

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
30 th October 4 th Sunday Before Advent	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 1 vv 10-18 p685 II Thessalonians 1 vv 1-12 p1189 Luke 19 vv 1-10 p1053	
2 nd November All Souls Day	9.30 am Holy Communion	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070	
6 th November 3 rd Sunday Before Advent Shoeboxes for Blythswood	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056	
13 th November 2 nd Sunday Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion & Act of Remembrance	Malachi 4 vv 1&2a p962 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056	
20 th November	8.00 Holy Communion Last Sunday after Trinity	Epistle & Gospel BCP	
	9.30 Holy Communion Christ the King	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p 1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060	
27 th November Advent Sunday Year A	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994	
4 th December Advent 2 Ruth Millard of CAP	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 1-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967	
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
30 th October 4 th Sunday Before Advent	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 1 vv 10-18 p685 II Thessalonians 1 vv 1-12 p1189 Luke 19 vv 1-10 p1053	
2 nd November All Souls Day	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Lamentations 3 vv 17-33 p826 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069	
6 th November 3 rd Sunday Before Advent Shoeboxes for Blythswood	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 8 vv 31-39 p1135 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Job 19 vv 23-27 p523 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056	
13 th November 2 nd Sunday Before Advent Remembrance Sunday David Summers	10.50 Holy Communion & Act of Remembrance	Malachi 4 vv 1&2a p962 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Daniel 6 vv 1-28 p890 Matthew 13 vv 1-23 p978	
20 th November	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion Christ the King	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p 1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060	
27 th November Advent Sunday Year A	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994	
4 th December Advent 2	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Kings 18 vv 16-39 p359 John 1 vv 19-28 p1063	
	11.00 Holy Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 1-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967	
Holy Communion 9.30 Wednesdays St Michael's		Holy Communion 9.30 Thursdays St John's	
2 nd November All Souls Day	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070	3 rd November	Philippians 3 vv 3-8 Luke 15 vv 1-10
9 th November	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	10 th November	Philemon Luke 17 vv 20-25
16 th November	Revelation 4 vv 1-11 Luke 19 vv 11-28	17 th November	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
23 rd November	Revelation 15 vv 1-4 Luke 21 vv 12-19	24 th November	Revelation 18 v1 – 19 v9 Luke 21 vv 2-28
30 th November S Andrew	Isaiah 52 vv 7-10 Romans 10 vv 12-18 Matthew 4 vv 18-22	1st December	A mystery yet to be revealed

Copy Date December Magazine: November 4th 8.30 am Rectory.



The Enormity of War

As I've got older, I've become more sensitive to the horror of war. Yes, I've always known in my head that war is a terrible thing, but these days it seems to touch my heart more. Learning history at school or reading books about past battles used to leave me relatively unmoved except to be pleased when our side won. Watching war films had the same effect. Films do usually play down the awfulness of armed conflict and even of fight scenes in gangster movies. You see people sustain tremendous blows and then get up and carry on fighting. Some people think that this makes us complacent about the damage we can do if we get into fights. You get into a brawl in a pub or club and hit someone as hard as you see on TV and you expect him to get up again just like they do in fiction and carry on fighting. Only he doesn't get up and perhaps he is facing life-threatening injuries and you are facing serious criminal charges.

It may just be a matter of getting older, but I find myself increasingly moved by thinking about battles past and even more so by the news we get about conflicts in our own time. Radio 4 has been broadcasting a short daily serial called *Home Front* which sets the story exactly one hundred years ago to the day it is broadcast. In other words, it is a daily account of life in the First World War. Most of the action is in Folkestone. It is about people like us, which makes it all the more poignant. In real life, the government filmed the Battle of the Somme as it really happened and showed the film in British cinemas. Some of the characters in the radio series keep going to the pictures in the hope of one last sight of a brother or husband or father who will not be coming home. Born in 1954, as a child and a young man, I didn't appreciate what our parents and grandparents had recently been through in two world wars and the difference it made to their lives. That was what they intended – that we, their children and grandchildren, should never have to know what war is like. You can never understand unless you experience it and I pray that we never shall. I think I understand a bit more now, however, as I've got older.

I used to preach every year on Battle of Britain Sunday when I was chaplain to RAF Manston and

the Ramsgate and Broadstairs Branch of the Royal Airforce Association. I used to dwell on the endurance and the heroism of our airmen, the support staff and the civilian population; the sense of common purpose in the country; of everybody's contribution being needed and valued; the necessity of defeating Hitler and the evils of Nazism; even the wartime determination to make the post-war world a better place than what had gone before, but I don't think I ever appreciated the enormity of the war.

More recently, I find myself reading the Bible at Morning Prayer in Church, with its accounts of various middle eastern conflicts two or three thousand years ago, and I come home, switch on the radio for the morning news, and hear that people are still fighting wars in the very same places they were centuries and millennia ago. There is bloodshed all over the world, usually only reported where it impinges on British interests, but it seems unbelievable that men and even women are still carrying out horrific acts of violence in the very places where the Good News of the Kingdom of God was actually proclaimed by Moses and the prophets. In the very places where Jesus, the Prince of Peace, walked and taught, performed His miracles, suffered and died and rose again for all mankind, still human beings cannot or will not accept the truth of the Gospel. I am reminded of some words of Jesus: *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* (Luke 16³¹). We are so hard-hearted, so stubborn.

It seems impossible that things can ever change. Just ponder these words from the first chapter of St John's Gospel, part of the Christmas Gospel. ¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* ¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* People won't listen to Jesus. But if we do listen to Jesus, we become the children of God. It is only if we act like the children of God that there can be peace in this world or peace for us in the world to come. Impossible! Well Jesus also said, *The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.* (Luke 18²⁷). So we don't give up! *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* (Matthew 5⁹). Roger.

Psalm 20:The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble : the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary : and strengthen thee out of Sion;
 3 Remember all thy offerings : and accept thy burnt-sacrifice;
 4 Grant thee thy heart's desire : and fulfil all thy mind.
 5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph in the Name of the Lord our God : the Lord perform all thy petitions.
 6 Now know I that the Lord helpeth his Anointed, and will hear him from his holy heaven : even with the wholesome strength of his right hand.
 7 Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.
 8 They are brought down, and fallen : but we are risen, and stand upright.
 9 Save, Lord, and hear us, O King of heaven : when we call upon thee.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
 and to the Holy Ghost;
 As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
 world without end. **Amen.**



Blythswood Care

We shall again be collecting shoeboxes for Blythswood to distribute in Eastern Europe and beyond for Christmas. Leaflets will be available in church with suggested contents. These include sweets (not chocolate), small toys, hats, scarves, gloves, toothbrush, toiletries (not talc), underwear, socks, etc. Please bring your boxes to one of the services on 6th November.

Christians Against Poverty

Debt Relief



Medway has serious personal debt problems, no doubt including Cuxton and Halling. Both rich and poor people can get into debt and it becomes a nightmare when you can't repay your debts. You may lose your home. Goods may be repossessed. The emotional strain can lead to relationship breakdown, ill health and even suicide. Debt can become an unbearable burden and people may feel very alone with their problems.

Christians Against Poverty is a national organisation which works here in the Medway Towns. If you need help call 0800 328 0006 and you can pass on this number to anyone you know who might need it. You will be contacted and receive a home visit from someone who will help you to deal with your debt problems, getting your expenditure under control, prioritising your creditors, dealing with creditors to rearrange payment schedules, etc.. They will also offer to pray for you and with you and some of the people who are helped by CAP may decide to become Christians. CAP is an explicitly Christian organisation which knows how Jesus can turn lives around. However, you don't have to be or to become a Christian to get help. If you don't want to be prayed for, CAP will still help you to manage your money and find a solution to your financial problems.

As well as providing financial advice, CAP offers befrienders to support the people who turn to them for help. CAP is looking for volunteers from local churches to take on this role. You need to be a sympathetic person rather than a financial whiz to become a befriender. The service is entirely free to those who use it, but of course it does cost money to run and CAP is assisted by donations from Churches and individual Christians.

For more information on helping or if you need help with debt relief <https://capuk.org>

Ruth Millard of CAP will be speaking to us about the work of the organisation on Sunday 4th December at St Michael's at the 9.30 service.

Gift Services

On 4th December we are invited to bring Christmas presents to our 9.30 and 11.00 services for people (especially children) who might otherwise receive little or nothing. Presents should not be wrapped and should be new and in good condition, please.



Two Wives for the Price of One.

Living with bipolar disorder.

by Elizabeth M Maisey.

[As bipolar awareness day falls in October, Buffy has asked me to print her story. RIK.]

“Paediatrician”.....I caught this word as I came round from a wave of pethidine induced sleep in the delivery suite of our local hospital. I sensed that something was wrong with the baby. I sensed the build up of tension amongst the hospital staff involved in the birth of my first child. I sensed that at last a huge effort was being made to save Andrew’s life after his long and brave effort to make his way into the world bottom first. Eventually I caught sight of a tiny bluish-grey body, stillborn. It was all over and I was alone. Family and friends and above all my husband did all they could to prevent me from feeling alone or inadequate and I rallied round stoically at first. But underneath my brave façade my psyche was irreparably damaged.

Plenty of women survive stillbirths without mental problems, but I had an inherited tendency to psychiatric weakness and this was a trigger for the onset of bi-polar disorder. The gene went back at least three generations. The maternity department recommended a holiday and then to try for another baby after two years. Two years seemed an eternity.

The baby was perfect and it was simply the prolonged labour and mismanagement of the birth that had caused his death, although the hospital staff never admitted this to be the case. To be fair, a breech birth on a bank holiday weekend with only one doctor on duty was an unfortunate combination of circumstances.

Although I had a nervous breakdown at the age of 17, this was successfully cured by 6 weeks’ medication (Stelazine) and ECG and I regard this as a one-off event. It was followed by ten years of mental stability. It was not until the stillbirth that I began my life of high and low mood swings, which was eventually diagnosed as bi-polar disorder, when I was 34.

From then on I took Lithium carbonate, which successfully masked the symptoms of the disorder, but did not prevent three subsequent hospital admissions. Two of these occurred in June. June is full of family birthdays. Birthdays and Christmas are a worry for me. I have 9 step-grandchildren, 4 step-daughters, 2 daughters, a sister and brother, 2 sisters-in-law and, believe it or not, my mother’s birthday was on boxing day! I usually start early in case I have a low phase before Christmas. Despite this, last year, I couldn’t drag myself across the room from the sofa to write Christmas cards till the last minute. I always enjoy these celebrations once they come, especially the extra choral singing we do in my church choir.

Two years after the stillbirth I successfully gave birth to a delightful daughter and two years later another. I thank God frequently that they are both mentally robust.

I have had a handful of hospital admissions and was fortunate, in that the Maudsley out-patients’ Department after-care included CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) as well as the chance to moan about my difficult husband! Since 1985 I have survived out of hospital, but have suffered severe depression and high elation even on Lithium.

When depressed, I spend the day reading and sleeping. Paperwork piles up. The ironing piles up. Dust gathers. I ignore it all for about 3 weeks. Depression continues for up to five weeks, but I gradually feel able to cope with more activities, still feeling that my life is not worthwhile and I would like to escape to the seaside by train. I never attempt suicide, as I cannot think of a pleasant way to go and I never get on that train to oblivion by the sea.

My first husband eventually found that he couldn’t live with a manic wife any longer and left quite suddenly. My second husband carries on his life, cooks our meals and prays for the end of each depressive phase. Each time I feel that this is the one that is going to last for ever and cannot see the end of the tunnel.

Quite suddenly the end does come and for a few days I spend the night having all-night knitting vigils, or sorting out my paperwork. My mind races and I think of things that need doing faster than I can do them. Ideas flash through my head, but I do not go on manic shopping sprees. If I won the lottery in a low phase, I would worry about what to spend the money on. If I won it during a high phase, I would be out of the house and up to the West End of London at the earliest opportunity. After only a few days I settle down into about eleven weeks of complete normality, sleeping normal hours and enjoying life.

It is this bipolar existence that my second husband once kindly described as having two wives for the price of one. We have had over 25 happy years of marriage.

I come from a medical family, so it never occurred to me to abandon medication. I did not think, like some questioned by Stephen Fry in his TV series on bipolar disease, that the high periods were so ecstatic that it was worth enduring the low ones and not trying to even out the swings with medication.

I am certain that Lithium helped to stabilize my moods. I am grateful to my two local medical practices before and after moving to Medway for overseeing the administration of this drug. Unfortunately after twenty-three years, my kidneys were adversely affected by Lithium and I had to be taken off the drug. I was offered alternative medication with the proviso that nothing has yet been discovered that can equal the performance of Lithium. I have been taking a cocktail of mood stabilizing tablets since then.

After the menopause the mood swings gradually elongated, partly due to the medication, but partly, I think, because hormonal changes can affect the disorder. Hence my worst time was during the years of childbirth and my most stable period was when I was taking a contraceptive pill.

I have taken part in a research exercise recently and was told that current research was looking at early diagnosis rather than causes of the illness or some specific gene.

I deeply regret the effect that the disorder had on my career. I might have reached the giddy heights that my tutor at University predicted, if I hadn't been bipolar.

I was fortunate, however, that I never had to take a day off work because of the disorder. I was able, with the help of my husband, to force myself to get there, covering up my feelings, so no one would guess I was depressed. I was fortunate that, although I was always honest with the health questions on application forms, I experienced no prejudice, just delays whilst employers consulted my doctor. I enjoyed many worthwhile jobs

I cope

- With the help of family and friends.
- By initially covering up my feelings in a new job or with new friends.
- Using MDF training course tips, such as getting involved in a wide variety of activities, exercising well, using self-medication and using "to do lists".
- Doing something useful, when sleep eludes me at night.
- Pushing myself to undertake courageous activities.

I make up for depending on Ray for meals, when ill, by cooking his favourite dishes, once I feel better. This takes some doing, as I wasn't born with a wooden spoon in my hand! I hope this article will help the newly diagnosed to understand that it is a disorder that can be lived with. There is a great deal of help out there.

Forthcoming Attractions

7th December: 12.00 Christmas Parish Lunch in the Church Hall.

10th December: 10.00 Christmas Coffee Morning in Church Hall.

6th January: 9.30 St Michael's Epiphany HC followed by brunch in church hall.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

17th September
18th September
9th October

Joey Michael Trevor Elliott Lawry-Williams
Isabella Summer Bailey
Alexander William Foreman

Ladywood Road
High Street
Chatham

Funeral:

22nd September

Daphne Barbara Rogers (91)

High Street

Thanks

I would like to thank everyone for their cards and good wishes after my "hip-op". Hope to be with you all again very soon. My love, Mary Morren.

Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival is the special time when we give thanks to God for the harvest and for meeting all our needs. This is our opportunity also to thank everyone who works so hard to make our Harvest Festival and everything we do in Church such a success. There are the flower arrangers and the people who keep the church buildings and grounds clean and tidy and in good repair. There are the choirs and organists and bell ringers. We think also of our Saints Alive and Freshers' group and those who catered such a wonderful harvest supper and for so many of our social events.

Having been here as long as I have, I find myself thinking of those who have done these things in the past and the unique contribution they each made and also thanking God for the people who are doing them now and those who will be doing them in the future as the Church responds to the opportunities and challenges God offers us in each generation. Roger.

For Thought

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Christmas Parish Lunch

We enjoy a monthly lunch every first Wednesday in the church hall at 12.00, thanks to Christine Eede, who cooks a variety of dishes for our delectation. All are welcome in return for a donation to cover costs and, hopefully, a bit extra for church funds. Just come along if you enjoy good food and good company. On Wednesday 7th December, the lunch will in fact be a Christmas dinner. We look forward to seeing you.

Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

This took place on 10th September. Rather more of us from this parish took part than usual this year. It was a warm day with very heavy rain threatened which never materialised. This event presents us with an annual incentive to get out on our bikes or to put on our walking shoes and see some of the lovely churches of Kent. At many of them, there are members of the congregation pleased to welcome the cyclists, runners and walkers and regale them with refreshments. Despite living in Kent all my life, I seem to discover new churches every year. Thank you Mary, Suzanne, Margaret, Matthew, Kevyn and Ruth and all those of you who sponsored those taking part. We made £500, to

be split equally between our parish and FKC, which assist churches all over the county. Roger.

Photo Challenge

Does anyone know where in the parish you would see this? If you recognise it, do you know what it is? I'll give the answer in next month's magazine. Meanwhile, I'd like to receive your ideas. You might know what it is but not where it is or vice versa! Roger.

SPONSORED
RIDE AND WALK





Alone in Advent

Advent Sunday falls on 27th November this year. For me, Advent is the season of endless arguments about when the Christmas decorations should go up and the Christmas celebrations begin. The arguments are endless because (as Tommy notes elsewhere), pure reason cannot settle questions when the parties concerned are starting from different premises. They might as well inhabit parallel universes for all the hope that there is of a meaningful dialogue. Not only do they not hear one another; they cannot hear one another. So, feeling utterly alone, I thought I would put my reasons and the premises on which they are based in writing. At last you'll know why I try to stand up for what I believe to be right!

Advent is a time of preparation. It looks forward to the coming of Jesus. It is a time to reflect on some very serious issues, the four last things: death, judgment, hell and heaven. The vestments and frontals are purple – a sombre colour, meant to encourage reflection and penitence. The same colour is used in Lent in preparation for Easter and the joy of the Resurrection. The appointed Bible readings for Advent are about preparing for the coming of the Kingdom of God. As John the Baptist and Jesus proclaimed, being ready for the Kingdom of God starts with repentance for the sins which divide us from God and from one another, basically our own self-centredness. The glorious Advent hymns pick up the same themes. Each week in Advent, we light one more candle, in anticipation of the Coming of Jesus, the Light of the World (His Advent), both now and not yet. Christmas is Good News to be celebrated: because Jesus has overcome the power of death and promises eternal life to all of us who repent of our sins and put our faith in Him; because He is a merciful Judge, Who forgives all who truly turn to Him; because He has defeated the power of hell by His death on the Cross; and because He has prepared a place in Heaven for all those of us who truly love Him. So the Church asks us to use Advent to meditate soberly and solemnly on our need for God, on our faithlessness and His faithfulness, on His unconditional love and our absolute dependence on Him, on Him alone, Who is utterly dependable. At Christmas, we will celebrate the fact that God meets all our needs in Jesus Christ. We will celebrate at the Christmas services, but not only by participating in religious services. We will celebrate by decorating our churches and our houses. We will celebrate by consuming lots of good food and drink. We will exchange greetings and presents. The point of all these joyful ways of celebrating Christmas is that God meets all our needs. He delivers us from death, condemnation and eternal misery and makes us His children, members of His household in all eternity. We feast and drink and exchange presents because God loves us and has overcome all the power of sin, the world and the devil.

That's my perspective. One has to be careful about assuming what other people believe and I shall be happy to stand corrected if I am wrong. However, it seems to me that most people are just not interested in the four last things, the themes of Advent. They try not to think about death. They don't worry about judgment because they don't recognise that they are sinners. They think that conventional respectability is good enough. They either don't believe in hell or believe that it is reserved for people much worse than they are or than their families and their friends are. They think that, if there is a heaven, admission will be automatic. If we accept their perspective then, we have little to say about the big things in life – the quest for justice for all people, the fact that people do actually suffer and that we shall all die, that we face big temptations and challenges in this life, and will one day have to give account for what we have done about them. Advent, in that case, means nothing to us, except as a foretaste of Christmas. The decorations go up. We commence the feasting and drinking. December is a shopping spree. The point of celebrating Christmas is not to celebrate the Birth of Jesus and what He has accomplished for us. His Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection make no real difference to us. The point of celebrating Christmas is just to eat and drink and buy and receive gifts. Clergyman who try to get us to focus on serious matters like death and judgment and heaven and hell during Advent are just killjoys who hurt the Church's reputation by resisting pressure to conform to what the world desires. The argument is that people will only come to Church if we give them what they want, whereas I would say that there is no point in their coming unless we give them what they need. The Church isn't irrelevant when it takes life seriously, including injustice, pain and death; the Church becomes irrelevant when it trivialises everything and refuses to face tough realities. God alone is sufficient to supply our needs. If we cut Him out and pretend we don't really have any needs which the world can't meet, what's the point of the Church? I'm quite sure we do need God and His church. Any comments? Roger.

The Academy of Cuxton Schools

We have had such a busy start to the academic year. The children returned looking well and refreshed from their holidays and 60 new children joined us in Foundation. They have settled and are finding their feet, whilst enjoying their topic of Talent!! One small boy came up to me with a microphone and just sang- beautifully I might add! I am sure in about 15 years we will see him on the television.

The older children are working hard and of course many are now having to think about secondary school choice and some have sat the 11 plus test. This is an anxious/ exciting time for these children as they think about the next chapter in their educational career.

We took part in the Macmillan great coffee morning on 30th and with the kind generosity of many of our parents and staff we raised over £800. It was lovely to see so many parents in school chatting and for those that are new, getting to know one another.

The building project which has been going on for almost one year is almost complete. It has made a real difference to us, in having the school building joined and the central space. Once the builders are offsite(and they have been fantastic by the way), we will have a grand opening for all to see. It may be that you came to the school and would like to see how it has changed and developed over the years! We probably have your name in our admission book!

We are celebrating Harvest and this year are collecting for folk in Downsland House and also the ' Strood Community Project'. Children will perform to their parents some traditional and modern Harvest songs and poems. Our school choir is also performing at the Woodville Halls in a couple of weeks , where children from all the schools in our Trust family gather to sing and dance! They are all extremely excited.

The FCS, our PTA, continue to do a fabulous job. They are already planning the year's events and have been busy planning with the children their Christmas cards in order that they can be sold. The next large event is the Christmas Fete which will be on the 5th December.

A few weeks ago I attended a meeting of the Bush road Partnership Project. We are trying to make a difference to the traffic on Bush Road and Sundridge Hill for the safety of all of our children, families and residents in Cuxton. We also want to work together as partners in the community to use the facilities we have better! Watch out for relevant news!

Aside from all of this, we are continually driving standards forward, wanting the best academic progress for each child and supporting them in the best ways we can so that they have excellent outcomes. Well, that is all for now, please take care, Sandra Jones, Head teacher.

Hiring the Church Hall

Cuxton church hall is available for hire at modest rates. The hall is well appointed and well equipped and it is suitable for children's (not teenage or young adult) parties, meetings of clubs and associations, and activities such as music, dance, gym and martial arts. Bookings are being taken now for this and next year. Apply to Malcolm Curnow, 4, Pilgrims Road, Cuxton, 01634 719585.

The 140th Anniversary of the Mothers' Union

Pippa MacDonald, Valerie West (the Diocesan President of Trinidad and Tobago M.U.) and I were thrilled to be able to participate in the special celebration of the 140th Anniversary of the Mothers' Union in Winchester. The Canterbury Diocese offered a coach trip, together with accommodation, to the Rochester Diocesan members and we readily took up the offer. It was great fun travelling on the coach on Wednesday, 21st September and despite having a number of male members on the coach, we did not stop talking! We stayed in a very friendly hotel in Basingstoke for 3 nights and the coach took us to each event.

The next morning, we were dropped off in Winchester for the special service in Winchester Cathedral. There were so many people wishing to attend, that a morning and an afternoon service had to be organised. It was very moving to see delegates from all over the world. The Mary Sumner Choir from Zambia led the singing and lifted our praise in song. We were fortunate to be able to attend the evening Gala Dinner and meet the World Wide President of the M.U. and the regional presidents. The Annual General Meeting was held at the Hampshire Court Hotel, with a venue big enough to hold 1,700 members of the M.U. Before the meeting, we were entertained by the Saltmine Theatre Company, who performed the story of Mary Sumner. At the end of the Meeting a large Beaney's fruit cake was cut by the President of the Mothers' Union and the Bishop of Winchester. On the journey home, the coach stopped at Old Alresford Rectory and Church where it all began. We were given a talk in the Rectory and enjoyed a delicious lunch.

Since the Mothers' Union was founded by Mary Sumner in 1876, it has provided vital assistance to families all over the world who are experiencing hardships in their lives. Now with four million members in 83 countries, the organisation continues to carry out the important work of supporting family life, and communities, through its programmes. We felt proud to be part of their celebrations.
Jenny Beaney, (A member of the Cuxton and Halling M.U.)

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 Wednesday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St Michael and 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.

House Rules

The eponymous diagnostician, played by Hugh Laurie in the American TV series: *Religion either means everything to you or it means nothing*. Anything else in between is just hypocrisy. So true and from an atheist!

St John's Draw (September): £5 each Sam Head (16), Mrs Ballard (35), Mrs Catchpole (79), Mr Hill (104) – drawn by Mrs Cheeseman. Please contact Betty Head 240889 if you would like to join the draw.



Cuxton WI

There are two meetings of Cuxton W.I to update you on. At our September meeting we welcomed Mr. Steve Edney who is the Head Gardener at the Salutation Garden in Sandwich. He was entertaining and informative with the story of the renovation of the garden from being overgrown back to its original glory as envisaged by the architect, Edward Lutyens, who designed the beautiful Salutation House. His speciality is Dahlias and at the time they were in full bloom and I know members who then visited the garden.

Our October meeting saw the members welcoming Mr Dean Caston who gave us a history of the Royal Variety Performance from its initial show in 1912 to the present day and of all the famous stars who have taken part together with recordings of some of the most famous acts of the eras. Our next meeting is on 3rd November when we welcome a presentation about Spooky Kent, this being just after Halloween. All the ladies of the village are very welcome to come as visitors, however young or old. For further information, contact Wendy on 01634 719622

Tommy's Talking Points



We've done well for outings lately. Back in September, Master took me to see an old friend of his from when he was curate at St Christopher's, Newington, Ramsgate. I wasn't allowed to run free in her house and garden because, the last time a dog visited, her cat left home and never came back. She now has a new cat but was naturally unwilling to risk a repeat performance. So we drove to Pegwell village and walked along the cliff to Pegwell Bay where Master says there used to be a hoverport and an open top bus service all around the coast to Minnis Bay where I told you we went for a lovely day out back in August. It must have been an amazing ride. (Route 69,

converted Guy Arabs, it was amazing, says Master, in his day, especially coming down Fort Hill into Margate at dusk when there were seaside illuminations all the way to Westbrook). Anyway, it was nice walking along the low cliff top and looking out across beautiful Sandwich Bay on another wonderful day. When we got there, we looked for a pub to lunch in. Closed Mondays, as they so often are. So Master said we should carry on walking to Minster. It turned out to be rather farther than he remembered from thirty odd years ago, when, he remembers, he took the youth club for a walk all the way there from Newington. He says he carried one of the younger ones, for whom it turned out to be more than he could manage, some of the way, but that was a long time ago and Master was much younger then. We did pass St Augustine's Cross which supposedly marks the spot where St Augustine landed in the year 597, commissioned by Pope Gregory to preach the Gospel to the Anglo-Saxons, starting with us here in Kent. Gregory was the pope who said we were not Angles but angels, when he saw some of us being sold in the slave market in Rome and determined that we should hear the Good News of Jesus Christ for ourselves.

We did find a nice pub with a pleasant garden in which to dine at Minster. Master recalled how his first time in Minster had been even earlier than when he used to walk there from Ramsgate, when he took the Orpington youth club to stay there for a very low budget holiday sleeping in the Roman Catholic church hall on the floor. They walked to Minnis Bay the first morning for a day at the seaside. The young people insisted on coming back on the bus (route 70, AEC Reliance). The fares blew the entire budget and they had to spend the rest of the holiday in Minster – where there isn't much to do if you're not old enough to go to the pub and not too keen on country walks. If only they'd had tablet computers in those days! We walked back to the car at Pegwell.

Subsequently, we've completed the Oxted-Merstham section of the North Downs Way with our usual walking companion, only 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles this time. The morning dawned dark and chill, but Master took me out in our woods for a bit of a walk, because he thinks I should have the chance to stretch my legs before embarking on long journeys by public transport. It was so dark that he put me on my lead, partly so that he should not lose me, but also because he couldn't find the paths and I could. We came home, had breakfast and set off for the station. Change at Tonbridge. Train to Edenbridge station. Walk to Edenbridge Town station, getting directions from nice young lady with a baby. Meet Master's friend at Oxted. The day soon warmed up and so did we as we climbed the steep scarp slope up onto the downs. The day had begun very still, the cold air sinking down into the valleys and the warmer air higher up on the hills. (I think it's called a temperature inversion.) The pullover soon came, off, quickly followed by the shirt, as both the altitude and the temperature increased. I smelt something really interesting way ahead and ran off after it. They couldn't catch me and never found out what it was that I was after. The sunshine was golden. The woods were wonderful, slightly different combinations of trees from what we have here at home, more beech, less ash, Master thought. Where the trees opened up, there were tremendous views across the Weald towards the South Downs and the Sussex coast. Master said he thought he could see three counties. His friend thought we might be able to see a fourth – Berkshire, which sounds very dog friendly. There was a large map provided, but they would have understood it better if there hadn't been a springer spaniel sitting in the middle of it. I moved before he could get his camera out. Some young women were intrigued to hear them debating vigorously all the political and philosophical issues of the day. They discuss everything that matters on these walks, but they always come back to the same conclusion. If you're agreed on the premises, everything else follows quite naturally, but, if you're arguing from different premises, you might as well shut the premises' windows and watch reality TV instead.

By and large, the path was well sign-posted and they didn't get lost on this occasion. So we were in good time for another nice pub lunch in a pleasant pub garden in glorious sunshine. What's more, the pub was near the station. So not too much more walking, which they appreciated, though I wouldn't have minded at all. The only drawback for the human contingent was that, by the time they had eaten their starters and main courses, the chef had gone off duty for an hour. There were no desserts because the cook had deserted his post. I can't say it hurt Master to go without in the week of the Harvest Supper and the parish lunch. We would have had to walk an extra mile for every additional hundred Calories consumed. Again, I wouldn't mind, but Master? We have hopes of doing the next section in a few weeks. I'll report back when we do.