

Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
7 th May Easter 4	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall		Ephesians 2 vv 11-22 p1174 Luke 19 vv 37-48 p1055
	11.00 Holy Communion		Genesis 7 vv 1-24 p8 Acts 2 vv 42-47 p1094 I Peter 2 vv 13-25 p1218 John 10 vv 1-10 p1076
14 th May Easter 5	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism		Genesis 8 vv 1-19 p9 Acts 7 vv 55-60 p1100 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 p1218 John 14 vv 1-14 p1082
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall		Revelation 21 vv 1-14 p1249 Luke vv 25-32 p1028
21 st May Easter 6	11.00 Holy Communion		Genesis 8 v20 – 9 v17 p10 Acts 17 vv 22-31 p1113 I Peter 3 vv 13-22 p1219 John 14 vv 15-21 p1082
25 th May Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion		Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1093 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
28 th May Easter 7	11.00 Holy Communion		Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
4 th June Pentecost	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall		Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 7 vv 37-39 p1072
	11.00 Holy Communion		Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 I Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153 John 20 vv 19-23 p1089
Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton			
7 th May Easter 4	9.30 Family Communion		Genesis 7 vv 1-24 p8 Acts 2 vv 42-47 p1094 John 10 vv 1-10 p1076
14 th May Easter 5	9.30 Holy Communion		Genesis 8 vv 1-19 p9 Acts 7 vv 55-60 p1100 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 p1218 John 14 vv 1-14 p1082
21 st May Easter 6	8.00 Holy Communion		Epistle & Gospel BCP (Easter 5)
	9.30 Holy Communion		Genesis 8 v20 – 9 v17 p10 Acts 17 vv 22-31 p1113 I Peter 3 vv 13-22 p1219 John 14 vv 15-21 p1082
25 th May Ascension Day	7.30 pm Holy Communion		Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1093 Ephesians 1 vv 15-23 p1173 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
28 th May Easter 7	9.30 Holy Communion		Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
4 th June Pentecost	9.30 Family Communion		Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 20 vv 19-23 p1089
Wednesday HC 9.30 am St Michael's		Thursday HC 9.30 am St John's	
3 rd May	Acts 8 vv 1-8 John 6 vv 35-40	4 th May	Acts 8 vv 26-40 John 6 vv 44-51
10 th May	Acts 12 v24 – 13 v5 John 12 vv 44-50	11 th May	Acts 13 vv 13-25 John 13 vv 16-20
17 th May	Acts 15 vv 1-6 John 15 vv 1-8	18 th May	Acts 15 vv 7-21 John 15 vv 9-11
24 th May Rogation Day	Acts 17 v15 – 18v1 John 16 vv 12-15	25 th May Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1093 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
31 st May The Visitation	Romans 12 vv 9-16 Luke 1 vv 39-56	1 st June	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17



THY KINGDOM COME

Archdeaconry Prayer Events in Rochester Diocese

Tuesday 30 May 7.00 - 8.00pm: **Praying with Images** - Christ Church Chislehurst, Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, BR7 5RB

Wednesday 31 May 7.00-8.00pm: **Bringing your Concerns into prayer** - St Benedict's Centre, St Mary's Abbey, Swan Street, West Malling, ME19 6JX

Saturday 3rd June 11am – 1pm: **Praying with the Bible** - Christ Church Gravesend, Old Road East, Gravesend, DA12 1NU

Copy Date June magazine 8.30 am 12th May Rectory



Christianity & Literacy

Too many pubs don't serve meals on Mondays. That's a problem for me because Monday is my day off. It's also the origin of this talk. One Monday last September, my friend Margaret and I (together with Tommy the dog) had walked along the cliff top from Pegwell Village to Cliff's End, where the hovercraft used to come in, with a view to having lunch in the local pub. Being Monday, however, lunch was unavailable at Cliff's End and we were obliged to walk onto to Minster, where I'm glad to report, our hopes of refreshment were not disappointed. On the way, Margaret told me about her study into literacy in Tudor England. I was surprised to discover that far more people in Tudor England learned to read than learned to write. That is surprising because nowadays children are taught reading and writing at more or less the same time. We learn our letters, both how to recognise them and how to form them, in infants' school or before. Margaret explained that, in Tudor times, there was much more to writing than reading. You had to mix up your own ink. There were no bottles of Quink on sale in Smith's and Dr Biro's invention lay centuries in the future. You had to be able to fashion a goose feather into a quill pen, using a pen knife, a sharp instrument which you might not want to put into the hands of a five year old. Most significant of all was the cost of what you wrote on – materials like vellum and parchment. Industrially produced paper only became available in Elizabethan times, production

beginning on the banks of the River Darent. Good Queen Bess' golden days also saw the invention of the pencil, but neither pencil nor paper were cheap nor freely available. You definitely didn't want to waste scarce and expensive materials on childish scribbling. So why would you want to learn to write, or read, come to that? You didn't need reading and writing to be a labourer or most kinds of domestic servant. Tradesmen kept accounts on tally sticks. Maybe if you wanted to be a lawyer or a clergyman or an academic or the steward of a great estate, or one of the royal officials, it would be worth the trouble and expense of learning to write, but why bother otherwise? Why indeed did people learn to read? One principal motive was in order to read the bible, the prayer book and other religious works.

My grandfather was born in the 1890s and, as a boy, he had known many adults who couldn't read and write. It was only in 1880 that school attendance became compulsory for all children aged five to ten and even this law was widely disregarded. Only about 82% of children attended school in the 1890s. At about that time, one of my predecessors as Rector of Cuxton, Canon Charles Colson, wrote in the parish magazine, begging parents to send their children to school. Many homes were very poor and they needed any income their children could earn in the fields and factories. Besides, if they were growing up to be farm labourers or housemaids, what need did they have of book learning? Canon Colson made quite an eloquent case for the wisdom of parents

sending their children to school, but his writing presumably had little impact in households where people didn't read. Many of that generation of boys, of course, died in the First World War, but those who survived came home to an entirely different world in which literacy and education generally would become ever more important.

Anyway, my grandfather's point was that, while he knew many people who couldn't read and write, he didn't know any who couldn't do money sums. I'm told that the same is still true of the street children of Brazil. People learn if they are sufficiently motivated. They learn what they want to learn.

The Dean of King's College London, where I studied Theology, came from central Europe, where most people grow up learning several languages as a matter of course. He frequently lamented the difficulty we British students seemed to have learning languages, but, of course, it's not some genetically inherited disability we suffer from; it's the fact that, living on an island which at one time headed an empire on which the sun never set, we seldom have to communicate with people who can't speak English.

So what motivates us to learn? It would be wrong to discount the power of religion. Gobekli Tepe is an archaeological site in Turkey, excavated from 1996 onwards. What is remarkable about it is that it is a temple without a city. It had always been assumed that human beings first built cities to live in and that, when they became sufficiently prosperous, they went in for luxuries such as temples. Gobekli Tepe has resulted in a major rethink. Could it be that nomadic tribes first came together in large numbers to build temples to their gods and then started building cities in which to live and work around the temples? It has been suggested that life was actually easier for hunter gatherers leading a nomadic existence in scattered communities than it was for early farmers settled in towns and tilling the soil with the sweat of their brow. So why did they settle down, till the ground and build cities? Was it in fact because of their religious attachment to their temples? Maybe animals were originally farmed in order to provide meat for temple sacrifices. It is true, however, that many cultures regard the taking of animal life, whether in hunting or the slaughter of farm

animals, as in itself an act of sacrifice. That was true of the people we used to call American Indians and it is true, to a certain extent, of modern Jews and Muslims. Kosher and Halal methods of slaughter reflect the conviction that all life is sacred. The slain animal is to be accorded respect and the lost life is offered back to God.

Etymologically, "civilisation" is from the same root as "city". In the ancient world, only city dwellers were civilised. We country bumpkins were uneducated barbarians. If ancient religion gave rise to the city state, it was also the origin of civilisation. So why, when Ur was one of the very few cities in the world, did God tell Abraham's family to leave it and take up the nomadic life in Canaan?

It isn't hard to discover other examples of the importance of religion to the development of civilisation and its decisive role in education and learning. It was astrologers, especially those of ancient Babylon, whose observations of the heavens provided the original data on which the science of Astronomy is based. It has been suggested that more sophisticated religious ideas made scientific analysis of the cosmos possible. If your people believe that the sun, the moon and the stars are gods, it's potentially impious or blasphemous to treat them as the objects of your investigations. Once, however, you understand (as Jews, Christians and Moslems understand) that the heavenly bodies are actually God's creation, just as we are, then they are no longer off limits. You can study them, catalogue them and even travel to them once you've invented sufficiently powerful rockets. Galileo's conflict with the pope was an aberration in the story of science and religion. It was the Roman Catholic Church's erroneous scientific theories, not its Christian faith, which Galileo got into trouble for arguing with.

It was the priests of ancient Egypt who kept the records of the Nile's yearly inundation, enabling them to tell farmers the right time to plant their crops. Pythagoras is in many ways the father of Western mathematics and the father of Western philosophy. His main interest, however, was religion, which led him to believe that there must be order in the world. I should put it this way. The world has to make sense because it is the creation or reflection of a rational mind, infinitely

greater than our minds, but nevertheless rational, so that we can conceivably begin to understand it, him or her and the universe which is its, his or her creation. Mathematics makes sense (at least to mathematicians). There are scientific laws. You can trust gravity and thermodynamics and all the rest always to be the same, every day, everywhere throughout the universe. Men like Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle and Michael Faraday believed that because they believed that the laws of Science are the Laws of our immutable God as surely as are the Ten Commandments. Science is motivated by awe and wonder and seeks order in the cosmos. Whatever the motivations of atheist scientists today, belief in God was a major factor in motivating the pioneers of modern science, as it is of many Christian practitioners of science today.

Coming back to books, perhaps the hardest group of students for teachers to teach are working class boys and young men. They've got too much energy to sit in a classroom and, if they're not enthused by the subject matter or motivated by the prospect of a job to which their studies are relevant, they tend to be disruptive and inattentive. And yet, how many Muslim young men devote themselves to the study of Arabic so that they can read the Quran in the original? Muslims believe that no translation can convey the beauty and depth of God's Word to Mohammed as well as the original. And so they learn a complex and beautiful language in which to study it. Likewise, Jewish boys learn at least some Hebrew so that they can read from the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) in its original language at their Bar Mitzvah. I guess girls do the same at the relatively newer ceremony of Bath Mitzvah.

Judaism, Islam and Christianity are all, in a sense, religions of the book, though we should never forget that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (II Corinthians 3⁶. As a clergyman, I'd better give the bible reference!) Christianity has been credited with inventing the book. By book, I mean codex, the sort of book with pages sewn together between two covers. Before the spread of Christianity, most books were in scroll form. It's probably an exaggeration to say that we Christians invented the codex, but we certainly made it popular. If you're sharing your faith with someone or arguing about it, and you want to find, say II Corinthians 3⁶, it's much quicker to thumb

through till you find the page you want than to unwind and rewind a long scroll until you get there.

Christianity began in Palestine, where most people at that time spoke Aramaic (which is similar to Hebrew, but not the same). Jesus spoke Aramaic. Some of the words He used are Abba, Amen, Talitha cumi and Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?. Their Bible was pretty much what we call the Old Testament and was written mostly in Hebrew, with small parts in Aramaic. Some Hebrew words and phrases have come into English from the bible like Hallelujah. The only Hebrew word I know which has come into English other than from the bible is sugar, which is curious, because the first time I flew El Al, I put pepper in my coffee, not realising that sugar was Hebrew for sugar.

After Christ's Ascension, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles and the rest of the Church quickly spread the Gospel throughout the Eastern Roman Empire where the lingua franca, ironically enough, was not Latin, but Greek. The New Testament, therefore, was written in Greek. The Old Testament had already been translated several times into Greek, most notably in the version known as the Septuagint. S Jerome translated the bible into Latin, the Vulgate, as the Gospel spread westwards across Europe and southwards into Roman Africa.

There was no written form of some of the languages of the so-called Barbarian peoples of those days. But Christian missionaries were determined that these people should be able to read the bible and to follow the service books in their own tongues. Reading the Word has always been essential to Christian belief. S Ulfilas or Wulfila actually devised an alphabet for the previously unwritten Gothic language, so that the Goths could have their own bibles in their own language. S Cyril and his brother S Methodius did something similar for the Slavs, drawing up the alphabet which became the Cyrillic alphabet (named after Cyril) in which Russian and similar languages are still written today.

In order to promote the reading of the Word and its study, Christians gave us the codex form of the book and actually brought the possibility of written culture to tribes such as the Goths and the

Slavs. Literacy of course then made possible many other kinds of learning.

Following the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, it is well known that, during the so-called Dark Ages, learning was kept alive in the monasteries of Ireland, Great Britain and Europe. The monks read and copied and studied the sacred texts. It was in the context of monasteries as centres of learning that other studies could flourish such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. Often the priest was the only literate person in the parish and most of the business of ordinary people was conducted in the church porch under his guidance and supervision. In fact, my proper job title is still *clerk in holy orders*.

Sadly, the mediaeval Catholic Church became determined to keep all this knowledge, and the power which it offers to those who avail themselves of it, to itself. The Bible was only to be available in Latin and people caught reading or sharing English versions of the Scriptures could be put to death. In spite of the danger, however, it has been calculated that there were more copies of portions of the Bible in English in circulation in mediaeval England than there were of any other English books. The motivation to read the Bible was sufficient not only to learn to read it, but to possess it and to share it with others, even at the risk of being burnt at the stake. Similarly in the world today, there are people willing to risk imprisonment and death for the privilege of possessing and reading the Bible and of sharing it with other people. Jesus Himself is the Word of God.

The Reformation (the Tudor period in England) more or less followed the development of printing in Europe. Bibles and prayer books were translated into the languages of Europe and formed the principal market for printed books. Soldiers of the parliamentary army in the English Civil War were supplied with a special edition of the Scriptures. Ordinary people heard the bible read and took part in the prayer book services in church and, if they had books at home at all, they were likely to be the bible, the Book of Common Prayer, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress. Only Shakespeare had anything like the same influence on the

development of the English language. I remember my mother remarking on how, as a child, she learnt to read in part from following the services in church, a much wider vocabulary and more ambitious grammar than she would have encountered at school or home. There are 588 pages devoted to quotations in my copy of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Of these 38 are devoted to the Bible (King James Version) and 16 to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. What an influence on the development of the English language.

I had better not go on too long. The bible itself says, "of making many books, there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh (Ecclesiastes 12¹²). I must, however, mention Sunday Schools. The monasteries had been the principal centres of learning in the Middle Ages. Some of the funds which became available through their dissolution under Henry VIII were used to fund grammar schools. Cathedrals had choir schools and there were various other religious educational foundations. But nobody bothered much about the education of poor children until C18, when philanthropists such as Hannah Ball and, especially, Robert Raikes founded Sunday Schools. Raikes' vision was that the road out of poverty and poverty's often concomitant vice and crime was education. They met on Sundays because the poor children were at work all the week. The first thing was to learn to read and the text book was the Bible. He began in 1780 and by 1831 1¼ million children (about 25% of the population) were in Sunday Schools. Overlapping with the Sunday School movement, the National Society for Promoting Religious Education was established in 1811 by the Church of England, aiming to provide a school in every parish. There were 12,000 national schools in England and Wales by 1851. Cuxton had a national school which was replaced by a council school in 1906, though our buildings were still used by the state system just about within living memory when children had to walk from Halling to the old buildings at Cuxton for lessons which Halling School did not provide. Other religious bodies also provided schools and promoted education in the C19, but it was not until the 1870 Education Act that the state began to take responsibility for the education of children in this country. The National Society is still going strong

and, in many communities, the church school is still the only school and is often the preferred option where there is more than one school on offer to parents.

I should finish there except that I was told to finish with an anecdote from my experience as a naïf young clergyman. My title parish was All Saints Orpington, where I served from 1980-84. It was frustrating trying to teach the young people. They seemed much more impressed that I ran marathons (albeit very slowly) than that I could expound to them the teaching of S Athanasius. One winter's evening, the senior youth club had

arranged to hold a wide game in Knole Park. On the night in question, the rain was coming down in torrents in Orpington. They persuaded me nevertheless to take them on the train to Sevenoaks in the vain hope that it might be better there. It wasn't, but they decided to go to Knole Park anyway. I had more sense and gave them strict instructions to meet me at the station at such and such a time. After about twenty minutes, even they gave up and came to find me. I asked them how they knew where I would be. "The pub nearest the station," they said. So I had managed to teach them something after all. Roger.

(The above started life as an address to the Rotary Club of Gillingham.)

Forthcoming Attractions

22nd April 7.00pm in Cuxton Social Club: Cuxton Voice – Singing competition for adults and teenagers. If you would like to take part, please contact Robin Bourner 07708 362 836. National singing star Jamie Johnson will also be performing in the first half.

29th April 10.00 am: APCM & Vestry Meeting at St John's.

3rd May: 10.30 am: Bring & Buy for Christian Aid in church hall.

5th May 7.00 pm for 7.30 @ Hoo St Werburgh: Christian Aid Supper.

1st July 6.00 pm: Barbecue at Rectory.



As it is increasingly difficult to carry out street collections, magazines will contain Christian Aid collection envelopes. These may be returned to church or posted directly to Christian Aid. It is also possible, if you wish, to donate to Christian Aid online. Christian Aid Week starts on 7th May.

There is a bring & buy sale for Christian Aid at 10.30 am in the church hall on 3rd May before the parish lunch.

Don't forget the Christian Aid Supper and Talk at Hoo St Werburgh on 5th May (7.00 for 7.30, tickets £7.00). Please inform Rector if you wish to attend.

Cuxton's Own Charity - The Thomas Stevens Trust

This charity was founded more than 100 years ago by the Rev Thomas Stevens to provide 'Bread and Coal for the needy of Cuxton'. The present trustees interpret that to mean we can provide funds for 'Food and Heating' (in the form of coal, an electricity or gas bill). We have money available. **We need your help:** we are asking for nominations for people that would benefit from our assistance. The criteria are as set out above and they **must** be resident in Cuxton. If you know of an individual or a family that would benefit from our help, please contact any one of the trustees in **confidence**. We do not publish names of those we help.

The Trustees:

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The Archbishop of Canterbury will be visiting the diocese from the 17th – 19th July, arrangements to be announced.

Thy Kingdom Come is the Archbishops' prayer initiative for the period from Ascension Day to Pentecost – 25th May to 4th June. The Archbishops state the aim as being:

- To join in prayer with the whole family of God the Father;
- To pray for the empowering of God the Holy Spirit;
- That we may be effective witnesses to God the Son, Jesus Christ.

24th June - Our Patronal Festival

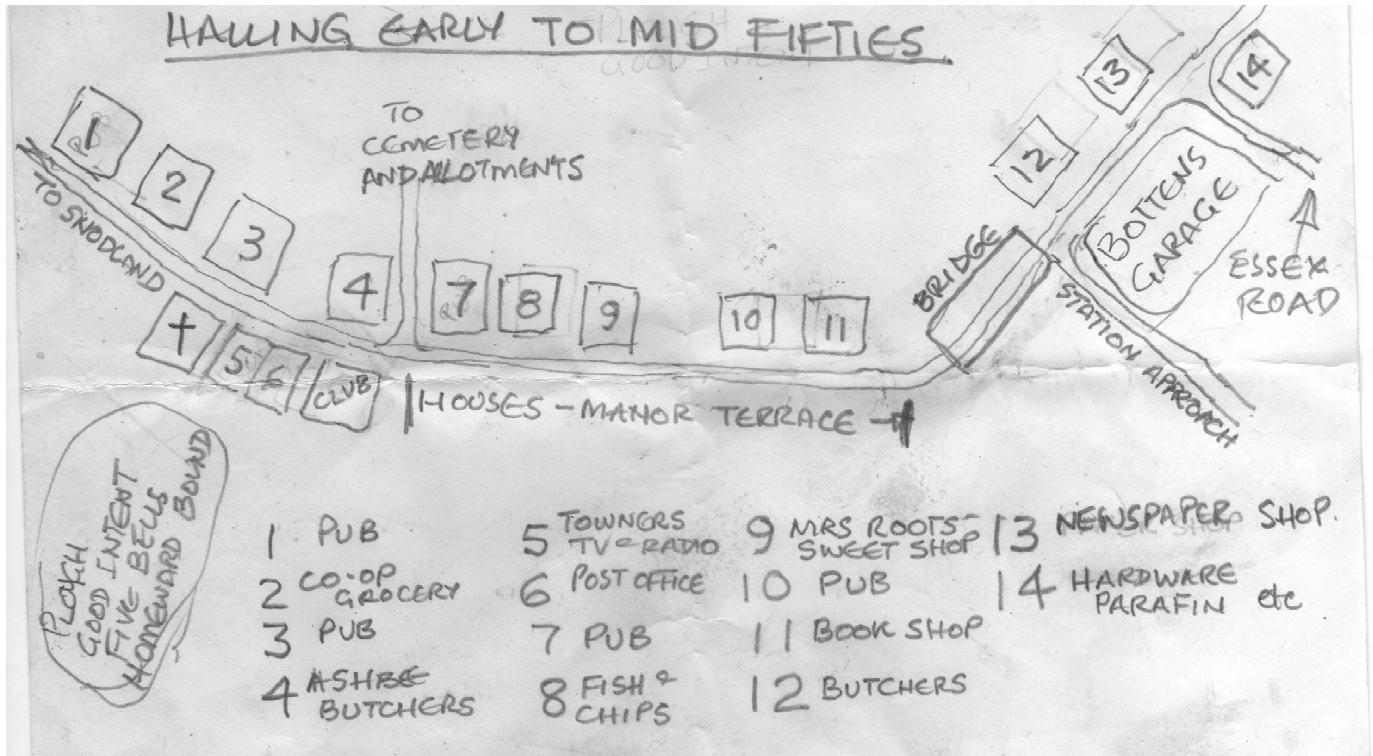
What do you do to celebrate a patronal festival. The first Halling Fun Day and several subsequent ones were held on 24th June or the nearest Saturday to celebrate the birthday of St John the Baptist. When it falls on a Sunday, we commemorate him at our normal service. Other years, weekday evenings, we've invited the bishop and celebrated with a Confirmation service. Probably, our church was dedicated to S John the Baptist because it is near the river and, for over a thousand years, John has been the patron saint of Halling. This year his birthday is a Saturday and we'll hold a sung celebration of Holy Communion at 9.30 am. I don't know how many people will come on a Saturday, but it's an important day in the life of our community and Church isn't only for Sundays. So we'll have to see. Maybe some people who don't normally come on Sundays will join us for this one off special occasion. I'd love to see you there.

A visiting team of bell ringers will ring in celebration at 11.45 am till about 12.15.

And Cuxton

We had been hoping that the bishop would come on 29th September for Cuxton's Patronal Festival this year and lead a Confirmation service. Unfortunately, this will not prove possible after all. We are hoping he may come on some other day in the Autumn. If not, we'll take any confirmation candidates to another parish. Please ask me if you are thinking of confirmation this year. Roger.

Halling Shops in Times Past



We now have some additional information regarding this map. Mrs Bourne is also identified as the proprietor of the sweet shop at 9. The butcher's shop at 12 was Chapman's. 13 was run by Mr & Mrs Horner, who also ran a greengrocery between 13 & 12. 14 was run by Mrs Beadle. There was a dentist in Station Approach and a shoe repair shop between the Homeward Bound & the sweet shop. The post office was run by the Peschers. Halling residents will also remember Mr Whibley's greengrocer's shop in Essex Road, which closed only a few years ago and Mr Whibley's round with his van which extended throughout Halling and Cuxton.

Flora and Fauna

The first bluebells I've seen in bloom this year were on 28th March – on a very warm sunny day for this time of year. The previous day, the first forget-me-nots had appeared in my garden. A few days previously the anemones had come out in the local woods. I didn't see many last year, but there seem to be plenty this. In Mays Wood, the white anemones are interspersed with an abundance of yellow celandines, both flowers which open fully only when the sun shines on them. These join violets and a terrific display of primroses in the churchyards and gardens. We've already seen a few butterflies, including one or two which probably hibernated in church. Halling's almond tree, planted by the Sunday School, has bloomed again. If you can beat the squirrels, there will be nuts in the Autumn. Halling cemetery is very beautiful again with many different kinds of spring flower including blue anemones, which must have spread from having been planted on graves and also blue flowers which I think are squills. In the fields, the rape seemed to develop from seedling to flowering plant in a matter of days. So far a warm and dry Spring. Maybe there will be hosepipe bans in the Summer!

The probation boys are doing a brilliant job on both Cuxton Churchyard and Halling Cemetery this year. Do thank them if you see them at work. Roger.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

19 th March	Casey Louise Judd	Strood
2 nd April	Isla Sophie Berry	Jackdaw Way
8 th April	Francis Peter Baker	Limeburners Drive
8 th April	Beau Lois Baker	Limeburners Drive
9 th April	Lily Ann Guest	Rochester

Funerals:

5 th April	Kathleen Rickard (86)	formerly of Cuxton
12 th April	Emily Agnes Miller (80)	Bingley Close, Snodland

Parishioners were also sorry to learn of the death of Lily Hesketh who was a very faithful member of our Church and a much loved long time resident of Halling.

Thanks

Bishop James' visit to the deanery began with an evening service at Hoo on 26th March. Each parish had to provide something for the prayers. We listed some of the things we have to be thankful for in these two villages.

- We are surrounded by some of the most beautiful countryside in the world.
- We live in one of the most prosperous countries in the world and, while it may surprise you, we are in the top third of English parishes for wealth (the people who live here, not the Church). That doesn't mean that there aren't any poor people in Cuxton or Halling, but it does mean that we have the resources to help one another both within the parish and in the wider world.
- Despite recent terrorist attacks in London and elsewhere, we live in one of the most peaceful and safe countries in the world. We are free to practise our religion in public and share our faith with others. The bible is freely available to us in any number of languages and translations.
- Both Cuxton and Halling have had churches for nearly 1,500 years since Saxon times. Cuxton may indeed have had a Christian presence in Roman times. All those generations of people living out their Christian lives serving God and the people of these communities.
- We have two beautiful parish churches and, while I might wish that there were two of me, one rector for Cuxton and one vicar for Halling as in the old days, in both Churches we celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday in accordance with our Lord's command and there is a bible based sermon.
- We thank God for the present generation of worshippers at St Michael's and St John's and all the work they do. We thank God for Halling Baptist Church and for Cuxton United Reformed Church. We thank God for one another.

There were various other excellent events throughout the week, some of which you may have attended. The culmination was a deanery Songs of Praise at St Michael's on 2nd. Thanks to all who chose hymns and for the moving testimonies of those who explained to us the reason for their choices. Thank you also, John, and the members of both choirs for leading the music. Thank you Beaney's for catering the buffet following and thank you all the volunteers who helped with the tea and washing up.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Farrow (25), Mrs Smith (49), Mrs Mitchell (64) & Mrs Gyde (133) – drawn by Miss Heighes.

St Michael's Draw: winners Mr Curnow (30), Mrs Fenton-Scott (38) & Mrs Hughes (39).

Native American Wisdom

There is an old Cherokee legend about a grandfather who tells his grandson about the two wolves that are fighting inside each of us. One wolf is full of anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, false pride and ego. The other is full of joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, truth and compassion. The grandson asks, 'Which wolf will win?' And his 'grandfather answers, 'The one you feed.'



Our Aim

On our patrols we aim to:

- Make sure people are safe
- Build relationships within the community
- Provide a listening ear
- Help vulnerable people
- Clear away broken glass and bottles
- Give out Flip Flops, preventing injury to feet from glass

Medway Street Pastors

- Give out Bottles of water to those who are dehydrated and/or being sick
- Provide silver blankets to keep people warm
- Care for those who are hurt or unwell until help arrives
- To be available to anyone we meet who is in need of care, and to help them regain their safety, dignity, peace and comfort.

Street Pastors

We are a team of 16 local volunteers from all over Medway and from all different Christian denominations. 4 Pastors patrol Rochester each Saturday making sure people have a good time and get home safely. We patrol Rochester as two teams of two, each pair walking either side of the road with the other team in sight. We talk to each door staff member as well as members of the public while we patrol. Once we get to the bridge and are satisfied all is well, we turn around and head back to Star Hill. On route we help out with directions, sore/bare feet (by giving out flip flops), drunkenness (by giving out water and making sure people have a way of getting home), hypothermia (giving out heat blankets), cuts/blisters (plasters), more serious first aid (we are all fully trained) – we can cope with most eventualities and if we cannot, we ring for appropriate help (999 or CCTV).

We interact with the public until the early hours of the morning.

We are always looking for people to join our team.

Prayer Pastors

We have a team of 11 Prayer Pastors who support those out on the streets from the Vines Church, Rochester. While the Street Pastors are patrolling, two Prayer Pastors are in the church praying for the team. The team use mobile phones to relay what is happening and to ask for specific prayer if needed. We have a further team of 30+ who pray from their own homes each week and support us from there. If actual patrolling isn't for you but praying is, then please join our prayer team. We would love to hear from you.

Medway Street Pastors, The Vines Church, The Terrace, Victoria Street, Rochester, Kent. ME1 1XN.
07933 172888 medway@streetpastors.org.uk

**Odd Job Lady.
Inside or Out.**

Painting & decorating, carpentry, tiling, gardening etc.

Please call
Julie 07507 826756 references available

Feedback on James Wraight and the Woodyards

Other sources are sceptical about a Jim Wraight owning a woodyard in Cuxton in the late C19 (where the surgery now is) and later at Upper Halling. There was definitely a woodyard in Cuxton at Street Farm (near where the garage is now) run by the Cogger Family. The Mitchells had a substantial timber business at Upper Bush. The woodyard at Upper Halling was purchased by old Mr Baker from the Lingham family and he is believed to have been the first person to establish a woodyard on that site. An internet search reveals that there were Wraights in both Cuxton and Halling, but the only reference to James Wraight and the woodyard on Google is our own parish magazine. Does anyone have any more information? Mr Foster, opposite where Cuxton surgery now is, did trade in fish from there.



Cuxton WI

There are two meetings to bring you news of this month. Both our March and April meetings have been “foodie” related. In March, we had a presentation on the history of English cheeses, with samples to taste. Very interesting to learn how some of our most famous cheeses began life, so to speak. Our April meeting saw us learning about sugar craft and the speaker had bought a home-made Victoria Sponge and then proceeded to show us how to cover it with icing and decorate it for a special occasion. She then donated the cake to our raffle. So one lucky member was able to take it home with them. We were also delighted to receive news that Halling now has a new WI after the closure in recent times of the original Halling WI and we look forward to meeting some of the

members in the future and we wish them well. Some of our members attended the Annual Meeting in Tunbridge Wells and this was very entertaining with Helen Sharman the first UK person to go into space telling us all about her progress to becoming a “spacewoman”. Proves women can achieve anything and a great inspiration to all likeminded young women. During the last months, we have had a trip to London to see the new musical “The Girls” which was brilliant. There was also an outing to Brighton as well as events laid on by the WI. Our next meeting is our AGM on the 6th May and then we start our new year of events in June with our annual birthday celebrations – this year Cuxton WI has been in existence for 72 years having started at the Social Club in 1945.

Bereavement

We all face bereavement at some times in our lives and it can be a very difficult experience. Of course we feel very sad when we lose someone. Grief is perfectly natural and an inevitable consequence of our love. It hurts that our loved one has been taken away. We have to face sorrow in our lives as a part of life and I don’t think it is wise to reach for the “happy pills” unless we are actually suffering from clinical depression – which is an illness and something different from the sadness we quite rightly feel at sad times in our lives.

Not only may we feel sadness, we may feel guilt as well. None of us can say we always treat our loved ones as we ought to treat them. That too is natural. Some times we think that, if we had done more for them, they might not have died. Often, that just isn’t true. We did our best and you can’t do more than your best. Occasionally, however, people might be responsible for a tragic accident. One clergyman I knew had to take the funeral of a child whose parents had unwisely used a squash bottle to store bleach and the child had drunk it. You can’t minimise the grief and guilt they felt. You deal with grief by owning up, by confessing your sin to yourself and to God, not by pretending it didn’t happen or by making out that it wasn’t your fault. You accept, confess and there is forgiveness – a new beginning.

We may also feel lonely when we are bereaved. Not only do we miss him or her, we no longer do the things we used to do together. It might not seem worth cooking a proper meal or even getting up and washing and shaving. We may not feel that there is any point in looking after the house or garden if there is no-one to appreciate our efforts. People often avoid the bereaved through embarrassment, but that hurts too.

What we have to remember is that those who have died in the Lord are with Him forever and that we shall see them again if we too believe in Him. We also have to consider that the time we have left on earth is precious. The one who has died would surely want us to come to terms with our loss and to live good, happy, useful, fulfilled lives in whatever time is left to us. I hope these thoughts help. Roger.



Tommy's Talking Points

Hurrah! The season for walks has come round again. Well, yes, we have been out every day throughout the Winter around the parish, but now we're getting more ambitious once again. On the day before the first day of Spring, Master's friend met up with Master and me at Higham station for the Dickens circular walk (more figure of eight really, or infinity on its side). The threatened rain more or less held off, but the force of the wind was impressive. Dogs like wind. It blows the cobwebs away.

We turned out of the station and doubled back on ourselves on top of the tunnel to Strood – once a canal tunnel, the longest in Britain when it was built and still, Master thinks, the longest in England. We met two other dogs, who started off friendly, but then ganged up on me. I find that, if you submit, they usually leave you alone. After that incident, we crossed the fields to St John's Church. Plenty of freedom for me, and there are plenty of footpaths around Higham. The humans had a look inside the church. Master knows it quite well. He's been known to preach there, but it was new to his friend, very attractive, Victorian gothic, sensitively modernised, light clean and airy. It was built in the C19 because the old parish church was too far away from where many of the parishioners lived and Dickens worshipped there when he lived at Gad's Hill.

Then up the road to Gad's Hill. We saw lots of spring flowers in peoples' front gardens and then Dickens' old home, which is now a school. He'd always wanted to live there since he saw it with his father when he was a boy. Gad's Hill is also the place where Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff took part in a highway robbery. Hence the name of the pub. Master was usually given the part of Falstaff to read when he was at school – the English master making some kind of a point, he thought.

We climbed Telegraph Hill where they used to signal and visited the Larkin memorial. This commemorates Charles Larkin. Master had never heard of him or his monument, but he was a reformer who campaigned for the extension of the franchise in the C19. Master wasn't very impressed with the monument either, which can't be seen unless you go looking for it, but the setting is perfect for springer spaniels – narrow paths winding in and out of the brambles. I had a great time running around and jumping.

Then across the fields once again and onto the marshes, with great views of the River Thames. Master and his friend had one of those deep politico-philosophical debates which I don't really understand and I'm not sure that they do. We came to St Mary's Church – Higham's old mediaeval church. That too was open and Master was very pleased to see it because he had never been there before. It also is a beautiful church. Some people in Higham lament the fact that it is no longer open for regular worship. Presumably, had they attended it more often and given enough of their time, talents and money to maintain its mission and ministry to the community, it would still be in use. If you visit, it still does have that prayerful atmosphere you find in places where people pray.

We got a bit lost then. They were starting to get tired and hungry and were in need of a pub lunch. We headed back to the station – where the pub is completely shut for ever. We walked back up the hill to the centre of the village – where the pub is temporarily closed for refurbishment. So we had to walk all the way back to the Falstaff, where the men said that the beer and the food were brilliant, but they had to eat it in the garden because of me. By the time that they had finished, they were frozen and needed the walk to the station to thaw out again. I'm glad of my fur coat. They did, however, see the tunnel where Dickens used to walk under the Gravesend Road to his Swiss Cottage on the other side. The Swiss Cottage is now at Rochester, but Master doesn't think that they will extend the tunnel to its present location. I'm hoping next time to go back to Box Hill (where Master fell in the river) and finish Surrey.

You human beings do some funny things. When Master ran out of cake the other day, he decided to make one in order to save a trip to the shops. Making the cake, he used up all his milk and we had to go to the Co-op to get some more.

Tommy the Rectory Spaniel.