

| Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 5 th October Trinity 16, Harvest & Dedication Festival. | | 8.00 Holy Communion | I John 2 vv 1-17 p1225 Mark 10 vv 2-16 p1014 |
| | | 11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism | Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 p689 Philippians 3 vv 4b-14 p1180 Matthew 21 vv 33-46 p990 |
| 12 th October Trinity 17 | | 11.00 Holy Communion | Isaiah 25 vv 1-9 p708 Philippians 4 vv 1-9 p1180 Matthew 22 vv 1-14 p990 |
| | | 5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall | Proverbs 3 vv 1-18 p637 I John 3 vv 1-15 p1226 |
| 19 th October Trinity 18 | | 11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen! | Isaiah 45 vv 1-7 p731 I Thessalonians 1 vv 1-10 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990 |
| 26 th October Last Sunday after Trinity & Bible Sunday | | 11.00 Holy Communion | Leviticus 19 vv 1-18 p121 I Thessalonians 2 vv 1-8 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 34-46 p991 |
| 2 nd November | | 8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall 4 th Sunday before Advent | I Thessalonians 2 vv 9-13 p1186 Matthew 24 vv 1-14 p993 |
| | | 11.00 Holy Communion All Saints Sunday & Commemoration of All Souls | Revelation 7 vv 9-17 p1238 Matthew 5 vv 1-12 p968 |
| Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton | | | |
| Monday 29 th September Michaelmas | | 7.30 pm Holy Communion | Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064 |
| 5 th October Trinity 16, Harvest & Dedication Festival. | | 9.30 Family Communion | Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 p689 Matthew 21 vv 33-46 p990 |
| | | 6.30 Harvest Praise Evensong | Proverbs 2 vv 1-11 p636 I John 2 vv 1-17 p1225 |
| 12 th October Trinity 17 | | 9.30 Holy Communion | Isaiah 25 vv 1-9 p708 Philippians 4 vv 1-9 p1180 Matthew 22 vv 1-14 p990 |
| 19 th October Trinity 18 | | 8.00 Holy Communion | Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 18 |
| | | 9.30 Holy Communion | Isaiah 45 vv 1-7 p731 I Thessalonians 1 vv 1-10 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990 |
| 26 th October Last Sunday after Trinity & Bible Sunday | | 9.30 Holy Communion | Leviticus 19 vv 1-18 p121 I Thessalonians 2 vv 1-8 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 34-46 p991 |
| 2 nd November All Saints Sunday & Commemoration of All Souls | | 9.30 Holy Communion | Revelation 7 vv 9-17 p1238 Matthew 5 vv 1-12 p968 |
| Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 at St Michael's | | Holy Communion Thursdays 9.30 at St John's | |
| October 1 st | Job 9 vv 1-16 Luke 9 vv 57-62 | October 2 nd | Job 19 vv 21-27 Luke 10 vv 1-12 |
| October 8 th | Galatians 2 vv 1-14 Luke 11 vv 1-4 | October 9 th | Galatians 3 vv 1-5 Luke 11 vv 5-13 |
| October 15 th | Galatians 5 vv 18-26 Luke 11 vv 42-46 | October 16 th | Ephesians 1 vv 1-10 Luke 11 vv 47-54 |
| October 22 nd | Ephesians 3 vv 2-12 Luke 12 vv 39-48 | October 23 rd | Ephesians 3 vv 14-21 Luke 12 vv 40-53 |
| October 29 th | Ephesians 6 vv 1-9 Luke 13 vv 22-30 | October 30 th | Ephesians 6 vv 10-20 Luke 13 vv 31-35 |

18th October St Luke HC St Michael's 8.00 am, 28th October St Simon & St Jude HC St Michael's 7.30 am, 1st November All Saints, HC St Michael's 8.00 am.

Copy Date November Magazine October 10th 8.30 Rectory

Rector: The Reverend Roger Knight BD AKC, The Rectory, 6, Rochester Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Kent, ME2 1AF, 01634 717134, roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>



From the Rector
Harvest Festival was one of my father's favourite church services. The harvest hymns are marvellous. Church buildings are traditionally decorated beautifully with produce from the fields and gardens as well as the usual flowers. It is the smell of the fruit and vegetables, as well as the bright colours and the careful arrangements, which make Harvest so special. (Hops are my favourite – and not just because you make beer out of them.) Choirs may well learn special anthems. My father was a long term chorister. (I was turned down for the church choir and became a server instead). The bells welcome the congregation as they wend their way across the fields to church, or at least as they did at Southfleet in those years between the two world wars, when there were more fields and fewer cars. Apparently, the bell ringers used to play hymns on the bells and their pattern of ringing was sufficiently predictable to know if you were late and needed to start running. Before farm mechanisation, harvest was hard work for most of the village, not, like nowadays, just for the few who work on the farms. A good or bad harvest still made a significant difference to how well at least the poor were likely to eat in the coming year, much more so than it does today, when we are, to some extent, cushioned against rising food prices by imports, subsidy and benefits. The Autumn weather is usually golden and working hard outside to a good end is very satisfying in itself. The congregation came cheerfully to Church to celebrate, in Dean Alford's words, "All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin." They say, "Nostalgia isn't what it used to be." There's nothing you and I can do about that, but, if our appreciation of Harvest, our sense of thanksgiving because "God our Maker doth provide ~ for our wants to be supplied:" is in anyway lacking, then the answer is in our own hands. "Come to God's own temple come; raise the song of harvest home."

My father's birthday was 5th October and I always think especially of him, when, like, this year, Harvest Festival falls on that date. When we remember "those whom we love but see no longer", there may be a whole variety of emotions: appreciation and thankfulness for all the love they gave to us and the things they did for us,

for their example and care, for the people they were; regret perhaps that in some ways maybe we let them down or did not always treat them as we ought to have done; sometimes still a sense of loss even when people have been dead for many years; perhaps too a sense of our own responsibility to preserve their heritage – what they did and accomplished – for generations yet to come, the children who hardly remember them or never knew them at all. I remember being told at Junior School that when we mourn for Christians who have died, we are not really being sorry for them. They are in a better place. They are with Jesus. Our sadness is for ourselves being parted from them. St Paul says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so we shall ever be with the Lord." (I Thessalonians 4¹³⁻¹⁷). Their lives live on in us. Where we fail, we are forgiven, if we turn to the Lord, just as they were. They are safe in Jesus, just as we are safe in Jesus, all one in the ocean of God's love. They have eternal life through faith in Him, just as we have eternal life through faith Him. We shall see them again when we shall see Jesus as He is and, when we shall see Him as He is, we shall be made like Him (I John 3²). There is a final Harvest, a harvest of souls. Christ will come again and all humanity will rise from their graves to receive His Judgment. What have we done with the resources He gave us? How have we treated other people? What have we done with our talents? What we have done to others is the same as doing it to Jesus (Matthew 25^{31 et seq}). It is on His mercy, and on Him alone, that we depend. "Come then, Lord of mercy come, Bid us sing thy harvest-home: Let thy saints be gathered in, Free from sorrow, free from sin. All upon the golden floor Praising thee for evermore: Come, with all thine angels come, Bid us sing thy harvest-home." Roger.

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 Sunday 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.

My Child, My Letter To You

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1
I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2
I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3
Even the very hairs-on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31
For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27
In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28
For you are my offspring. Acts 11:28
I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5
I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12
You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. I Psalm 139:15-16
I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26
You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14
I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13
And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6
I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8: 41-44
I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16
And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1
Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1
I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11
For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5
I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41
And I want to show you great and marvellous things. Jeremiah 33:3
If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 31:4
For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13
I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20
For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18
As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40: 11
One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3~4
And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4
I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17: 23
For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26
He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3
He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31
And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10
I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32
If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. I John 2:23
And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39
Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven as ever seen. Luke 15:7
I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3 vv 14-15
My question is, Will you be my child? John 1: 12-13
I am waiting for you. Luke 15: 11-32

Love, Your Dad, Almighty God.

St Michael's Draw August: Dorothy Taylor and Jeanne Harris £10 each; Neil Jones and Martin Hills £5 each.
St John's Draw August: £25 Mrs Clark (180); £10 each Mr Mitchell (69) & Mrs Hayward (80) – drawn by Mrs Barton.

The Good Samaritan Today.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance there came a certain priest that way. He carried out a swift risk assessment, decided that there was no proof that the thieves were not still around, and he *passed by on the other side*. His employers commended him *for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him. He considered the matter, but realised that: he had no formal qualifications in first aid or criminal investigation; that he could possibly sued if he tried to help and made a mistake; and, anyway, his insurance would be invalid if he took on any work not specified in his contract of employment.

The employers of the priest and the Levite received an *Investors in People* award because they had made sure that all the boxes were ticked.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. For this he was later charged with masquerading as a medical practitioner and using unlicensed pharmaceuticals.

And set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. He was admonished by the health and safety officer for allowing the robbery victim to ride without a hard hat and because he was not an authorised riding school instructor.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. The innkeeper said he was unable to take cash because of money-laundering regulations and, although he knew the good Samaritan extremely well, it was not company policy to give credit without formal ID. So the robbery victim was thrown out of the inn and a passerby dialled 999. Of the four person trauma team, one was on parental leave, one was on a diversity awareness course, and one was near the end of his permitted working hours under the EU directive. As one person was not allowed to attend alone, the robbery victim had a long wait, during which he died. However, as all the boxes had been ticked, no-one was responsible and nobody was disciplined apart from the whistle-blower who had told the local newspaper that inadequate staffing levels were likely eventually to lead to fatalities.

Who, thinkest thou, needs neighbours in this brave new world?

“All are Called” - Diocesan Vocations Day

Christ Church, Orpington Saturday 11th October 10.30-3.30

This promises to be thought-provoking and informative, designed for those thinking about lay and ordained ministries, as well as those who wonder what God may be calling them to. The day is looking at Vocation in its widest form and is drawing on resources from across the diocese. Dean Mark and Ven Karen Gorham, Archdeacon of Buckingham, are our speakers, both of whom come with a knowledge and passion for Vocation. Booking forms and further information are available on the Diocesan Website www.rochester.anglican.org, and the closing date for bookings is Tuesday September 30th.

Joke of the Year

I'm getting rid of my Hoover.

It only gathers dust!

From the Registers

Baptisms:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 10 th August | Seren Lilah Kallie Anstey | Gravesend |
| 17 th August | Ruby Rose Krucyk | High Street |
| 24 th August | Joshua James Eaglestone | Carroll Close |

Weddings:

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------|
| 16 th August | Daniel Paul Chubb & Kelly Marie Copeland | Cuxton |
| 16 th August | Daniel James Quamina & Ellie Emma Dole | Halling |
| 4 th September | Marc Hall & Robyn Elizebeth Wadhams | Halling |

Wedding Blessing:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| 23 rd August | Thomas and Terry Ryan | Cuxton |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|

Funerals:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 19 th August | Donald Brunger (76) | The Street |
| 19 th August | James Frederick Little (82) | Woodhurst Close |
| 20 th August | Leonard Parris (96) | High Street |
| 22 nd August | June Grace Court (80) | Kent Road |
| 29 th August | Joan Kate Dorothy Obee (89) | Frindsbury |
| 12 th September | Howard Underdown (86) | Meadow Crescent |

Gladys Stephenson RIP

Parishioners will be sorry to hear of the death of Gladys Stephenson, whose funeral at St John's is scheduled for 24th September at 10.30 am after this magazine goes to press. Until she moved to Hampshire to be nearer her daughter, Gladys lived in Halling all her life and was a great supporter of St John's Church. She baked no end of cakes and sausage rolls for the stall which raised a large proportion of the amount of money needed for the restoration of the church. Gladys was also a proud member of the Verse Speaking Choir, and a somewhat reluctant, but very conscientious churchwarden. We miss her. Gladys passed away peacefully on 3rd September aged 91 years, at Chestnut House Nursing Home, close to her daughter Sylvia in Dorset. The funeral is at St John's at 10.30 on 24th this month. Family flowers only, please, but donations if desired to St John's Church or Kent Association for the Blind c/o Clarke's Funeral Service, Snodland.



Quiz for Parish Funds

Saturday 25th October, 7.30 pm, Cuxton Church Hall,
Teams 6-8 or come as individuals.
£7.00 entrance includes ploughman's. Please bring your own drink.

Bible Exhibition St John's Church Halling

October 26th this year is Bible Sunday. Peter Joyce (candidate for ordination) will be preaching at 11.00 service at St John's and there will also be an opportunity to see his exhibition of bibles and bible-related materials.



Other Diary Dates

5th October: 6.30 pm Harvest Evensong at St Michael's followed by Harvest Supper in church hall.
30th November: 6.30 pm Advent Sunday Evensong followed by party in church hall for Rector's 60th birthday. All welcome.
13th December: 10.00 am Christmas Coffee Morning in church hall.



Cuxton WI

Two for the price of one this time as holidays intervened with last months events. In August we enjoyed a merry hour with Mr March who had been a milk analyst with the Milk Marketing Board. He was a very entertaining speaker who arrived with several samples of various milks, all in bottles, which he felt were more economical than cartons, as they could be sterilized and used again up to eight times. He told us of the various properties of the milk and said that his personal favourite was semi skimmed organic. There had been a very well attended strawberry tea at Dorothy's which had raised some well needed funds for our future events. One of these will be our 70th birthday celebration next June. Seems ages ago since we used to meet in the then old "tin" hut in the village but we had a lot of fun there. Next year is also the 100th birthday of the WI movement and there are plans for large celebrations all over the country with the AGM in June to be held in the Albert Hall and broadcast in local cinemas.

Our September speaker had an entirely different subject which caught a lot of us by surprise. The title of his talk was Tulipomania and we thought that this would be about the horticultural side of tulip growing. However it was the history of the tulip from its humble beginnings in Turkey to the

tulip wars in Holland and the money that was made by the development of various varieties. One bulb in the 1600s could buy you a mansion; they were so revered. Martin Head managed his talk by showing us many relatively unknown and famous paintings in which there were tulips either prominently displayed or hidden in the picture. I am sure that when any of us next goes to a gallery we will be looking far more closely at these Dutch masterpieces. Our business section followed and we were told that fees would increase to £36 for next year, quite a jump but taken in context not bad for twelve meetings per year, cheaper than a monthly visit to the cinema. We were lucky to get 12 eager members on our committee this year and we could not function without them. However Pat has been President for four years and the usual term is three years. So we are hoping that some one or two people will volunteer to become our next chief and keep us going.

Next month we are having Bon Marche to show us some of the new collection. So do come along as a visitor if you would like to see what's on show. It's on Thursday October 2nd at 7 30 pm in the church hall.
Sheila.



The Children's Society

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING

I would appreciate it if all holders of Children's Society boxes could dig them out in time for this year's box opening, which will be held on Friday 17th October at 204 Bush Road, Cuxton, starting at 9.30 am. You can give them to me at Church on a Sunday morning, drop them in at my house before the event or I am happy to collect them from you beforehand as they can get very heavy. Please give me a call on 727424 to arrange that. Thank you. Julia Wells.



Halling WI

Halling W.I. decided not to have an ordinary meeting this month but to have a summer picnic in Jemma's garden instead. It so happened, just my luck, and as I don't usually "do" funerals, I just had to go to this one on the same day as the said picnic. I understand a good time was had by all, and I know they had quite good picnic weather.

Also in August the W.I. have had their annual ploughman's lunch This we have done for many years, first in Mrs Vi Head's garden. When Vi passed away Mrs Betty Head continued what has now become a tradition. On a very gray wet day, 26th August we had our ploughman's lunch

(Wait for it) in Mrs Head's front room. Norman was relegated to the back room and Betty's big green picnic table had been bought in from under the car port. When I arrived, a bit late, the ladies were sitting round like King Arthur's knights in front of the table laden with every thing ploughman's except perhaps the mud and the seagulls. We all had a lovely lunch. Betty always does a good job. Then we chatted, reminisced, gossiped? and laughed telling stories and generally enjoyed ourselves. Then it was tea and cake time. What a great way to spend an afternoon for which we must thank Betty and Norman for letting us share their house, but where on earth did the time go from twelve till four? Phyllis.

Halling Historical Society

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 16th October at 7.30 pm in the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling. The speaker will be Mr Harris and his subject is:- THE HISTORY OF COBHAM HALL. Visitors and new members welcome.

Nature Notes August 2014

"Moonlit Apples" by John Drinkwater.

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under.

A mouse in the wainscot catches and scratches, and then

There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep.
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep
On moon-washed apples of wonder.

August begins on a sunny note with warm west winds. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. I feel and enjoy the warmth of the sun shining from a blue sky brushed with white cloud. Knapweed, birdsfoot trefoil, hawkweed, clover, lucerne and ragwort bloom among the tall straw coloured grasses. On Sunday 3rd I go to church for a service to commemorate the beginning of the First World War which began on 4th. The 5th is another warm day when I walk round the lake with Murphy. Flowers bloom among the tall grasses. Cloud builds up during the morning but no rain falls. The afternoon becomes clear and the sun beams down on the earth. The evening is still with skies brushed with white cloud. Rooks begin to come home to roost. The 7th is warm and sunny. On the lake I see a crested grebe. Knapweed, umbellifers, viper's bugloss, clover, birdsfoot trefoil, goats rue, hawkweed and bristly ox tongue bloom. The 8th is a grey day with considerable humidity. Heavy rain falls in the afternoon. It lashes down the window facing the back garden and rivulets flow down the drive. More rain falls in the evening. Rain falls again on the night of 9th. On 10th skies gradually clear; then strong westerly winds drive billowing clouds across the sky. The sun shines warmly after a heavy shower falls. The trees sway backwards and forwards in the wind. Jays come to the garden. At night a very bright moon lights up the garden. Apparently, according to the local weather forecaster, it is a super moon. The 11th is bright with sunshine but dark clouds gather in the west when I walk with Murphy round the lake at Bluewater. I notice that leaves on various trees and shrubs are beginning to show signs of Autumn. Hips, haws, sloes and cob nuts are ripening. Showers fall in the afternoon. The embankment berries are turning red on the hawthorns. The jay is making frequent visits. The super moon appears again. The 12th is a beautiful day, some of which I spend in the garden.

Westerly winds drive white, billowing clouds across the blue sky. Dark clouds form in the afternoon and a few spots of rain fall as I walk along Pilgrims Road. When I walk home, I'm aware of leaves looking autumnal. In the early evening rooks fly over to the woodland by the river in order to roost. Darkness has fallen soon after 9.00pm. There is some heavy rain on 13th. Then the 14th is dull and damp. The 15th is chilly and overcast. Then in the afternoon there are a few glimpses of the sun. On 16th, between singing at weddings, I sit with friends by the river at Halling. Swans and gulls glide on the water. After a grey morning on the 17th, skies become blue in the afternoon. I watch the vapour trails of aircraft crossing the beautiful blue. The sun shines brightly on 18th when I walk with Murphy round the lake; an array of wild flowers bloom. The afternoon is bright; then clouds build up from the west and a shower of rain falls. The evening is quite cool for the time of the year. On 22nd a blackbird trills from the holly tree and a damsel fly hovers across the garden as I sit outside enjoying the warm sunshine, blue sky and billowing clouds. The morning of 24th is bright as I walk to church. Again I'm aware of an autumnal feeling in the air. The 25th is a very wet day. We take Murphy to Bluewater where I walk him in an under cover car park for he does not like walking in the rain. If he encounters a puddle he lifts up his paw and shakes it vigorously. Rain continues to fall well into the evening. The 26th is a very wet day I walk along Pilgrim's Road and notice ripe haws on hawthorns and leaves on various shrubs which are looking autumnal. The 27th is warm when I drive to Snodland. Rooks are cawing in the trees. The 29th is breezy with sunny spells but with some showers in the morning. The wind strengthens in the afternoon but the sun shines brightly. There are plenty of red haws on the railway embankment opposite our garden. The evening becomes overcast

as rooks come home to roost. The 30th is a fine day with warm sunshine in the morning when I sit in the garden for a while listening to birdsong. Grey clouds cover the sky later in the day. In the evening I stand outside transfixed by the beautiful song of a blackbird and the cawing of rooks. The scent of wood smoke fills the air as grey clouds drift across the sky from the

west. The trees produce beautiful shapes against the sky. On the last day of the month, the sun is shining when I walk to church. The sky is brushed with high cloud. In the afternoon, I sit in the garden taking advantage of the warm sunshine. As the light begins to fade, the clouds are salmon pink due to the setting sun. Elizabeth Summers.

News from Cuxton Schools

Dear Friends of our School,

An extremely busy start to the new academic school year! The children have returned looking refreshed and smart in their school uniform, eager to see their friends and meet their teachers and teaching assistants. We are now officially two academies as from September 1st. We are working with the Primary First Trust, a small group of primary schools, five in total, all striving to be outstanding for our young children. We look forward to the new experiences this will bring and the challenges ahead. Officially due to budgets we have to remain as two schools but we are working as one primary, with joint governors and a joint leadership team. The staff are working closely together and we look forward to the building work to join the buildings. Plans will be submitted in a couple of months for permission and architects are working hard to plan for a shared entrance area, offices, single central staffroom and additional rooms for children. Whilst we do not anticipate growing hugely in numbers we will be a two form entry school throughout as this year we have taken 60 foundation stage children. We still want to retain the village school, small community feel with the caring ethos we have created.

We have a busy term ahead, with workshops for parents around letters and sounds and spelling and grammar teaching, internet safety, Harvest festival, Environment day, a Maths week, parent's evenings and reading afternoons.

The government changes to the curriculum have determined that all schools re evaluate their curriculum and whilst English and Maths remain at the core of all we do, we have to be more creative in our delivery of other subjects. Standards are higher, expectations are raised. Already this term, year 1 and 2 children have seen and handled lizards, snakes and spiders and years 3 and 4 have handled and looked through microscopes at rocks, fossils etc., as their topic focuses on tremors and under the ground.

I will inform you of other changes next time, but in the meantime if you have any spare time and would like to become involved in the life of the school by helping the children with gardening, sewing, reading or have any particular skills in art, with computers or cooking, please do come and see us or ring the school offices on 01634 718532 or 01634 337720.

Many thanks, Sandra Jones, Headteacher.

Prayer Group

There is a small group of people in the parish ready and willing to pray for you and your needs. If you would like to be remembered in prayer, please contact Elizabeth Maisey on 727126 or elizabeth@rabhutch.demon.co.uk There is also a box at the back of St Michael's in which prayer requests may be submitted on paper.

A Funny Thing

Don't be discouraged by this, but a funny thing has happened to our e mail communications. Some e mails between members of the prayer group and mine to our former PCC secretary and the chairman of Churches Together in Medway have been sent back as undeliverable with a note to the effect that their content has been identified as spam. I don't know if it is significant, but the e mail service responsible for most, though not all of these problems, is demon.net. If you are having the same sort of trouble, log on to http://mailreport.co.uk/FAQ/CMAE_PreFilter. This will explain how you have to send an e mail to ham@mailreport.co.uk with the failed e mail you sent as an attachment. Roger.

Joke:

"Doctor, I keep thinking I'm a moth."

"You should see a psychiatrist."

"I know, but your light was on."



Max's Tail Piece

Last month, Master didn't save me any space to write in the magazine, which is a bit unfair seeing that many readers say they like my articles better than his. It was especially ironic last month, because I had had a lengthy letter in reply (from a dog) to one of my previous articles, which is more than he ever gets. I was thinking about telling you about some ways to wind Master up. You have to be a dog really, but the principle's the same. For instance, he would like me to finish up my meals so that he can wash up my dish while he has still got a bowl of hot soapy water. So I usually leave just too much food in it to throw away economically. Then, the best bit, when he is ready to go out, I stop and finish what is left in my food bowl. He hates to be kept waiting. In the same way, when we are out walking in the woods, I will just stop. He goes on some distance and turns round, only to see me just standing there with a defiant expression on my face. I won't budge until he comes back to get me. It isn't just the obstinacy of old age. I've done this since I was a puppy 13 years ago! On the subject of eating still, I always make him cut up my poached eggs. I can chew up fried eggs and boiled eggs perfectly well, and, of course, scrambled eggs are no problem. I'm not sure which I like best – fried eggs or scrambled, but I know poached are my least favourite. However, he insists that I have to have the same breakfast as him. I can't really complain. I get two eggs to his one! And drinking. We used to have a concrete birdbath in the garden which came to grief when a heavy pigeon knocked it off its plinth. However, because the birds and animals had got into the habit of coming there for a drink and because it is nice to see them, Master has tried replacing it with various containers. The attractive looking ones cracked in the frost. So now he puts out an old plastic basin. There is something of a mystery about this, too. It is quite often moved some distance in the garden overnight and a couple of basins have disappeared altogether. We do not know whether this is the work of foxes (who do like playing just like puppies) or human intruders. We do get human intruders and Master says, "You can't really expect the local yobs to behave any better than council officers who themselves treat the law on trespass with contempt!" Anyway, this basin of water for the birds needs topping up quite often in warm weather. I find I can wind him up again by ignoring the water in my bowl indoors and drinking what's in the birds' basin outside. It soon needs filling up again. A spaniel drinks more than a sparrow!

On the first Monday in September, we met up with Master's friend to walk some more of the North Downs Way. It was a nice train ride to Paddock Wood, where we got on another train which our friend had got on in London. We travelled to Chilham, where we finished last time. I don't think the humans were quite as energetic as usual. For the last few weeks, Master's knee has been giving him gyp, which is why you haven't seen him running much lately, and his friend too had a condition which could have been clergyman's knee, caught from walking with a clergyman, but probably isn't! I was on fine form. They resisted the temptations of the enticing looking tea room and pubs in Chilham and we had a good brisk walk up onto the Downs. As usual, there were splendid views. There was an amazing crop of apples in the orchards and we saw one of the camps where the seasonal workers live who pick and pack them. The accommodation looked very nice, much better than the old hoppers' cottages, which used to house Kent's seasonal workers. We stopped at a wonderful pub at Chartham with a lovely dog-friendly garden, excellent beer and a very impressive lunch menu. On account of the fact that we did not appear to be near any stations or bus routes, they somewhat reluctantly decided that we would have to continue to Canterbury. They had an odd conversation about whether firm beliefs were a good thing when it seemed that people with firm beliefs were only too likely to go to war with people they disagreed with, though, on the other hand, without a vision the people perish and the unexamined life isn't worth living, according to the Judaeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman traditions which have formed our western culture and without which we should be rootless. Eventually we walked into Canterbury down the old London Road and found a pub which did excellent first courses, but no desserts, a defect remedied by an ice cream van, and so home by train. We walked from Strood because there was no train due for a while and he hates to be kept waiting. It would still, however, have been quicker to have waited for the train.

The next day, he went to the optician and hobbled in on his poorly knee, to be told that his sight had deteriorated, he should get his blood pressure checked and that he had failed his field test. The optician recommended him to go for further tests, about which he was very grumpy. The optician asked him whether he would go and he said that, instead, he thought he would walk round to the undertaker's and book a prepaid funeral. Actually that is quite a sensible thing to do at any age. It's a good investment in a time of very low interest rates and saves your family having to worry about paying for your funeral when the time eventually comes. So he got thinking about what kind of funeral he wants: a male priest to take it; largely 1662 (or at least Series 1, not common Worship, the funeral rite in which he loathes); Psalm 90 said or sung, I Corinthians 15 vv 20-58; the prayers after the committal, definitely no commendation; Onward Christian Soldiers, Shine, Jesus Shine, and You Shall Go Out With Joy. And then he thought, control freak that he is, that he didn't really trust anyone to take his funeral the way he wants it. He considered recording himself taking it to be played back on the day. How creepy is that? Max.