

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
30 th May Ascension Day		9.30 am Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Mark 16 vv 14-20 p1024
2 nd June	Sunday after Ascension	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Peter 4 vv 7-11 p1220 John 15 v26 – 16 v4 p1083
	Easter 7	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-34 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
9 th June	Pentecost	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 v 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 14-17 p1134 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
	Whit Sunday	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 11 vv 1-16 p696 Galatians 5 vv 16-26 p1172
16 th June Trinity Sunday		11.00 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084
23 rd June Trinity 1		11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 1-9 p751 Galatians 3 vv 23-29 p1170 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038
24 th June Nativity of St John the Baptist		9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 Luke 1 vv 57-80 p1027
30 th June Trinity 2		11.00 Holy Communion	I Kings 19 vv 9-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
30 th May Ascension Day		7.30 pm Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Mark 16 vv 14-20 p1024
2 nd June Easter 7 / Sunday after Ascension		9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-34 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
9 th June Pentecost / Whit Sunday		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 v 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 14-17 p1134 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
16 th June Trinity Sunday		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity Sunday
		9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084
23 rd June Trinity 1		9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 1-9 p751 Galatians 3 vv 23-29 p1170 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038
30 th June Trinity 2		9.30 Holy Communion	I Kings 19 vv 9-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040
Holy Communion 9.30 am St Michael's on Wednesdays		Holy Communion 9.30 am St John's on Thursdays	
5 th June S Boniface	Acts 20 vv 28-38 John 17 vv 11-19	6 th June	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17 vv 20-26
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 Corpus Christi	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 6 vv 51-58
26 th June Ember Day	Genesis 15 vv 1-18 Matthew 7 vv 15-20	27 th June S Cyril	Genesis 16 vv 1-16 Matthew 7 vv 21-29

11th June is St Barnabas & 29th St Peter: Respectively Mattins at 7.15 & Holy Communion at 7.30 & Mattins at 7.45 and Holy Communion at 8.00 at St Michael's.

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

Parish Lunch: Church Hall 12.00 every first Wednesday. All welcome.



Lift Up Your Hearts

Be joyful. Be happy. Be positive. Be thankful. Don't live it up just a bit. Live life to the full. *Lift up your hearts.* Those are the words with which I exhort the congregation at the beginning of the Communion Prayer. We sometimes call it the Eucharistic Prayer. Eucharist means thanksgiving. Thanks and praise. We have a lot to be thankful for. Make a list, if you like, of the things you have to be thankful for. Be positive. Be happy. Be joyful.

In biblical times, it was the custom to lift up your hands in prayer. Some Christians pray like that nowadays. Try it. We do need to ask for things in prayer, the things we need to live. God knows our needs but, if we ask Him, we know Whom to thank for all that we receive. We need to say sorry for our sins. We bear one another's burdens in prayer as in other ways. It would be false to pretend always to be happy. But praying thankfully, lifting up our hands in prayer raises our spirits above our troubles and enables us to come through.

The Bible also speaks of lifting up our voices in prayer. Speak to God. Sing to God. Praise God. I've been thinking lately about the words *to set forth his most worthy praise.* They come after *to render thanks for the great benefits that we have*

received at his hands. Being thankful is obvious, but how can our praises be worthy of Him? He is worthy of infinite praise, so much more than we can offer Him. That is why we thank Him for accepting our unworthy offering of ourselves in His great love for us.

We also lift up our voices in prayer, when we are in great need, when we are desperate, when we are in anguish. We cry out to God and He hears us. He knows our needs and He hears our prayers.

A favourite psalm starts, *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.* Look up. Look at the world around you. Look at the sun (not directly!) and the moon and the stars. Look to the hills and the mountains. Look at the woods and the fields and the gardens. Look into a flower, a human face. Investigate the mysteries of the atom. Listen to music. Study plants and animals and insects. Enter deeply into studying anything. Lift up your eyes and your ears and your noses. Lift up your hearts. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes.*

Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. That verse has seemed very pertinent since my knees stopped allowing me to run. But it's an attitude. It's a way of responding to the world. Be positive whatever happens. *Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.* Roger.



www.themothersunion.org

April MU Meeting – Speaker from “Spadework”

When one of our Church members took a walk in the West Malling area, she happened upon Gill Speed, who helps to run “Spadework”. This is a charity situated on a 7 acre site in the pretty village of Offham, which provides care and meaningful opportunities for over 100 people with learning and other difficulties.

At our April Mothers' Union Meeting, Gill Speed kindly gave a most interesting talk on the work of “Spadework”.

The trainees are of all ages who are encouraged to follow their own interests and skills. They receive practical training to develop vocational and life skills through social interaction with the community, providing them with the necessary tools to reach their full potential.

Gill brought in a selection of craft and wooden items which are made on the premises and sold in the site shop. There is a well-stocked Garden Centre with top quality, home grown plants, including fruits, vegetables, shrubs, trees, seeds and bulbs. The trainees help to make cakes, jam and chutneys and serve customers in the café which can seat 50 people.

We were all inspired to support this charity by paying a visit to the “Spadework” Centre.

Jenny

Hire the Church Hall

Our hall at Cuxton is well-equipped and clean and available for hire at very reasonable rates - £10 per hour peak, £8.00 per hour off peak. It is suitable for meetings, children's parties, music practice, martial arts, dancing, singing, etc.. Book with the booking secretary, Malcolm Curnow, on 719585.

Christian Aid



A Division of The British Council of Churches

Christian Aid Walk

This will take place this year on the 8th June. A gentle saunter

through our beautiful Kent countryside to raise money in a good cause. Details from Rector if you would like to take part. If you cannot join us, please sponsor one of the walkers.

The Christian Aid Quiz this year will be in Cuxton Church Hall on 21st September.

A Musical Evening with the Cantium Singers

11 July 2019, 7:30 p.m.
St John the Baptist Church
High Street
Halling

We've enjoyed the Cantium Singers at Cuxton. Now they are coming to Halling - a larger venue and easier parking!

Nic Boniface Counselling

& Therapeutic Services (Medway)

Offices in Rochester & Rainham

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

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

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

BonifaceTherapyServices@gmail.com

07865 470014

'Come and See' - Beacon event - 8 June, Rochester Cathedral (midday onwards)

Bring a friend, a picnic, a rug/fold-up chair and join the mega-picnic in Rochester Cathedral's 900-year old nave as a part of a celebration for *Thy Kingdom Come* in Rochester Diocese

Activities for all ages, including:

- Singing workshops
 - Labyrinth
 - Prayer ministry
 - Bell ringing
- Prayer with icons
 - Puppets
- 'Be a monk' tours

There will be displays and prayer stations from all 17 deaneries of Rochester Diocese and many diocesan schools

The day will conclude with an informal act of worship at 3pm and the preacher will be The Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge

St John's Draw (June): £5 each Mrs Mitchell (66), Mrs Terry (125) & Mrs Dallas (157) – drawn by Mr Hills.

St Michael's Draw (May): £10 Mrs Maisey (34), £5 each Mr MacDonald (26) & Dr McCabe (12).

Aylesford to Allington



Aylesford is a small riverside village some 7 miles from Cuxton. The old village comprises around sixty houses, a village shop, two pubs, a hairdresser/beauty salon, restaurants, St Peter and St Paul's' church and a coffee shop all located along the high street. There are two free car parks near the river.

My adventure today begins in the car park at the Bailey Bridge Aylesford (East) Car Park. I walk out of the car park, over the bridge and turn left onto the riverside footpath. This path takes me past some newish apartments and along the river bank. The trees are well advanced in leaf now and the ground has a good covering of wild flowers, especially buttercups. The path leads to a railway crossing at a tiny hamlet called Little Preston. The footpath carries on behind some gardens and turns right towards a small but beautiful wood. The path emerges from the wood on to a crop field and travels parallel to the M20 before a right turn onto a tarmac path which crosses the M20 as part of the Medway Valley Walk. From the high bridge crossing the M20 there are some lovely views although it is a bit noisy, due to the traffic, and today is rather breezy.

Over the bridge and the path descends to normal ground level and into an enclosed pathway. There is wild woodland on the right with various foot bridges over former railway lines, streams and narrow lanes. Eventually there are glimpses of the river on the left and evidence of light industry on the right. The footpath comes out onto a road. I turn left, walk over a railway bridge and to the right I arrive at Allington recreation ground with a small car park . The lane takes me down to a T-Junction. Here a turn to the right leads to the privately owned Allington Castle but to the left leads to my next destination - Allington Lock. This is a very quiet lane with very few properties and little danger to pedestrians.



At the end of the lane is Allington Lock. This is an under-rated place. There are many and varied water craft, a few carefully maintained dwellings, lovely views up and down the river, an excellent refreshment kiosk, a walkway over the the river and lock as well as a museum/environment facility, a good pub/restaurant and plenty of wild life to observe. To my delight there is a family of swans. According to the lady running the kiosk the swans live close-by and the eight cygnets hatched just over a week ago. What a treat!



It is warm and sunny at the lock so I stop and take refreshment in this beautiful setting. A good and light but sufficient lunch served with care and efficiency. Suitably refreshed, I wander around this area of the river watching busy water fowl and hedge birds. The river and lock have shoals of tiny fish darting in and out of the shadows and vegetation.

My journey back to my starting point is very easy.



The old damaged and eroded footpath has been replaced. It is now clearly defined and allows the rambler to see the river and surrounding vegetation whilst walking unimpeded by overgrown plants and tree roots. The new footpath leads under the M20, beyond farmed fields with grazing sheep and over a newly constructed wooden bridge right into the Bailey Bridge Aylesford (East) Car Park.

This walk may be short, about four miles, but it is most enjoyable and has lots to see on route.

Holly Croft

From the Registers

Baptisms:

21 st April (Easter)	Henry William David Lewis	Vicarage Road
28 th April	Olivia Grace Watson	St Mary's Island
28 th April	Thea Janette Belinda Crust	Wainscott

Confirmation:

5 th March (at Cliffe)	Sara Marie Downie	Vicarage Close
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Funerals:

16 th April	Kenneth John Homewood (67)	Upper Halling
29 th April	Mary Patricia Ridley (75)	The Caravan Site
8 th May	Maria Duke (73)	formerly of Cuxton

Des Vinicombe RIP

Maureen and family would like to say a big thank you to neighbours and friends for all their kind words, love and help during a very difficult time following the untimely death of Des Vinicombe in March.

The Seasonal Steps of our Seers – June

June was a very busy month in the time of our forefathers, for hay-making and sheep-shearing gave little time for festivals. Long forgotten now is St Barnabas' Day which at one time was a very important date in the church calendar. Before the calendar change of 1752, the 11th June was the longest day of the year. (Now it is the 21st June). Garlands of flowers would decorate the church and on the person on St Barnabas, whether on statues or pictures. The saint was often depicted with a hay-rake because of the time of year.

Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright; Longest day, shortest night. Traditional

Confusingly, midsummer festivities often started on the evening of 23rd June. Until the end of the 18th century, bonfires to celebrate the solstice would be lit on hill tops soon after sunset along the length and breadth of the country. When the flames had died down, local custom dictated people were to jump over the fires with the hope of changing their luck for the better. It was a powerful time for fortune telling, divination, fairies and magic (A Midsummer Night's Dream – Shakespeare). By looking into the embers of the fire you could apparently tell fortunes. The 24th June was regarded as the half-way point of the year celebrating the abundance and mystery of Nature. Many flowers and plants used as medicines were collected from hedgerows on this day and garlands were often made to put even around the necks of animals. Rowan was powerful against witches, and a sprig of St John's wort placed on a door lintel was a protective measure against evil. The day is also associated with St John the Baptist and was in the past a very enjoyable feast-day in the country.

*Thus doth the joyful feast of St John the Baptist take his turn,
When bonfires great with lofty flame in every town do burn;
And young men rounds with maids do dance in every street,
With garlands wrought of motherwort, or else with vervain sweet*

Thomas Kirchmeyer (16th century)

St John the Baptist is the one who foretold the coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus, whom he baptised, John's life, as written in the Bible, is seen by Christians as a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. St Peter's Day falls on June 29th revered by Roman Catholics as the 'Father of all Christians'. He preached all over the known world and he is thought to have lived in Rome, where he was crucified. Tradition has it that he is buried in St Peter's Basilica. Many traditional festivals do not seem to have much to do with the saint at all but seem to have house-keeping in mind. Hay-strewing ceremonies are found in all parts of the country, which provides a cheap floor covering of straw in churches and houses, and fields of hay were often grown specifically for that purpose. There is a

story that in Old Weston, Huntingdonshire, a local landowner gave a bequest for hay-strewing so as to deaden the sound of labourers heavy boots in church!

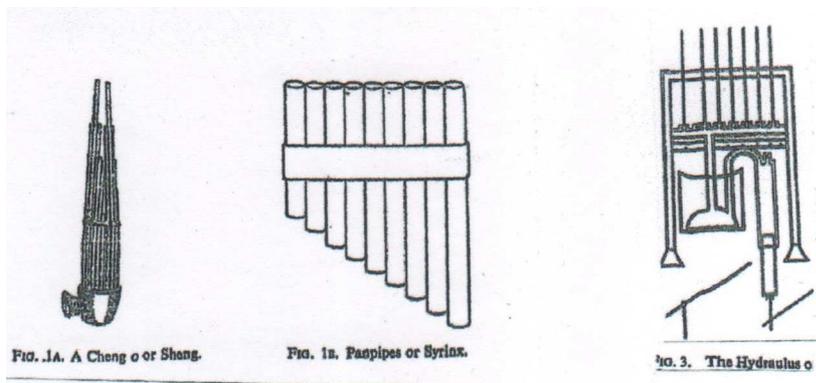
*Of all the trees that grow so fair, Old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the Sun, than Oak and Ash and Thorn.*

Rudyard Kipling 'A Tree Song'

In fact, both Saint Peter and St Paul share the 29th June as their feast day. Both were organisers of the early Christian church, both dominated the Christian community and both were martyred for their faith. But in the days of our forefathers, especially in the countryside, it is St Peter who is revered at this time of year.

THE ANATOMY OF THE ORGAN - 2

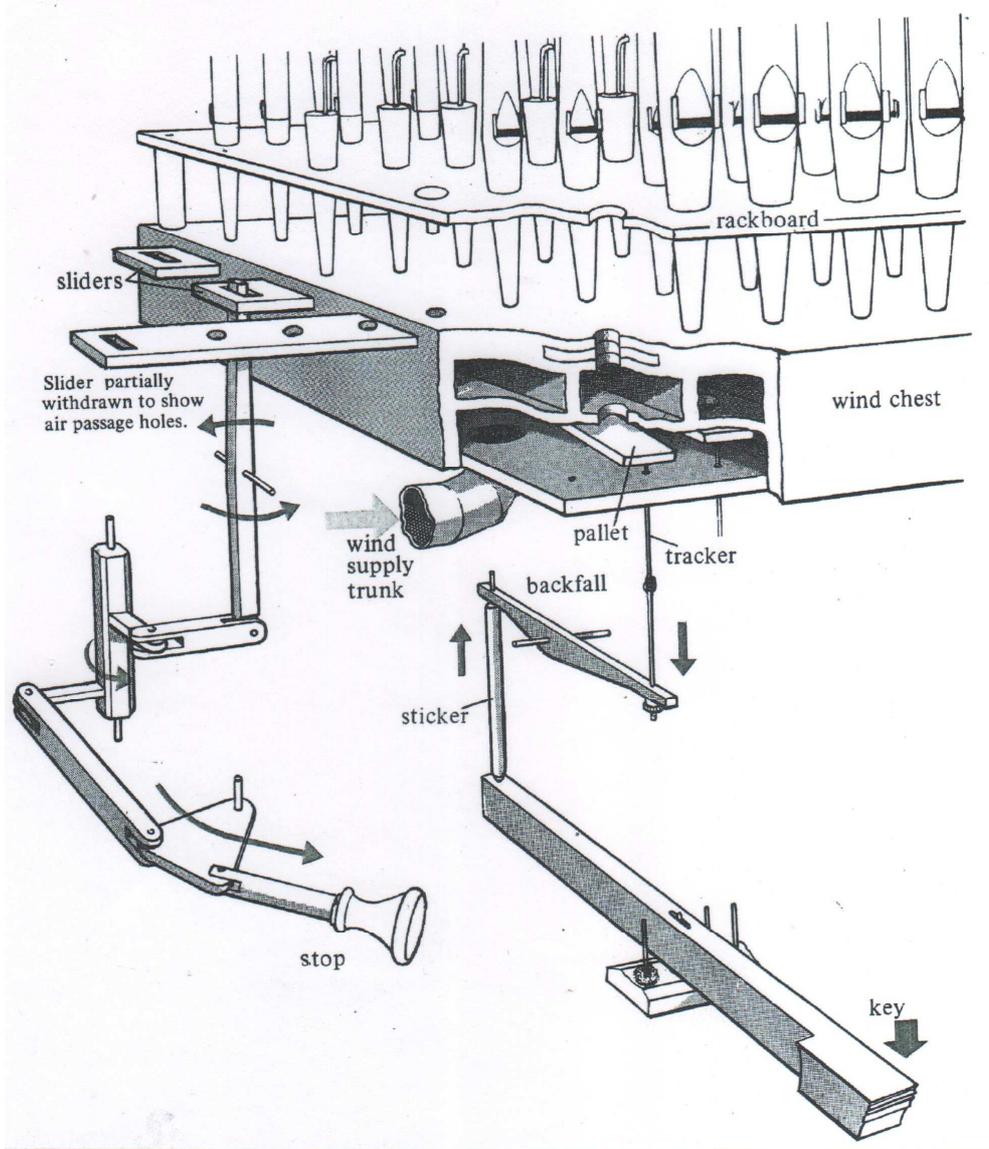
The organ of today works in basically the same way as in Greek or Roman times, or even from the ancient Chinese tradition. First of all there must be a supply of wind. On St Michael's instrument this is supplied by an electric blower, but it also has the facility of hand bellows worked from a large wooden lever that you easily can see on the right hand side of the instrument. The Greeks often built their organs over a supply of flowing water which forced air upwards into the pipes. These instruments were often very large and made loud sounds that could be heard for quite a distance. The Chinese 'Sheng' from over five thousand years ago used hollow reeds arranged on a wind chest in the form of a bowl which was then blown through a mouthpiece. Greek shepherds had a Syrinx (or Panpipes) using strong reeds fastened together and played by blowing across the top of the pipe. Roman author, Pliny the Elder AD 23-79, speaks of the 'hydraulis' (water organ) first made in Alexandria two hundred years previously, which uses constant water pressure to push air along pipes.



Secondly, there needs to be a way of selecting sounds which on the church organ is by two keyboards or 'manuals' and a foot operated 'pedal board' all joined to 'pallets' to allow wind to enter the group of pipes selected. Thirdly, a large number of cylindrical and conical pipes of varying diameters and lengths which produce a wide range of tones, sounding in the same way as does a penny whistle or recorder. There are two families of organ pipes: 'flue-tone' pipes which forces air against a lip, or wedge, which splits it forcing a vibration of air along the pipe which dictates the sound depending on length and from what it's made (metal? wood?) and 'reed-tone' pipes which relies on making a 'reed' vibrate which in turn vibrates the air in the pipe. The fourth element is the 'stops' which can be seen either side of the manuals. These are connected to 'sliders' which allow one or all of the sets of pipes (ranks) within a group (department) to be played. The last element, the 'couplers' join the keyboards or different sets of stops together so that by pressing one key, many pipes belonging to other

keyboards will sound. In Cuxton church the organist can join the Swell organ to the Great, the Great to the Swell, and both to the pedals. We have pipes in feet - 2', 4' 8' and 16' pipes - the longer making lower sounds.

The action shown below is typical of the workings in the St Michael's organ. The operation is mechanical. Apart from the blower or air pump which is electric, the rest of the workings are operated manually. The blower supplies wind into the 'wind chest'. The stops pull out the sliders allowing a set of pipes to accept air and by pushing the key, the pallet is moved, allowing the air to flow up the pipes selected by the slider. The two manuals of keys are of fifty-six notes making 112 keys, trackers and pallets and the pedal board has a further thirty notes. There are twelve stops, each with their associated woodwork mechanisms, plus couplers to join keyboards together. That is a considerable number of items that could go wrong and that's without taking heating atmospheric conditions and accidental damage into account.



Thanks to everybody who has already contributed to the cost of the organ restoration. The money has been coming in amazingly generously, but there is still a long way to go. If we receive more than we need to spend now, it will be kept in the organ fund for any work necessary in the future. So please keep giving. The money may be handed to churchwardens or Rector. Any cheques should be payable to "Cuxton and Halling PCC".

The Moped and the Paraclete

You've heard of the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*? Well this address is called *The Moped and the Paraclete*. Cast your mind back to the year 1970. You're a disaffected teenager. You live on a rundown post War housing development. The old people go on about the community spirit in the old slums and the way they came through the blitz, and how all that disappeared when they built these spanking new tower blocks in the 1960s. Only they're not so spanking new anymore. A combination of vandalism, poor workmanship and untried new materials have left families besieged in rotten flats surrounded by litter-strewn, crime-infested, graffiti-disfigured communal areas. You've left school at 15 with no qualifications and the days of full employment are rapidly drawing to an end. You're heading for a dead end job or a life on the dole. Everyone went on about the sixties as a time of liberation and new ideas in music and on the fashion scene, but the stars of ten years ago are either dead (of drugs, suicide or murder) or they've sold out and turned commercial. And the fashion! Does anyone remember seventies fashion? At school you were told about Great Britain, but the empire's going, going, gone and some people are saying it's more something to be ashamed of than to be proud about. If Britain was once the workshop of the world, it isn't going to be for much longer. All the cheap stuff is made in Hong Kong or Taiwan and the decent stuff comes from Germany or Japan, the countries that lost the War.

So you're pretty fed up and you hang around the streets mostly bored and occasionally getting into trouble just to relieve the monotony. Then this new detached youth worker arrives on the estate. His name is John and he's a bit weird, but he's cool really. He tells the kids something's going to happen, something big and they've got to be ready for it when it comes. People listen. When word gets out that he's chilling in the park, they all hang out with him. You go down to find out what it's all about. You're going on a quest. He might look like a rocker with his old leather coat and his greasy long hair, but he's done a deal with a metal dealer for twenty scrap mopeds. He says you're going to do them up and embark on an adventure. This could be your way out, but you've got to be ready. There's only 20 mopeds. The younger kids have got to go back to school. The more conventional boys and girls turn their backs on the project and go and get jobs. The Mummy's boys won't take a chance. So there's just 30 of you left and 20 mopeds to do up for the quest.

First you've got to fetch them from the scrap yard and scrap is pretty much what they are. None of them runs. In those days mopeds had to have pedals as well as motors, but it's harder work riding them than pushing them. So it takes a real effort to get the bikes to John's workshop and ten boys drop out the first day. They were up for a laugh, but they didn't reckon it was going to be hard work. The 20 of you left slave like nobody's business under John's direction. You strip the mopeds down to their constituent parts. Every bit is cleaned, repaired, or replaced if necessary, greased and reassembled. While you work, you talk. John's really wise and he tells you lads what's what about a lot of things. A lot of what he says is the same as what your dad and your teachers have been telling you, but it comes better from him. You feel better about yourself because you're achieving something really worthwhile. Eventually you have 20 gleaming, perfect mopeds. They still don't run. They're a bit easier to push or pedal, but you can't start the engines yet. John won't let you. You can't afford the petrol. He says you've all got to wait for his mate Josh who is the real business. When Josh comes, you'll be cooking with gas. Till then, it's clean, polish and pedal round the yard and you start to wonder whether the quest is ever going to take off.

Then Josh comes, pushing his own immaculate machine up the road. John looks out of the workshop and shouts, "There he is". You all rush out. Josh says to John, "Just check over my machine, would you?" John says, "What me, check your machine?" Josh, "Says, yep. I want you to do the same for me as you've done for these lads." So John gives Josh's machine the once-over and Josh pushes his moped into the petrol station and fills up. Josh pays the petrol pump attendant for all of you and you all fill up and for the first time you start your engines. Every cleaned gleaming machine starts the first time and you're off. John stays behind, but you follow Josh out on to the open road. You follow your quest and what adventures you have. You see new places, new people, new things. You're free. You're gone for months. You find you can do things you never knew you could do. You make plenty of mistakes, but Josh is always there for you. You think it's going on for ever. Whenever you run out of fuel, Josh tops up your tank. You travel thousands of

miles and it's just amazing. You stop caring about the object of the quest. The journey is just so awesome. Then one day, you're devastated. Josh tells you he's got to go. He'll never forget you. You'll never forget him. He gives you his credit card (which had only just been invented in 1970) and tells you you can have as much petrol as you need. It's up to you now. You've got wheels. You're free. You can go on holiday. You can get a job. You can visit people. You can fetch and carry. Instead of hanging about on the estate getting bored and making mischief, you will be a useful member of society, a giver, not just a taker. You can make a contribution. You've got wheels. You can use them to do some good in the world. Indeed you can do more than Josh ever did, because there are 20 of you and you can pass on the good news. You can tell other people, recruit them into the Josh movement. Give them Josh's credit card. He won't mind. He wants you to do it. They can be set free too, given wheels, become givers, not just takers, and they can recruit others too and so can those others and the movement will spread across the whole world because the spirit Josh freely gives out sets them free to serve the whole world. And not to forget the quest. The journey is awesome, but the end is spectacular. Josh says he can't tell you what it's like now, but you will see him again and then you'll really know what it's all about. Just do what he did, what he told you to do. He's already given you everything you need – a set of wheels and a tiger in your tank. Just do it. And they did and that's why we're here and it's our turn now.

Psalm 104. *Benedic, anima mea*

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul : O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour. Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment : and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters : and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind. He maketh his angels spirits : and his ministers a flaming fire. He laid the foundations of the earth : that it never should move at any time. Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment : the waters stand in the hills. At thy rebuke they flee : at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid. They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath : even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them. Thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass : neither turn again to cover the earth. He sendeth the springs into the rivers : which run among the hills. All beasts of the field drink thereof : and the wild asses quench their thirst. Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation : and sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from above : the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works. He bringeth forth grass for the cattle : and green herb for the service of men; That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man : and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the Lord also are full of sap : even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted; Wherein the birds make their nests : and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats : and so are the stony rocks for the conies. He appointed the moon for certain seasons : and the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness that it may be night : wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. The lions roaring after their prey : do seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together : and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour : until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works : in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea also : wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan : whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein. These wait all upon thee : that thou mayest give them meat in due season. When thou givest it them they gather it : and when thou openest thy hand they are filled with good. When thou hidest thy face they are troubled : when thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to their dust. When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made : and thou shalt renew the face of the earth. The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in his works. The earth shall tremble at the look of him : if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will praise my God while I have my being. And so shall my words please him : my joy shall be in the Lord. As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end : praise thou the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen



Tommy's Talking Points

May 2nd was an interesting day. Master always tends to be up with the lark and now it gets light so early we very often make an early start and enjoy a long walk before Morning Prayer. This particular morning, it wasn't fully light and, coming out of Cuxton Churchyard, there was a badger coming towards us. The moment it saw me, it turned tail with me in hot pursuit. Some people say that they have never seen a live badger, but we see them quite a lot. I do more than he does. Actually, he's a bit wary of badgers now. On Easter Monday, late in the evening, one chased him round our garden. Perhaps it was cross to have had its rest disturbed by the Easter Egg Hunt earlier in the day. I, on the other hand, thought that the Easter Egg Hunt was great. So many people made a fuss of me.

Anyway, coming back to the 2nd, this was also the morning when we heard our first cuckoo in the woods at Upper Halling. We hear lots of birdsong in the early morning, but the cuckoo is one of the few that Master can recognise with any confidence. The lark, actually, is another, but then you can see the lark ascending, whereas you very seldom see a cuckoo. There are lots of squirrels about and one friend is hoping to find a drey, a squirrel's nest. So far this year, she has been unsuccessful. Have any of you seen one? They must nest somewhere.

Master has been enthusing about the beautiful flowers in the gardens and countryside. Bluebells of course in profusion. We walked to Halling through the woods for the Annual Meeting because it was such a nice day and there is so much to enjoy at this time of the year. I received a lot of attention there too. Apart from bluebells, which seem to be finishing earlier this very warm year, there are large areas of wild garlic with its white flowers and particular smell. This seems to have become more common in recent years. There are anemones and other small white flowers which are very delicate but he doesn't know the names of them. White may has replaced the white flowers of the blackthorn frosting the hedgerows, but the red may hasn't yet appeared as I write. White candles on the horse chestnut, magnificent trees, are just coming out, but again the red ones come out a little later. He's trying to create a Bonsai conker tree, but I don't know if he'll succeed. It looks like it's already growing too big to me. Cow parsley and its relatives complete the white ensemble.

The other dominant shade in the woods is blue at this time of year. As well as the bluebells, there is the blue of bugle. The violets have been prolific, from January right into May. The lilac is coming into bloom and scenting the night. In the garden, there is a profusion of forget-me-nots, a pretty pale blue, so many as to form carpets, contrasting nicely with the pink and white of the apple blossom and, earlier, the deeper pink of the flowering cherry. A long, long time ago, a much loved elderly relative asked Master to promise never to get rid of the forget-me-nots in his garden. She had planted them on her own mother's grave – such a lovely flower with such an appropriate name. But they grow so well, that he couldn't get rid of them if he wanted to. They even grow up through the path. Out in the country, the darker blue speedwell forms equally attractive mats at the margins of the grassland. There is also purple vetch, which he was pleased to spot and identify.

But, he says, I am forgetting the yellows. The buttercups have been amazing in the churchyard and the field beyond, especially with the sun shining from the east. The next field up is home to some very cute lambs – black, white, brown and piebald. They bounce straight up in the air on all four legs. I can do that too! It's fun. Try it sometime. We've just seen the end of daffodils in the garden and primroses in wilder places. There's a patch of yellow archangel or deadnettle in the woods at Upper Halling. Elsewhere, the more common white deadnettle adorns the uncut fields. Another field is white with the seed balls of hosts of dandelions which have already finished. In the garden, there are brimstone butterflies and some quite sleepy wild bees. One settled on me! We regularly see rabbits in Dean Valley and there are a few woodland farm animals in the wooded area opposite. The sheep are magnificently horned, but very shy. There is plenty for you human beings to see and enjoy in the local woods, even if you haven't got the acute senses we animals have to investigate everything the landscape has to offer. Tommy, the Rectory Spaniel.