regained the NDW, cool under the trees and soft under the paws. So we came to Kit's Coty, which we wanted to see as we had been to the Coldrum stones on an earlier walk and they form part of a set – a line of Neolithic burial chambers along the foot of the North Downs. Then disaster. We accidentally bypassed the *Lower Bell*, missing one lunch opportunity. The NDW brought us back to the A229 and, rather than follow it to the *Malta*, they decided to take an alluring footpath across some fields. Well, after some way, we came to a village Master said he had never seen before. He said he didn't even know it existed and he's lived within ten miles of it for most of his 58 years! We just kept on walking and it turned out to be Pratling Street which brought us into Aylesford and a very late lunch in the *Bush*. Strongly recommended. Staff and regulars were very welcoming to dogs (including extremely thirsty ones) and hikers (including extremely thirsty ones) and there was good food at reasonable prices. Thence a dash to reach the station just in time for the hourly train and home to Cuxton while our friend reverted to Reading! Max.