

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Wednesday 2 nd November All Souls	9.30 Holy Communion	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070
6 th November 3 rd Sunday Before Advent Blythswood Collection	9.30 Family Communion	Amos 5 vv 18-24 p920 I Thessalonians 4 vv 13-18 p1188 Matthew 25 vv 1-13 p994
13 th November 2 nd Sunday Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion & Parade Service	Zephaniah 1 vv 1-18 p944 I Thessalonians 5 vv 1-11 p1188 Matthew 25 vv 14-30 p994
20 th November Christ the King	8.00 Holy Communion	Collect, Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 25
	9.30 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 34 vv 11-24 p865 Ephesians 1 vv 15-23 p1173 Matthew 25 vv 31-46 p995
27 th November Advent Sunday Year B	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1144 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019
4 th December Advent 2	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Wednesday 2 nd November All Souls	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Romans 5 vv 5-11 p1132 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
6 th November 3 rd Sunday Before Advent Blythswood Collection	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Judges 7 vv 2-22 p249 John 15 vv 9-17 p1083
	11.00 Holy Communion	Amos 5 vv 18-24 p920 I Thessalonians 4 vv 13-18 p1188 Matthew 25 vv 1-13 p994
13 th November 2 nd Sunday Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion & Parade Service	Zephaniah 1 vv 1-18 p944 I Thessalonians 5 vv 1-11 p1188 Matthew 25 vv 14-30 p994
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	! Kings 1 vv 1-40 p334 Revelation 1 vv 4-18 p1233
20 th November Christ the King	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Ezekiel 34 vv 11-24 p865 Ephesians 1 vv 15-23 p1173 Matthew 25 vv 31-46 p995
27 th November Advent Sunday Year B	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 64 vv 1-9 p750 I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1144 Mark 13 vv 24-37 p1019
4 th December Advent 2	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 11 vv 2-11 p976
	11.00 Family Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 II Peter 3 vv 8-15 p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002

9.30 am Holy Communion @ St Michael's Wednesdays		9.30 am Holy Communion @ St John's Thursdays	
2 nd November All Souls	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070	3 rd November Richard Hooker	Romans 14 vv 7-12 Luke 15 vv 1-10
9 th November	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	10 th November Leo the Great	Philemon Luke 17 vv 20-25
16 th November	Revelation 4 Luke 19 vv 11-28	17 th November	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
23 rd November	Daniel 5 vv 1-28 Luke 21 vv 12-19	24 th November	Daniel 6 Luke 21 vv 20-28
30 th November St Andrew	Isaiah 52 vv 7-10 Romans 10 vv 12-18 Matthew 4 vv 18-22	1 st December	tba

1st November is All Saints Day. Holy Communion 7.30 am @ St Michael's.

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Christian Ministry is not a Job!

When I say to people that we ought to keep Sunday as a day of rest, sometimes they accuse me of working on Sundays. In fact I try very hard not to work on Sundays. I won't do paper work, washing or cleaning. I don't do gardening if it's hard work. I try to avoid meetings on Sundays, including church meetings. As far as possible, I don't do things on Sundays which mean that other people have to work for me – like shopping. What I do on Sundays is what all Christians ought to do. I participate in public worship and then take a day off to relax. The only thing which is slightly regrettable is that I have to do the public worship bit twice for both Cuxton and Halling. How I long for the day when the people of this country turn to Christ so that our churches are full every Sunday and so that there is such an abundance of young men offering themselves for the ministry that there are no more shortages of clergy and no more talk of church closures, amalgamations of parishes and “pastoral reorganisation” which is usually a euphemism for managing decline!

When people tease me that I work a one day week, I tease them back by telling them that I don't work at all. And in a sense that's true. Christian ministry is not a job! Being ordained is more like being married than starting work. When a man is ordained deacon, priest or bishop he enters a new state of life, just as a man becomes a husband at his marriage. Like marriage, priesthood is lifelong. Having been ordained first deacon and then priest, I shall be a deacon and priest for the rest of my life. That is what I *am*, no matter what I *do*. To renounce my priesthood or to have it taken away from me for misconduct would be at least as serious as divorce. It would be to break the promises I made at my ordination and to let down God Who made me a priest in His Church. As a priest, I am called to be faithful to God and to His Church just as a married man is called to be faithful to his wife. The Church of England sees no reason at all why clergy should not marry, but ordination and marriage are both totally absorbing lifelong commitments and it is very hard for a priest to be married to a woman who does not recognise his vocation.

I should still be a priest if I were retired or if I had a job which had nothing at all to do with the Church. In fact there are many clergy who have outside paid employment. They may well preach,

take services, etc., in the parish when they are not at work, but they are still priests in everything they do, whether presiding at the Eucharist or driving buses.

I do have a job, a job which I could not have if I were not a priest. My job is to be Rector of Cuxton and Halling. Unless age discrimination legislation kicks in before 2024, I shall have to retire from being Rector at the end of that year, but I shall be a priest until I die.

The job of Rector is, however, different from most other jobs. I am not employed by anyone. In the eyes of Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue I am an “office holder”. I am not paid by the hour, for the things I make, or even per soul I save. I receive a stipend so that I do not have to take paid employment. The bishop is not my employer (though he is the guarantor of my stipend). The bishop shares with me his cure of souls in Cuxton and Halling. “Cure of souls” is a fancy way of saying “looking after people”, which is very much the Church's business. I am not employed by the PCC (though they have to struggle to supply the bishop with the money he needs to pay [through the Church Commissioners] my stipend). The PCC is a body elected to represent the laity (all those Christians who are not clergy) and to work with me in doing God's work in this place. The Diocesan Office and the Church Commissioners are not my employers, though they have some of the responsibilities for clergy that employers have for their employees.

The point is to *be* the parish priest. There is not much about what I am required to *do*. Specifically I have to say Morning and Evening Prayer in church every day. I have to provide services of Holy Communion in both parish churches at least on every Sunday and on major holy days. I don't provide all the public worship I ought to provide because there isn't sufficient support in the parish for three Sunday services in both churches and even less for holy days which occur in the week. I am required by my office to baptise, marry and bury parishioners. Beyond that there is very little I specifically have to do, but I have a general responsibility to provide pastoral care for all parishioners and to support and encourage their spiritual development. “Parishioners” means everyone who lives in Cuxton or Halling, not just those who attend St Michael's or St John's churches.

Generally speaking, I try to spend my time promoting God's work, rolling up my sleeves and taking on whatever needs doing. Obviously that includes visiting the sick and lonely and praying for people. It means taking school assemblies and welcoming people to the church buildings. It may mean getting involved in local campaigns, sitting on committees and governing bodies of various community organisations. My predecessor was a member of Cuxton Parish Council. God's work can also include cutting churchyard grass, moving church hall furniture and booking performers for parish social events. I spend a lot of time at this desk, including sitting in front of the computer and doing jobs like writing the parish magazine.

Obviously I'm not the only person who does these jobs. Caring for people, praying for people, getting involved in the community, looking after the environment, administering the parish, communications, etc., are the responsibility of the whole Church. The whole Church is the sum total of baptised people. These things are everybody's responsibility. Everybody ought to be supporting the Church's work in accordance with the gifts God has given him or her. The work of the parish includes many things which the Rector may do himself or organise other people to do, but most of these jobs are things which anybody could do and which people other than the Rector could organise, if they need organising at all! Many of these jobs are done by lay people and so they should be. Some of them are done by me and that's fair enough. God's work in Cuxton & Halling is a shared responsibility.

Just because I am Rector I am expected to take on some jobs which I'm not at all good at and might well be better done by somebody else. I think there are roughly 5,000 people in this parish, which means that there are approximately 4,999 people who could chair the PCC better than I do!

In recent debates about the ordination of women, people have asked the question whether ordained ministers do things which women couldn't do as well as men. If not, the argument goes, why not ordain women? But, as I have tried to explain, it's not about what ministers do; it's about what we are. I can imagine that a male priest might make a better coach for the boys' football team than a woman (though I once knew a nun who was a brilliant football coach) and some people might say a woman priest would be better at counselling rape victims. Of course it might be sexist to

suggest either! But it's not the point, you don't have to be ordained to represent the Church as a youth leader or as a counsellor, although you may be. Equally, a particular priest may not be called upon to exercise a youth ministry or a counselling ministry.

Ordained ministry is not about what you *do* so much as what you *are*. It is a vocation, a calling by God. Not everyone who believes that he is called has a genuine calling. Psychiatrists have very many patients who believe that God talks to them. Suicide bombers believe that they have a vocation from God, but they are wrong! The Church has a process of discernment which tries to establish who has a genuine vocation. This process of discernment involves prayer and careful consideration in the light of current needs and of the faith of the Church as revealed in the Bible and down through the ages. The question whether or not to ordain men or women in general or whether or not to ordain any particular person is not a question of whether the Church thinks they can *do the job*. Nor is it simply a matter of whether they themselves believe that they are called to ministry. It is whether the Church sincerely believes that the person in question is called by God to *be* a deacon, priest or bishop.

What about the things that people particularly associate with Christian ministry? What about the things I do in church? Again I don't actually *do* much. I certainly don't do what a lot of other people couldn't just as easily physically do as I do. Anyone could put on my robes, stand at the front and read from the prayer book and Bible. The rôle I have in public worship is not because of what I can do, which really amounts to nothing. I have that rôle because of what I am – an ordained minister of religion. In some contexts, lay people may well do most of the things I do in church.

I conduct Baptisms, but it is the candidates themselves (or the godparents on their behalf) who turn to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and renounce sin, the world and the devil. It is God, not the priest, who forgives the candidate's sins, causes him or her to be born again and welcomes the newly baptised person into full membership of the Church. What matters in religious rites is the supernatural – what God does for us and our response to His grace – not what some vicar or rector says or does except insofar he acts as a representative of God and his Church.

Marriage has both a legal and a sacramental aspect. As a minister of the Established Church, I am also a marriage registrar and I can complete the legalities for the couple. However, on the more important sacramental side, it is the couple who make vows of unconditional love to one another and God Who makes them man and wife. *Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder!* I just create the liturgical space in which the couple offer themselves the one to the other and God consecrates their lifelong commitment to one another and their union.

I read the funeral service, but it is God Who judges the deceased on the basis of how he has lived his life. It is only through the grace of God that anyone gets to heaven. It is my duty to pray and to lead in prayer, to teach and to warn, to speak of judgment and mercy, but, in the end, it is the individual's relationship with God which determines the outcome, not anything that any church minister can do.

Every day, when I conduct public worship, it is my job to pronounce the Absolution and the Blessing, but it is God, not I or any other priest, who forgives sins and pours out the abundance of His Blessing.

I preach sermons, but my task is not to present my own ideas. The preacher's job is to proclaim the Word of God. This means relating the Word of God as revealed in the Bible and in the life of the Church to the world as it is today. Where can we find hope? What should we do in this or that situation? What warnings ought we to heed? The preacher's task is not always to please his hearers or to tell them what they already know or to reinforce them in their prejudices. He may have to say things that are unpopular or hard to understand. I'm always glad to be challenged by people if they think I have misinterpreted the Bible or misapplied it in the current situation or even if they let me know that I haven't put over the message very well in a way that people can understand it. The Bible is an open book and everyone of you can read it for him or herself and come to your own conclusions. Don't however reject the Bible. It is the Word of God. And be very cautious about interpreting it in a way which is inconsistent with what the Church has always everywhere believed. How likely is that you or I are right and that the rest of the Church all over the world for the last 2,000 years has got it wrong? How likely is it, indeed, that the Church in

the West in C21 has got it right when much more deeply committed churches, churches whose members have willingly faced martyrdom, have got things wrong? I'm not saying that tradition can never be challenged. If it couldn't be challenged there would be no Reformation ever. But I do think we should be cautious in assuming that we alone know best.

I preside at the Eucharist, but it is not I, it is God Who makes the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Because I *am* an ordained minister, I preside at the community celebration. We are a congregation celebrating Holy Communion as the Body of Christ in this place. I am not a performer, acting, putting on a performance for an audience. I am leading the Body of Christ in this place in the worship of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is not about me or the choir or the lesson readers pleasing an audience or a potential audience; it is about a Christian congregation, which includes clergy, musicians, readers and maybe other worship leaders, seeking to please God. So the questions to ask of public worship are not questions like *Will people like the hymns we've chosen? Or would people prefer Common Prayer 1662 or Common Worship 2000? Or do we like this particular vicar or organist or whomsoever?* Hopefully we are all in church every Sunday seeking to please God, not to please ourselves. In that case the relevant questions are more like these:

- Do we truly repent of our sins?
- Are we worshipping in spirit and in truth?
- Are we in love and charity with our neighbours?
- Are we open to receive the Word of God in the Scripture readings and the sermon?
- Do we believe that our prayers are an aspect of God's work of healing, reconciling and blessing?
- Do we discern the Body of Christ in the Eucharist?
- Do we feel constrained by the love of God to share this Good News with the whole world?

We are all responsible for doing these things. I don't do them because it is my profession. I try to do them because I am a Christian. Because I *am* a Christian minister it is my rôle to support, sustain and encourage the whole Church, all baptised people, in *doing* all the things God wants His Church to do. Roger.



As you know for some time we have enjoyed having Andrew Daunton-Fear as our CMS link mission partner at St Andrew's Seminary in Manila. Andrew is now retiring, although he will remain in the Philippines and continue to help with work at the Seminary and in the Church there. Our new link mission partners are Paul and Charitas Cho, who will be working in the same area as Andrew and whom some of us were privileged to meet with Andrew when they visited the parish on 25th June. This is the official profile supplied by CMS.

Paul and Charitas are CMS mission partners in training, preparing to go to the Philippines with their son Hayoung (the name means *Glory to God* in Korean). Paul will be involved in theological education at St Andrew's Theological Seminary (SATS) in Manila. Paul came to the UK with Charitas in 1993 to pursue postgraduate studies in order to become a theological educator back in Korea. He completed his MA and doctorate at the University of Kent in Canterbury, but God led him to ordained ministry instead of becoming a theological teacher. He was then ordained in the Church of England, in London, in 2000. However, Paul never lost his desire to become a theological teacher during his seven year stay in the UK, even while working as chaplain to the Korean community in London, including the University of London.

Paul's promise that he had made to God was fulfilled when he went to the Philippines for 18 months with the CMS SALT programme, serving at St Andrew's Theological Seminary, the only seminary training clergy for the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP) and some of the ordinands of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI). Paul taught various theological subjects and in doing so, found his strong sense of calling for teaching, particularly in the context of the Philippines where the great need for qualified theological educators is desperately required. Paul currently works for the Oxford Centre for Mission Study, working as Consultant for Institutional Advancement and Supervisor for research students. He will be continuing his teaching mission at SATS and helping the ECP ministry as mission partner this time with long-term commitment.

Charitas has always worked alongside Paul as a faithful companion. She supported Paul while he was studying and sponsored his teaching mission to the Philippines. She has been working for CMS since 2004, initially in the Mission Personnel Team and now as the Facilities Officer. In the Philippines, Charitas will initially be looking after their son but hopes to be involved with street kids ministry and using her IT and administration skills.

For more information contact:

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Something to Shout About

Every third Thursday of the month a group of us meet in the URC Chapel hall in Bush Road Cuxton at 7.30 pm to discuss some topical issue. Anyone can come. The meetings are open to all. The discussions are quite lively. We even get tea and biscuits! November 17th will be the next meeting.

Coffee Morning

Coffee is served at the URC Chapel hall every Thursday morning. You would be very welcome just to call in for a coffee and chat.

If you could help with serving coffee, that too would be appreciated. Please speak to the organisers.



Christmas Dinner

Our Christmas dinner in the Church Hall will be on Wednesday 14th December (not 7th) at 12.00.

What Used to be the Christmas Coffee Morning

As this event has grown so much, we are renaming it the Christmas Minimarket. It will take place at 10.00 on Saturday 10th December at the Church Hall with all the usual attractions plus ???



Blythwood Care



Please bring on 6th November the shoe boxes you have been filling for Blythwood to take to Eastern Europe (where there is still great need even after the fall of Communism and the end of the terrible Balkan wars of a few years ago) and to other places where there is need. Lists of suitable contents for the boxes will be found in church or ask Phyllis Chidwick.

Literal Feedback



Max remarked last month that he had heard that ground elder is edible. A reader sent in a recipe!

1 colander full of ground elder leaves. Pick off the stalks. Wash and put damp leaves in a saucepan with 1 oz butter, plus salt and black pepper to taste. Cover. Cook gently for ten minutes. Remove lid and stir gently till most of the liquid has evaporated. Drain and serve hot. Enjoy!

If anyone tries it, please let me know how it turns out. If you are really keen, you can also make ground elder soup and even ground elder rice cakes. Roger.

Notice

Conviction for Disturbing a Congregation

At the Petty Sessions holden at Hurstgreen, on Friday 10th May, 1861, *Frank Chapman*, of Ticehurst, Labourer, aged about 18 years, was convicted before her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for laughing or otherwise disturbing the Congregation on several occasions during Divine Service, at the Parish Church of Ticehurst, and fined in the sum of 5s. and 16s. costs, and in default of payment, to be imprisoned for 30 days in County Gaol at Lewis.

Ticehurst. May 31st. 1861.

The above turned up in *The High Weald in Old Photographs* compiled by Brian Harwood. It makes you think, but I'm not sure what it makes me think!

Halling Bellringers

I should like to thank Mary Acott and Joyce Heighes very much for making tea for our visiting ringers from East Kent on September 24th. The visitors showed their appreciation at the time!

At present, we do not ring at Halling a lot because we only have three regular ringers. We usually join Cuxton ringers for their practice at St Michael's on Wednesday evenings. It would be good to recruit more ringers so that we can once again ring regularly on Sundays and on other occasions. Peter Silver.

Visiting Bishop Jokes.

The new bishop came to the parish for the first time and was introduced to the oldest worshipper – 110 years old. "You must have seen some changes in all that time," said the bishop. "Yes," replied the old man, "and I opposed every one of them!"

The suffragan bishop was dismayed to see the church flag flying at half mast for his visit. "Have you had a death in the parish?" he asked anxiously.

"No, my lord," replied the aged verger, "but I wasn't hauling it all the way up the pole just for a suffragan bishop!"

From the Registers

Baptisms:

11th September Lily Sophia Silvey Rochester
11th September Reece Nathan Maskell Kent Road

Wedding:

8th October Scott Peter Crundwell & Hazel Patricia Simmonds Cuxton

Funerals:

16th September Alan Seager (69) Primrose Road
19th September Irene Lilian Haden (76) Charles Drive

Alan Seager RIP

Ann, Andrew and Gillian and family would like to thank all our friends in Halling and in Cuxton for their kindness and support during Alan's long period of ill health, and then his sad death on 31 08 11. We very much appreciate all the practical help, the many cards and flowers and the donations to the RNLI. Thank you all so very much.

Rene Haden RIP

The Haden family would like to thank everyone for their cards & messages of condolence, on the loss of my dear wife, Rene, mother of Arron, Mark, Amanda, & Gary. Thank you also for the donations you have made payable to the Alzheimer's Society. The total sum raised so far amounts to the magnificent sum of £810. Thank you !!!! Many Thanks also to Roger for a wonderful Service. Any further donations please to :- R.J.Haden c/o 91 Charles Drive

Quotations

“Time is God’s way of making sure everything doesn’t happen at once.”

GM Hopkins: You do not mean by mystery what a Catholic does. You mean an interesting uncertainty. But a Catholic by mystery means an incomprehensible certainty.

EB Pusey: It is not the things which we know clearly, but the things which we know are clearly which are our highest birthright.

Wills & Grace

Rochester Cathedral has produced a paper about legacies. It points out that the Cathedral is a magnificent building with tremendous theological, musical and historical traditions. It has served the City and Diocese of Rochester for more than 1500 years and continues to do so today, but all this good work costs a huge amount of money. So it’s worth considering leaving a legacy to the Cathedral when you make your will (which is something we all ought to do in order to make things easier for the people who will have to attend to our affairs when we die.) If you would like more information about making a bequest to the Cathedral, please contact Ms Lynne Bax at Rochester Cathedral Trust, Garth House, The Precinct, Rochester, ME1 1SX or development@rochestercathedral.org, 01634 810074.

Obviously you might also or alternatively want to consider other missions or charities or even the Parish Of Cuxton & Halling for a bequest. We are very grateful for some legacies which we have received lately. It is possible to leave money in a tax advantageous way, which you can discuss with our treasurer or covenant secretary or your solicitor or account.

St John’s Church Draw: £5 each to Mrs Burr (10), Mrs Brown (50), Mrs Warman (56) & Mrs Mitchell (61) – drawn by Mrs Heasman.

Church Hall Draw: August £5 to Renee Barker, drawn by Ray Maisey; Sept.: £5 to Jo Martin, drawn by Buffy Maisey.



Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

Our three participants made £271 divided equally between our parish and FKC. Thanks to them and to their sponsors.

Christmas Unwrapped

Do you know the Christmas story? Do you think all the people you know know the story? If you log on to <http://www.christmasunwrapped.org.uk/> you can see a three minute video which tells the story beautifully. You can also read the story for yourself.

If you would like to share the story with your friends, you can get stickers to stick on your Christmas card envelopes with the above website address. The stickers are free and can be ordered from the website or by calling 01793 418330 and quoting 79904. It would be great for children.

All Souls 2011

On the 2nd November each year, the Church commemorates the Festival of All Souls. It is a day specially set aside to remember the faithful departed. In the words of the Creed, we believe in *the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body*.

In other words, we believe that we can trust God for those whom we love but see no longer. Death is not the end, but a new beginning, a new phase of existence. Our love for them and their love for us continues within the love of God. The things we have done wrong on earth can be forgiven if we ask God in Christ. Our personality, our soul, is not extinguished by death, but finds its fulfilment in God's love. These are the kinds of thoughts to remember when we think about our loved ones who have died.

In this parish, we remember by name on All Souls Day all those whose names are in the Books of Remembrance, those whose funerals we have arranged in the last year and any other individuals we are asked to commemorate.

The All Souls services this year are on Wednesday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St Michael & All Angels' Church Cuxton and at 7.30 pm at St John the Baptist's Church Halling. At both services we remember all those whose funerals we have taken in this last year and people from the parish we have heard about. If you or other members of your family or friends would like to be present at either service, you would be most welcome. If there are other names you would like remembered, please give them in writing to the Rector.

Nature Notes September 2011

***Beech Leaves* by James Reeves.**

In autumn down the beechwood
path
The leaves lie thick upon the ground.
It's there I love to kick my way
And hear the crisp and crashing
sound.

I am a giant, and my steps
Echo and thunder to the sky.
How the small creatures of the
woods
Must quake and cower as I pass by!

This brave and merry noise I make
In summer also when I stride
Down to the shining pebbly sea
And kick the frothing waves aside.

The first day of the month is beautiful with blue skies and warm, golden sunshine. While in the garden, I watch bees as they gather nectar from the lupins and birds feeding. Goldfish are still in the pond. We had thought that a heron may have caught them but that is not the case. By the evening all cloud has dispersed and the skies are clear. The next day, as I drive to Addington, I notice the changing colours in the trees. In the afternoon, the skies become less hazy. I sit in the garden for a while enjoying the warmth of the sun. As the sun sets salmon pink, clouds brush the pale sky then a crescent moon appears in the western sky. The evening air is balmy. On the 3rd, as I walk with Murphy at Bluewater, I'm aware of the fading flowers as Autumn approaches. The following day we experience some heavy rain but it is needed. The sun returns in the early evening. The morning of 5th is bright with sunshine and blue skies. We take Murphy

to Cobtree Manor Park where I see a wealth of berries on various trees. The wind strengthens and grey and white clouds march across the sky. I notice a clump of fungi in the grass and shiny brown conkers which have burst from their spiky, green cases. The 6th is a very wet day causing me to walk in a covered car park at Bluewater where the rain continues to fall. In the garden, birds brave the rain in order to feed. By evening the skies have cleared and a bright moon shines. As I walk up the path by the church the next day, I see that birds have foraged on the blackberries and wild clematis straddles the wall. A moderate westerly wind blows on 8th when we again walk round the lake at Bluewater where yarrow, clover, Lucerne and bristly ox tongue bloom. As we walk along the lower path I espy a green woodpecker as it flies out of the trees across the water calling as it flies. Many trees bear their autumn fruits. The next two days are

grey and humid. Green finches, collared doves, blue tits a robin and magpies come to the garden for food. There is a distinct chill in the air on the evening of 11th. Rain is falling on 12th when we leave home for Wiltshire but the clouds begin to disperse and the sun shines in between billowing grey clouds. A strong westerly wind buffets the car. We arrive at our destination at 4.00pm a beautiful cottage in a valley between rolling hills. Sheep graze up in the field above us and swifts fly low overhead. Later I walk along the stony track, up through the woodland path and along the top of the field where I drink in the view as clouds march across the sky driven by the wind. At the bottom of the hill I walk the woodland by-way then return to the cottage along the track. I see white deadnettle, buttercups and deep red haws. The early morning skies of 13th are a clear blue full of golden sunshine. Later a few wispy clouds drift across the sky from the west as we drive to Devizes. Eventually, banks of dark clouds march towards us and heavy showers fall. As we drive back I watch cloud formations. Some are ridges, others billowing mountains light greys, dark greys and white. Blue skies and sunshine return with blustery winds driving more clouds across the blue. In the afternoon, a neighbour takes me, with her cocker spaniel, Cassie, to the top of the field and along to a large badger sett. On the way, I see, in the furrows, field pansies, scarlet pimpernel cut leaved cranesbill white dead nettle and toadflax. The sunshine is beautiful and the wind is strong causing the tall ash tree to bend and bow. A sparrow hawk hovers overhead. In the evening, when the light is fading, I walk along the path to watch bats flying overhead among the trees and into the sky. It is a wonderful sight. The early morning of the 14th brings blue skies again. I see the shadows of sheep on the curtains of the bedroom window. Clouds drift across the sky as we approach Warminster where there has been some rain but eventually the clouds are blown away and by mid-day the sun is shining from a clear blue sky. In the afternoon, we drive to Shearwater Lake around which we intend to walk. In fact we go beyond the lake up into woodland of pines and deciduous trees and along some muddy paths. I see a variety of flowers and berries, Canada geese and mallard ducks. The trees along the way display beautiful Autumn colours and the lake reflects the blue of the sky and the water ripples in the wind which has strengthened. We drive back across Salisbury Plain where we see miles of beautiful views. The 15th is a morning of "mists and mellow fruitfulness". I look out of the window and the trees, beyond the wet grass, are enshrouded in mist. The rising sun behind the mist brings brightness to the sky.

Bleating sheep walk down the field and I watch them as they walk one behind the other. It is so still and peaceful. The mist clears revealing autumn colours and blue sky brushed with fluffy clouds. Later, we sit by the Kennet and Avon Canal and drink in the warmth of the sun and watch barges negotiating the locks. We then drive to Erlestoke to visit a friend and enjoy the sun while sitting in her garden. In the evening I walk up to the top of the field where I see a magnificent sunset. The next day we leave Orcheston and set off home. The weather is beautiful. After early rain the next day I have my first sight of a hummingbird hawk moth as it hovers over the petunias. It is a beautiful creature. The 20th is a mild blustery day with grey clouds bowling across the sky from the west. I walk round the lake with Murphy at Bluewater where a few Lucerne plants, yarrow, hawkweed and bristly ox tongue still bloom. Trees are losing their leaves, squirrels have taken the hazel nuts but acorns on pendunculate oaks are ripening. A flock of pigeons fly over the lake's rippling water. In the early evening of the next day I watch a skein of calling Canada geese as they fly in formation across the sky, following the course of the river. By 22nd it is almost dark by 7.30pm. The morning of 23rd is very chilly, Autumn is definitely here. As I walk with Murphy round the lake at Bluewater I feel the warmth of the sun on my face. Yarrow and a few goats rue flowers bloom but all the umbellifers have turned brown, both stalks and heads. The next day, in the early morning, I smell autumn in the air. The evening skies are clear and as the light fades I stand outside listening to the rooks as they settle in the trees by the river. The morning of 26th is grey as we drive along the M20, where Autumn displays are beautiful, to Cobtree Manor Park. The clouds begin to disperse revealing patches of blue sky. I see shiny, brown horse chestnuts lying on the grass as we walk among the trees. The 27th is very warm. Darkness has now fallen before 7.30. By 28th we are experiencing an Indian summer. In the evening, when darkness has fallen, I stand on the patio and, looking up into the sky, I see many stars and over in the East a satellite shining brightly. The 29th and 30th are very hot days, reaching 29 degrees Celsius. On the last day of the month I drive to Addington where Autumn colours are beautiful. The sky is a clear blue from which a golden sun beams down on the earth. In the afternoon, I listen to two robins seemingly having a conversation with one another, one in the conifer tree and the other in the holly tree. As the evening light fades, the skies remain clear after the pink tinges of the setting sun have disappeared. Elizabeth Summers.

Joke: The ice cream man as found dead on the floor of his van covered with hundreds and thousands. Police think he topped himself!



Cuxton WI

Once again we decided to start our meeting with the speaker Mr Steve Roberts a retired Scotland Yard detective. Our numbers were down as lots of members were away on holiday or had gone to see Dreamboats and Petticoats with a "rival" WI. So it was a contest between items of clothing put to music or the low down on criminals sometimes involving music although Mr Roberts declined to sing for us! He was born a cockney and started his police career by being put into the east end of London as he could talk the talk. From talking he rose to the Flying Squad at Scotland Yard. This squad was started in 1920 by supplying the police with two large black covered wagons with holes cut in the sides for them to spy on the people. Shades of Dad's Army and the butchers van with the guns sticking through which wasn't so far fetched after all! Mr Roberts then became a Scotland Yard detective and his work took him to many exotic places in the world although the parts that he visited were not the most popular tourist spots. His best story was a joke on himself when digging had been taking place in a garden in England In the bottom of a hole appeared a skull. He looked at the surrounding patio and decided this could be a den of hidden bodies etc .He sent for the criminal task force and when the pathologist arrived was quite taken aback when he jumped into the hole, picked up the skull and

tossed it at him. Luckily he caught it and on closer examination saw the words "made in China" - so ended his efforts to find a mass murderer!

After tea we went through the business section quickly. Our finances are not too bad but the cost of speakers and expenses have increased considerably .Pat had made £65 at her coffee morning which helps a lot and she is hoping to try a light luncheon party in Jan/Feb. Arrangements for our Christmas party were discussed We have re-engaged Sarah Eede who is local and was so good at our June party. In these economical times we are calling on all our WI ladies to each provide a plate of sweet/savoury food for a buffet. WI will decorate tables etc and provide drinks but our committee are like the rest of us not getting any younger and to have to cater for 60+ is quite an undertaking. Now Lakeland has reported a huge increase in the sale of baking tins etc particularly with the younger generation which is very good news. So, come on girls Jam and Jerusalem might be on the wane but a bit of home made baking is still what we are all about and jolly good we are at it.

Our next meeting is on Thursday November 3rd - 7 30pm in the Church Hall when Mr Chris Wade will tell us about Smugglers in Kent - so perhaps we won't have to buy any wine after all! See you all there - bring a friend and give us a try. Sheila..

October News from Cuxton Community Infants School

Dear friends of our school,

The children have settled and it feels like we have been back at school a long time (said in a positive way!)I am so pleased to see our youngest children skipping into school so happily each day. They certainly are a confident group and are enjoying all the various activities.

If you have a child of school age next September, and have not contacted us already, please do. We are holding an open morning and afternoon in early November.

We celebrated Harvest by Years 1 and 2 children singing songs and saying poems and showing paintings and then selling cakes, decorated biscuits and apple crumbles, fudge etc to their families. Children and staff had been busy baking all week. The sale was a great success and each class will use the funds they collected for their classroom resources.

The foundation stage children did the same and sang to their parents in the hall and said rhymes. Each class has collected for Caring hands in the Community and brought tins, pasta, coffee etc into school. There is a prize for the class that collect the most.

Our Environmental day this year is now going to take place on October 21st. The children once again will be digging, planting, tidying the gardens etc. All year groups will be involved. Please see the school website for last years day under environment day- the movie!!

Our parents have also attended workshops on Literacy and Numeracy. We have shared the curriculum and our expectations and how parents can help at home. We reminisced about our

school days and subjects we found easy/hard. After Christmas we plan to invite parents into school to observe lessons taking place and how and what children are learning.

Having mentioned the Christmas word we have decided this year to present 3 different performances , one for each year group as we have more children now. We look forward to seeing the outcome of this new format .

Do contact us if you need to know anything about the school or look at our website if you have access to a computer.

That's all from the Infants for now,
Sandra Jones. Head teacher.



Zumba Classes

Cuxton Social Club - *Wednesdays Evening 7-8pm (£4)*

Cobham Meadow Rooms - *Tuesday Morning 10.45-11.35am (£5)*

Cliffe Memorial Hall - *Wednesday Morning 9.30-10.20am (£5)*

Contact 07746082182 for more info or for other classes in *Cliffe/Cliffe Woods/Chatham or Gravesend.*

An additional morning class will be arranged in the church hall, Cuxton, if there is sufficient demand. Please contact the above number if interested.

Psalms

Bishop James invited all the clergy to a day conference on psalms at the beginning of October at Orpington. It was a very profitable and enjoyable day with an excellent speaker – Dr Susan Gillingham of Oxford University and a reader in the Church of England.

Congregations in the Church of England used to know the psalms better than most Christians because they sang them regularly at Morning and Evening Prayer. The Parish Communion has, however, quite rightly displaced Mattins and Evensong as the main Sunday service and psalms are no longer a mandatory part of the regular public worship in which most people participate. The clergy, of course, still recite the psalms daily as part of their Morning and Evening Prayer and you are of course always welcome to join me at 7.15am at St Michael's Tuesdays to Fridays and 7.45am Saturdays or at 5.00pm any day except Sundays and Mondays. Over the last couple of the years we have been saying or singing psalms at some of our Sunday Communion services. It isn't fair if I know the Psalms better than you. The Bible is for everyone, not just for ministers of religion.

The difficulty many people have with the psalms is that we sing them to chants. Most hymns and most songs are written in metrical verse and are quite easy to set to music. English translations of the psalms are necessarily in prose and chanting is a way to set prose to music. You can actually sing any words to any chant – as I once demonstrated by singing the list of song titles at a Karaoke evening to a psalm chant! Like most things, however, chanting is difficult if you don't do it very often and, if you don't do very often what you find difficult, you set up a vicious circle of achieving less and less. It is better, I think, to say psalms than to chant them badly. We don't take in the meaning of the words if we're struggling with the tune. On the other hand, psalms were meant to be sung and they lose something if they are only ever said. Psalms were sung in the Temple at Jerusalem, built by King Solomon and finally destroyed by the Romans about 40 years after the Death & Resurrection of Jesus. Modern research suggests that the tunes the ancient Israelites used to sing the psalms in their original Hebrew were not dissimilar to mediaeval plainsong, to which monks and nuns sing psalms even today. Recordings of plainsong have been big sellers because even people who are not religious find it deeply moving.

Another difficulty is the English translation in which we usually sing the psalms. The Book of Psalms was translated by Miles Coverdale long before 1611 when the King James Version which most of us think of as the traditional English Bible was published. Coverdale's translation was included in Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer and survived its revision in 1662. A lot of people don't actually like the psalms in the KJV, which is rather odd. Coverdale didn't know Hebrew. He was one of those people desperately translating the

Bible into English at a time when to do so was illegal and could lead to martyrdom. He was the first person to publish a complete bible in English. He used other people's work extensively, especially that of William Tyndale. His own translations are from Latin and German. So the prayer book psalms we sing are written in the language of 450 years ago and in a translation which is not wonderfully accurate.

The odd thing is, however, that Coverdale's psalms have a power to inspire, which presumably is why they have been retained and why we still appreciate them so much. There is, however, no reason why we should not use newer translations. At Halling, we mainly say the psalms as they are in the Book of Common Worship, the new prayer books we acquired last year. There are many good modern translations.

Some psalms have been rewritten as hymns in metrical verse. This makes them easier to sing. The problem is that some meaning is lost with each move away from the original. There is loss in translation from Hebrew into English. There is further loss in altering the order of the words to create metrical verse. Psalm 23 is a good example. In the version "The Lord's My Shepherd" it is much easier to sing than Ps 23. It is, however, slightly changed. In the version "The King of Love my Shepherd Is" it is changed further and it is made quite explicit that our Shepherd is Jesus. In one way this is a gain, because it helps us to understand one important meaning of the psalm. In another sense, however, it is a loss. To insist that the Shepherd is Jesus is to rule out the other possible meaning – the original meaning, that the Shepherd is God. Of course Jesus is God, but He is also Man. So there's a lot to think about in understanding Ps 23 as Jesus and we shouldn't jump to what may seem like an obvious conclusion.

Anyway the value of having a great familiarity with the psalms is that they are such a tremendous resource for prayer. The psalmist talks to God on the basis of what he knows of God. When we use the psalms in worship, we enter into the experience of God which David and the other authors of the psalms experienced. We enter into the experience of generations of Israelites and generations of Christians living out their faith in all the different circumstances of their lives over three thousand years of history and all over the world. When we pray the psalms we tap into the resources of all the people of God. That is why it is worth persevering with the Psalms both in public worship and private devotion. You could do worse than to read the psalms appointed for each day in your daily prayer. The old Prayer Book would give you on average six psalms per day to read. Newer lectionaries suggest rather fewer. You can find out what psalms people are reading every day by logging on to <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1172724/weekday%20lectionary%202005.pdf>



Max's Tail Piece

Master reckons I am entitled to at least one walk each day and, to be fair to him, usually I get at least one. He aims for at least four miles – though often it is more than that and occasionally (like today when he overslept) rather less. He jokes that the puppy book recommended three walks per day, but probably that's three walks of a much shorter duration than my one.

Sometimes I get lucky, however, and we go on what he calls a bonus walk. That sometimes means he's going somewhere on foot where he can take me. [He says it's a pity that the minority who dislike dogs have managed to ban dogs from so many places where most people wouldn't mind them and a lot of people would like them, but that's modern life. As a bishop said on the radio lately, we've forgotten that the Law is there to protect our liberty and perverted it into a plethora of petty regulations which unnecessarily restrict our freedoms.] Sometimes I get a bonus walk when he's feeling restless. He's finished work. He's spent too much time reading already and there's nothing on TV – about five evenings out of seven! The best bonus walks are when he's got some free time and the weather is so beautiful that he thinks it would be a sin to stay indoors. I'm always pleased to be offered a bonus walk.

Well he was quite annoyed a week or two ago when he came in to find his telephone and internet service had packed up, but I was quite glad when I was offered a bonus walk to the telephone kiosk in Cuxton where he was going to report the fault. But the box wasn't there and, when he went into the post office to report the theft, he was told that it has been gone for years! Unobservant or what? I could have told him. Luckily the kind man in the post office let him use his 'phone. Otherwise you might not be reading this. Max.