

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Saturday 2 nd November All Souls	11.00 Holy Communion	Lamentations 3 vv 17-33 p826 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
Sunday 3 rd November 4 th Before Advent	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Lamentations 3 vv 22-33 p826 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078
	11.00 Holy Communion Collection of Shoeboxes for Blythswood	Isaiah 1 vv 10-20 p686 II Thessalonians 1 vv 1-12 p1189 Luke 19 vv 1-10 p1053
10 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion & Parade Service.	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	I Kings 3 vv 1-15 p338 Romans 8 vv 31-39 p1135
17 th November 2 nd Before Advent	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Malachi 4 vv 1-6 p962 II Thessalonians 3 vv 6-13 p1190 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
24 th November Christ the King	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 32-43 p1060
1 st December Advent Sunday (Year A) Gift Service	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 52 vv 1-12 p739 Matthew 24 vv 15-28 p993
	3 rd November 4 th Before Advent	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994
Services at St Michael and All Angles Cuxton		
Saturday 2 nd November All Souls	9.30 Holy Communion	Lamentations 3 vv 17-33 p826 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
3 rd November 4 th Before Advent	9.30 Family Communion Collection of Shoeboxes for Blythswood	Isaiah 1 vv 10-20 p686 II Thessalonians 1 vv 1-12 p1189 Luke 19 vv 1-10 p1053
10 th November 3 rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion & Parade Service.	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
17 th November 2 nd Before Advent	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Epiphany 3 (When there are more Sundays after Trinity than there are readings provided, we have recourse to the unused readings after Epiphany)
	9.30 Holy Communion	Malachi 4 vv 1-6 p962 II Thessalonians 3 vv 6-13 p1190 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
24 th November Christ the King	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 32-43 p1060
1 st December Advent Sunday (Year A) Gift Service	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994

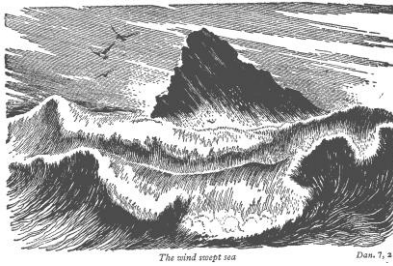
Wednesday Holy Communion St Michael's 9.30		Thursday Holy Communion St John's 9.30	
6 th November	Romans 13 vv 8-10 Luke 14 vv 25-33	7 th November	Romans 14 vv 7-12 Luke 15 vv 1-10
13 th November	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	14 th November	Philemon Luke 17 vv 20-25
20 th November	Revelation 4 Luke 19 vv 11-28	21 st November	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
27 th November	Daniel 5 vv 1-28 Luke 21 v 12-19	28 th November	Daniel 6 Luke 21 vv 20-28

Friday 1st is All Saints Day: Holy Communion St Michael's 7.30 am.

Copy Date December Magazine 8th November 8.30 am Rectory.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Miss K Thorne (3), Mrs U Murphy (42), Mr R Mitchell (69) & Mrs R Clark (157) – drawn by Mrs Lawrence.

St Michael's Draw: £10 each Dave Maxwell and Dennis Hills and Peter Charlton and £5 each Jane Joyce and Janice Cheesmer – drawn by Mrs Cheesmer.



The Great War

More than Just Names

As you know we are preparing to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War next year. We are collecting information about the people commemorated on our two war memorials and this will be published in the magazines for the months leading up to the events. Please keep the stories coming in. They may eventually become part of a separate booklet, though at the moment, that is not my responsibility. What is proposed is an exhibition in the church hall on 2nd & 3rd August, Evensong (preacher to be announced) at 6.30 in St Michael's Church that day and a reception afterwards. The centenary will be commemorated at St John's at the Parish Communion at 11.00 on August 27th with Bishop Brian presiding and preaching and a reception to follow. There may be an exhibition that day in the south aisle. Do you have any objects or pictures from the Great War you would be prepared to lend to us to exhibit?

I am afraid I must begin our wartime stories this month with an apology. The lady whom Ted Allcorn married was the widow of Percy Chalklen, killed in action, not as stated in last month's magazine. Apologies for any embarrassment which may have been caused. Mr and Mrs Chalklen are pictured on the back cover of *Cuxton A Kentish Village* by Derek Church, outside the old post office which is the old Chalklen family shop – now Enigma hair salon on the corner of Bush Road and May Street. Victor Slingsby's family had shops in Surrey. His parents lived in May Street. Frederick Sudds came from Bush Road. He is the one whose original wooden cross is now in the tower at St Michael's. Stanley Randall was the brother of Hilda Hogg formerly of Station Road. Frank Burchfield (Jo Martin's uncle) was one of eleven children and lived at Flora Villa. He was engaged to Edward Earl's sister Beat at the time of his death and she later married his brother Alf. So tragically Beat lost both her brother and her fiancé in the First World War.

James Beaney was killed on Hill 60 at Ypres on 18th April 1916. He volunteered to serve although he was already 38 years old and joined up in December 1915. So he was killed within four months leaving a wife Mary and nine children in a house in Portland Row, North Halling.

I also now have a list of the units in which the Halling men served. Roger.

PLEASE WEAR A POPPY

by Don Crawford

"Please wear a poppy," the lady said
And held one forth, but I shook my head.
Then I stopped and watched as she offered them there,
And her face was old and lined with care;
But beneath the scars the years had made
There remained a smile that refused to fade.

A boy came whistling down the street,
Bouncing along on care-free feet.
His smile was full of joy and fun,
"Lady," said he, "may I have one?"
When she'd pinned it on he turned to say,
"Why do we wear a poppy today?"

The lady smiled in her wistful way
And answered, "This is Remembrance Day,
And the poppy there is the symbol for
The gallant men who died in war.
And because they did, you and I are free -
That's why we wear a poppy, you see.

"I had a boy about your size,
With golden hair and big blue eyes.
He loved to play and jump and shout,
Free as a bird he would race about.
As the years went by he learned and grew
and became a man - as you will,
too.

"He was fine and strong, with a boyish smile,
But he'd seemed to be with us such a little while
When war broke out and he went away.
I still remember his face that day
When he smiled at me and said,
'Goodbye,
I'll be back soon, Mom, so please don't cry.'

"But the war went on and he had to stay,
And all I could do was wait and pray.
His letters told of the awful fight,
(I can see it still in my dreams at night),
With the tanks and guns and cruel barbed wire,
And the mines and bullets, the bombs and fire.

"Till at last, at last, the war was won
 And that's why we wear a poppy
 son."
 The small boy turned as if to go,
 Then said, "Thanks, lady, I'm glad
 to know.
 That sure did sound like an awful
 fight,
 But your son - did he come back all
 right?"

A tear rolled down each faded
 check;
 She shook her head, but didn't
 speak.
 I slunk away in a sort of shame,
 And if you were me you'd have
 done the same;
 For our thanks in giving are oft
 delayed,
 Thought our freedom was bought -
 and thousands paid!

And so when we see a poppy worn,
 Let us reflect on the burden borne,
 By those who gave their very all
 When asked to answer their
 country's call
 That we at home in peace might
 live.
 So wear a poppy! Remember - and
 give!

Forthcoming Attractions.

30th November 7.30 pm: Ukulele Concert Church Hall.
 14th December 10.00: Christmas Coffee Morning &
 Minimarket
 6th January 2014: 9.30 am Epiphany Service at St Michael's
 followed by brunch in church hall.

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Harvest Thanksgiving

Thank you to everyone who made possible our wonderful Harvest Thanksgiving at both Cuxton and Halling. We should remember those who keep our church buildings clean and well maintained throughout the year – also those who look after our churchyards and cemeteries – not least those who donate money to pay professionals to do the grass-cutting etc., which is far too much to be done on a purely voluntary basis. We are in need of more of these generous contributors as both our churchyard funds are

running a current account deficit this year. There are also the flower arrangers and those who polish the brass and those who do all the work behind the scenes to arrange and cater for our various social events. And there are those who work with the children in *Saints Alive*.

Harvest brings together the efforts of everyone with services in our two beautiful churches, music and bell-ringing and a wonderful presentation on food and health by Saints Alive. I'm told that the gifts of food to be distributed by Social Services to families in need exceeded last year's total by a considerable amount. We hope to start collecting for the local food bank in January. Then there was the Harvest Supper following the Evening Service in the Jubilee Hall – a sumptuous repast and a big thank you to the organiser. Roger.

We thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good,
 The seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health our food,
 Accept the gifts we offer, for all thy love imparts,
 And, what thou most desirest, our humble, thankful hearts.
 All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
 Then than the Lord, O thank the Lord,
 For all his love.



Blythswood Care

We shall again be collecting for the annual Shoe Box appeal. Please bring boxes to services on 3rd November. Pick up a leaflet in church with suggestions of what to include and what not to include. Toothpaste, warm clothing, soap and simple toys head the list of what is needed.

Accountability and Responsibility – What is the Difference?

When I was young we were taught to be responsible. Now we are told that we should be accountable. What is the difference? So far as I can make out, responsibility is always doing your best because that is what your conscience demands. Accountability is making sure that all the boxes are ticked so that no blame attaches to you when things go wrong. Responsibility is tied up with faith, trust in God and trust in one another. Accountability is a poor substitute, but all that's available in a faithless society. RIK

From the Registers

Baptisms:

22nd September
29th September
6th October

Katie Elizabeth Barber
Eliza Antonia Pease
Zoe May Mitchell
Bradley James Mitchell

Charles Drive
Bush Road
Snodland
Snodland

Confirmations:

29th September

Amy Isaac
Alexander David Fenton-Scott
Francesca Rose Fenton-Scott
Zachary Bernard Daunt-Jones
Jane Jillian Joyce

Bush Road
Essex Road
Essex Road
Grove Road
Black Boy Cottages

Mervyn Taylor

Dorothy, Sue, Gill and Lynd would like to thank everybody who came to church for Mervyn's funeral. It was lovely to see so many people there. We would like to thank Roger for the lovely service and for his help. Thank you to John for the music, the choir, Jenny and the other ladies who helped with the refreshments. Thank you to everybody. We don't know yet the final figure for donations, but thank you to all who gave and to all who worked in the background. God bless you all.

All Souls Day

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 Saturday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St Michael & All Angels' Church Cuxton and at 11.00 am 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.

Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride



This took place on 14th September. The sponsorship raised is half for our own parish and half for Friends of Kent Churches who help churches throughout the county. I was the only one able to take part this year from our parish. It was rather a wet day, but I had a great time cycling down to Hollingbourne roughly along the old Pilgrims Way and then back to the Medway Towns via Huckling across the Detling Bypass and to the A2 at Rainham. Tackling

Huckling may indicate a mid life crisis. I was reminded of cycling the notorious hills by which it is approached which challenged us as teenagers and I thought, "Well if I could do it 40 years ago..." and thankfully I still can! Thank you for your generous sponsorship which raised £225 of which £122.50 comes back to us. Maybe more will be able to take part next year and perhaps the sun will shine for us. Roger.



Halling WI

We were minus a speaker for our September meeting. So it was decided we would go it alone and just call it a Surprise meeting. It turned out to be like W.I. used to be, very sociable and fun. Jemma read the minutes, and Margaret gave Sylvia and Maureen their birthday flowers. A very posh new magazine called the Landscape was given out to all the member. In it were lovely coloured photos and unusual recipes, must have cost a fortune to produce, hence the cost. Don't think I will be buying it; it would go with the rest, in the recycling bin. Betty and I accepted the invitation from Ham Hill and Snodland W.I. to their Harvest Supper on 9th October. Aylesford and Eccles W.I. invited our members to Ten Pin Bowling. Just can't manage that. District W.I. Carol concert for 2013 will be held at East Malling on 5th December. It is a very long time ago since we last went to St James church.

Jemma and Ann had arranged the next part of the evening. We had teams of four for the Quiz night. Our team consisted of Ann Graves, Betty Head,

Lily Hesketh and myself. We called ourselves the Brains of Britain, and we won. The Maltesers were lovely. Each table was supplied with nibbles and drinks, just like a "professional" quiz. We had a fun time and now know what a Red Thumb is not one that has been bashed with a hammer, and I think Mr Mathew W could answer this one. It is a potato. Personally I had never heard of it, Pink Fir Apple, yes, but not a Red Thumb. After the fun and games and the lovely refreshments, Lily judged the competitions. First for the Flower of the Month, was Sylvia Mitchell, with a tiny perfect pink Rose, and something beginning with the letter R, yes you'd guessed it, a Rabbit, not an Old English or a Flemish Giant, just a white cuddly toy one, belonging to Margaret Sutherland.

October letter is the easiest one of the lot, S for Sugar. Try and find a really unusual item, like Soot, Saucepan, or even a Shilling. Our speaker will be Mark Tickner, talking about the Fire and Rescue boys and girls. If Mark forgets he is coming to us we can go next door and rake him out. Phyllis.

And Speaking of Quizzes

Christian Aid



A Division of The British Council of Churches

On 21st September we hosted the Strood Deanery Area Christian Aid Quiz. The hall was packed with people from the parish and all over the deanery and we raised the largest sum ever I think (more than £600) for Christian

Aid. Again thanks to everyone who supported this event. {We are still anticipating the parish quiz on 19th October as I wrote. Hope it goes as well!}

Cuxton WI



The usual *gang* were back in charge this month and before we started Pat warmly thanked the *members* committee who had run the September meeting which we had all very much enjoyed. Our speaker this month was Dr Ann Kneif who gave us an informative and interesting talk on the Hall Houses in Southfleet. Most of these structures, in their original form, were built at least 200-300 years ago. There are eight of them in Southfleet with some that have been turned into pubs. We realised that there are several in our surrounding villages including the White Hart farmhouse next to the garage in Cuxton. We shall be going on our country walks with a new thing to look out for in the future. News from our reps showed that winter time is really starting up as several groups have arranged their annual lunch together. The *White Hart* is proving to be a popular choice and

it's good to see the new owners making a thriving business on our doorstep.

Several members were absent this month with various degrees of colds and flu, but there was good news from Ann who has had another operation on her foot and hopes to be back with us in November. Janet, Joyce and Sylvia are all beginning to make good progress and are rejoining us for meetings. The trouble is that the years are flying by and being such an active group we forget that we are all getting older and therefore are bound to be less mobile and more prone to falls etc.. Still there is nothing like a roomful of friends to cheer you up and keep you going and that's what our W.I. is all about. Come and join us and see for yourself. You will be made most welcome. Next meeting Thursday 7th November at 7.30 in the church hall. Sheila.

The Cuxton Wedding

Wednesday 25th September 2013,

Today the children of Key Stage 1 at Cuxton Infant school whilst learning about Christianity, took part in mock wedding ceremony. It was with much excitement that we arrived at St Michaels for the special occasion. We all enjoyed it very much and will remember it for a long time.

Here are some reports written by the children of the day.



TODAY WE WENT TO THE CHURCH By Harry S

Nia was getting married to Jack so we needed to look smart. When we got there the father took the Bride down the aisle. Nia had some flowers – they were colourful. Nia wasn't really getting married because you need to be 16.

Jack and Nia said promises so that God and Jesus look after them. The best man gave Nia and Jack their rings and Reverend Roger Knight wrapped his stole around their hands. Then they had to write their name in a book.

THIS MORNING I GOT READY FOR A VERY SPECIAL DAY By Debbie A

It was a wedding! I got dressed really quickly and when I got there I was a Bridesmaid. I went in with the Bride and I saw Reverend Roger Knight. We sat in the choir pews and Reverend Roger Knight and everybody sang a hymn. Then the Bride and Groom said promises to each other and they were married.



I WENT TO A WEDDING TODAY By Eve

The Bride walked in front of the Bridesmaids. They gave Reverend Roger Knight the rings and then Jack gave Nia his ring. Then they made promises and signed the book.

I WENT TO A WEDDING by Charlie J

Reverend Roger Knight was there, Nia and Jack got married. They made promises. Samuel was the Dad. There was a ring, Jack gave his ring to Nia and then they wrote in a book.

MY WEDDING By Nia

I went to the church for my wedding. I waited until last with my Dad. When we got to the church we were led to the front - the groom and the Best Boy were there before us. We sang hymns and then we made promises for each other. Reverend Roger Knight said that the Best Boy had to give him the rings. He blessed the rings on the Bible then we swapped rings. Torin (one of the bridesmaids) gave me some flowers and me and Jack had to sign our names in some books. When we came out of the Church they threw confetti at me, Jack, my Mum and Dad and Jack's Mum and Dad. I loved my wedding.



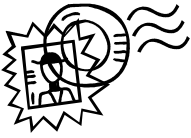
Jokes

“Mummy, I don't want to go to school today.”

“Don't be silly, Tommy. You've got to go to school. You're the headmaster!”

“Why do you only ever get one egg in a French restaurant?”

Because in French one egg is un oeuf (enough).



FAREWELL TO GERRY

On 2nd October Cuxton villagers said a sad farewell to our butcher/postmaster of 24 years and 9 months, Gerry Robinson. Collections were made in the two hairdressing salons, the *White Hart*, Cuxton Social Club and in the 2 churches. A photo shoot was held outside the premises, whilst his name was still above the door. Soon a pharmacist will be moving in and we are delighted that he has also taken on the village post office. We understand that the pharmacy will serve those who do not use the village medical centre, a godsend for non-drivers, and that a stock of cosmetics will also be available. Up at the church hall, where the monthly parish lunch happened to be taking place, Ray Maisey, our member on Medway Council presented Gerry with an original watercolour painting of St Michael's church by our resident artist Hilary Morgan as a reminder of the village. Gerry's wife Monica ran the post office for a number of years and we wished them both a happy retirement. It seems that handing over a business is fraught with far more headaches than selling a house. So the date of completion came with very short notice. Nevertheless, Christine Eedes, who runs a catering business locally, managed to produce a beautiful cake overnight. A cheque will also be sent to Gerry and Monica for them to select their own gift to be a reminder of their long and faithful service to Cuxton, with a smile!



Forthcoming event – 7.30pm - 30th November, 2013 – Ukuleles in the Church Hall

"What's all this?" I hear you ask. "And what is a ukulele?" It was felt that something different was needed in our social calendar and so the Bexley Ukulele Music Society (or BuMs for short) will be coming to the hall to play and sing some songs that everyone will know and hopefully join in with, as well as having an enjoyable time. The word *ukulele* comes from Hawaii and its name translates as "Leaping Flea". It is a small fretted stringed instrument that looks like a miniature guitar and there are no other stringed instruments native to Hawaii. But the root of this musical instrument, if you trace its ancestry, is Portugal. Three Portuguese instrument makers arrived in Hawaii in 1879, bringing with them their native instruments, including the *cavaquinho*, on which the ukulele is based. They set up shops selling the instruments and these quickly caught on with the local population. It was an instrument used at times of celebration, a natural part of Hawaiian life, and it became quickly popular in other states, as the craze for Hawaiian music swept across the United States of America in the early twentieth century. Guitar-like lutes also spread from Spain through their south and central American colonies as did other variants of these from Portugal through trade with their colonies of Madeira, the Azores and Cape Verde and on into South America to become an armadillo-backed instrument called *charango*. There are four sizes of ukulele: in order from the smallest is the soprano, the concert, the tenor and the baritone although in the late twentieth century other sizes were added to the range in the form of the sopranino and the bass. Each has four strings and a varying number of frets, from around 14 on the soprano to at least 22 on the baritone. The instruments you will hear in Cuxton are usually tuned to concert or orchestral pitch (the note A above middle C = 440 hertz – or vibrations per second) the same as the church organ, for example. But when playing in traditional folk music, the pitches are not set and performer will raise or lower the strings in order to accommodate their music.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the ukulele's success spread to Europe. It became particularly successful as part of the British Music Hall tradition, or variety acts that performed during the Second World War. Everyone has surely listened to George Formby singing songs accompanied by his *banjolele* which is a very similar instrument to the ukulele but with a round sound box covered in a skin (like a banjo).

There has been a further renaissance of the instruments popularity since the Millennium challenging the teaching of the recorder in schools. BuMs was formed a couple of years ago meeting in the *Black Horse* public house in Bexley. Some of us have been playing music for some time whilst others are beginners. We hope you enjoy our show and that you are in good voice!! JGB.

Come & Join Us in the Church Hall

30th November 7.30 pm for an evening with BuM offering a variety of music and sing-along songs. Light refreshments will be served with tea and coffee. (Bring alternative drinks if preferred.) All we ask is a donation to Church funds and of course your company to make our evening go with a swing. A warm welcome to you all. See you there!

Nature Notes September 2013

“Ode To Autumn” J Keats

Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom –friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more
And still more, later flowers for bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen Thee oft amid thy store/
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half –reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

The first day of the month is warm, but the skies are hazy and the sun watery. As I walk to church, I am aware of the first breath of Autumn. Later, in the early evening, salmon pink skies reveal themselves after the sun has set. The 2nd is a beautiful day of blue skies and golden sunshine. Fresh breezes blow as I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Summer has not abandoned us for more fine days are forecast. Flowers are few now except for bristly ox tongue growing tall among the straw-coloured grasses. The water ripples in the breeze. In the afternoon I sit in the garden watching birds and butterflies busying themselves. The evenings are drawing in and it is almost dark by 8.15pm. The 3rd is very humid with high cloud as well as sunshine. We go to the lake again where I see hazel nuts ripening but acorns remain green. I see a single sainfoin flower in the middle of a grassy path and a few birds foot trefoil display their golden flowers. I hear a green woodpecker calling from a nearby willow tree by the water. Bristly ox tongue grows tall and clumps of Lucerne bloom among the grasses. The willows are reflected in the lake. I enjoy the warmth of the sun. The 4th is a hot day, and while in the garden, I watch a large white butterfly, a brimstone butterfly and a fritillary, while bees gather nectar from the flowers. The 5th is very hot, probably the last hot day of Summer according to the forecasters. I mow the back grass in the late afternoon. Wasps fly low over the grass blades so I am careful. A beautiful jay comes to the garden but it doesn't stay for long. The evening air is balmy and wisps of salmon pink cloud adorn the sky after the sun has set. The next day, temperatures

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with a patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye where are they?
Think not of them, -thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full grown lambs bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge crickets sing and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

have dropped considerably. There is early morning brightness but clouds soon drift across from the west and rain is falling before mid-day and this continues well into the afternoon. Eventually the sun shines again and birds come to feed including the jay. Late afternoon sunshine lights up the sky. Bird song on 7th reminds me of the sounds of Spring. Dragonflies and a small white butterfly hover over the ivy which is now full of flowers in bud. The 9th is a rather bleak day with grey skies and fresh westerly winds which eventually bring heavy showers which clear in the afternoon. The 11th is grey and chilly quite a contrast to the temperatures of the previous week. Rain falls in the evening. A jay joins a magpie, feral pigeons a chaffinch a robin and a dunnock. On 12th, I listen to the chirping sounds of a robin coming from the ivy clad conifer tree trunk. Two rather wet days follow. Then on 15th the sun shines but the air is cold, very Autumnal. Billowing clouds build up in the sky and rain falls well into the darkness of the evening. On 16th there are some heavy showers but by evening the skies have cleared and a bright moon shines but the air is cold. The next day the sun shines in the morning with fresh westerly winds blowing. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. The water, rippling in the wind, reflects the sky brushed with white clouds. Two pied wagtails hop across the grass in front of us. Trees are looking quite autumnal. On the 18th, I give my talk about Bluewater to our Mothers' Union and it is well received. The 50 acres of parkland are home to many species of flora and fauna, over one million trees and shrubs, 4,700 semi mature trees, meadows, orchards and forest landscaping, six lakes

and a water garden, 300,000 aquatic plants, protected nesting site for Bluewater's sand martins, 600 species of insects and 4 km of cycle paths and walkways. David had taken some beautiful photographs because the day I visited it was raining. The 20th is sunny but there is a chill in the air. Listen to birdsong in the garden where small white butterflies hover. Two overcast days follow. I realise that I haven't seen any wood pigeons for many days. We set off for Wiltshire on 23rd. It is overcast but by the time we reach Amesbury the sun is shining. Along the A303 I'm aware of Autumn displaying itself in the trees. Golden leaves of beeches are particularly beautiful, while hips and haws are ripening. We reach the village of Orcheston in golden sunshine and soon the skies become a clear blue so we sit in the garden. Sheep, little lambs when we came in April, are grazing on the hillside while rooks fly overhead. Fog covers the countryside in the morning of the next day as we drive across Salisbury Plain to Wilton where ducks parade by the river. We go on to the pretty village of Broad Chalke where we enjoy the warm sunshine. We visit the Community shop opened in June in the United Reformed Church where services are held on Sundays. It is a place of cheer and it retains its peace. Inside

there is a huge cross up against one of the walls and it brings to mind the hymn "The Old Rugged Cross" Once back at Orcheston, I walk up the hill, across the valley and back by the lane and a woodland footpath. Elderberries and haws have ripened. Cawing rooks fly overhead. I drink in the last rays of the sun. On 25th three magpies fly across the misty fields in the early morning. All is still. Sheep graze on the hillside as the sun attempts to penetrate the foggy sky. The sun shines as we drive to beautiful countryside and Wells in Somerset, where I make another visit to the cathedral. Rain is falling on our return journey. Rain has continued to fall through the night and into the next morning. I hear the bleating of sheep on the hill while cows graze on the lower field. A lone horse walks round and round the adjacent field. Eventually the rain ceases. The next day we drive back to Kent. On 28th I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Bristly ox tongue, ragwort, yarrow, sainfoin, and goat's rue are still in bloom. On the last day of the month the sun shines warmly in the morning when I walk again round the lake. Grey clouds disperse and it remains bright and sunny throughout the day. Elizabeth Summers.

The Answer to a Mystery

Last month we asked: Does anyone know the hymn parodied in this little verse?

Little dabs of powder, little dabs of paint, Make a girl's complexion really what it ain't.

Here is the answer given by a reader:

Little drops of water, little grains of sand, Make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.

So there you are! Our readers have come up trumps again.

Hymn Writers 10

Fanny J Crosby 1820 - 1915

Fanny Crosby was born in Brewster in up-state New York in March, 1820, about fifty miles north of New York and was very proud of her Puritan heritage. She could trace her ancestry back to Simon Crosby of Boston in 1635 who was one of the founders of Harvard University and who married into the 'Mayflower' families. When she was six weeks old, a slight cold caused inflammation in her eyes and it was recommended that hot mustard poultices be administered which tragically resulted in her losing her sight. She never in her long life ever blamed the practitioner for what had happened to her, but believed "the good Lord consecrated me to do the work that I am permitted to do." Fanny's father died when she was still young and her mother and grandmother were the leading influences on her life, her grandmother stating that she would be the little girl's eyes. They educated her as much as they could, mostly at home, and her grandmother described in great detail the wonderful variety of the colours of nature, the beauty of a sunrise and sunset, what the birds and flowers looked like and the colours in the sky. Before long Fanny was describing these wonders as well, if not better, as a person with sight. Above all else, her grandmother patiently taught her the Bible a verse at a time. Soon Fanny was memorizing entire chapters. She developed a marvellous memory especially of bible stories and what her world looked like. She learned to play guitar and as she developed a skill for song-writing she was able to accompany herself. At fifteen she entered the School for the Blind in New York City. It was very hard for her to leave the security and safety of her home but she persevered as a student for seven years and as a teacher there for a further eleven. Many important people visited the school and they became accustomed to listen to Fanny recite her poetry for them.

In 1843 Fanny Crosby went to Washington, DC, with other blind friends, to prove to government leaders that blind people could have a productive education too if they received the pertinent training. She was the first woman ever

to address the Senate, moving many senators to tears by her personality, conviction and her poetry, becoming the friend of several presidents. During her thirties she married the scholarly, accomplished musician Alexander van Alstyne who was so proud of his wife's achievements and genius he insisted she retain her maiden name. They had one child who died in infancy.

In her forties she met the American composer W B Bradbury who requested she write some hymns and in 1864 she submitted her first. Bradbury had a publishing house and guaranteed her work so that in a period of nine years Fanny Crosby wrote many hymns including 'Blessed Assurance', 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus', 'I am Thine, O Lord', 'Praise Him, Praise Him', 'To God Be the Glory', 'Rescue the Perishing' and many, many more. As one of the most prolific poets, Fanny often found critics claimed that her hymns did not possess a high poetic quality and she would be the first to agree as she was not writing for literary critics. She maintained she wanted her words to be understood by the common people and thus she was directing her output towards mainly the poor whom she had lived amongst for most of her life. And yet there is the universality about them that so appealed to a wide cross-section of people. Most of her hymns were written after midnight so that she had silence to concentrate and she was not much of a sleeper. However, some of her work was written spontaneously. 'Blessed assurance' was one of these. Hearing a tune from Mrs Joseph F Knapp on the pianoforte, Fanny immediately stated a suitable title and within a short time, the hymn was finished. Later, some others came as quickly.

At the age of sixty, Fanny Crosby was more active than many in their forties. She began to work as a home mission worker several days a week mainly in the depressing districts of New York City and especially in Bowery and it was here that she wrote "Rescue the Perishing". She said, "You can't save a man by telling him of his sins. He knows them already. Tell him there is a pardon and love waiting for him....make him understand you believe in him and never give up." She put into practice what she said in the words of her hymns, and those words penetrated the poor, the destitute and the broken, and there are many testimonies of how she involved herself in this. Fanny Crosby was an excellent speaker and in her nineties she was still addressing large crowds. As a newspaper put it, she was "feeble in body, yet strong in mind....with a trust and faith in God as firm as everlasting hills!" Though nearly bent double and extremely thin, she wrote happily to a friend, "I am so busy I hardly know my name." As she grew older, her cheerfulness increased. A Scottish minister told her that it was too bad God had not given her the gift of sight. Startling him, she responded, "If I had been given the choice at birth, I would have chosen to be blind.... for when I get to heaven, the first face I will see will be the One who died for me!" Fanny Crosby died on February 12th, 1915 after a six month illness. In one of her last messages she said, "God will answer your prayers better than you think. Of course, one will not get exactly what he has asked for....We all have sorrows and disappointments, but one must never forget that, if commended to God, they will issue in good.....His own solution is far better than any we could conceive."

*Great things he has taught us, great things He hath done, and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son:
But purer and higher and greater will be our wonder, our worship, when Jesus we see!*

JGB

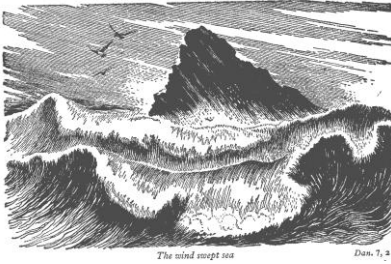
STAMPS - Please bring your used (and even unused) stamps into us. Thanks to those who have already done so. We are still collecting them –they are appreciated and for a good cause!! JGB.

IN MAY THIS YEAR, IT WAS EXACTLY 65 YEARS SINCE AL NAKBA – WHEN 750,000 PALESTINIANS WERE EXPELLED FROM THEIR LAND AND BECAME REFUGEES.

Monday 4th November 2013

FREE entry from 7pm: refreshments and music, 8pm: Talk & Presentation
St Luke's Church, EARDLEY RD, SEVENOAKS TN13 1XT

St Luke's is pleased to be participating as one of the 65@65 Events initiated by the Amos Trust in which 65 events have and will take place across the country during the year to highlight and reflect upon the Palestinian situation and to raise funds to support Amos Trust's work towards a just peace for the Palestinian people. We are delighted that Brian and Karen Senior, Vicar and Reader respectively of St Philip's Tunbridge Wells will be our speakers. Brian is also Rural Dean of Tunbridge Wells. They have visited Israel/Palestine for studying, touring and pilgrimage and will be sharing their personal experiences and insights. Entry is free but donations to support Amos Trust's work will be gratefully received.



Defacing Bibles

I was horrified to learn from the Autumn 2013 edition of *Gideon News* that there are several active campaigns to

remove Gideon bibles from hotel bedrooms. Subscribers to these campaigns are asked to request a bible free room when staying in a hotel, to complain to the hotel chain's head office if there are bibles in bedrooms and to deface or steal any bibles they may find there. You may remember similar attempts to have bible removed from bedsides in hospitals on the alleged grounds that they might harbour infection – though it is not stated why the powers that be think that bibles are any more likely to spread infection than any other books, say, from the hospital library. The Gideons refer to Ephesians 6¹²: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

They ask that Christian people oppose these dark forces in the best way we can. Prayer is our first defence. It is something we can all do and it puts us on the same side as our all-powerful and all-loving heavenly Father. Indeed I was doubtful about writing this article. We already had a ten page magazine – which is quite enough to print - and it was the day before copy day. So I prayed for guidance last night and woke up this morning with the conviction that I should share all this with you this month. So here I am, trying to finish in not much over an hour! As well as praying about the situation the Gideons suggest we might ask for a bible when we stay in a hotel, write to hotel chain head offices asking them to be open to the work of the Gideons, and to make a point of expressing our thanks when we find a bible in our room.

But why would people campaign against bibles in hotel bedrooms? Why this militant atheism? If the atheists are right the bible is just a book. Why would they want to ban a book? If they want to ban bibles, what other books would they like to ban? And why? Historically people ban books for the same reason as they try to suppress freedom of speech. They are so arrogant in their belief that they alone are right about religion or politics or whatever that nobody else may be allowed to express an opinion. In controlling what people may say they hope to control the way we think. They believe that ideas different from their own may be dangerous, that people who think independently present a risk to social stability and that the mass of people are too stupid or too lacking in moral insight to

be able to choose between conflicting ideologies. Whether the mediaeval Catholic Church or Stalin's version of communism, totalitarianism cannot tolerate freedom to express or publish ideas contrary to its own ideology for fear that ordinary people will make up their own minds about what they want out of life and whom they are prepared to trust with authority and with the trappings of power.

The bible says (I John 4¹⁸): *Perfect love casteth out fear.* The opposite is also often true. Fear engenders hatred. Militant atheism hates the expression of religion in public life because it fears the power of faith. If the bible really were just a book, it would be a matter of indifference whether or not there were copies in hotel bedrooms. If you wanted to read it, you could; if you didn't want to read it no one would force you to do so. Why would anyone so deface the hotel bible that the next person to use that room couldn't read it? It is illogical to hate the bible if you think it is a just a book. Totalitarian regimes might well ban *Mein Kampf* or *Das Kapital* or Mao's *Little Red Book*. Enlightened regimes recognise that it is an infringement of a basic human right to limit what may be published and that it is far healthier for society if people who are so inclined can read these things for themselves and make up their own minds about them than to have the state decide on our behalf what it is good for us to think about. Given that atheism in western Europe mainly derives from the Enlightenment of the late C18 – a movement devoted to freedom of thought, freedom of speech and rational enquiry – it is ironic that modern atheists advocate irrational behaviour and wish to suppress freedom to think and to disseminate ideas. Atheists often try to make out that faith and reason are opposites. So, on their own terms, it is extraordinary to discover atheists acting irrationally. Of course, faith and reason are not opposites. Faith and reason are complementary virtues in the search for the truth. Truth has no fear of open debate. Rather we discover the truth through a spirit of openness. It is irrational to deny a place for faith.

So what are the atheists afraid of if there are bibles in hotel bedrooms? The fact of the matter is that human beings are intrinsically religious. Atheists are and always have been a tiny minority. People do feel that there is something missing in their lives if they have no religion. So if atheism is to triumph, atheists have to prevent people from being exposed to religious ideas.

The bible is very powerful. It is actually the Word of God. The bible sets people free and that is why tyrants have always sought to suppress it. Cynics claim that you can prove anything from the bible. You can't, but the bible offers many different perspectives on the issues which concern us as human beings. That is why people who think that there is only one right way to

think will try to stop you reading the bible for yourself. If you think for yourself, you may well finish up not agreeing with the government or the Church or this or that group of people who believe themselves to be the only ones who are right.

A rather amusing illustration of the fact that people need religion is those so-called atheist churches. I think it started as a joke, but it has become quite serious. People meet together on a Sunday morning for fellowship, to sing together, to hear a motivational address and to do good works. The difference from proper Church is that God mustn't be mentioned. When you come to think about it, for years now, people have been meeting on Sunday mornings for friendship, to do themselves good (walking, cycling, etc.) or to do good works (care of the countryside, children's sports, etc.). It all gives the lie to idea that the reason people don't come to church is because they haven't the time or that they are not interested in having a social life, self-improvement and community service. People like those aspects of church life; it is the more important side of it that bothers them!

You can also see people's need for religion in civil weddings and humanist funerals. Logically for an atheist, marriage is no more than a social convention designed to underpin reproduction, and death is simply the cessation of life. Why does either need a ceremony? In fact there is a certain amount of controversy about whether any religion at all should be allowed at these occasions. Should there be songs which mention angels or heaven? One civil marriage venue was made to take down a picture of the *Judgment of Solomon* because it was religious. At a recent civil marriage some council official wouldn't allow the couple to make the vows they wanted to because they sounded too much like the ones we say in church. So the couple made their proper vows at the

reception to the applause of their guests. But why didn't they just come to church in the first place?

There is powerful pressure from what is still a minority to exclude religion from public life – especially the Christian religion. Sikh men and boys are allowed to wear turbans. Moslem women to wear head coverings. The deputy prime minister says that Moslem schoolboys ought to be allowed to grow beards in contravention of school uniform policies. But Christians are not allowed to wear crosses. A Christian nurse was disciplined for offering to pray for a patient. Why? If you don't believe in God, prayer makes no difference. So it couldn't hurt the patient to be prayed for. On the other hand, if religious people are right, prayer would be beneficial. So why ban something that can't do any harm but might do some good? It is a celebration of our cultural diversity when the Chinese celebrate their new year with street processions, but Jesus, Mary and Joseph have to be excluded from the Christmas displays because (secular officials wrongly claim) we might offend people of other religions.

I think that the reason Christianity is more a target for militant secularism than other religions are is because they fear us more. Christianity presents a much greater challenge to the secular state than any other religion. As far back as Acts 17 Christians were described as people who turned the world upside down. The cross really is an offence. It is a scandal. St Paul says (I Corinthians 1^{23&24}) *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called. Both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* What threatens the world is our faith that God saved us by the Cross of Jesus and that the only way that we can be saved is to take up our cross and follow Him.



Max's Tail Piece

I nearly didn't get any space this month, which is a bit rough since most of you say you like my articles much more than his! What I wanted to tell you about was my rejuvenation. Being twelve years old, I'm well over 80 in human years and, like some of you, my joints are getting a bit stiff. I still enjoy a run, but, first thing in the morning or if I've been lying down for a while, well you know how it is. So Master put me on cod liver oil and what a difference. Even the first day after the first dose I felt so much better. It's put the spring back into Springer. My appetite is better, my coat shinier. Master says it is probably the vitamin D in the cod liver oil and he even preached a sermon on it. If you don't get your vitamins, you don't live well, and if you don't get them at all, you don't live long. He says that vitamin D deficiency is getting a bit worrying among humans because you are afraid to go out in the sun because of skin cancer and you've cut back on the dairy for fear of getting fat – both sources of vitamin D. You'll have to start taking cod liver oil. It's quite nice poured over your dinner. Well, I'm not going to take it from a teaspoon, am I? Yes and I know it comes in capsules but did you ever see a dog swallow a capsule voluntarily? Master couldn't put up with that every day for the rest of my life. And the sermon? *Vitamins are essential to your mortal life. God is essential for your eternal life.* Master says there is one drawback in giving me cod liver oil. He had started trusting me with more freedom when it got too much trouble for me to run off. Well now it isn't!

Max.