

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
2 nd October Trinity 19 Harvest Festival		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Nehemiah 5 vv 1-13 p489 John 9 vv 1-41 p1075
		11.00 Holy Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 II Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1052
9 th October Trinity 20		11.00 Holy Communion	II Kings 5 vv 1-15 p373 II Timothy 2 vv 8-15 p1196 Luke 17 vv 11-19 p1051
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Nehemiah 6 vv 1-16 p489 John 15 vv 12-27 p1083
16 th October Trinity 21		11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Genesis 32 vv 22-31 p36 II Timothy 3 v14 – 4 v5 p1197 Luke 18 vv 1-8 p1052
23 rd October Last Sunday after Trinity		11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 14 vv 7-22 p772 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Luke 18 vv 9-14 p1052
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
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
2 nd October Trinity 19 Harvest Festival		9.30 Family Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1052
		6.30 Evening Praise Followed by Harvest Supper in church hall.	Deuteronomy 26 vv 1-11 p203 Philippians 4 vv 4-9 p1181 John 6 vv 25-35 p1070
9 th October Trinity 20		9.30 Holy Communion	II Kings 5 vv 1-15 p373 II Timothy 2 vv 8-15 p1196 Luke 17 vv 11-19 p1051
16 th October Trinity 21		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 32 vv 22-31 p36 II Timothy 3 v14 – 4 v5 p1197 Luke 18 vv 1-8 p1052
23 rd October Last Sunday after Trinity		9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 14 vv 7-22 p772 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Luke 18 vv 9-14 p1052
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
Holy Communion 9.30 am Wednesdays at St Michael’s		Holy Communion 9.30 am Thursdays at St John’s	
5 th October	Galatians 2 vv 1-14 Luke 11 vv 1-4	6 th October	Galatians 3 vv 1-5 Luke 11 vv 5-13
12 th October	Galatians 5 vv 18-26 Luke 11 vv 42-46	13 th October	Ephesians 1 vv 1-10 Luke 11 vv 47-54
19 th October	Ephesians 3 vv 2-12 Luke 12 vv 39-48	20 th October	Ephesians 3 vv 14-21 Luke 12 vv 49-53
26 th October	Ephesians 6 vv 1-9 Luke 13 vv 22-30	27 th October	Ephesians 6 vv 10-20 Luke 13 vv 31-35

Copy Date November Magazine: 14th October 8.30 am Rectory

Harvest Supper
Follows Evening Praise Service @ St Michael's
6.30 2nd October Church Hall



What Are We Doing at a Funeral?

Isaiah 58 vv 6-14, Psalm 103, Hebrews 12 vv 18-29, Luke 13 vv 10-17

I suppose the obvious answer is that we are arranging the hygienic disposal of a dead body. That is obviously

important from the point of view of public health, but it hardly explains the need for a funeral service. We leave waste disposal to the council. Yet most human cultures, from as long ago as the Stone Age, have had rituals for dealing with death. Usually, these are religious rituals. I'm intrigued by the rise in popularity of non-religious funerals in our post-Christian culture. My great uncle used to say, *Just put me on the compost heap*, which seems logical enough if you believe that there is no God and that our human personality is simply a function of our bodies – the software generated by the hardware of our flesh. Once your body is dead, according to that way of thinking, you are finished. So what does it matter what happens to the body and why do your relatives and admirers need some kind of ceremony to mark your passing? I don't think that my great uncle believed that. I think and hope he did believe in an afterlife in the Hands of God, but, even if you do believe in God, if you believe that some sort of immortal soul lives on after the body has died, does it really matter what happens to the body?

It does matter to most of us. The body, at the very least, is a vehicle for who we are and people who love us quite rightly want to see our dead bodies treated with respect even if they are convinced that we ourselves are in a better place. Personally, I think that reverence for dead bodies can be overdone. For example, people shouldn't get upset about autopsies which might solve a crime or further medical research. Neither should they obsess about what has happened to the body in a war zone, or in a serious accident, or at sea to the extent that their obsession becomes something which prevents their ever coming to terms with their loss or simply a stick with which to beat the authorities for what bereaved families believe to be official culpability for the cause of the tragedy.

Ritual seems to matter too. Human beings are ritualistic creatures and we seem to need ceremonies to mark great occasions – birth, marriage, death, etc.. As a youngster, I was

influenced both by Protestantism and by scientific humanism which have left me with a deep suspicion of empty ritual. I'm always ready to suspect ritual of being meaningless. Hence my suspicion of humanist funerals and secular naming ceremonies in lieu of christening. What do these rituals mean, if there is no God to accept our praise, to receive our thanks, to forgive our sins, to guide and sustain our lives and to Whom we can offer ourselves in an act of worship? People obviously feel the need of ritual at the significant moments in their lives, but what do the rituals mean? What is the significance of our lives if there is no God, if our existence is simply a matter of chance and if we cease to be, shortly to be forgotten, at the moment of death?

Anyway, what are we doing at a Christian funeral? The 1662 funeral service is very short, dignified and simple. It had to be short in times of plague when funerals were held swiftly one after another. It commences with those wonderful sentences of Scripture: *I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* (St. John 11. 25, 26) *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.* (Job 19. 25 – 27) *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* (1 St. Timothy 6.7; Job 1.21). There is a choice of two psalms, a long reading from I Corinthians XV about the resurrection of Christians (too long and difficult to understand for some people, perhaps), a committal of the body to the ground at the graveside and a couple of prayers following the Lord's Prayer. Simple, brief and dignified, not even any provision for a eulogy or sermon. What the service sets out to do is to provide comfort for the mourners – that those who have died in the Lord shall not die eternally, but sleep in him and be raised up at the last day – and to prepare all those of us present at the service for our own deaths. We shall all die. We shall all face judgment for what we have done with our lives on earth. We can only depend on God for our salvation and God is absolutely dependable.

An interesting twist is that, whereas 1662 provides for the prayers to be said at the graveside, the 1928 prayer book and subsequent revisions allow for the prayers to be said in church before the committal. This is to avoid standing around too long in the cold and wet, which, it is sometimes claimed, has led to mourners at one funeral catching their death of cold and needing themselves to be buried at the next. It is, however, more emotionally satisfying to have prayers after the committal and it is a shame that prayers before committal have become the norm even at the crematorium and at burials even when the sun is shining. Revisions do give a wider choice of psalms and readings than 1662 and that is helpful.

What would be lacking, in my opinion, in a prayer book funeral service without a eulogy or address would be the opportunity to put our memories of the departed into words, to share our memories with one another, and to give thanks to God for the life of this particular individual. I have conducted very few funerals where there hasn't been some sort of eulogy or address, given by the vicar or a family member or a friend and it feels as if something important is lacking if the eulogy is missing. It is also good to include hymns and other appropriate music and sometimes readings in addition to the biblical lesson.

The big difference between Catholic and Protestant funerals is that Catholics pray not only for the mourners, but also for the dead person. The Roman Catholic theory, which got out of all proportion in the Middle Ages, is that the wicked and unbelievers go to Hell when they die and their case is hopeless. Some very good Christians go straight to Heaven and, when the Catholic Church believes this to be the case, they are called *saints*. Most Christians, however, are not good enough for heaven when they die and they go to a place called Purgatory, where they spend as long as it takes for them to get fit for Heaven. Their progress through Purgatory can be assisted by the prayers of the Church on earth. Hence prayers for the departed. In the Middle Ages, this belief in Purgatory was exploited to get people to pay for what were called indulgences to lessen their own or their loved one's time in Purgatory and the money raised from the sale of indulgences helped to fund the Church. It was largely this abuse

which provoked the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther and others went back to the Bible, where there is nothing to support this whole theory of Purgatory. The Bible makes clear that we all deserve Hell. None of us is good enough to deserve to spend eternity in the Presence of God. God, however, justifies us by grace through faith. None of us is fit to go to Heaven. Nothing any of us could do would make us fit for Heaven, but Jesus has done everything necessary for us. All that is required of us is that we repent and believe. When our life on earth is over, our eternal destiny is already fixed. If we're in Heaven, we don't need the prayers of the faithful. If we're in Hell, nothing, not even prayer, can help us.

So, there are no prayers for the departed in the Protestant funeral service. Two difficulties with this theological austerity are that it is emotionally difficult, if not impossible, to cease to remember our loved ones in our prayers, even when they are dead, and that we must surely hope that somehow God will get around what appear to us to be God's own rules and finally save, if not everyone, at least everyone who is willing to be saved. I Timothy 2^{3&4} *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to knowledge of the truth.* At one extreme of theological opinion, we have dead jihadi fighters for ISIS sharing Heaven with murdered Syrian children. At the opposite extreme of theological opinion, we have kind old Uncle John going to Hell because he could never believe in God after he was abused by priests when he was a boy. *Common Worship* services in the Church of England probably wisely gloss over this question of praying for the dead. *Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ; according to your promises, grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.* Is that praying for the faithful departed? You can read it either way. 1928 is a bit more Catholic, *And we commend to thy gracious keeping, O Lord, all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee, according to thy promises, to grant them refreshment, light and peace,* which makes it into *Common Worship*, to the concern of some evangelicals. The modern litany remembers *both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone*, raising the possibility of salvation for those who haven't self identified as Christians. The 1662 litany only

mentions death in the context of the petition: *In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us,* and, in the great intercession, simply says of the dead, *And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear: beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that we with them may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom:* adding, *Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.,* making clear that we depend on Christ alone for access to Heaven.

I haven't much space for the *Common Worship* funeral service, which I dislike intensely. It is too bitty and fussy. The prayers are sentimental and didactic. The *Common Worship* funeral service provides for a general confession. While mourners often do feel guilt about the way they have treated the departed, the funeral is seldom the appropriate occasion on which to deal with it. It suggests naming the nearest and dearest in the prayers. This is mawkish and would be inviting trouble in some families which are not at all united. I once took the funeral of a homosexual who had died of AIDS. His grieving parents, who thought homosexuality was a sin, blamed his boyfriend for infecting him but the boyfriend was of course grieving deeply too. Better to name nobody than to try to sort out who is worthy of having his or her grief officially singled out by the minister. What I really dislike about the *Common Worship* funeral service, however, is the commendation. The committal commits the body to the ground or to be cremated, *in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.* The commendation commends the person to God. The time to do that of course is while the person is still alive and, especially, at the moment of death. If we still think it necessary at the funeral to commend the person to God, days or even weeks after the death, where do we suppose the person has been in the mean time? The commendation at the funeral is illogical sentimentality.

The three dangers I see in many funerals these days are: the danger of conducting a celebration of someone's life which glosses over the fact that the person is dead and that his or her loved ones have sustained a genuine and significant loss; the danger of treating the congregation as an audience

(listeners and viewers rather than participants in a common purpose); and the danger of treating the people arranging the funeral as customers rather than as fellow Christians sharing in a common act of worship. The second two are risks at weddings and christenings as well.

I've been thinking about funerals lately because I was much moved at a recent service by the number of parishioners who attended, many of them people I know quite well, but most of whom seldom if ever come to Church. An extremely important part of the service is praying for the minister and the whole congregation there present that, at the end of time, *we, with all those that are departed in the truth faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory;* and that God will raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart in this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is that this our brother doth; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* The prayer I am saying on my own behalf and on behalf of the whole congregation is that we shall all meet again in the Kingdom of God and reign with Him forever – me and my parishioners. Amazing and daunting! Traditionally, people are buried facing east towards the Mount of Olives where some traditions expect Jesus to return, and, in some places, the clergy are buried facing west with the thought of meeting their flock on that last day, the Day of Resurrection. The prayer is that God will bring us and all our parishioners home. We clergy have an important role in getting us all there. It's so hard to get people to listen to the Word of God. It's so hard to get them to come to Church. It is so hard to get people to commit themselves 100% to Christ. In fact it is very hard to make that 100% commitment ourselves. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to knowledge of the truth.* God wants us all to be saved, but what about those of us who are indifferent to the Christian religion, those who seldom come to Church, those who only pray

when they're in trouble, those who live their lives in their own way with no thought for the commandments of God? What about those who are actually hostile to religion? Will they all make it safely to Heaven anyway? Wouldn't it make a mockery of God to think that we could treat Him with indifference or even oppose Him and that He would then reward us with all the blessings of everlasting life, sweeping our sins under the carpet? If Jesus purchased our redemption by shedding His Blood on the Cross, should we expect to receive the fruits of that redemption if we can hardly be bothered with Him? I'm not sorry when non-Christian parishioners opt for a humanist funeral. It saves me having to say things about them which I'm not sure are true. On the other hand, I am sorry if people opt for a humanist funeral because they struggle with faith or because

they don't think they are good enough or because they think God couldn't possibly love them or even that He won't accept eleventh hour repentance. We sometimes use Psalm 103 for the committal at funeral services. It speaks of the wideness of God's mercy, mercy which encompasses the whole human race. But, in today's other readings, Isaiah warns us not to be complacent and think we can live self-centred lives and still expect God's favour, Jesus warns us of the danger of abusing religion for own selfish ends. Hebrews warns us that being a Christian is tough and demands nothing less than absolute devotion. I'm not quite sure how to balance these two concepts – that God is infinitely merciful and that He requires absolute commitment from us. What do you think? Roger (a sermon preached Trinity 13).

Halling Bell Ringers

We had a full peal rung at Halling on July 23rd by a team from the west country – the first for many years.

People keep asking me why the bells at Halling are not rung as much as they should be? Well. If the young people don't come to church, how do you get a team of ringers. I'm sorry I can't ring any more owing to poor health. P. Silver.

Mary Acott's 90th Birthday Party

I had a marvellous, heart warming party at the Jubilee Hall on Sunday 31st July. It was so moving to meet so many friends, representing the different interests and associations I have been connected with during my 35 years in the parish. I write to thank all who contributed to make the occasion so worthwhile, and especially Hannah and her band of helpers who produced such a gorgeous spread. Thank you all for your love and good will and the lovely flowers and presents. Mary.

Forthcoming Attractions

29th September 7.30 pm St Michael's Patronal Festival – preacher the Rural Dean.
2nd October: 6.30 pm Harvest Praise at St Michael's, followed by Harvest Supper in Church Hall.
15th October: 7.30 pm Quiz for Church Funds in Church Hall.

19th October: Mothers' Union Tea in 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.

Saturday 15th October Cuxton Church Hall Quiz for Parish Funds

7.00 for 7.30

Teams 6-8

£7.00 includes food but not drink

‘The first commandment is “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ Mark 12:30-31.

Jesus taught us that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbour. It can be tempting to only make the effort to love people we see, those near us and close to us. But Jesus’ parable of the good Samaritan leaves us in no doubt that being neighbours means loving any person in need of our help or kindness. This year’s Poverty and Hope Appeal will enable us to show love to our neighbours, those near and far. We will do this by building a vocational centre in Kondoa Diocese, Tanzania, facilitating peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, feeding families in Burkina Faso, tackling deforestation in Argentina, enabling justice for vulnerable women in Delhi, and investing in young people here in Kent with critical and creative thinking skills. Please join with us this year as we pray and give to our neighbours as Jesus calls us to. <http://www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/poverty-amp-hope/> Envelopes available in church at Harvest Festival services and till Christmas.

The Missionary and the Pearl Fisherman

A heavy splash, followed by many ripples, and then, apart from a stream of little bubbles which rose to the surface, the water was still. A missionary stood on the pier in the Indian Ocean, his eyes riveted on the water. Finally a black head appeared from the water and a pair of bright eyes looked up. Climbing on the pier, an old pearl diver shook the water from his still supple body. "As nice a dive as I have ever seen, Rambhau!" remarked David Morse, the missionary, who had come to India to tell the people the good news of salvation through Christ Jesus.

"Look at this one, Sahib," said Rambhau, taking a big oyster from between his teeth. David pried it open and sure enough, it held a beautiful shining pearl.

"What a treasure!"

"Yes," shrugged the diver, "rather good, but some are better, much better. Look at these little flaws here. You know, yesterday you talked with me about God, and I admit, I have many faults and sins, just like that pearl, but I am, and always will be, a Hindu. We Hindus believe that we have to do a lot of things to come to God; I have to correct my faults and do penance for them."

"But Rambhau, my friend, God offers full forgiveness to every sinner who confesses his errors and sins to Him. Everyone who comes to Him in repentance and accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour will be adopted as a son of God. Do you understand?"

"No, Sahib. I often told you, that's too simple for me. Perhaps I am too proud, but I want to do something to get a place in heaven. I intend to go on a pilgrimage to Delhi for my sins, and so I hope to earn God's mercy."

"But Rambhau, you won't even manage this long journey. Today is the time of grace, tomorrow it may well be too late! And, apart from that, we cannot earn God's grace, for He wants to give it to us freely. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has suffered on the cross and accomplished all that is necessary for our salvation. God only wants us to confess our sins to Him and then believe that His Son paid all the debt for those sinners who come to Him. He is the only Saviour. Without Him, there is no salvation. Without Him you are hopelessly lost."

Rambhau shook his head and went home. No matter how often David Morse talked to him, it was of no avail. The diver would not accept Christ. Yet they became friends, the missionary and the old pearl diver.

One day Rambhau came to see the evangelist. He carried a little box with him, and said, "Sahib Morse, I've got something in here that I want to tell you about. I had a son who was also a diver. He was the best pearl diver along the Indian coast. He had the keenest eye, the longest breath. He could dive down to 30 meters. He was the delight of my heart. He always dreamt of finding a pearl better than any that had ever been found. And indeed, one day he found it, but the oyster was nearly inaccessible, so deep, and so well attached in a rock crevice. In his struggle to get it out he stayed too long under water and strained his heart too much. Soon afterwards he died." The old man bowed his head, and for a moment his whole body shook, but he made no sound. "I have kept that pearl for years. Now that I am leaving for Delhi, perhaps never to return, I want to give it to my best friend, to you. Here you are."

For a while the missionary gazed silently at one of the biggest pearls ever found in India. It glowed with a wondrous lustre. "Rambhau! What a pearl!"

"That pearl, Sahib, is perfect!" the Indian replied quietly.

Suddenly an idea flashed across the missionary's mind. Looking up he said, "Rambhau, let me buy this wonderful pearl! I'll give you \$1000 dollars for it."

"Sahib," replied Rambhau in a severe tone while straightening up, "this pearl is invaluable. Nobody in this world can pay what this pearl is worth to me. I cannot sell it to you. I can only give it to you as a present."

"No, Rambhau, as much as I want the pearl, I cannot accept it. Maybe I am too proud, but to accept it just like that seems too easy to me. I want to pay or work for it."

"Don't you understand, can't you see, Sahib? My own son gave his life to get this pearl. Its worth is in the life blood of my son. I cannot sell it, I can only give it as a present. Just accept it as proof of my love to you."

Holding back tears, the missionary responded, "Rambhau, don't you see? That is just what you have been saying to God." The diver gave the missionary a long, searching look as he slowly, slowly began to understand. "God is offering you salvation as a free gift, at no charge. It is so great and costly that no man would be able to pay for it. It cost God the life of His only Son to open the entrance to heaven. Even through pilgrimages of thousands of miles you could never earn God's grace. He deliberately gave up His beloved Son to the terrible death of the cross. God's love and deliverance of sinners like you and me can only be accepted as a gift, in faith and thankfulness."

God's light entered the old pearl diver's heart. "Now I understand," he said. Then he turned around and went away, deeply in thought. An hour later he came back and said: "I don't want to wait any longer. I want to come to God right now, just as I am. I cannot earn God's mercy, the price is simply too great. As a lost person I want to accept this love of God. Though it is beyond my understanding, I want to thank Him and His Son Jesus Christ for it."

This is a true story, a striking illustration of God's offer of love. Won't you come to Him too?

From Lady Windermere's Fan by Oscar Wilde

Cecil Graham: What is a cynic?

Lord Darlington: A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Cecil Graham: And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything and doesn't know the market price of any single thing."

The "White Hart" and Cuxton Village

Copies of "Cuxton Remembered" by Lillian Bennet, available at £1.00 from church.

From the Registers

Baptism:

28th August

Monte Edward William Kagan

Snodland

Wedding:

6th September

Miles Ian Bonneywell & Katherine Louise Page

Cuxton

Funerals:

17th August

Kenneth William Hewitt (82)

The Glebe

2nd September

Ada Kathleen (Kath) Garrott (89)

Vicarage Close

8th September

Winifred Beatrice Parris (93)

High Street

Psalms 90. Lord, thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made : thou art God from everlasting, and world without end. Thou turnest man to destruction : again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday : seeing that is past as a watch in the night. As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep : and fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green, and groweth up : but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered. For we consume away in thy displeasure : and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation. Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee : and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For when thou art angry all our days are gone : we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told. The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years : yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. But who regardeth the power of thy wrath : for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure. So teach us to number our days : that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last : and be gracious unto thy servants. O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon : so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. Comfort us again now after the time that thou hast plagued us : and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity. Shew thy servants thy work : and their children thy glory. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us : prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handywork.

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.**

FOODBANK HARVEST - Shopping List



Thank you for your continued support. We currently have very low stock levels of the following:

- Fruit Juice - UHT/long-life
- Breakfast cereal (small)
- Make-in-the-cup/sachet
- Coffee (small)
- Sugar – 500g packs only please
- Feminine hygiene
- Deodorants (for ladies or men)
- Shaving foam/gel and Razors
- Nappies – all sizes
- Shampoo
- Washing powder/liquid (small)
- Washing-up liquid
- Toilet rolls and kitchen rolls

soup

- Tinned/packet desserts, e.g. sponge pudding, 'Angel Delight', jelly or trifle mix
- Evaporated milk
- Dried/powdered milk
- Biscuits
- Sweet treats, e.g. sweets, chocolate or drinking chocolate

Please note: currently we DO NOT need soup, baked beans, pasta, rice, rice pudding, tinned meat, tea.

Thank you for your support – it really does make a difference. info@medway.foodbank.org.uk

Cemetery & Churchyards

Thank you to the probation boys who have at last done a splendid job on Halling Cemetery. Everybody is very pleased with the result. Thanks also to everybody involved in doing the work on Cuxton Churchyard. This has been very much a combined effort by our professional guy, those who've donated funds, volunteer labourers and, latterly, the Probation Service. We're grateful for the offer of grants from both parish councils because we need to pay for equipment, fuel, etc.. If anyone reading this knows how we gain access to what we have been promised, please tell me. And finally, thanks to Medway Council for once more maintaining Halling Churchyard this year.

Roger.

St John's Draw August: £25 to Mrs Clark (157), £10 each to Mrs Feraday (84) & Mrs Chidwick (18) – drawn by Mrs Tapson. Please contact Mrs Head if you would like to join the St John's Draw.

Random Memories of Cuxton

Back in the 70's there used to be a mobile butcher. His name was Pete and he came round twice a week. When my late mother in law visited he could always be relied upon to find us a nice rabbit (with its coat still on). She liked to prepare it herself, didn't trust butchers to joint it the way she wanted. He also had slices of a delicious pork and egg raised pie.

Fresh, locally grown, fruit and vegetables were available from Mr Cogger's shed, next to the Scout Hall. The shed is now incorporated in a private residence. A mobile greengrocer also visited the village. Mr Whibley had a shop in Halling, and always had a good selection of seasonal fruit and vegetables. A big treat was fish and chips from a van that used to park at the bottom of James Road on a Friday, they certainly did a good trade.

Another van that regularly visited the village was the mobile library that used to park in Charles Drive where it joins Whiteleaves rise. This was in addition to the library in the Scout Hall, which was run by the local policeman's wife for many years

The Scout Hall was also the outreach surgery for the Snodland GP's. I must admit that when I first moved into the village I found it all rather strange.

I have vague memories of a Mr Pether who had a shop where the Co op is now. I think he must have lived on the premises. A double fronted building with a door/doors in the centre. I am thinking it must have closed in the mid 70's and possibly stood empty for some time. If anyone has a photo of it, or can fill in any gaps in my memories I would love to know.

If anyone has the requested photograph, please send it to the Rectory electronically or a print. If the latter, it will be returned. Any more memories for future publication would be very welcome. RIK.



Rapid Change

One of the more mature members of our community happened to remark before Mattins the other day, that it was a hop-picking morning. That made me laugh. It was the sort of thing my grandmother used to say on late August and September mornings – a bit of a nip in the air, but with the promise of hot sunshine to come. Until the 1960s, hop-picking was a major enterprise in this part of Kent at this time of year. Thousands of pickers were required to bring in the hop harvest. Many local people would have joined in. Lots more came down from London. And it was one of the seasonal jobs travellers or gypsies did to support themselves throughout the year. The money people made hop-picking set them up for the Winter – winter coats, school uniform, a bit put by for food and fuel. In some places, school terms were adjusted so that children could join in hop-picking and some children were kept off school even after they ought to have gone back!

Older people seem to have happy memories of hop-picking. It was something of a country holiday for Londoners who the rest of the year lived in what could often fairly be described as slums, breathed the kind

of atmosphere which earned our capital the soubriquet “the Smoke” and enjoyed so little sunlight that their children might be prone to rickets. My grandmother used to reminisce about her mother putting a meat-pudding on the stove first thing in the morning to cook slowly and give them a hot meal at the end of a hard day’s work in the fresh air. They took cold tea to drink in the hop fields. Ugh! By the time I was around, but still a child, on one of my few visits to the hop fields, we had a Thermos flask – which I’m afraid I broke, trying to find out why the glass at the bottom was iridescent by dropping a stone into it. I wasn’t popular. I personally have very mixed feelings about hop-picking. The vines raise welts on your skin if you aren’t careful and everything gets covered in a thick black dust. People had a laugh though, met others, got some exercise out of doors at what is generally a beautiful time of year and earned some money, often much needed. The best bit was the smell of the hops drying in the oast houses. There was an oast house right in our village and the aroma of hops drying was heavenly. When he was a boy, my father and his mates were allowed to spend the night in the oast house and roast potatoes in the fire. I’m not sure that many people even know what oast houses were for before they were turned into bijoux residences.

Hops are used to flavour beer. In fact, I think the technical difference between ale and beer is that beer has hops added and ale doesn’t. I could be wrong about that, however. It’s a remarkable thing to me that, after centuries of hand-picking hops, machines were brought in in the early sixties and then, after only a few more years, it all came to an end in this part of the world and all those thousands of acres of hop gardens were planted with other crops. I believe it was a matter of changing tastes and imports from Europe which killed the local market.

It is striking, isn’t it, that such a big thing in which so many people were involved has almost completely died out in living memory. There’s a lot more that could be said about how the mechanisation of agriculture, changing crops, the decline of local industries such as paper and cement, and improved communications (motorways, electric trains, now high speed) have entirely altered village life. The difference the digital revolution will make is yet to be disclosed. Maybe there will be some more contributions on these subjects – past, present and possible futures – either from me or from other contributors to the magazine. It’s up to you to supply some interesting copy. Roger.

Wildlife Update

During this interval in the publication of Nature Notes, we’ve been informally recording some of the flora and fauna people have noticed. Strangely, nationally we are told that this has been a poor year for butterflies, but there have been plenty in my garden. Maybe this is because there are plenty of nettles for the caterpillars to eat and buddleia to attract the adults. Conversely, there is supposed to be a glut of wasps and dragonflies this year, but I have seen few wasps (Hurrah!) and no damselflies or dragonflies, which is a shame. I’d never seen them before I came here, but there are usually a number in my garden at this time of year. They even land on you if you keep still. There are of course plenty of blackberries, though they came a bit later than usual. I received a very nasty sting from something in the woods, but I didn’t see what it was! RIK.

Also sparrows have been noticed nesting under solar panels round the village. Apparently this is becoming common behaviour all over the country.



**The
Children's
Society**

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING

This year's box opening will be held on Friday 14th October, starting at 9.30 am. As usual, the venue will be 204 Bush Road. If boxholders could bring their boxes to church on a Sunday morning I would be grateful, otherwise you can drop them in at my house or I am happy to come and collect them from you. Please let me know if you would like me to do this. Julia Wells (727424).



Tommy's Talking Points

If you can see this picture, all right, it is me between Wrotham and Otford. The men in the party finally got their act together and we have done the next section of the North Downs Way. We got to Borough Green and Wrotham Station early because Master hurried up at Maidstone and got from East to Barracks quicker than the National Rail computer thinks possible and we made a difficult connection. So we had to wait and met an interesting old gentleman who told us all about how Wrotham used to be a really big goods station with sidings where the car park now is and how they sent farm produce and building materials from the quarry to London by train. Now, I suppose, it goes on all those motorways of which Master thinks there are far too many around Wrotham. We also saw the best pub in Borough Green turned into a Sainsbury's. Shock, horror! We had to ask because we'd forgotten the way to Wrotham and then we had a bit of a job finding the NDW, but it was worth it. Now I could be let off my lead. Now I'm mature, I can have a good run free without fear of my running off. I'm so disdainful of motor traffic that I hang back whenever we approach a road. In one place, Master virtually had to haul me up some steep steps because I knew there was a road at the top. I don't want to be self-righteous, but Max would have just run into the road, given the chance.

So long as there were no livestock in the fields, I was free to bound around, sniff things out and do all the generally doggy things I like to do. They were tremendously impressed by the views across the Weald and up into the High Weald. Kent is a very beautiful county. It was a lovely day, not too hot like the rest of that week, and we met some other walkers. One man, on his own, we encountered near Otford said that he was walking to Cuxton. We had to admit that, while we lived at Cuxton, we had actually travelled half the way by train. I don't think the man knew much about Cuxton because he asked Master what the hotels there were like. Master did tell him that one of the attractions was St Michael's Church, but then remembered that it wouldn't be open because it was the Rector's day off and he was out for a walk. Nearly there, we got lost of course. I suddenly recognised the path and sped off ahead. Master thought it was odd that I should suddenly know the route because neither of us had ever been there before. Then they realised that they had somehow gone round in a circle and were now retracing their steps towards Wrotham. I thought we were going straight home, but there were yet more joys to come on the outward journey. Turning back, we eventually made Otford. The first pub supplied beer but no food on Mondays. They did, however, recommend a second pub where the landlady of the first pub takes her dog. Master and his friend enjoyed an excellent repast of tenderly cooked lamb and first class beer, while we all enjoyed resting in the shady garden and greeting other dogs with people. Back to the station and home. Master was talking to his friend on the wrong side of the tracks when our train came in. He can, after all, it turned out, run a little bit, even up and down steps and over a bridge. We just made that train and the connection at Maidstone and weren't too late home.

They thought Otford to Oxted was a bit far for the next section and were going to break the journey at Knockholt, but Knockholt Station is so far from the NDW that they've decided we might as well go the whole way to Oxted. I'm game if they are, but they'd better not get lost. On the current plan, I'll be able to tell you about that section too in my "Talking Points".

It was altogether a very good week because a couple of days later we went with the Mothers' Union to the seaside. It was the hottest day of the year so far and it was too hot for some of the people. The traffic to Birchington was very heavy and slow-moving. There was a tremendous traffic jam caused by road works. I asked why they call them road works when there is nobody actually working on the roads. We stopped for chips and fish and were asked if we were regulars. If regularity qualifies you for a discount, it appears, once a year isn't regular enough! We parked in the station car park. So I suppose we could have gone by train. Then off to the beach at Minnis Bay. The tide was out but coming in. (I knew that because the sand was dry). There were hundreds, if not thousands, of happy people there, individuals and families, myriads of joyful children. Now I know why he was singing *O I do like to be beside the seaside*, instead of the usual hymns while he washed up the breakfast things. It was a wonderful day out.

We panicked a bit. It was quite a large party and we thought that we had lost the children. It turned out that they had wandered off with their dog to find a beach on which dogs were welcomed instead of banned, unlike the place where we were. Wise children! Master said that they didn't have so many petty rules when he was a lad and you were free to do anything you liked so long as you didn't harm anyone else, but times change and not always for the better. So I sat curled up on the promenade in the shade and had quite a pleasant time while some of the humans (including Master) spent a lot of time in the sea. As the tide comes right in there, it's like a swimming pool, only more fun, fresh air and freedom. The water was as warm as bath water. Master says that one dog he had used to go in the sea when there was snow on the beach and come out with icicles in his fur. I'm not sure if I'd like that! Our only problem that day was that it was really too hot but, with some difficulty, the consequent problems were overcome and all was well that ended well. Thanks to all who suggested and organised our outing. We had a great time.

We had some excitement the other day. Master was mowing and I was playing with Raffle in the garden when our cleaner discovered a legless reptile in my bedding. We dogs were kept outside just in case it was a venomous viper, but, on the assumption that lizards are more common than snakes around here, Master then just shook out my covers. It turned out indeed to be a slow worm and Master put it out in the garden where he said it would eat the slugs. Poor slugs! At least, I have my basket to myself without any reptiles.

From my point of view, Otford to Oxted proved even better than Wrotham to Otford. The day had started off well when we saw a badger first thing in the morning in our local woods. I really don't think you are supposed to be able to make that connection at Maidstone East. This time we had to run down the steps as the train was coming in. It worked out well, however. Master's friend's train from London arrived at Otford two minutes after ours and we were able to set off straight away. We walked down the roads for a bit until we located the path through the fields and woods and headed westwards towards the border with Surrey. There were no sheep and the cows and horses were a long way away from the path. So I was allowed off my lead for nearly all the time. It was also a longer walk than last time, though how much longer is debatable. The guide said eleven miles. Master's friend's 'phone said seventeen and a half. I don't believe they got that lost. Master probably would have as his technique is just to keep going till he gets somewhere, whereas his wiser companion stops and checks maps and signposts and even the display on his mobile 'phone. I'm not sure, however, how much help a thick line drawn across fields, woods and contour lines really is. Master says that it is a sinful and adulterous generation that seeks for a sign, but I don't know what that means. I prefer the text about a voice telling you whether to go left or right. Anyway, I can find the way all right. I can sniff out where other walkers have walked. I just don't always stick to it. The weather was misty and cloudy. The beauty of the countryside is different in different conditions. It was cooler too and my coat got thoroughly soaked. The paths too were slippery. *Four legs good; two legs bad.* We met a few other people and dogs. One person misled us, directing us onto the path she thought we were looking for, rather than the actual one we wanted. All good fun, though. There were no signs at the border, no customs posts, so imperceptibly into Surrey and through the country park to Oxted.

No pubs with beer gardens and restaurant facilities near Oxted Station. They had to make do with milk and sandwiches from a filling station. Getting home by train was a trial: London Bridge; crowded slow train bound for Gravesend via Sidcup; change to a faster one at Dartford to Strood and walk home from there because Master hadn't the patience to wait 32 minutes for the Cuxton train. It took until after eight o'clock. It might have been faster to walk all the way back, which I could have done even if he couldn't.

It would have been quicker via St Pancras, but Master didn't want to take me on the tube in the rush hour. Someone asked if dogs were allowed on the Underground. Actually, at most stations they are compulsory. The signs say *Dogs must be carried on the escalator*. If you haven't got a dog, you can hire one from Transport for London. They keep special dog pounds at the tops and bottoms of the escalators where you get them. They are a special breed called an alstation. I know this must be true because Master told me.

Tommy, the Rectory Spaniel.