

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
1 <sup>st</sup> May Easter 6	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall		Zephaniah 3 vv 14-20 p947 Matthew 28 vv 1-20 p1000
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism		Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 16 vv 6-15 p1111 Revelation 21 vv 10-27 p1249 Revelation 22 vv 1-5 p1250 John 14 vv 23-29 p1082
5 <sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion		Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p 1062
8 <sup>th</sup> May Easter 7	11.00 Holy Communion		Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-40 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall		Isaiah 44 vv 1-8 p729 Ephesians 4 vv 7-16 p1175
15 <sup>th</sup> May Whitsun / Pentecost	11.00 Holy Communion Stop! Look! Listen!		Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 12-17 p1134 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
22 <sup>nd</sup> May Trinity Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion		Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084
29 <sup>th</sup> May Trinity 1	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism		I Kings 8 vv 22-43 p345 Galatians 1 vv 1-12 p1168 Luke 7 vv 1-10 p1034
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
1 <sup>st</sup> May Easter 6	9.30 Family Communion		Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 16 vv 6-15 p1111 Revelation 21 vv 10-27 p1249 Revelation 22 vv 1-5 p1250 John 14 vv 23-29 p1082
5 <sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day	7.30pm Holy Communion		Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p 1062
8 <sup>th</sup> May Easter 7	9.30 Holy Communion		Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-40 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
15 <sup>th</sup> May Whitsun / Pentecost	8.00 Holy Communion		Epistle & Gospel BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion		Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 12-17 p1134 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
2.00 On Fire followed by tea in grounds of Cuxton URC			
22 <sup>nd</sup> May Trinity Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion		Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084
29 <sup>th</sup> May Trinity 1	9.30 Holy Communion		I Kings 8 vv 22-43 p345 Galatians 1 vv 1-12 p1168 Luke 7 vv 1-10 p1034
Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 am Cuxton		Holy Communion Thursdays 9.30 am Halling	
4 <sup>th</sup> May Rogation Day	Acts 17 v15 -18 v1 John 16 vv 12-15	5 <sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 Luke 24 vv 44-53
11 <sup>th</sup> May	Acts 20 vv 28-38 John 17 vv 11-19	12 <sup>th</sup> May	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17 vv 20-26
18 <sup>th</sup> May	James 4 vv 13-17 Mark 9 vv 38-40	19 <sup>th</sup> May	James 5 vv 1-6 Mark 9 vv 41-50
25 <sup>th</sup> May Venerable Bede	I Peter 1 vv 18—25 Mark 10 vv 32-45	26 <sup>th</sup> May Corpus Christi	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 6 vv 51-58

w/c 8<sup>th</sup> May Christian Aid Week and Week of Prayer for Evangelism.

Copy Date June Magazine: 13<sup>th</sup> May 8.30 am Rectory



## The EU and Me

How are you going to vote in the referendum on June 23<sup>rd</sup>? I hope you will vote. We have been entrusted with this tremendous responsibility, to share in a decision which is not important for our own country alone, but also for the whole of Europe and which will have a major impact on much of the rest of the world. I hope you will not shirk your own part in making this decision.

I think we should hope for a decisive result, with one side or the other gaining a big enough majority to settle the issue for at least a generation. Whatever the result, all of us, however we voted, must afterwards live together in harmony and work with the decision the majority has taken democratically.

I'll try to put the case fairly for both sides, but I had better start by declaring my own personal inclinations. I'm a strong advocate of freedom and independence, of individual rights and responsibilities. Personally, I dislike the idea of my country being dictated to by Brussels bureaucrats as much as I dislike Medway Council bureaucrats dictating to me how I should live my own life. I voted to leave in 1975. Was, I wonder, joining the Common Market the worst disaster to befall the English people since 1066? Given that the contagion of overregulation seems to have originated in Brussels, I'm rather hoping that, if we do leave the EU, we can elect a British government which will also curtail the powers of local authorities considerably and curb the nanny state!

My admittedly limited knowledge of history suggests to me that the two periods in which this country really flourished were the Tudor and Victorian eras, when we disengaged somewhat from Europe and reached out to the rest of the world. In the Middle Ages, we had squandered a good deal of blood and treasure fighting European wars and inflicted much suffering on the people of France. The decline of the British Empire, on which the sun allegedly never set, was certainly accelerated, if not caused, by our entanglement in the Great War of 1914. It is always dangerous to second guess history, to speculate on *what if?*, but without the involvement of the British Empire, many scholars believe that the Great War would

have remained confined to Europe (instead of becoming a world war) and that Germany would have fairly swiftly defeated France as she did in 1871 and 1940. Historians differ on what would have followed from that. Some suggest that the Kaiser's government would have established something like the EU (only excluding Britain and her empire, of course). In that case, there would have been no rise of the Nazis dedicated to avenging the defeat of 1918 with such terrible consequences for Europe and the rest of the world in the ensuing decades. Others think that the Kaiser was actually not much better than Hitler, that his government would not have been much less oppressive and expansionist than the Nazis were and that ultimately we would have been unable to avoid war with Germany or even with the whole of a German dominated Europe. If the British Empire had not been weakened by two world wars which started in Europe, on the other hand, would it have evolved into a commonwealth of democracies under the law, or would we have continued to use our superior military and naval strength to dominate and exploit one fifth of the world's population? Another unanswerable question.

Now, I'll try to recast those two last paragraphs from the opposite point of view. Freedom, independence and individualism are highly desirable, but *no man is an island entire unto himself*. We need one another. We live in communities, societies, nations, the world. We can't thrive without other people. But, in order to live with other people, we have to forego some of our freedom and independence. We have laws and conventions and treaties. I can't do just as I like here in the Rectory without caring about the consequences for my neighbours. Neither can the United Kingdom exist as if we were the only country on earth. We need to make agreements with one another, to enter into treaties, to trade, to recognise national and international law. We can't live without other people. So we have to accommodate our personal freedoms so as not to impinge on their rights. We give up a certain amount of control over our own lives in order to experience the blessings of sharing our lives with other people. Marriage is the best example of this at the level of individuals. Each gives self to the other and the two become one for better or worse unconditionally for the rest of their lives. We have many other family relationships of varying degrees of closeness and relationships with

friends, neighbours and colleagues. Similarly, as a nation, we have all sorts of ties – not only the EU, but the UN, NATO, the Commonwealth, etc..

We can, however, choose our friends. We might want to associate with the Commonwealth or with the English-speaking world or with the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation as much as or more than we want to associate with the EU. We can also choose how close a relationship we want with our friends. Do we want to live in the same house with them and share their rules or do we want to preserve our independence and opt in to as much or as little of their programme as we feel comfortable with? If they only want our friendship on their terms, do we still want to be friends with them? Or would we be happier as Billy No Mates?

Would there have been another European War (leading to a Third World War) if the dominant European powers of Germany and France hadn't tied themselves into what became the European Union? Another imponderable, but the western world was sick of war by 1945. Moreover the threat posed by Soviet Russia more or less compelled the western powers to stick together and to form NATO. Whatever might have been the case five or six decades ago, I find it very hard to believe that modern Germany would march into Poland tomorrow if Britain were to leave the EU.

So, there remains a case to be made on either side. The main issues are apparently constitutional, economic, security, immigration and national identity.

The EU is not really a democratic organisation. The European Parliament has very little effective power. The unelected European Commission has a great deal of power and so does the European Court. Neither is in any sense democratic. The Council of Ministers is democracy at second or third hand. We get to vote for members of parliament. They support a government. The government appoints ministers to attend the Council of Ministers. The EU is also becoming even less democratic as the elite in charge overrule national democracies in order to impose what they believe to be the best solutions to the immigration crisis and the economic collapse of some Eurozone countries.

If we value democracy, do we think a more democratic EU is the answer, with more powers

for the European Parliament? Are we prepared to give up that much national sovereignty? Wouldn't it be too big and too diverse ever to deal with important and urgent problems? Or would we like to bring sovereignty back to our national parliament? Do we think our laws should only be made by people we vote for directly? If so, the EU in its present form is not viable. If we believe in sharing sovereignty at a level higher than the nation state, why stop at Europe? Why not aim for closer ties with all the western powers, or with the Commonwealth? Is the eventual aim a world government and a world parliament? On the other hand, if we are worried about our individuality and our own culture being subsumed in enormous international organisations, how small should the nation state be? Should England, Wales and Scotland separate? If they did, what of Northern Ireland? Should we turn back the clock, not 44 years to before we joined the EU or 309 years to before we became one with Scotland, but 1500 years to when Kent itself was an independent kingdom?

Knowledgeable people come down on both sides of the economic argument. Some of them say that we should lose our access to European markets and become poorer if we left the EU. Others say that the EU would have to continue to trade with us on good terms, because it is as much in their interest as ours. To do otherwise would be cutting off their noses to spite their faces. We should have less regulation outside the EU. Our businesses would not be tangled up in red tape. We should be able to trade more freely with the rest of the world, much of which is doing far better economically than the sclerotic EU. Some people, however, worry that a British government too close to the City of London and the boardrooms of multimillion pound corporations would scrap not only unnecessary regulation, but also the rules we need to maintain the health and safety of workers and consumers and to protect them from exploitation.

There is also the fear that the EU leadership would do its best to make it difficult for Britain to thrive outside Europe for fear that the populations of other EU countries might think about leaving themselves. Actually, this is one of my problems about the EU. The people in favour of it form an elite who regard the rest of us as stupid peasants who can't be trusted with a say in the decision-making process. Europhiles at home and in Europe are quite angry that David Cameron has

given the British people a choice and they are quite determined that the ordinary people in other countries should not be allowed their own say as to whether or not they wish to remain part of an ever closer union.

The security argument is closely parallel to the economic argument. Are we better off making our own decisions about issues such as border control, data sharing, extradition and military interventions or pooling these decisions in a greater whole? The greater whole could be more effective. On the other hand, we could find ourselves outvoted and compelled to adopt policies which we regarded as not in our own best interests. Law-abiding democracies will, I am sure however, continue to cooperate in the fight against terrorism and other serious crime whether they are inside or outside the EU.

Immigration is the issue that makes me worry about the out campaign. Some of those most strenuously advocating that we leave the EU are very anti-immigrant. Christians cannot be anti any human beings. Whatever immigration policy we adopt, we absolutely have to treat immigrants and would be immigrants with respect. There are good reasons for immigration. We live in one of the best countries in the world and it is not surprising that many people want to come here to escape war or persecution or poverty. We benefit too by immigrants coming here, bringing their skills and willingness to work, often in jobs for which there are too few British people willing or suitably qualified to fill vacancies. We also benefit by meeting and engaging with people from different cultures. There are also reasons for worrying about immigration: too much pressure on jobs, housing and public services. We are a crowded country with a tenth of this green and pleasant land already having disappeared under tarmac and concrete. Natives may feel that their own culture is being dissolved in a sea of diversity. Immigrants may continue to regard as "home" the places their families came from rather than where they now live. This may present a problem when there is conflict between this country and the country or culture from which the immigrants came. Nobody says that we should turn away all would be immigrants. Hardly anybody says that we should welcome all those who want to come. There is no moral reason why immigrants from Europe should be treated differently from the way we treat immigrants from the rest of the world. The questions are whom

should we welcome to live here and who should decide who is welcome? We may feel that the best way to deal with the huge numbers of migrants is to agree a common strategy across the whole European continent. We may, on the other hand, believe that we should retain control of our own borders.

Finally, the question of identity and our place in the world. You may think of yourself as English, British or European or all three. Maybe you think of yourself as a citizen of the world. Ask me my race and I shall say "human". Ask me my ethnicity and, if I answer at all, I shall say "white English", the category which was tellingly left off the 2001 census. Much more significantly than any secular categorisations of nationality or ethnicity, I belong to *a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues* - the Church of God. Christian is my essential identity.

Where does the EU fit in? Is it a step towards a universal brotherhood of nations or is it a private club for rich western nations, protecting themselves against the rest of the world with tariffs and trade barriers? The controversy about whether or not to invite Turkey to join is evidence that this question is far from settled. If we're aiming for universal brotherhood, we do everything we can to make it possible for Turkey to join. If the EU is a club of like-minded, post-Christian western nations, we make it as awkward as possible for them to join.

Like-minded western nations. Is Britain really naturally part of Europe or was General de Gaulle right that we don't properly belong? Most of continental Europe has experienced life under the tyrannies of Napoleon, Hitler and/or Stalin. (We played a big part in rescuing them!) It goes back far further than that, however. In its declining centuries, the Roman Empire became very bureaucratic, controlling and paternalistic, even more so in the Byzantine east than in the west. The Holy Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the Napoleonic Code, Soviet Socialism and National Socialism all took up the same mantle. The people in charge know best. It is therefore in the interests of ordinary people to have their lives run for them by the Church or by the government as the case may be. Everything is regulated. What isn't explicitly permitted is forbidden. The authorities are effectively above the law (opening the path to corruption and

tyranny). Democracy and free speech are in the gift of the elite and can be withheld or withdrawn if the elite deem it necessary. (In contrast, democracy and free speech are actually written into the constitution of the USA, inalienable rights which neither the president, nor congress nor the courts can take away.) There are so many rules under the European/Soviet set up that nobody expects them all to be obeyed as you will have observed on trips to Europe, where health and safety etc. are commonly flouted.

As an island on the edge of the continent, we have developed differently. It is our unelected head of state who has little real power. Ditto the Church of England. We would find it inconceivable that parliament wasn't sovereign. Her majesty's government is subject to the same laws as the rest of us. We have Common Law and Magna Carta and the 1689 Bill of Rights. We are a free people under the Law. Democracy and freedom of speech are basic to our national character. We are free to do anything which is not specifically prohibited by law. The laws we do have are enforced without fear or favour. These freedoms have been compromised and eroded by our membership of the EU, but it is still true to say that our political and legal systems have much more in common with the USA and many commonwealth countries than they do with most of Europe.

Then there are language and culture. While the EU spends huge sums of money and a great deal of effort translating documents into the official languages of Europe, most of the world has simply adopted English as its *lingua franca*. Partly for this reason, the culture of the world's only remaining superpower, the USA, easily dominates everything from films to fast food

throughout the world. Continental Europe is a bit of a backwater! You might do better to learn Mandarin than French.

If you wanted to be a cosmopolitan Englishman in the 1950s, when the EEC came into existence, you travelled and did business in Europe. Sixty years later, it is as easy to get to the USA or Australia as it was to go to France or Austria in those dear dead days almost beyond recall and the internet gives us instant communication everywhere.

Some people think of leaving the EU mainly in terms of securing Britain against what they don't like from beyond these shores. Others think of Brexit as potentially setting us free from an outdated, overregulated, elite club so that we can engage much more openly with the rest of the world. Possibly they are both right; perhaps neither is and we need to be part of Europe both for our own security and in order to take our full part in the global economy.

So, is the EU the future, a step on the road to global integration, or is it the past, a failed fifties attempt to create a super state on the model of what the Americans had done nearly two centuries previously in quite different circumstances? Some people think that the EU wouldn't long survive the departure of its second biggest net contributor and if Brexit set a precedent for other disaffected populations. That is for the peoples of Europe to decide (not just the elite, I hope). Do we want to continue to throw our lot in with them, to put most of our eggs in the European basket? Or do we think we would be better going it alone, relating to other nations on our own terms? Apparently, we get to decide. Don't forget to vote on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Roger.

#### Psalm 100 Jubilate Deo.

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands : serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song. Be ye sure that the Lord he is God : it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise : be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name. For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting : and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

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.**

# On Fire

Pentecost Praise

Whitsun Witness

2.00 pm

15<sup>th</sup> May

URC Grounds Bush Road Cuxton

Praise Service followed by tea

No charge but a voluntary collection for Mission Aviation Fellowship.  
An opportunity to meet Samantha Aspinall the new URC minister.

## 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.

Founding Father of the European Community Jean Monnet: 'Europe's nations should be guided towards the super-state without their people understanding what is happening. This can be accomplished by successive steps each disguised as having an economic purpose, but which will eventually and irreversibly lead to federation.' (The exact words have been disputed, but other documents indicate that this is what he and other EU founding fathers believed as long ago as the 1950s.)

### Forthcoming Attractions

15<sup>th</sup> May 2.00 pm On Fire URC Grounds  
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 –  
preacher the Archdeacon.  
9<sup>th</sup> July: Barbecue 6.00 pm Rectory

10<sup>th</sup> July: 4.30 pm Michael Hudson of the Bible  
Society will join us for tea and Evening Prayer at the  
Jubilee Hall and tell us about the Bible in Cambodia.  
16<sup>th</sup> July: Halling Fun Day  
17<sup>th</sup> September: 7.30 Quiz for Christian Aid at St  
Nicholas.  
29<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm St Michael's Patronal Festival  
– preacher the Rural Dean.

### Refugees

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot

Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These people are just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born  
there  
Do not be so stupid as to think that  
The world can be looked at another way.

(Now read from bottom to top.)

Brian Bilston

## Garden Maintenance

All aspects of garden maintenance undertaken

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### Tommy's Talking Points I

1<sup>st</sup> April 2016



Master said I could start this month's talking points a week early because I want to tell you about a new technique for keeping dog hair off your carpets and soft-furnishings. What you have to do is to train your dog to moult only out of doors or in rooms where the flooring is linoleum or tiles and the surfaces are Formica or marble. In order to do this, you have to harness your dog's natural response to temperature. Keep the temperature down in rooms where there are beds or three piece suites and carpets on the floor. An easy way to check whether they are cold enough is that, if your bedrooms are at the correct temperature, your breath will freeze overnight, making attractive patterns on the window panes as an added bonus. In the living-room the goldfish bowl should acquire a thin film of ice overnight. This will not harm the fish provided that it melts for at least four hours in the middle of the day. Thus your dog will learn to keep his hair on in rooms where there are surfaces from which it is difficult to remove it. Allowing for cooking three square meals a day, the kitchen should be warm enough for him to feel secure in shedding any surplus hair onto the linoleum. Some bathrooms may also be warm enough for your dog to moult in without catching cold. The training takes about fifteen years and remember that dogs don't like being alone. So you have to sit with him in either the cold or the hot rooms. With any luck, he'll perform the spring moult in the garden. Tommy.

## From the Registers

### Funeral

24<sup>th</sup> March

Derek Reynolds (88)

White Leaves Rise

Friends will also be sorry to hear of the death of Libby Collins, formerly of Ladywood Road.

### Thanks For Easter

Easter is the greatest festival of the Christian Year. Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! It is wonderful to see the two churches so beautifully decorated and all the Easter flowers, to sing the Easter hymns and to listen to the choirs sing, also to hear the bells ring out over the village. Thank you to all those who make these things possible, not only at this season, but throughout the year. Easter Monday seemed like a miracle. Hurricane Katie blew herself out in the morning while Tommy and I were walking in the woods. We then enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon for our Easter Egg Hunt and the children and adults had a great time searching the grounds and engaging in various activities in the church hall. It only came on to rain again at 4.00 when it was nearly all over. Thanks again to those who worked so hard on the event and to those who donated eggs.

We are sometimes told that things are really tough for young people today. I'm not sure about that. They are certainly better off in material terms than previous generations. Medical care is better than it has ever been. There are far more opportunities for travel than there used to be. Admittedly, the internet brings problems like cyber bullying and sexting, but the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. House prices and job opportunities seem to be the main difficulties confronting young adults just now, but, even so, this isn't the first generation to have to live with parents or to rely on them for help with a first home. We employ tens of thousands of migrant workers because British youngsters no longer have to accept poorly paid menial work. Admittedly, teenagers no longer get their university education paid for like my generation, but then so many more of them now get the opportunity to go to college than my contemporaries did. So I'm not sure that young people today have it tougher than previous generations. Maybe they do; maybe they don't. At least there isn't a war on as there was when my parents and grandparents were young.

Where young people quite definitely are at a disadvantage today is that they are deprived of the knowledge of God. Religion has been marginalised in our society. We no longer teach children the Bible stories. We no longer say our prayers with them. There is always something better to do on a Sunday than go to church or Sunday School. Religious education has become learning about what other people believe, not being nurtured in the Christian faith. Increasingly, public demonstrations of Christian faith are discouraged by officialdom.

This ignorance of God is the worst deprivation of all because it robs people of the resources we need to live. Without religion, we don't know Whom to thank for this amazing world and all the joyful things in our lives. Without faith, we have nobody to turn to in prayer when we are confronted by problems which we feel we cannot overcome. We are deprived of that sense of never being alone in the world if we don't know that Jesus is God with us, wherever we are, all the time, whatever happens to us. We do not have that sense of always being loved, of always being valued, if we can rely only on our fellow human beings for kindness and affirmation. They are not always kind. If human beings are just highly evolved apes, there is no rationale for our ethics. It's *survival of the fittest*, not *love thy neighbour*. If there is no overarching Providence, no omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God Who is love, there is no reason to hope that the forces of chaos and evil won't ultimately triumph. If this life is all there is, everything is ultimately meaningless. We can't take our possessions with us when we die. Our achievements will soon be forgotten. There would be no enduring value at all in our lives if our lives were not hid with Christ in God. Death would be the end. And what is the end for non-believers? If there were no God, if there were nothing apart from the material world, could there be anything at all after death? If there is life after death, do we imagine that it is the same for everyone, irrespective of who they are, what they believe or how they have lived? Or do we believe, as the Bible teaches, that there will be judgment, that we shall all give account to God for the way we have lived? Do we believe in justice and mercy? Eternal life, we are taught, is to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. Young people (and old people) are certainly deprived if they don't have this knowledge. These were my Easter week thoughts and my Low Sunday sermon. Roger.



### Thank You Also

Thank you also to those who expressed your sympathy and support when I told you that Medway Council were muttering about taking legal action against me for telling you the story behind the Tree Preservation Order imposed on my garden. You won't be surprised that the diocese has made it quite clear that it will not be part of a cover up. There was some concern that one officer might have believed himself to have been accused of wrongdoing of which he was not guilty. I would not want that. So I prepared as full an account as I could of which officer did what and a summary of the reasons why some might think that there was corruption and I sent it to the council's legal department. I can make it available to anyone else who would like to see it. These people are your servants and you are entitled to know what they get up to.

Someone who knows about these things stopped me when I was walking Tommy and told me something else interesting. Apparently most of the trees in Cuxton on which the council has imposed TPOs are on church land. On church land TPOs cover a great deal of worthless scrub. In the rest of the village, however, some quite fine specimens have no protection at all. This is not sufficient of itself to prove corruption.

I'm not too worried about legal action. I haven't said anything which is not true. I can prove most of my account of what happened. I also think it is extremely unlikely that any of the officers involved in this sordid affair would risk testifying in court on oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I'm sure some of you think that I should just give up and accept that powerful people like council officers don't have to play by the rules which apply to us ordinary mortals. That won't do, however. As Tony Hancock said, Did Magna Carta die in vain? No. Council officers exercise wide-ranging powers with very little accountability and often in conditions of secrecy. They have a role in determining which children get into which schools. They give or withhold planning permission. They award council contracts to local and national firms. They decide which roads are priority for repairs. They exercise discretion in enforcing parking regulations, etc.. They assess vulnerable people for the care packages they are entitled to. They take or do not take at risk children into care. It is absolutely vital that council officers always act within the law, that they tell the truth and that they use the council's powers and resources exclusively in the public interest and not at all to do favours for mates or bad turns to people they don't like. I'm just sorry that I can't get Neil Davies, the Chief Executive, to confirm that he agrees with me on these principles. If he did, however, he would have to quash the TPO on my garden, granted its squalid provenance. Roger.

St John's Draw March: £5 each to Miss L Thorne (24), Mrs Ballard (35), Mr S Mitchell (77) & Mr Silver (77) – drawn by Mrs Mattingley.

## FRESH EXPRESSION GROUP TAKES PART IN LOCAL FUN EVENTS.

On June 12th we'll be unfurling our banner and running a Tombola stall at **CUXTON'S BIG LUNCH** and on 16th July at **HALLING FUN DAY** we'll be holding a children's lucky dip and toy stall.

If you have good as new donations for either of these events we'd be most grateful, if you would contact Buffy Maisey on **01634 727 126**.

**Christian Aid**



A Division of The British Council of Churches

### Christian Aid Week

This runs from 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May this year. If you can help with the street collection, please contact Jack Payne on 716368. Christian Aid envelopes may be returned to church if not collected.

The Christian Aid walk is likely to be on 21<sup>st</sup> May, but this is not yet confirmed. If interested, please contact Rector.

### Query

What do you call a selfie taken by another person?

A photograph.

### From The Archbishops



The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have written to all the parish priests with a call to prayer in the week leading up to Pentecost – that is 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May. The theme is Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done. Ministry is empty and barren without prayer. The intention is that there should be a great wave of prayer throughout the land: for all Christians to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ; for all of us to have confidence to share the Gospel; for all to respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him as disciples, to live out the Gospel and to seek God’s Kingdom from day to day.

“At the heart of our prayers will be the words that Jesus Christ himself taught us - ‘Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.’ It is impossible to overstate the life-transforming power of the Lord’s Prayer. It is a prayer that is reassuring enough to be on the lips of the dying and yet dangerous enough to be banned in cinemas. It is famous enough to be spoken each day by billions in hundreds of languages and yet intimate enough to draw us ever closer into friendship with Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to be memorised by small children and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer. When we pray it with sincerity and with joy, there is no imagining the new ways in which God can use us to his glory.”

### Why Not Advertise In This Magazine?

We shall shortly be preparing the advertisement pages for the year from July. Nearly five hundred copies of the magazine are in circulation and local businesses find that this is a good way to reach potential customers. Prices for the year are yet to be finalised, but will be of the order of £40 for  $\frac{1}{6}$ <sup>th</sup> page ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ” x  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ”). If you are interested, please contact Roger on 01634 717134 or [roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk)

### Proof That God Knows All About Me by Malcolm Curnow

It was Maundy Thursday evening. Holy Communion was over, the church stripped and bare. It was time to collect the wooden cross – made 29 years ago in Walter Hayward’s workshop in Halling – from its storage in one of the “charnel houses” behind St Michael’s church. But it was not there! It had been disposed of after Easter last year, suffering from rot, and woodworm. My intension was to replace it before it was needed again. In the rush of modern life, this was simply forgotten. Roger and I parted – he to cocoa and bed, me to my garage to see what could be done.

There it happened. The first piece of wood found was a seven foot long plank, which became the new upright. (Why had I purchased 14 lengths for the new floor for the mower store when 13 would have been enough?) The new cross beam turned up in the odds and ends of the wood bin. It was a length of timber acquired some years ago for panelling the church hall but not used because of a knot hole. (Why was it still in stock?) Fixings would be needed to couple these two pieces together. Nails wouldn’t do, because the upright is too thin. The junk box provided two perfect washer headed screws. (I don’t think these had been seen before and no source is established.)

And so, late that night, the new cross was taken into church and stood before the bare altar table had once stood. Next morning, Good Friday, everything seemed quite normal and organised. However I now knew that God knew my shortcoming of forgetfulness and had shown me that things which were to take place some time in the future were already planned and their resolution also. Malcolm.

### “Cuxton Remembered” by Lillian Bennett

For your copy (£1), please apply to the Rector. Mrs Bennett’s notes on old Cuxton (especially her life at the “White Hart” during both world wars) make fascinating and entertaining reading.

### Tommy’s Talking Points II



And so I come to my normal “Talking Points” when I’m allowed to use the space left when all the human beings have entered all there articles in the magazine. We’re a couple short this month because, when a second Friday (copy day) immediately follows a first Thursday (when they have their meeting), there is no time to get a report on Cuxton WI. So you’ll have to wait for next month to find out about their activities or else, you ladies, you could go along to WI as a visitor and, if you like it, join yourselves. Also the person who normally provides our Nature Notes is not

in a position to do so this month. I might try some rather less expert descriptions of the flora and fauna currently to be seen round and about from a canine point of view.

This time last year, I was still confined to the Rectory and its grounds because I had not yet had all my immunisations. Freedom came in the month of April 2015 and I remember my first walk to Halling was to the annual meeting. I was relieved to discover later that far more fun things happen at St John's than meetings! Otherwise, I don't think Master would bother to go there, whereas he is exactly as enthusiastic about Halling Church as he is about Cuxton Church for the worship and the fellowship, to share in the pastoral care and to reach out to and to serve the community. He wouldn't dare be otherwise!

I started to go out more about that time, but, after I ran away twice last Summer, I was not allowed so much off my lead. Then came the Winter. It was dark mornings and evenings and the paths in the woods were a quagmire. I don't mind a bit of mud myself, but Master isn't so keen. When you stand upright on two feet and you're getting on a bit in years, it's no fun falling over in the mud in the dark. Whereas, when you have four feet with claws on your toes and stand less than a cubit high and your joints are supple and your bones are strong, you just don't care! But still, we had a lot of walks on the lead on the road.

Now it's much lighter, the days are longer and the woodland paths are drying up somewhat. Now I am (almost) entirely trustworthy, I'm allowed off my lead a lot in the woods and fields. The churchyard at Cuxton is very beautiful with primroses and other wild flowers. There were snowdrops right throughout the Winter. Our garden, too, is brightened up considerably by tulips and hyacinths, daffodils, lungwort and (earlier) crocuses. The forget-me-nots will soon be in bloom and I watched him pruning his roses in hopes for the Summer. I would have spent longer out there with him only I hung about right down the bottom of the garden till I saw a neighbour from whom I wanted a cuddle and jumped over the wall to greet her. After that, I had to stay in. I can jump back over the wall, but he doesn't always trust me to do so. Master likes to see me making friends, but he gets impatient if he can't get on with what he's got to do because he's got to go looking for me and bringing me back. To be honest, I'm more interested in the cats, squirrels and foxes than the flowers and have great fun chasing them. Master hasn't seen a fox in our garden for months. They vanish up the bank as soon as I get out there, whereas Max would have played with them if he could. There are lots of smells in the garden and in the open country. I track them down, running around, tail wagging, but I don't think you human-beings fully appreciate the pleasure of sniffing things out.

Easter was good. We had the family and their dogs for dinner. Well, actually we had lamb for dinner, which meant a nice big bone for me. It also meant sausages from the Farm Shop – which I can recommend. Easter Monday was really exciting with Hurricane Katie blowing overnight and still powerful when we went out for our morning walk. Somehow the wind really inspires a dog to enjoy life. Master was pleased, however, that it left off in time for the Easter Egg Hunt. I picked up one egg, dropped it on command and didn't touch any more. Master was proud of me. I really enjoyed playing with all those happy children and some other dogs. Then it rained again when it was all over. So we felt very favoured.

My statutory walk is usually early morning before there are many people about. Since it's been getting light earlier, we go out in the woods. The trees are coming into leaf. The bluebells are coming out in swathes of blue. I'm normally now allowed to run off my lead. I'm quite good at staying within sight, but, if I don't, he doesn't like to shout if we're out when other people are likely to be still in bed. Very often, I have a bonus walk late afternoon if he's finished what he's got to do. We see more people then and lots of other dogs. Most of them are very friendly and want to play too (people and dogs). Some, however, (dogs more than people) are a bit grouchy and I'm supposed to steer clear of them.

Master loves to see me joyfully running and leaping between the trees, through the undergrowth and across the fields. When I do that, I'm doing what I was made to do. It's exactly the same when human beings worship God, joyfully doing what they were made to do, and he likes to see that as well. He says that whenever anything in the whole universe is doing what it is meant to do the Creator is glorified. By the time most of you read this, we should have walked a bit more of the North Downs Way – Etchinghill to Wye. They are planning to take the bus from Folkestone to Etchinghill! Wye Oh Wye? Maybe a new photograph of me next month. Tommy the Rectory Spaniel.