

Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Thursday 2 nd November All Souls	9.30 Holy Communion	1 Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
Sunday 5 th November All Saints Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall 4 th Before Advent	Hebrews 9 vv 11-14 p1207 Mark 12 vv 28-34 p1018
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 25 vv 6-9 p708 Revelation 21 vv 1-6 p1249 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078
Sunday 12 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion	Jonah 3 vv 1-10 p928 Hebrews 9 vv 24-28 p1207 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 10 v33 – 11 v9 p696 John 14 vv 23-29 p1082
Sunday 19 th November 2 nd Before Advent	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen!	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
Sunday 26 th November Christ the King	11.00 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
Sunday 3 rd December Advent Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	1 Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057
	11.00 Holy Communion Gift Service	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057
Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Wednesday 1 st November All Saints	9.30 Holy Communion	
Thursday 2 nd November All Souls	7.30 pm Holy Communion	1 Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
Sunday 5 th November 4 th Before Advent	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 6 vv 1-9 p185 Mark 12 vv 28-34 p1018
Sunday 12 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion Rev'd Stuart Aitken	Hebrews 9 vv 24-28 p1207 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002
Sunday 19 th November 2 nd Before Advent	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
Sunday 26 th November Christ the King	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
Sunday 3 rd December Advent Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion Gift Service	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057

Copy Date December Magazine 10th November 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton on the last Wednesday of the month at 10.45. **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's from 27th April.

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/rogerknight/myhomepage/newsletter.html> &
<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/RogerKnight/index.htm>



All Saints

November begins with the commemorations of All Saints on the first and All Souls on the second. Many people in history have been recognised as having a notable holiness and have been given the epithet “saint” by the Church. But all Christians are called to be saints. All Christians are called to be holy. If you are one of those people who calls yourself a Christian and also says “I am no saint” then you are a paradox!

On All Souls day we remember all the faithful departed now at rest in the Lord. In this parish (2nd November 9.30 am Halling and 7.30 pm Cuxton) we shall remember by name those whose names are in the Books of Remembrance, those whose funerals we have organised this year and any others whom we are specially asked to commemorate (names please in writing to the rector).

Being a Christian is being in a filial relationship with God. This we express by our prayer relationship with Him and I have been thinking over how our prayers of intercession in Church reflect on our understanding of what it is to be a Christian.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity relate to one another in love. The divine love encompasses love for the world, especially for us human beings. We are created in the image of God. We can thus address God as Father. Our prayers are caught up in the unity of the Trinity by the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is God in us. As children of God, we are one with Jesus the Son of God, a unity both symbolised and effected by our Baptism and by our sharing in Holy Communion.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

Prayer is simple. It’s easy. God longs to receive our prayers. All we have to do is to talk to Him!

Strengthen Michael our bishop and all your Church in the service of Christ, that those who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

We begin by praying for the Church. This does not of course mean the building. Neither is the Church a human organisation. The Church is the people, the people of God. We are the Body of Christ, living stones built up into a Temple for the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the vine. We are the branches. Our relationship is that close.

I often base the prayers for the Church on the Bible readings set for that service or on the life of the saint whose commemoration falls that day.* These set the standard for what the Church ought to be like (and intrinsically is) so long as she is faithful to her Lord. We are to believe the Gospel. We are to be united in love for God and for one another. What we say, what we do and – above all – what we are must reveal the glory of God in the world. We pray for Andrew Daunton-Fear our mission partner in the Philippines and for all those who have a particular vocation as bishops, priests, deacons, missionaries etc. On the days called Ember Days we specially ask God to raise up people to serve Him in this way. And we always remember that all Christians – all baptised people – are called to full time Christian service.

Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another and seek the common good.

* The event for Christians is the Sunday Eucharist when we all meet together around the Lord’s Table on the day He rose from the dead. We experience communion with Him and with one another as we obey His commandment to do this in remembrance of Him, proclaiming His Death till He comes again, assured of His favour, secure in our membership of His people and our place in Heaven, receiving grace to do the good works He has prepared for us to walk in as, our bodies are cleansed by His Body and we dwell in Him and He dwells in us. We do, however, have opportunities for daily prayer and indeed daily Eucharists and you miss out if you only come to church on Sundays! In particular, we remember the persecuted on Fridays – the day of the week on which Jesus died.

In the prayers for the world, we very often remember those countries where there are wars, where there has been some terrible natural disaster or where there is chronic and excruciating poverty. Sometimes I feel that it is like reading God a list from the pages of a newspaper, but God, of course does not need us to tell Him. The needs of the world are far greater than we know and God knows them all intimately. He is with every man, woman and child in their pain. The need is so great that those who work for good need to be totally committed. If we are God's people, working with God, to put an end to suffering and to bring in His Kingdom of justice, mercy and peace, we must be totally committed. This certainly means joining our concerns with God's love in prayer, but it also means devoting our time, talents and money to serving Him. We must pray for other people and we may find that we are the answers to our own prayers.

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours, that we may serve Christ in one another, and seek the common good.

We commit our own lives and the lives of our families and friends to God's care. We commit our village, our parish, our local community to Him. And that means working with Him to see that we live Christian lives and that our homes are Christian homes. For many of us it will mean supporting voluntary organisations or working in local government. It will mean being hospitable and friendly. It will mean doing what we are able to do to meet the needs of the people in this community and it will mean being ready to share our faith when the opportunity arises. We are Christians full time, not just when we are in Church or at church functions! The Bishop has said that he wonders if he might not do more good going to boot fairs than going to Church. Well he needs to be part of the worshipping community or he will find it very difficult to remain a Christian. We also need his ministry to the Church. But the world also needs his ministry and ours. So do come to Church, Bishop, and all you readers

St John's Draw: £5 each to Miss Partridge (43), Mrs Mattingly (65), Mr Dance (128), Mrs Botten (160) and Mrs Fallows (184) – drawn by Mr Head.

St Michael's Church Hall Draw: £5 to Jenny Beaney, drawn by Dave Maxwell, £5 to Peter Crundwell, drawn by Elizabeth Summers

of this magazine, but also proclaim Christ at the boot fair and wherever you go.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles; and bring them the joy of your salvation. Praying for people is part of our caring for them. Sometimes we pray for people by name in church. Ask for prayers for yourself or for people you know who particularly need prayer at any time. Sometimes confidentiality might make it inappropriate to say too much at a public service, but God knows all our needs anyway. There is scope to remember the range of human need over services throughout the week, not just Sundays. Again we may be the answer to our own prayers. We can visit the lonely, offer help to people no longer able to do things for themselves, run a youth club to help young people grow to maturity, collect for a charity which really helps people in this country or abroad. The possibilities are endless.

Hear us as remember those who have died in the faith of Christ. According to your promises grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

As Christians, we believe that the best things in this life are only a taster for what awaits us in the hereafter. If we are Christians, God promises that we shall spend eternity with Him. That is the faith we have for those who have gone on before us in the faith and the faith we have for ourselves. We have eternal life now. It will be consummated in Heaven.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

God's love encompasses all things – animals, plants, rocks, planets, stars, everything in this universe, everything in time and space, everything in any other universes there might be and everything in heaven and earth. That is quite a lot. See how privileged we are to call ourselves Christians. Roger.

Confirmation 2007

Next year our Patronal Festival at Halling (the Nativity of St John the Baptist 24th June) falls on a Sunday. So I am particularly pleased that we shall have the Bishop of Tonbridge to preside at our 11.00 Eucharist and also to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. If you are thinking about Confirmation you should be 12 years old or older. There is absolutely no upper age limit. If you are not yet 12, I can ask the Bishop's permission for you to be confirmed if you are a faithful member of our congregation and have the support of your family. All those interested, please contact me and we will arrange a course next year. You can attend the classes as a seeker with no commitment to being confirmed. If you are already confirmed, you can also attend as a refresher or to support a shy candidate. At confirmation you repeat the promises made at your Baptism (which were made on your behalf by your godparents if you were baptised as a baby). If you can honestly say that you are a Christian, there is no reason why you should not be confirmed. (I will print the commitment below.) If you want to become a Christian and have not been baptised, you can be baptised before the Confirmation or (preferably) at the same service.

I am trying to lower the threshold of entry and raise the ceiling of aspiration. Absolutely anyone can come. Nobody should feel that they would not fit in in the Church. The only barrier between us and God is sin and Christ has paid the price for all our sins. If we repent, the door is open. If there are social factors keeping us away from the Church, then there is something very wrong somewhere. The threshold is at ground level. Everyone is welcome.

On the other hand, the ceiling is the infinity of Heaven. What I aspire to for you is a total commitment to Christ. You are invited to give your life to Him. We should not be half-hearted, token or merely nominal Christians.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Jesus' invitation is open to everyone, the invitation to lose yourself in Him. If you can honestly say what follows, you ought to be confirmed. If you want to discuss these issues, before making up your mind, come to the confirmation classes as a seeker after truth or speak to me individually. Roger.

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.



Cuxton WI September

Our September meeting went very well, although it did seem noisier than usual! We had a fair bit of correspondence and the Reps' reports and there were a lot of books, toys and craft items for sale on the Trading Stall. After tea break, we were introduced to Colin Breed, an ex Detective Inspector from Kent Police, who gave a talk with slides on royal visits to Kent. He told us of the meticulous detail and organisation that preceded these visits by members of the Royal Family and for which he was responsible. The slides showed some very nice photos of the Queen, Princess Anne, Prince Charles, Princess Diana and the Queen Mother. He gave various humorous anecdotes of when things went a bit wrong and I think we were amazed when he told us it took three days for the Queen Elizabeth Bridge to be fingertip searched before the opening ceremony by the Queen. A really fascinating talk and we look forward to hearing his *Royal Visits to Kent Part 2*.

Some of us went to Gravesend by train (not enough cars to take all) to meet our friends from Tilbury WI. As usual we had a very nice lunch at the *Three Daws* pub. Catching up on all our news and chattering nineteen to the

Cuxton WI October

This month was our Annual General Meeting, which went very smoothly and did not take too long as we had ten people for the Committee and our president is standing for another year. After the tea break we had a quiz which was a lot of fun and everyone enjoyed.

Nine of us went to the Food and Fashion Day at Ryarsh in September, four of us volunteering to be models!! The fashions were provided by the Edinburgh Woollen Mill, and we each had four outfits to wear. There were ten models in all, from various other WIs. We were treated to a superb lunch and tea by the organisers as a thank you for giving up our day. We all enjoyed it immensely and the hall was packed for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A very successful event.

dozen, we created a lot of noise, as can be imagined! The waitress shut the doors of the room we were in in case we put the other diners off! It was lovely to see them all again and we will meet again early next year.

The Walking Group (or re-named the *Ladies' Adventure Group*) went for a walk around Ranscombe Farm on a beautiful sunny, but not too hot, day. The route was planned, a circular walk. However, because the path was very muddy, we took another (going in the same direction we thought) aiming towards Mill Woods and to our surprise ended up at the Mausoleum! Completely the opposite direction. So we walked a good deal farther than we intended, but ended up having a lovely lunch in the garden of our leader, Sheila, who really did us proud.

A few of us went to Halling WI for their Public Affairs and International Evening, where we were entertained by Phyllis' son-in-law telling us of his experiences as an auctioneer and his wife telling us and showing slides of their visits to Jordan, which she was passionate about and had visited many times. We were treated to a very nice supper and, as always, were made very welcome.

The Walking Group went to Riverside Country Park last month and again we were blessed with a beautiful sunny day. We strolled around the paths by the water and enjoyed the view. We only covered half the area; it is such a large park. The café there had recently be burned down by vandals. So we headed for a nearby pub for our lunch, by now feeling hungry and longing for a sit down!! The next walk is around Trottiscliffe Country Park. So let's hope for fine weather.

The Poetry Group are getting together for their annual dinner on the 10th and the week after, it's the Committee's turn.

Our next WI meeting is on Thursday 2nd November and the speaker is Margaret Clift, *Making Festive Decorations*.

Ann Harris.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

10 th September	Angelina Elizabeth Morley	Charles Drive
24 th September	Corinne Keaty	Bush Road
24 th September	Alison Jones	Demelza Close
24 th September	Phoebe Rose Jones	Demelza Close
8 th October	Natalie Jane Penney	Strood
14 th October	Elizabeth Claire Wilce	Bush Road
15 th October	Louis James White	Charles Drive
15 th October	Katie Anderson White	Charles Drive

Wedding:

9 th September	Roger Knight & Gemma Snoek	Cuxton
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Funerals:

12 th September	Winifred Florence Willard (98)	formerly of Halling
15 th September	Joan Valerie Bish (65)	The Street
19 th September	Sheila Ellenor Taylor (76)	Poplicans Road
4 th October	George Harold Lofthouse (87)	Poplicans Road
5 th October	baby Matthew Ward	
12 th October	Paul King (44)	Essex Road

In response to the news of Bishop David Say's death, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali paid the following tribute:

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of Dr David Say last Thursday, 14 September 2006. Dr Say served this diocese with great distinction as bishop from 1961 to 1988.

At Bishop David's retirement, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, said of him, "...everything he touched turned to gold", as he paid tribute to the 'last of the Macmillan bishops'. He said he had been one of the Church's most willing and efficient workhorses – as a key member of the General Synod's Standing Committee for some 15 years, and as a long time member of the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors, frequently standing in for the Archbishop as its chairman. He was a regular speaker in the House of Lords on social and moral issues, and a champion negotiator for State aid for Churches. Here in the diocese, he enjoyed the reputation of being everybody's bishop in the fullest sense, equally at home in whatever situation he found himself. Everyone could own him and yet, it was said, none could claim him exclusively as theirs.

The enthronement of the present Archbishop of Canterbury in 2003 was one of the last occasions that Bishop David and his beloved wife of almost 60 years, Irene, attended a service together, for she died in July of that year.

When I visited Bishop David just a few weeks ago, his recall of people and places was as sharp as ever. He was keen to know that the diocese was in good heart. That was typical of him.

Looking back, it was a pleasure to pay tribute to Bishop David in Rochester Cathedral on the occasion of his 90th birthday in 2004. Ten years earlier, in 1994, preaching in the cathedral to mark the 1350th anniversary of the death of St Paulinus, the 3rd Bishop of Rochester, he concluded his address with the words: "*When you are fearful and despondent about today's Church, or when the press and media get you down, remember Paulinus and all the saints and thank God we are their successors, and that we are sustained and renewed by the faith that was theirs in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic church of Christ*". This was indeed the faith of Bishop David Say. We hold his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

+Michael Roffen 18th September 2006.

30th Strood (Cuxton) Scout Group

Cheese Auction

25th November 7.30

Scout Hall, Bush Road.

Looking To The Future

Christmas Coffee Morning: December 9th Church Hall.

Soirée: December 9th Church Hall.

Thanks

Harvest Festival was wonderful again this year. The churches were beautifully decorated. The choirs sang beautifully. The food and fellowship at the Harvest Supper were brilliant. Thanks to all those who decorated the churches, sang, rang, rehearsed the Sunday School play and prepared the supper. Thanks too for all the good things you brought to share via our local social services. Included in our thanks are Bo Peeps pre-school who brought their harvest festival to St John's the Thursday before.

Thanks also to those who supported our two **quizzes**, the one for Christian Aid, the other for Parish Funds. Thanks to the competitors and the caterers without whom we would have had two hungry evenings!

The Church and Halloween

Back in pagan times it was usual to have a festival at the time of year when the nights are drawing in and the leaves are falling from the trees. Nature's darkness and death led to thoughts of ghosts and witches. When the light of the Gospel came to Europe, the Church introduced feasts of All Saints (or All Hallows) and All Souls, celebrations of light, goodness and the eternal life which Christ promises to all Christian people.

The pagan festival sort of survived in the observance of Halloween on the eve of All Hallows (1st November). For most children, this is harmless fun, dressing up as ghouls and pretending to be scared. For a few people, there is serious black magic involved and that is evil. For too many people, there is *trick or treat*, which is quite frightening for people living alone, a nuisance when the tricks get out of hand and perhaps a danger to the children who knock on strangers' doors in the dark.

Some churches organise children's parties on the 31st October where the emphasis is on light and life as healthier than the themes of Halloween. We could do that next year if anyone is interested. There is an event at the Cathedral you could go to this year. You could also come to the services on All Saints Day and/or All Souls Day, much more wholesome!

Roge

Bible Cake

8 ozs Judges 5.25, 8 ozs Jeremiah 6.20, 1 tbsp I Samuel 14.25, 4 Jeremiah 17.11, 8 ozs Nahum 3.12, 8 ozs I Samuel 30.12, 2 ozs Numbers 17.8, 12 ozs I Kings 4.22, 1 tsp Amos 4.5, 1 tsp II Chronicles 2.13, 3 tbsp Judges 4.19.

One round greased 9" cake tin. 1 ¼ hrs Gas 3, 300F, 150C.
I have the key if you get stuck!

Any other favourite recipes for the magazine gratefully received.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

Windmills on Roofs: The Government is reviewing planning laws with regard to these. The Society is concerned that local authorities should retain control. If you have concerns about planning matters or policy, please contact the society.

Nature Notes September 2006

The morning of the first day of the month was grey but the afternoon was pleasantly warm when the sun shone. Strong westerly winds blew the following day causing the sycamore branches to sway backwards and forwards. On the 3rd, we took Murphy to Addington and walked along the grassy path to the heath where golden gorse bloomed. I found some flowering thistles and a single floret of bird's foot trefoil. Murphy saw a rabbit, which darted into the undergrowth but he was not allowed to chase it. As we returned to the path, I noticed tiny fungi in the grass. I noticed that horse chestnuts had swelled in their green shells and haws were a deep red. Some warm days followed. On the 7th we went to the Brookland Lakes at Snodland where rippling water reflected the blue of the sky and where coots and moorhens glided. A cormorant dived down below the water and a white swan glided by. Hips, haws, sloes, blackberries and elderberries had ripened and acorns hung on oak boughs. A few wild flowers bloomed and white butterflies hovered over the hedgerows.

As darkness was falling on the evening of the 8th, I watched jackdaws fly across the garden to roost. On the 10th a beautiful red admiral butterfly settled on the grass, while by the pond, a frog startled Murphy when it jumped from the grass in to the water. By the 12th, I noticed that the leaves of the trees were becoming quite autumnal but after rain the grass had become green again. Very heavy rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning fell during the night of the 13th. At Addington, on the 14th, I watched swifts flying over the cricket ground.

On the afternoon of the 15th, I walked across Church Fields where cows and horses grazed and where mallow, thistles, dandelions, sloes, hips and haws were to be seen. Old mans beard straddled the hedgerows. As I looked across the hill, I could see that the smooth flowing river was at low tide. I made my way into Mays Wood where brown leaves were strewn across the path and where the undergrowth had died down. I could hear the wind

sighing in the trees as I approached the top of Dean Valley where the ancient beech tree was beginning to look autumnal. The valley was drenched in hazy sunlight and white butterflies hovered over the hawthorns. Field pansies bloomed along the edge of the path leading down to Purty's Shaw.

The beautiful warm weather continued. On the 20th, another pigeon became caught in the netting over the pond but I was able to free it before it became too entangled. I heard a rabbit, which had probably been caught by a fox, squealing. Temperatures reached 27C on the 21st. We took Murphy for a walk at Addington where he enjoyed himself. Back home, in the garden, I listened to a pair of chattering magpies, and as the light faded, I watched the jackdaws come home to roost. I gazed at the tall trees in the grounds of Whornes Place, as they became black silhouettes against the fading blue of the sky.

On the 23rd, which was a beautiful day, I walked with some members of the Countryside Group, to the Ranscombe Nature Reserve where we found a variety of plants, some of which we were unable to identify. Spindleberries, red hips and haws adorned the hedgerows and the warm sunshine lit up the rolling countryside.

In the early evening, the sunset lit up the sky and the garden turned to gold then after a few seconds it had faded. While walking with a friend in North Wood on 26th, I found dog violets in an area where trees had been felled. They looked so beautiful all the more because a spring flower was blooming in autumn. We took Murphy to the heath at Addington the next day. Evening primroses bloomed along the banks and the yellow petals gleamed in the bright sunlight. Warm weather continued to the end of the month and the final day was a mixture of sunshine and showers.

Elizabeth Summers



Mothers' Union News

All members please note that we are welcoming a speaker from Bible Lands at our meeting on November 15th in the Church Hall at 10.45. Anyone who would like to join us is very welcome.

Our December Meeting on 20th is the week before Christmas and we are hoping to be joined by the parents and children of St Michael's Angels for a celebration in the true spirit of Christmas.

Please also note that we are inviting our retiring president, Angela Pain, to our February Meeting, which falls on Ash Wednesday.

Parish Bible Study: November 29th 7.30 Rectory. All welcome.

Cuxton Community Infant School News!

A big hello to all you villagers from us at the Infant School here in Cuxton. The staff and I hope you all had a good Summer break and continue to enjoy the sunshine and the feeling that Autumn may be soon upon us! We have welcomed this term 40 little folk into our Foundation stage classes. They have settled well and found their feet already. We are always so pleased to see the children come into school enthusiastically and feel this is largely due to the comprehensive visits we run over the summer term. Our year 1 and 2 children have returned to school looking a little more grown up, refreshed and smart in their uniforms.

We are still seen by Medway as a rural, small village school, and I am pleased about this, as we are a family. We know all the children by name and their 'little ways' which I feel is so important and I like to think we have a caring ethos, where children feel valued, safe and loved, and where they can achieve their highest possible potential. We have five classes at present and a full complement of experienced teachers and teaching assistants in every class. We continue to work well as a team and are a happy band, even in this busy term when stress levels may rise over Harvest festivals, and Christmas productions! We are proud of our many achievements at the school and were recently awarded with the Inclusive Schools Quality Mark, being one of Medway's few schools to achieve this accolade. All of our achievements could not be made without the staff, parent's support and of course the children.

This term is a busy time where children settle, staff assess the children in their classes, and meet their parents, and targets are set for children's learning. We held our Harvest Festival on Friday 29th September, and this year we collected sugar and pasta, which will be distributed overseas by Blythswood.

Last academic year we worked more closely with the two playgroups in the village, and hope to continue welcoming them into school this term. Both playgroups will continue to come into school one morning a week and use the hall and PE apparatus. We hope the children will come to our Harvest assembly and some of the Christmas events in December.

Mr Bignell as some of you may be aware, left the Junior school at the end of last term. We wish him well in his new post. I hope to continue working closely with the Junior school and the new Head teacher Miss Terry for the benefit of all of our children.

The Governing Body held an action day last Saturday and my thanks to the few parents who came. We worked jolly hard in clearing overgrown bushes, sweeping, pruning, cutting down and clearing leaves from drains and rubbish. It was very hard work and I think we all ached on Monday but the front of the school looks lovely.

We continue to welcome members of the 50 club into lunch on a Wednesday and fifteen visitors came into school this last week and had lunch with the children which they all enjoy! Sharon our cook serves up a treat, this week a pudding of freshly picked blackberries and apple crumble with custard, filled several holes! Of course this was preceded by roast chicken! If you would like to come into school for a hot meal please contact us. In fact if you would like to come in at any time just come to the school office. We are always looking for folk to share in the events we hold and also to come in and help in the classes or hear children read etc. Many folk took great delight in looking in the old punishment book and admission books and diary logs last term. If you would like to see them and trace family members do feel able to visit.

Lastly if you have moved into the village or would like a place for your child in school do come and see us or ring the school office on 718162.

Finally, as always, stay healthy and safe, and we wish you a happy month, very sincerely from us all, Sandra Jones, Head teacher.



Halling WI

September was a quiet month for Halling WI after a very hectic August. Mary, our president, was left high and dry while our treasurer and secretary were living it up on the high seas somewhere in the Med. They both deserved and earned their cruise, which was enjoyed by both. Our meeting got off to a lively start, when we all burst into song – *Happy Birthday To You* Eileen Knight whose birthday happened to be on our meeting night, which doesn't happen very often and at least it shows we can sing something other than *Jerusalem*. Maureen Burren, standing in for Ann Hayward, read the previous month's minutes which were duly signed. The correspondence was dealt with, an invitation for four members to visit the new Federation Headquarters at Pembury, Ethel Hunt Lodge.

Mary then introduced our speaker, Peter Sherman, who is no stranger to us. We were expecting *All For Our Delight*, but Peter decided to talk about *The Life History of Rudyard Kipling* instead, which was very enjoyable and informative, but I

wondered what we were going to be delighted with in the first instance. Most of us could recall some of the famous poems and songs we had learnt in school but didn't realise who the author was, such as the *Just So Stories* and *The Road to Mandalay*. I thanked Peter on behalf of all of us.

After our usual cup of tea and biscuits, Peter judged our competitions. Ann Seagar's ham sandwich was first for something beginning with H and my dark red dahlia (the only flower I could find in my garden) won the *Flower of the Month*. Then it was back to business. Mary read some correspondence from Fay Mansell, the national chairman, with regards to the dreaded new magazine which has been thrust upon us. This has had a lot of publicity in the national press of late. The magazine will come and, as one member said, you can always *return to sender* but I think we might be mildly surprised and I for one (who was very anti at the beginning) can't give up over 40 years of fun and friendship just for the sake of a paper book. It can always be recycled. P. Chidwick.

"You Can Be A Christian Without Going to Church"

by Max the Rectory Spaniel

Master tells me that I am spoilt. My breakfast (two eggs) is usually ready for me when I come in from church each day. I get carried out to my basket at bed time. I usually get a share of anything nice the humans in my house are having for tea. I don't have to round up sheep, catch rats, flush out game or guard premises, unlike many other dogs Master could mention. I divide my time between sleeping, eating, going for walks and playing. I don't even get left on my own very much. The other evening, however, Master reminded me that I go to church a good deal more than most dogs too – which is quite true – but then he added that I go to church more than most humans as well. And that struck me as odd that he should mention it. I enjoy going to church because I love my master and like being in his company, but why should human beings want to go to church?

After all, most people think that being a Christian is about being a nice person and you can certainly be a nice person without going to church. In fact, some people who don't go to church are nicer than some that do. If you want to pray, you can do that anywhere. God is everywhere. You don't have to go to church to pray. You don't have to pray at all if you don't want to. If you do pray on your own, you can say what you want, and not read from a prayer book or have to say *Amen* to the worship leader's prayers. If there is an afterlife, surely God won't hold it against you if you don't bother about Him much in this life. The Bible is old-fashioned and boring and irrelevant to the i pod generation.

Church is such a bore altogether when you come to think about it. The seats are hard. It's too cold or too hot. You can't hear properly and, if you could, why should you listen? What does the preacher know that you don't know better? The Church is always after your money. And anyway there are so many more important and interesting things to do than to go to church – like watch TV and go shopping.

Sure, it's nice to have the church there at Christmas or for family christenings, weddings and funerals, but you can rely on the few who go every week to keep it clean and well maintained, to pay the Rector and all the other costs, so that it is always there when you want it.

Master quite strongly disagrees with most people about this. He says that Jesus wants us to meet together in His Name and to break bread in remembrance of Him. Master says that the Bible is the Word of God which bears witness to the Truth which will set you free. Master says that shared prayers have their own life beyond that of individual prayers. Master says that your relationship with God determines both the way you live on earth and your eternal destiny.

So, who is right? Master and the minority who share his faith, or the majority in contemporary Britain? It is quite hard for a little dog to make up his mind.

Max, the Rectory Spaniel.