

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
6 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	9.30 Family Communion	Joshua 5 vv 9-12 p219
		Luke 15 vv 1&312 p1049
13 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 5 Passion Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 43 vv 16-21 p729 Philippians 3 vv 4b -14 p1180 John 12 vv 1-8 p1079
20 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 6 Palm Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Palm Sunday
	9.30 Holy Communion	(At hall) Luke 19 vv 28-40 p1054 Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 p737 Luke 23 vv 1-49 p1059
24 <sup>th</sup> March Maundy Thursday	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Exodus 12 vv 1-14 p 68 I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 p1152 John 13 vv 1-35 p1081
25 <sup>th</sup> March Good Friday PJ	10.00 Family Service	
27 <sup>th</sup> March Easter Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 17-25 p752 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 I Corinthians 15 vv 19-26 p1156 John 20 vv 1-18 p1089
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
6 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	II Timothy 4 vv 1-18 p1203 John 11 vv 17-44 p1078
	11.00 Holy Communion	Joshua 5 vv 9-12 p219 Luke 15 vv 1 31&2 p1049
13 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 5 Passion Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 43 vv 16-21 p729 Philippians 3 vv 4b -14 p1180 John 12 vv 1-8 p1079
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	II Chronicles 35 vv 1-16 p469 Luke 22 vv 1-13 p1057
20 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 6 Palm Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 p737 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Luke 23 vv 1-49 p1059
24 <sup>th</sup> March Maundy Thursday	9.30 Holy Communion	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 p1152 John 13 vv 1-35 p1081
25 <sup>th</sup> March Good Friday	12.00 Three Hour Devotion	
27 <sup>th</sup> March Easter Day	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 65 vv 17-25 p752 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 I Corinthians 15 vv 19-26 p1156 John 20 vv 1-18 p1089

There will be Holy Communion daily at St Michael's at 9.30 am in Easter week except Thursday when it will be at Halling. There will be no official Mattins & Evensong that week.

Holy Communion 9.30 am Wednesdays at St Michael's		Holy Communion 9.30 am Thursdays at St John's	
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 Matthew 5 vv 17-19	3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Jeremiah 7 vv 23-28 Luke 11 vv 14-23
9 <sup>th</sup> March	Isaiah 49 vv 8-15 John 5 vv 17-30	10 <sup>th</sup> March	Exodus 32 vv 7-14 John 5 vv 31-47
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Daniel 3 vv 1-30 John 8 vv 31-42	17 <sup>th</sup> March S Patrick	Genesis 17 vv 3-9 John 8 vv 51-59
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 John 13 vv 21-32	24 <sup>th</sup> March Maundy Thursday	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 13 vv 1-35
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Acts 3 vv 1-10 Luke 24 vv 13-35	31 <sup>st</sup> March	Acts 3 vv 11-26 Luke 24 vv 35-48

Copy Date April Magazine: 11<sup>th</sup> March 8.30 am Rectory

**Vestry Meeting & APCM:** Our vestry meeting and our annual parochial church meeting will take place at 10.00 on 30<sup>th</sup> April this year in the church hall. Several office holders have indicated their desire to stand down this year. So we shall be looking for new people. Could it be you?

We remembered William Laud at our service at Cuxton on 10<sup>th</sup> January. As Archbishop of Canterbury, he was beheaded on that date in 1645, a man much admired by some and despised by others. On the one hand, he could be narrow-minded, inflexible, easily offended, harsh and even cruel. On the other hand, he had a vision for holiness, decency and order in worship, he promoted education and knowledge, especially in bringing discipline and order to the University of Oxford, improving its buildings, endowing its library and founding the university press. He was scrupulously fair in the administration of justice, treating the rich and powerful in the same way as the poor. They tried him for high treason, but, when they couldn't prove a case against him, they passed an Act of Attainder, which empowers parliament to execute whomsoever it pleases.

Prayer of William Laud, Rector of Cuxton 1610: Gracious Father, I humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church, fill it with all truth, in all truth with peace. Where it is corrupt purge it; where it is in error, direct it; where it is superstitious, rectify it; where any thing is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided and rent asunder, make up the breaches of it; O thou Holy One of Israel. Amen.

On the same day at Halling, on account of the weather, the sermon began with the text *Make thee an ark*. The readings were about the Baptism of Christ and our baptism as members of His Body, the Church. So the ideas were closely related as we see in this prayer from the Prayer Book Baptism service (which, no doubt, was used in William Laud's baptism and which he would have used to baptise others.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel thy people through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy Baptism; and by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify Water to the mystical washing away of sin: We beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon this Child; wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost; that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church; and being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with thee world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



#### Why Do They Do These Things?

When you hear about the terrible things that ISIS gets up to – the beheadings, the tortures, the rapes – do you ever wonder how human beings can act like that? More generally, when you read about or

see pictures of the world's war zones, do you never think, how can anybody drop bombs on, gas, shoot, allow to starve, their fellow human beings? I'm sure we can't imagine doing these things ourselves. Most of us wouldn't even want to hurt an animal, let alone a fellow human being. Though, in certain circumstances, I suppose we might. If our country were under attack, we might have to fight for her and do things we wouldn't ever normally do.

It isn't only war, however. What about the terrible crimes people perpetrate? We sometimes hear about the most sickening violence. But, even where there is no violence, the victims of crime may suffer terrible harm. Pensioners are robbed

of the money they have to live on. Naive people are cheated out of their savings. Decent families come in to find their homes trashed and burgled. Now I can understand, though not condone, a poor person shop-lifting food from a multimillion pound supermarket to feed his or her hungry children, but I wonder about the consciences of those who seem to be capable of robbing those who are as poor as or poorer than themselves, or more vulnerable. How can a fit young man, steal from a frail old lady? Have they no self respect?

I wonder too about major corporations which can quite legally take advantage of the ignorance, naivety or just plain decency of their customers to overcharge them for their gas and electricity or their insurance policies or train tickets or to sell them products they do not need and are of no use to them? The fact that a practice is legal does not necessarily mean that it is ethical. Neither does the fact that it is common practice. According to reports, many pensioners are afraid to heat their homes adequately, while fat cat energy companies

refuse to pass on the savings they are making on the international energy markets.

It is not merely sins of commission either. What about sins of omission? How can it be that, in a world in which there is an abundance of resources, millions of people go hungry, millions do not receive the medical treatment they need and millions of children don't get a decent education? The EU throws away as waste 89 million tonnes of food per year and the UK is the worst offender, accounting on its own for about 14 million of the EU total. Nearly half of that is household waste, food that we buy and, for one reason or another, don't eat. It is mismanagement and poor organisation, but these reflect a lack of will both at the individual and the national and international levels to do something meaningful about it.

We need to move on from the international and the national to the more local and personal level. What makes people vandalise their own community facilities? How come, as a society and as individuals, do we not make adequate provision for frail, housebound, lonely people? What makes some men hit their wives? Can we even imagine what leads some people to abuse children? Why is it that a married man or woman is unfaithful, letting down the person to whom he or she promised unconditional, life-long love, and perhaps breaking up the family, often with tragic consequences for any children? I suppose addicts cannot help themselves, but what about people who have a choice and still spend the family budget in the pub, getting drunk and behaving obnoxiously, ruining their own health, or gamble away the wages their families are supposed to live on for the week or month? How can we pass the homeless by on the other side?

Why would we traduce the reputation of a neighbour, maybe even a friend, with malicious gossip? If we care about other people, how can we "stab them in the back" in the interests of our own careers or our progress in local or national politics? Why is it that the self-esteem of so many of us seems to depend on putting other people down? Why do some families no longer speak to one another? (Actually, in my experience, they can't always even remember the reasons themselves!) Why is it that some people with a little bit of power seem to enjoy taking a

"jobsworth" attitude to dealing with the public? How can we members of the public treat so badly the people who serve us in shops and restaurants, railway stations and other public services?

How can they do these things? Or do I mean, how can we do these things? After all, don't we all know that the world would be an infinitely better place if we all kept to the Golden Rule? *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* Yet none of us does. We're fools, aren't we? We know how we ought to live (Love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself. Keep the Ten Commandments.) and we don't live like that. We know the consequences of sin and yet we sin. *The wages of sin is death.* Sin is disobedience to God's commandments and God's commandments are summarised in the double command to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. Love is the only healthy basis for relationships. The absence of love, therefore, alienates. The absence of love, sin, alienates us from God and from one another. That is why *the wages of sin is death.* God is love. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Sin alienates us from God. Alienated from God, we have no love, no life. We have lost the way and our lives are a lie – the lie that the only way to live is to look after number one, whereas in fact, the worship of self is actually the broad way which leads to destruction. We are dead in sin and there is no place for us in the resurrection. *The wages of sin is death.*

We are all in this condition, fools who live as if there were no God. It is what the Church calls original sin – the fact that *there is none righteous, no not one.* So what does God do about it? He is a just God. Surely those ISIS terrorists deserve to be punished - and so do the warmongers and the violent thugs, and the thieves and the conmen (the ones who work within the law as well as the actual criminals), the adulterers, the drunks and gamblers, the gossips, those who refuse to forgive their brothers and sisters, the petty, officious tyrants, those whose advance in life is predicated on their ruthless treatment of anyone who gets in the way, those whose consciences allow them to enjoy an abundance of material goods, but care nothing for the poor, all of us who don't love our

neighbours as ourselves because we don't love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. Don't we all deserve to be punished? What is God to do about us? He is a thrice holy God. He cannot abide sin in His Presence, but in His absence, there is death. We are in no position to take the initiative because we are sinners, alienated from God and from one another, unable to become the people we were created to be.

Only God can take the initiative and, because He is Love, that is just what He does. He sends Jesus into the world. Jesus is God. So He is God with us. He experiences for Himself everything that it means to be human. He is tempted in every way that we are tempted. Jesus is a human being. He is the only human being who is perfect love. Jesus alone fulfils our human potential to be the children of God, to live in His image. Jesus is love. As such, He is one with the Father and with the Holy Spirit – three persons and one God, one man who is not alienated from God by sin, because He lives a life of perfect obedience to God's commandments. He lives a life of perfect love. The opposite of love is self-centredness, sin. The supreme act of love, therefore, is the offering of self. True love is love unto death. This is what Easter is all about. Jesus is totally obedient to God the Father. He fulfils all the Law's demands, which are perfect love. He offers Himself to God as a sacrifice of love to God. He dies on the Cross. He offers Himself on behalf of the human race, on behalf of the whole created order. He suffers the consequence of all human sin, death, and His sacrifice of Himself in perfect love, therefore overcomes all the power of sin, the

world and the devil. His Death is a *full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world*. He sets us free from slavery to sin and death. His sacrifice is an atonement for our alienation. The price of our sin is fully paid. Justice is satisfied. God's infinite mercy is realised. *The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

Jesus is God's answer to human sin, especially His Death on the Cross. The initiative is God's. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*. So what does God require from us? Repentance and faith. Put your trust in Him and turn away from sin. Turn to God in Jesus Christ. What does He promise to those who accept Him as their Saviour? Forgiveness of sin, freedom from the fear of death, a new heart and a new spirit, adoption into God's family, eternal life. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him*.

If you put your trust in Jesus and repent of your sins, you are set free to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. There is so much more I could say, but, if you love the Lord, you've got all of eternity in front of you to experience the infinite extent of His love for you. So, there's nothing more for me to say other than to appeal to you once again to taste and see that the Lord is good. You'll find a warm welcome at our Easter services. Roger.

Psalm 51: HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me. But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts: and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Turn thy face from my sins: and put out all my misdeeds. Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy holy Spirit from me. O give me the comfort of thy help again: and stablish me with thy free Spirit. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health: and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall shew thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee: but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations: then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

### Why Not Try One of These?

Christian Vision seeks to partner with the local church and key organizations "to reach one billion people with the message of the gospel and to give them an opportunity to choose personal faith in Jesus Christ." A major way that we seek to do this is through sharing the gospel online in a way that is relevant and authentic. We believe that digital evangelism (21<sup>st</sup> century evangelism) will play an integral role in reaching those who may never enter a church (especially to those within the 18-29 age bracket). With this in mind we have produced 3 free exciting digital resources that will serve to empower the church in sharing their faith in a relevant way.

**Yesheis:** An exciting free app to help you share the gospel online in a way that is as natural as everything else you do. We actively search the internet in order to provide you with the best, most 'sharable', good news content available. We then connect this content with an engaging and authentic presentation of the gospel and an opportunity for the viewer to become a follower of Jesus.

**Church Connect:** Is a website to connect those who are actively seeking for a local church online. Add your church for free and put it on the map.

**Simple Truth:** Is a free app for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of the bible and what it has to say for everyday life. It is a fantastic resource to give to those who are new to the Faith. searching for a local church online.

### Women's World Day of Prayer

This is Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March. Our service is at St John's Church at 7.00 pm. All welcome. Praying for Cuba.

### Deanery Quiet Day.

This will take place this year on 4<sup>th</sup> June at Aylesford Priory 10.00 -4.30 and it will be conducted by the Archdeacon. Please book with David Green 719502. There is no charge. Please bring own lunch.

### Looking Ahead

The Archdeacon is also our preacher for our Patronal Festival at Halling at 7.30 pm on 24<sup>th</sup> June.

### Looking After Our Circulation

Every year at this time, when we collect the annual subscriptions for the magazine, we discover that some of our customers have moved away. Some of our longest subscribers have also departed to a place where magazines are no longer needed. If you think that this magazine is worth reading, why not recommend it to your friends and neighbours? It is a good source of income for the Church and, more importantly, a means of keeping in touch with one another and sharing information and views. Please contact your local deliverer or the Rector, if you would like to take out a new subscription.

### A Nice Little Job

Is there somebody out there, please, who would be willing to organise the magazine advertisements next year. The job entails negotiating with advertisers and potential advertisers, accepting their copy and billing them. If you can help, please speak to Margaret Guest or the Rector.

## Garden Maintenance

All aspects of garden maintenance undertaken

RHS trained, fully insured

Competitive rates, references available

Phone Bev on 01634 717523 or 07837 159205

# Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Monday (28<sup>th</sup> March) 2.00 pm

Rectory

£2.00 per child.

Also refreshments and activities in church hall.

# Barn Dance

April 16<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm

Jubilee Hall

£6 adults, £3 children, £20 family ticket.

Please bring your own refreshments.

# Music for PSP

An afternoon of light chamber music followed by a reception with silent auction and raffle. Admission free. Collection for PSP awareness and research (80%) & the local Church (20%).

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May

St Michael's Church

3.00 pm

Progressive Nuclear Palsy is a cruel illness that leaves the mind totally unaffected whilst the body deteriorates over a 5-7 year period. This event is being organised on behalf of PSP sufferer Mike Brown who spent the majority of his life in Cuxton.

## Forthcoming Attractions

4<sup>th</sup> March: Women's World Day of Prayer 7.00 pm St John's

28<sup>th</sup> March: Easter Egg Hunt 2.00 pm Rectory

15<sup>th</sup> April: Christian Aid Supper 7.30 pm St Francis

16<sup>th</sup> April: Barn Dance 7.30 pm Jubilee Hall

30<sup>th</sup> April: Annual Meeting & Vestry Meeting 10.00 Church Hall

29<sup>th</sup> May: Concert St Michael's 3.00 pm

12<sup>th</sup> June: Big Lunch 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday HMQ Cuxton Recreation Ground

24<sup>th</sup> June: St John's Patronal Festival 7.30 pm

9<sup>th</sup> July: Barbecue 6.00 pm Rectory

St Johns Draw: £5 each Mrs Head (20), Miss Heighes (40), Mrs Acott (48), Mrs Shaw (102) –drawn by Mrs Gyde.

### Caught by the Council's Catch 22

Medway Council Tree Supremo Michael Sankus concedes that we don't need his permission to cut down dangerous trees and he can't force us to replant them. He says that the trees in my garden are not that dangerous. However, he says that they are somewhat dangerous and we could be liable if they cause death, injury or damage. [It's quantum physics. Just as Schrödinger's cat is neither dead nor alive until an observer looks into the box, so trees are neither safe nor unsafe until a council officer looks into the garden.] So we had better do as he says, beg for his permission to do it and accept that he has the power to make us replant. If we don't, maybe the diocesan surveyor could finish up in prison. Of course, if he wanted to be nice, Mr Sankus wouldn't exercise his power to compel us to replant, but he has and we've had to surrender rather than risk the incarceration of a good man. Is Medway Council's motto *Serving You* deliberately ironic or don't they know what the word *servant* means?

I've heard no more from the council about the fact that one of their officers trespassing in mine and other people's gardens turns out to be a sex offender. I've reported this to the Local Government Ombudsman. I'll let you know if I get anywhere, though I don't hold out much hope. If we go back to 2002, when the order was first imposed, contrary both to government guidelines and the outcome of public consultation, I don't know enough law to know whether it actually constitutes corruption. All I know is that officers broke the law, made untrue statements both to the public in general and to councillors, attempted to discredit truthful witnesses and that no fewer than three of them had a personal interest in imposing this TPO. Maybe it is enough to know that the officer who prepared and signed off on the original paperwork was a former member of our church who had left because of his many disagreements with me. Roger.

### Church Army



Thank you to those who contributed £4.25 to Church Army, which was in the box at the back of St John's. I have passed this on to Church Army. I have been mindful of the \*PCC's decision to pay off our own debts before focussing on giving money to charities. After all, if we have no parish church, we will never be in a position to help those charities. So I have been less diligent than I could be in raising funds for this very worthwhile charity. Many of the kind people who had a collection box at home have moved away. So if anyone feels able to put some coins in a box which I can pass on to Church Army, please let me or Roger know. Gillian Feraday. You can watch a short film on the website - [www.churcharmy.org.uk/ChristmasAppeal](http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/ChristmasAppeal) - about how Maureen Greaves reaches out to the lonely in her community and the difference it is making to people's lives."

\*The PCC doesn't actually give any money to charities except the collection at the Christingles services which is for the Children's Society and the collection at the Scout & Guide Carol service which we allow them to donate to a charity of their choice. Church members do, however, work to raise funds for a number of missions and charities and many of you donate generously. Years ago, I made a decision to allocate my tithes in part to the Church to which I belong and in part to other Christian causes. I suppose we all have to make a similar decision about how much our regular giving should be and where it will do the most good. Roger.

## **'DIAMOND INVITATION'**

We will be celebrating our Diamond Wedding Anniversary on

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016.**

We would be happy if any of you would like to join us at a short Service of Thanksgiving in  
St Michael's Church at 1.30pm.

Thereafter, to join us for tea in the Church Hall until approximately 5pm.

No presents just your presence required; unless you would like to make a small donation to be shared between Demelza House Children's Hospice and Church Funds.

Peter & Shirley Crundwell.



### Cuxton WI

Our year ended and started with social times. In December we celebrated with our Christmas party. This year the tables were decorated and two of our members Chris and Alma had made each person a little knitted souvenir filled with a delicious chocolate. The evening started with a light hearted quiz followed by a savoury buffet, and then more quiz questions and the sweet part of the buffet. After raffles and prizes we ended the evening with a spirited version of the 12 Days of Christmas and thus ended another enjoyable evening with all our friends.

The New Year dawned bright not with sun but still more rain. However the evening was dry and many hardy souls made their way up to the church hall for another get together. We do not bother with a speaker in January just in case the weather etc lets us down. However, as usual the Craft group put on a lovely show of their work over the year and once again I marvelled at the amazing talent that lurks in this village. Paintings, embroidery, quilting, china painting and handmade handbags were just a few of the types of crafts on display and several other types that I didn't recognise. It is such a pleasure to spend time just wandering round and looking at their work. Then the more mundane reports began. This time of year is when we look at the resolutions which are put forward at the AGM at the Albert Hall. And which are often acted on by the government of the day. Women still have a lot of power in this world. We all heard the various resolutions and from the eight presented we voted for "Appropriate care in hospitals for patients suffering from mental health problems" - making provision for their carers etc to be with them for longer periods and for more trained staff to work with them. We all thought that this was a very worthy resolution. So now we look forward to the New Year and perhaps even some dry weather for the Spring flowers to enjoy.

There were 35 people at the meeting in February with everyone eager to listen to our speaker from

Kent Fine Foods. He did not disappoint when the poor man eventually arrived. He had arrived early but at the Social Club and had then driven past the church turning in a vain effort to find his way up to us! However we filled in time by doing our business section whilst he set up his cooking gear. The wait was worthwhile as Matthew Kearsey-Lawson gave us a light hearted talk about his very varied careers starting at Hadlow college where he had done his initial training. He has often been heard on local radio and some TV programmes. He is passionate about only using local Kent produce whenever he can and came armed with many jars of chutney, jam and sauces. After the talking he cooked a delicious plate of mixed veg, herbs and sauces plus portions of smoked duck. This was followed by creamy cakes and sweets made by his mother who often produces the "sweet" treats for his demonstrations.

Our business part followed its usual pattern with invitations to other WI events. The big one coming up is in Tunbridge Wells for the annual council meeting in March when one of the main speakers will be Jeremy Paxton. We will be hosting a tea and cake table at the Cuxton big lunch on 12th June this year. We learnt that the library has booklets and voting forms concerning the next Thames crossing site which I am sure will provoke lots of discussion around the village. Our clubs are all doing well. Cookery will meet at Pat's. Val has organised trips to the Hazlitt and to a London theatre to see Beautiful. Poetry is thinking about holidays with their poems. And the walking group will go to Maidstone to discover the old cinema sites now sadly long gone. The two painting groups meet regularly to paint with watercolours and on China. Our craft groups are always busy and will have a full day in the church hall soon to learn some new skills. So we may be a little older and creakier but we are all so busy with the things we enjoy and the people we share it all with. Come along and join us anytime. Next meeting Thursday 3rd March in the Church Hall with Fun poems to listen to. Sheila.

### Concert for Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)

Prominent Christian worship leader and singer/song-writer Cathy Burton is performing at Cobham Hall School DA12 3BL, 15<sup>th</sup> April 7.30 pm. Admission free, tickets from <http://www.jumblebee.co.uk/cathyburton>



Christian Aid Supper

Unfortunately this also is on 15<sup>th</sup> April. It will be held at St Francis Church at 7.00 for 7.30 pm. The speaker will be announced nearer the time. So we're spoilt for choice! Please book supper place (£7) with Rector.

The Bells of St Mary's Chatham

These bells, which were rung for long after the church closed for worship in 1974 by volunteer ringers, including some of our own, have now been re-hung in a St Goranus Gorran Church in Cornwall. They were cast at Whitechapel in the 1890s – a ring of eight large bells. So important were they that Queen Victoria gave permission for the tenor to be named after her. St Mary's Church is located in Dock Road and is the most significant and attractive building visible from the river and the opposite bank. There were eight bells with the tenor (wgt 25 0 21, diameter 52") tuned to the relatively unusual key of D#. (This ring replaced a single bell which was donated to Eakring in Nottinghamshire.) When the bells were ringing, their music filled the Medway Valley and could be heard from Cuxton to the top of Chatham Hill, even more impressive than the Cathedral bells. It is very sad to lose them from the Medway Towns but it is good to know that they have found a new home where they will be valued.

There had been a church on the site since Saxon times. Between the two world wars, it was somewhat in the doldrums, but it became the centre of a very effective and important ministry during the second. The Rector, the Rev'd Joseph MacCulloch, (whom I heard lecture when I was a schoolboy in about 1971) both filled the church for evening worship (two sittings at one stage!) and held services in the town centre pubs. After the war, things declined again and St Mary's merged with St John's in Railway Street. St Mary's closed in 1974 after a bitter fight to keep it open and everything then centred on St John's. Much money was spent on restoring that building, but it found itself isolated by changes to the roads in the late eighties and the congregation merged with Chatham United Reformed Church in what had been Ebenezer Congregational Church in Clover Street. This was founded in 1662, in which year many ministers and congregations had to leave the Church of England because they found the re-imposition of the Prayer Book unacceptable after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne.

Both St Mary's and St John's are important architecturally and their demolition would be unthinkable, but how should they be used? Obviously, there are far fewer people living in the town centre than there used to be. Think of all the houses demolished to make way for the Pentagon. There are also no longer thousands of servicemen and women stationed around Chatham. So fewer town centre places of worship are needed, but I can't help think but that we ought to need more than we do if people only loved God as they ought. I'm glad that Anglicans and Congregationalists are now able to worship together again, but sorry that there aren't enough worshippers every Sunday to fill all three buildings and perhaps to need services in the pubs as well! RIK.

From the Registers

Funerals:

12 <sup>th</sup> January	Estelle Anne Killick (85)	Bush Road
14 <sup>th</sup> January	Grace Evelyn Spencer (102)	Snodland
21 <sup>st</sup> February	Marion May Tate (73)	Nine Acres Road

Marion Tate RIP

For years, Marion kept our church linen at Cuxton beautifully laundered and always made sure that there were flowers for St Michael. Her faithful attendance at weekday services long made it possible to hold a daily Communion to the glory of God and for the well-being of the Church and the wider community.

Love!...that is what I ask...I know but one thing now - to love Thee, O Jesus! Glorious deeds are not for me, I cannot preach the Gospel, shed my blood...what does it matter? My brothers toil instead of me, and I, the little child, I keep quite close to the royal throne, I love for those who fight. Saint Therese of Lisieux.

Please Sell Halling Fire Station  
An open letter to Halling Parish Council

I should like to add my voice to the campaign to persuade Halling Parish Council to sell the old fire station to Halling Baptist Church. The story so far is that many of us in the village were disappointed when Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority decided to close our fire station. We were not only concerned at the possible safety implications but we were also unhappy at the loss of our local band of fire-fighters who were a great asset to our community, among other things, organising the biennial pantomime which was so enjoyable and raised a lot of funds for village organisations. It would also have been a shame if the building which forms part of Halling's cultural heritage had been demolished only to be replaced with undistinguished housing in a development which might well close off access to the recreation ground. As usual, views expressed in the public consultation made no difference at all to a decision which had already been taken and the station closed.

Meanwhile, however, £100,000 became available to Halling Parish Council from a Section 106 agreement whereby Redrow made money for the community available to Medway Council as part of its obtaining planning permission to develop the old Rugby site. This was to be used in order to acquire the fire station for the benefit of the people of Halling.

Unfortunately, however, there was no obvious feasible community use, such as converting the fire station into a museum. So long as Halling Parish Council owns the building, expenses such as maintenance, rates and insurance fall on Halling council taxpayers. There is no income generated by the site.

Halling Baptist Church owns the chapel just down the road and it is no longer possible to repair and maintain that building economically. So, unless they are able to acquire another site to purchase or rent, we shall lose Halling Baptist Church from the village and the contribution which it has been making for a hundred years and which it intends to continue to make in the future. The Baptists have offered the Parish Council £175,000 for the site and there have been no other offers. So, sell the site and HPC gain £175,000 for village amenities, we retain our Baptist Church, we retain this culturally important building in the village, and Halling taxpayers are spared the ongoing cost of maintaining it.

There are really only two other possibilities. One is to convert the fire station into offices for the parish council. This would be another big expense for Halling taxpayers. It could be argued that the location in Vicarage Road is less accessible to the public than the existing offices in the Community Centre. Moreover, the rent HPC pays to the Community Centre is an important part of its income. So Halling taxpayers would be paying perhaps twice as much for their council offices and at the same time withdrawing support from a valuable village institution.

The other possibility is for the parish council to try to sell the site to a property developer. We should lose the old building. We should possibly lose that access to the Recreation Ground. This scheme raises all sorts of legal and moral issues about using money donated for one purpose for another one entirely. It is true that such a sale might eventually raise more money for the village, but that is speculation. The Fire & Rescue Service, Redrow and Medway Council might all have something to say about it! If the building is kept empty for years, this will be a drain on resources. If it is converted into parish council offices and then, after a few years, sold for house-building, all the money spent on the conversion will have been wasted and the parish council will once again be spending taxpayers' money on finding new office space.

Some people think that there is a reluctance in our multicultural society for a local authority to appear to be supporting Christians. Such a reluctance would hardly be fair to the Church, a community organisation which deserves as much consideration as any other group such as footballers, walkers, etc..

Roger Knight,  
Rector of Cuxton and Halling.

## NATURE NOTES JANUARY 2016

“Winter the Huntsman” *Osbert Sitwell*

Through the iron glades rides Winter the Huntsman.  
All colour fades As his horn is heard sighing.  
For through the forest his wild hooves crash and thunder  
Till many a mighty branch is torn asunder.  
And the red Reynard creeps to his hole near the river,  
The copper leaves fall And the bare trees shiver.

As night creeps from the ground hides each tree from its  
brother  
And each dying sound reveals yet another.  
Is it Winter the Huntsman who gallops through his iron  
glades,  
Cracking his cruel whip to the gathering glades?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, I walk with Murphy round the grassy paths at Bluewater. It is mild with westerly winds blowing. Gorse, daisies and sainfoin are in bloom. The next day is grey with rain and drizzle when I walk along Pilgrims Road to see a friend. Later, I walk home when darkness has fallen. Street lights are reflected in the wet road. Rain continues to fall into the night and into the next day. When the light is fading in the late afternoon, I watch rooks flying home to roost. The next day at Bluewater, I see delicate catkins and daisies. On 5<sup>th</sup> I walk up the church path to the fields where a few buttercups raise their golden heads to the sky. I enter Mays Wood where the paths are very muddy and where the air is full of birdsong. Spring is not too far away. I skirt the ploughed field to Six Acre Wood but there are no flowers to be seen just yet. I continue through the churchyard to the main road. Rain falls in the evening. On 8<sup>th</sup> there is a beautiful sunset then a starlit sky. For the next three days there is rain but it is quite mild. On 12<sup>th</sup>, when I walk along Six Acre path, I see fungi growing on some fallen logs. I skirt the ploughed fields to Mays wood then cross the fields where a few red hips still cling to their slender twigs. A few buttercups and daisies bloom. One field sported dead grasses and brown umbellifers. Birds sang. The 14<sup>th</sup> brings north winds and very cold weather.

On 16<sup>th</sup> I walk through Six- acre Wood and the muddy paths across the fields. A crescent moon hangs in the sky as the sun dips in the west. The wind has dropped causing a stillness in the trees. Rooks congregate in the ash tree in the churchyard. There has been a dusting of snow overnight. Long tailed tits come to feed on 17<sup>th</sup>. Another cold day follows. We wake up to a frost on 19<sup>th</sup>. The sun shines from a blue-flecked sky when I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. On 20<sup>th</sup> the moon shining in the evening sky is ringed with mist. There has been a sharp frost in the early hours of 21<sup>st</sup>. Plants, trees and grass are white. I clear the ice from the birds' water bowls and put out fresh water and seed. New buds have formed on the lilac and other shrubs. The 22<sup>nd</sup> is wet with grey clouds being driven across the sky from the west. Birds come to feed but I haven't seen collared doves or chaffinches for some time. A bright moon lights up the night sky. On 23<sup>rd</sup>, fog hovers over the hedges and trees. The paths are damp and the wet grass glistens. There is some sunshine and birdsong. I notice that days of light are lengthening. Grey days follow but it is mild. Along the M2, I notice golden gorse is in bloom. Grey skies continue to the end of the month. The birds shelter from the drizzle. Elizabeth Summers.



### Tommy's Talking Points

I was one year old on 30<sup>th</sup> January. So I am now quite mature. I know that socks, underwear and handkerchiefs are not dog toys. I know that Master doesn't see the funny side if I unroll the lavatory paper the length of the hall and start chewing. He says I am not a labrador! Apparently, some dogs are suffering from depression because they aren't going for walks in all this wet weather. To be fair to Master, he doesn't let me down in that department and most dog owners are the same. That's one reason why they keep fit. (Fit for what?) Other reasons are that the joy and unconditional love of dogs is good for your emotional well-being and consequently your physical health. Our hair and the little bit of dirt we bring in helps to protect against allergies and strengthens your immune systems against infection. We've had some quite long walks on days off. Leybourne Lakes was fun. Master was reminded of the time the Mothers' Union went on a walk there. Half (including Master) went clockwise round the lake. The other half went anticlockwise. When the clockwise failed to meet the anticlockwise, Master thought that half his Mothers' Union (including his own mother) had fallen in and drowned. It turned out that they had given up and gone to the pub! We also discovered that you can walk or take the bus (but not the car) from Snodland Cemetery to Holborough Lakes. I'm better at coming back when I'm called now and I've been allowed to run in the woods and fields now its light for longer, but sometimes it's still just too exciting and I just have to investigate all the wonderful smells. I wasn't too keen on the day our trees were cut down. The noise was terrible and went on and on, but the result is a great improvement. Got to play with Raffle in a minute. See you all soon, Tommy.