

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 2 nd October Harvest & Dedication Festival	9.30 Family Communion	1 Kings 8 vv 22-30 p345 Matthew 21 vv 12-16 p989
Sunday 9 th October Trinity 20	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 25 vv 1-9 p708 Philippians 4 vv 1-9 p1180 Matthew 22 vv 1-14 p990
Sunday 16 th October Trinity 21	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 45 vv 1-7 p731 1 Thessalonians 1 vv 1-10 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990
Sunday 23 rd October Bible Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Nehemiah 8 vv 1-12 p492 Colossians 3 vv 12-17 p1184 Matthew 24 vv 30-35 p993
Wednesday 2 nd November All Souls	9.30 Holy Communion	Romans 5 vv 5-11 p1132 John 5 vv 19-25 p1068
Sunday 6 th November 3 rd Before Advent	9.30 Family Communion	Amos 5 vv 18-24 p920 Matthew 25 vv 1-13 p994
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 2 nd October Trinity 19 Harvest & Dedication Festival	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 p689 Matthew 21 vv 33-46 p990
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	1 Kings 8 vv 22-30 p345 Hebrews 12 vv 18-24 p1211 Matthew 21 vv 12-16 p989
	6.30 Harvest Hymns of Praise followed by Harvest Supper	Deuteronomy 8 vv 7-18 p187 II Corinthians 9 vv 6-15 p1163 Luke 12 vv 13-34 p1045
Sunday 9 th October Trinity 20	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 1 John 3 vv 1-15 p1226
Sunday 16 th October Trinity 21	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen!	Isaiah 45 vv 1-7 p731 1 Thessalonians 1 vv 1-10 p1186 Matthew 22 vv 15-22 p990
Sunday 23 rd October Bible Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Nehemiah 8 vv 1-12 p492 Colossians 3 vv 12-17 p1184 Matthew 24 vv 30-35 p993
Sunday 30 th October 4 th Before Advent	11.00 United Parish Eucharist with speaker from the Gideons.	Micah 3 vv 5-12 p932 1 Thessalonians 2 vv 9-13 p1186 Matthew 24 vv 1-14 p993

Please make Harvest Gifts items in tins or packets with a long life so they can be distributed where they are most needed and used when they are needed.

Copy Date November Magazine: 14th October 8.30 am Rectory.

You will receive a warm welcome at any of our services and, of course, you are equally welcome at St John's and St Michael's whether you live in Cuxton or Halling. The 9.30 at Cuxton on the first Sunday of the month and the 11.00 at Halling on the third Sunday are family services.

On Thursday afternoons we have a Mother & Toddler service at Halling at 2.00.

Sunday School is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays).

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/rogerknight/myhomepage/newsletter.html> and

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/RogerKnight/index.htm>

Log on to our home pages for up to date information on what is happening in the parish. In addition to notices etc, other items such as Proceedings of the PCC and sermons are from time to time displayed on the web page. Daily Bible notes are available electronically if you send me your e mail address. These too now appear on the web page.

Bible Study: The next Bible Study is 7.30 pm on Wednesday 26th October (sponsored by MU) at the Rectory. All welcome. The next after that is October with MU. Daily Bible reading notes are now also available on the website or by e mail on request.

Confirmation 2006

We normally hold confirmations on alternate years in this parish. The other year we are invited to go to Higham. If anyone, therefore, is interested in Confirmation in the near future, I shall start classes after Christmas with a view to presenting you at Higham next May. Candidates are normally 12 years old or older (no upper limit). They may be seeking Baptism. They may have been baptised already and now wish to reaffirm their baptismal commitment and to receive the sacramental grace of Confirmation. If you are not yet sure, but want to study the matter further, you are most welcome to attend the classes and explore the faith with no obligation to be confirmed at the end. Roger.

Apology and Correction

Parish Web Pages

For some time we have had a rather unambitious web page

<http://hometown.aol.co.uk/rogerknight/myhomepage/newsletter.html>

This gives basic information about services and events in the life of the church plus contact details.

We now have an additional webpage <http://hometown.aol.co.uk/RogerKnight/index.htm> This gives a lot more information, including pictures, guides to the two churches, notes about basic Christian belief, etc. and daily bible notes. Log on to see what we have on offer.

The apology is that last month's magazine carried an inaccurate address and you would not have been able to log on directly. The above is correct, however. The new page is linked from the old and so are the web pages run by the civil parishes of Cuxton and Halling. They are all worth looking at.

Poverty & Hope

As usual in October, our charity collection and our profits from the Harvest Supper will go to the annual poverty and hope appeal – the fund set up by the Church of England to give 1% income of the rich to relieving acute and chronic poverty in other parts of the world.

Readers' Questions

The Church Survey I referred to in the August magazine indicated that people want more teaching and guidance from their clergy. Three areas were particularly mentioned: apologetics, the demonstration that Christian faith makes sense; guidance in prayer; and how to help other people to come to faith. If readers like to send in their questions on these and other topics, I will happily try to answer a selection of them.

From the Rector



Yesterday I watched a thought-provoking film with James Mason as the star. It was called "Spring and Port Wine." It was made in 1970, though I should say the action took place in the 1960s. It was a most odd film and the part played by Mason, the family patriarch, was not at all the kind of role you would expect him to take.

The scene was Bolton when the textile industry was still flourishing. Mason played the head of a lower middle class family with one adolescent son, one grown up son and two grown up daughters. They all lived together in a respectable terraced house. Watching this kind of film rubs in just how much things have changed in 40 years!

Mason's character was hard-working. He loved his family. He was rather starchy and old-fashioned. He had very high principles and he was religious. The film was a comedy as well as a social commentary. I felt that the fact that Mason's character had faith was used against him in the film, the typical media stereotype of the religious person as either ridiculous or tyrannical or both. Maybe that's my paranoia talking, but it would sometimes be nice to see the positive side of religion portrayed in a television programme or film.

The plot revolved around the fact that one afternoon one of the daughters refused to eat her herring for tea. She was grown up. Her mother was quite willing to cook her something else and there was plenty of food in

the larder. Unfortunately, the father decided to make this herring an issue of principle. He forbade his wife to give her anything else then and this herring was to be served up at every subsequent meal until it was eaten. His wife and children obeyed, though with a lot of mockery at first and then serious rebellion.

This issue of the herring pushed the family apart. The older daughter rushed into marriage and the man she was marrying decided he did not want to have anything more to do with her parents. The two sons decided to leave home, though they had no idea where to go. The younger daughter, who had refused to eat the herring, ran away and it became apparent that the reason she had gone off fish was that she was pregnant, though she was too naive to recognise the signs or to have seen the need to be careful even if she couldn't be good.

In the end, the younger boy gave the fish to the cat. He wouldn't say what he'd done and the old man abused his religion, as religious people are sometimes prone to do, to reinforce his authority and demanded that the boy swear on the Bible. The boy suffered an emotional collapse because he could not tell a lie on the Bible but was so afraid to tell the truth.

Truly a different world. By and large, today children seem to eat what they choose. It is unimaginable that parents would tell a grown up daughter what she must eat. Indeed, many homes seem to revolve around what the children demand. It is hard to imagine nowadays a wife and four children obeying a man if they thought he was wrong. It would hardly be regarded as a big deal these days if an older teenager found out she was pregnant. There would be no shame and, if wasn't convenient to have a child, she could always have an abortion, many people would think.

The film was made at a crucial point, when social attitudes were being transformed from traditional to modern. Films, books and plays all had a part in enabling the world to change in the way it has. Mason's character was held up as in some sense admirable, but also as old-fashioned, somewhat brutal and, to a degree, ridiculous.

Yet I had some sympathy with him. He was so strongly opposed to throwing away food because he could remember times when people in Britain were really hungry, when his own mother had tried to gas herself because she couldn't pay her debts and the bailiffs had come to take away her home.

In today's paper I read that 30% of the food we buy nowadays is thrown away. We decide we don't like it. We buy so much at a time that it goes off. We're so fussy that we throw it away as soon as it is past its best.

As Poverty and Hope reminds us, we are throwing away all this food in a world where there are still millions of people starving. Some of our food is imported from countries where the natives do not get enough to eat. Our trade policies ensure an abundance of cheap food and other goods in Europe and America at the cost of distorting the world market so that third world producers cannot get a fair price and a living wage. Tons of fuel oil are burnt bringing out-of-season fruit and vegetables to our tables. So we deplete scarce resources and pollute the atmosphere with exhaust gases to satisfy our desire for luxury and our greed.

Maybe we should all be more grateful for what's on our plates and eat it up without being so picky and demanding.

The Mason character in the film also told his wife not to make the girl something else because it was a family dining room, not a cafeteria. We have become incredibly individualistic. We eat at different times from other members of the family. We eat different food. We work different hours. We spend our leisure time in different rooms doing different activities. All this freedom is great, but we have lost the sense of belonging to one another. Surely families need to spend time together, to share interests, to face the world together and indeed to eat together. And that means a certain discipline. We eat some food which isn't our current favourite because other people are enjoying it and we don't expect the cook to do us something separate specially. Nor do we rudely reject what someone has lovingly prepared for us and microwave ourselves

something we like better. Neither do we turn away from family and friends who are speaking to us to answer our mobile or to text some friend who suddenly seems more interesting than Mum or Dad or brothers or sisters who are actually in the room with us.

There must be a place in the home for courtesy and politeness.

It must be right that we have moved on from the days when an unmarried daughter who got pregnant was told "Take that bundle of shame and never darken my doors again", but are we comfortable with a world in which tens of thousands of healthy babies are aborted and many of those who are born do not have fathers at home to share their upbringing with their mothers?

Mason's character was also a defender of standards in the arts. He loved what used to be called "good" music and poetry. He looked for truth in works of art and literature. Again we can rejoice that we have transcended the snobbery whereby people were looked down on for their bad taste, but do we really want to live in a world in which gangsta rap is regarded as in no way inferior to Handel and Tracey Emin is as lauded as Michelangelo?

The Church has traditionally regarded gluttony and all forms of greed as sin. If we have a lot of this world's goods, we are not supposed to over-indulge ourselves but to share with those less blessed. What God gives us is to be received gratefully, not thrown out with the trash.

The Church has traditionally supported family and community life as against selfish individualism. We are members one of another. [Indeed one of the problems facing

the Church today is that people no longer want to spend time with their heavenly Father and their Christian brothers and sisters in worship and acts of service. People want to do what they want to do.]

Christians have been hard on sexual sin, but the central aim has always been to uphold marriage as a sacrament in which a man and a woman give themselves to each other in love, caring for their children and wider family and also for the community in general. As the old prayer book forcefully puts it, the point of relationships is not *to satisfy men's carnal lusts, like brute beasts that have no understanding.*

The Church also has a history of supporting fine art. We believe that there is such a thing as good music, good painting, good sculpture, which points to an essential truth. Such art inspires and sustains souls.

So Mason's character was old-fashioned, unsustainable and ridiculous. The frustration of discovering that his beliefs were untenable in the modern world drove him to cruelty and brutality. That way cannot be the right way, but I don't believe the contemporary way, in which we put ourselves first and take what we want without regard for other people or concern for God's world, can be right either. So how do you maintain and proclaim eternal values in the modern world? In the film, Mason's family came back together because they still loved one another despite everything. They still had their differences and there were problems up ahead, but they knew they had to work at it because they were all family. Well, we're the human family and we've got to work through our differences and tackle our problems together because we are meant to love one another too. Roger.

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING

This year's box opening will be held on Tuesday 18th October, from 10 am - 12 pm, at 204, Bush Road, Cuxton. I would be very grateful if box holders could either bring their box here on the day, or bring it up to church and give it to me there. I can also collect boxes from people's homes if they let me know beforehand. Any help with counting would be much appreciated. Your reward will take the form of light refreshments. Julia Wells. Tel: 727424

From the Registers

Baptisms:

21 st August	Ben Lewis Claxton	Charles Drive
21 st August	Ellie Louise Mary McGrath	Chatham
4 th September	Rebecca Laura MacDonald	Pilgrims Road
11 th September	Katherine Emily Fryer	Rochester

Weddings:

27th August	Adam Psaila & Kerry Herbert	Cuxton
3 rd September	Martin Dopson & Ann-Marie Dobbs	Cuxton

Funerals:

24 th August	Douglas Maurice Henry Arms (65)	Station Road
25 th August	Walter Sidney Philp (96)	Ladywood Road

Special Heartfelt Thanks to all who have prayed for me and have helped me through the last three months. You know who you are. My thanks to a certain someone who insisted I made the appointment at the doctor's and was one of two friends who were both chauffeurs and minders. Not only that, one did the shopping and the other cooked me delicious meals. And others who made me laugh through the tears that I had sometimes. The wave on my way to Church in the mornings to give me encouragement. The visitors to the hospital. The offers of going on a rota to take me to the hospital. The cards, gifts and the phone calls and the encouragement from my family. Also I must mention the staff of the Medway Hospital for their care and kindness, also my doctor and the receptionist at Snodland Surgery. And first and last big Thank You to Almighty God who held me in the palm of His hand and sent me such good friends and strangers to see me through the last three months.

Marion Tate.

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Mary Morren drawn by Dave Maxwell, £5 to Shirley Crundwell drawn by Mary Morren
St John's Draw: £25 each to Mr Gardner (12) & Miss Partridge (43), £10 to Mrs Knell (31) – drawn by the Misses Thorne.



Halling WI

Our August meeting was uneventful although we had a good attendance for the "holiday" month. Mary presented our two oldest members with their birthday flowers, the pair of them, Mrs Violet Knell and Mrs Vi Head can notch up almost 190 yrs between them, well done ,you two. The July minutes were read and we didn't have any correspondence, we either get piles of the stuff or none at all. Money wise, we are still on an even keel, just. We haven't done any fund raising this year. Our speaker, Mr Graham Johnson, showed us some lovely unusual slides of Kent but most of us were familiar with most of the places, I personally would have liked a bit longer to look at the slides, Mr Johnson did whiz through them a bit quick. He was warmly thanked by Jean. After our usual cup of Yorkshire (tea) our speaker

judged our competitions. Flower of the month was won by Maureen Burren with a simple little white Japanese Anemone, the plague of some gardener's lives (it is very invasive), but I noticed Maureen bought a pink one from Evelyn the next day at our annual Ploughman's lunch. she must like them. This months letter, K, as an afterthought I just left my bunch of Keys on the competition table, and I won, I do tend to leave my keys all over the place, this time it paid off.

The day after our monthly meeting, once again Mrs Vi Head kindly consented to let us have our annual Ploughman's lunch in her garden. It is so enjoyable and relaxing, good company and good food, excellently prepared by Mrs Betty Head and her merry "men". We had a bring and buy and a raffle. We finished the afternoon off with a huge piece of cake and a cup of tea.

This month Halling W.I. was host to Malling District W.I.s for the Public Affairs and International meeting. It was decided to kill two birds with one stone, so we invited Phil Shorthouse to come and give us a presentation on the work of Blythwood Care as some of our more distant W.I.'s in the District don't know about the charity. As Phil was on holiday Mrs June Tottman and Peter ,her husband came in his place. Members were given an insight into their work, especially about the Christmas boxes appeal which Halling W.I. does as the norm at Christmas. It is hoped that they may get a few more this

year. All in all it was a very pleasant meeting with over 60 members attending. Halling members laid on a simple supper which was much appreciated by all. We as an Institute were very pleased with the result. Next District meeting, Canapés at Cuxton. Our next Institute meeting, we are going to learn a little bit about Gypsies and the like, Phyllis is in charge of refreshments and has threatened members with Hedgehog pasties, I don't think so, they are much too prickly, you'll get biscuits and like it, why not come and give us a try.

Phyllis C.

Cuxton WI



Our Members' Night was a great success, enjoyed by everyone. The Members' Committee had arranged the hall differently from usual and on arrival there was a great deal of activity while the various teams of six arranged their trays with the items they had made. There were a crafted box, a poem, a bloom, a painted card, a trifle in a glass and new words to the song "Happy Birthday." The presentation of all the trays was excellent and all had the theme of Celebration. Four of our District Reps came along as judges, giving up their valuable time for us, and awarded points for each item on the tray. While the judging was going on, we went through the business and reps' reports, which were all fairly brief. Then we had a quiz, supposedly easy, but a lot of the questions had us stumped!

During the tea break and social time, another competition was in progress, guessing photos of places in Britain. We were all able to see the trays and what points had been given for each entry. Jams and other items were on sale at the trading stall. After this, the results of the competition were read out by June Hanrahan, who organised the entire evening. The winner was a tray depicting a Celebration of Harvest, the second a Golden Wedding Anniversary and the third also Harvest. The raffle was drawn at the end of the evening and the visiting judges were thanked and given a flowering pot plant. It was definitely an evening with a difference, enjoyed by all, not least the "official" Committee, who had a well earned rest!

The Walking Group went to Leeds village on a beautiful day, starting with coffee in the pub, and walking through the churchyard, cricket ground and into Leeds Castle Grounds, through the village of Broomfield and back to the pub, where we had a very nice lunch. The next walk will probably be along the river from the Malta Inn, but no date has yet been arranged.

Some of us spent a very nice evening at West Malling WI at their social evening. We had a lovely supper and the entertainment by the Rowhill Follies was excellent and very funny, consisting of sketches, poems and a musical ending – a very talented group.

We spent an interesting evening at Halling WI, listening to a talk from a representative of Blythwood Care. They are just starting their Christmas Shoebox Appeal, the boxes to be taken out to Rumania. We were told about the running of the warehouse in Laker Road, Rochester and the problems they sometimes encounter abroad. Volunteers are always welcome to help sort the items and pack them for transportation. As usual, Halling provided us with supper and coffee and made us most welcome.

Next meeting: Thursday 6th October, Church Hall, 7.30 pm, Annual Meeting.

Ann Harris Cuxton WI Publicity.

Maidstone Day Centre

We had a kind letter thanking us for the support we sent to the Day Centre, tinned food and clothing collected between Easter and Whitsun this year. The Centre does a lot of good work for homeless people and donations are always welcome at the Centre, Lily Smith House, 15, Knight rider Street, Maidstone, ME15 6LP. www.homelessinmaidstone.org.uk

Quiz Evening

Saturday 22nd October 7.30 pm, Church Hall.

Teams 6-8, cost £5 includes supper. Please bring own drink. Enquiries and entries Rector 717134.

The Next Flood

(It Could Never Happen Here!)

In the year 2004, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in the United States, and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and over-populated and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans." He gave Noah the blueprints, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights".

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard but no ark. "Noah", He roared, "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?"

"Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah. "But things have changed. I needed a building permit. I've been arguing with the inspector about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbors claim that I've violated the neighborhood zoning laws by building the Ark in my yard and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to the Development Appeal Board for a decision. Then the Department of Transportation demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I argued that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it. Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to

save the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls. But no go! When I started gathering the animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. As well, they argued the accommodation was too restrictive and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space. Then the EPA ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood. I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how many minorities I'm supposed to hire for my building crew. Also, the trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union workers with Ark building experience. To make matters worse, the IRS seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species. So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least ten years for me to finish this Ark."

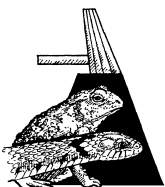
Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean, You're not going to destroy the world?"

"No," said the Lord. "The government beat me to it."

Adders in Decline

A call for your help to record Kent's Adders!

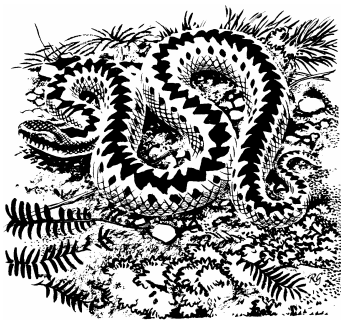
Concern about declining adder populations in Kent is growing and these concerns are being mirrored nationwide. The Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (KRAG) joined forces with The Kent & Medway



Biological Records Centre (KMBRC) in 2004 to highlight the plight of the adder in Kent. It is thought that like many species the adder is likely to be under-recorded, however KRAG firmly believe adder populations are declining. This year we are particularly interested in records from south Kent where knowledge of adder distribution is patchy at best, BUT all adder records will help to build an accurate picture of their whereabouts and understanding of their ecology.

As the UK's only venomous snake the adder has suffered from years of persecution. Although now the adder is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), its habitat and hibernation sites (hibernacula) are not protected; yet it is recognised as an indicator species for heathland & mire and lowland acid grassland, (e.g. Knole Park).

Early autumn is the perfect time to record adders as they shed their skin (slough) and often can be found basking close to their hibernaculum – in many cases knowing a hibernaculum site, is more useful than seeing the adder itself. Collecting adder skin can be incredibly helpful as they can be used for DNA analysis. Adder skins can be sent to KMBRC and will be sent for analysis.



Adder
(*Vipera berus*)

The adder (65cm length) has zigzag markings along the length of its back, but is sometimes mixed up with grass snakes, which are generally larger (120cm length) with two yellow patches at the back of its head. Grass snakes are often associated with water as they feed on frogs, but both snakes will eat small mammals. Male adders are generally greyer and brighter than the brownish females but both have the zigzag markings.

For more information on recording wildlife or the *Adders in Decline* project please contact the Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre, if you are interested in reptiles and amphibians and would like to know more about becoming a member of KRAG, then please contact the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group.

http://www.kentarg.org/adders_in_decline.htm
<http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/news.htm>

Line drawing courtesy of English Nature

Nature Notes August 2005

The morning of 1st was grey with some heavy showers, but by the afternoon there was some sunshine. I drove with Sam to the Leybourne lakes where the woodland and field areas were adorned with flowers. We took a narrow grassy footpath where meadowbrown butterflies hovered and where below the bank, gulls glided on the water or foraged on the island. A strange dog chased Sam into one of the lakes and he came out looking very bedraggled. He doesn't like going into water and will walk round puddles rather than through them. Late in the afternoon of the 2nd, a humid day, I watched, in the garden, a female emperor dragonfly zooming backwards and forwards across the pond. It was a beautiful creature. Much needed rain fell on the night of the 3rd. We climbed up into Mays Wood from Pilgrims Road on the 5th and some of the paths were carpeted in last year's beech masts; then we crossed Church Fields which were looking a little greener after rain. At Addington, the next day, I watched grey wagtails, as they hastened, with their tails bobbing, across the grass. I noticed that horse chestnuts were well formed. North westerly winds blew for several days and these kept the humidity at bay. Hawthorn berries were

turning red, while green spindleberries had formed. It was warm and sunny on the 8th when, in the morning, we walked in West Malling Country Park, where amongst the long straw coloured grasses, pink clover, meadow vetchling and birdsfoot trefoil bloomed. The skies, brushed with cloud, were blue. In the afternoon, we walked across Church Fields where elderberries were ripening.

We went to the Brookland Lake on the 10th where I watched a heron standing in the water by the reeds, coots foraging in the water and a pair of crested grebe with two chicks. Hemp agrimony, great willowherb, upright hedge parsley, field and hedge bindweed, common fleabane, tansy and privet bloomed. Elder and blackberries were ripe, hips and haws were turning red, spindleberries were turning pink and bright red guelder rose berries hung on slender stems. Green acorns hung on pendunculate oaks and green fruits of the alder were to be seen.

We went to Newenden on the 13th and I walked along the bank of the River Rother where Himalayan balsam

and purple loosestrife bloomed and quite strong westerly winds blew. It was a beautiful spot and we were able to enjoy the sunshine before dark clouds gathered and rain fell. The following day we went to Shoreham for cricket and I walked a path in the Darent Valley where, in the sunshine, the views were very beautiful. I found hoary ragwort, field bellflower, yarrow and toadflax. On some rough ground, I found knapweed growing in profusion. Just as the Kent Ladies' innings ended, the heavens opened and rain hammered down on the car which we had reached just in time. On the 16th, which was a beautiful day, we walked along the top path of Six Acre Wood where I watched a squirrel dart up a tree trunk and along a branch. The wheat had been harvested and put into bales which were golden in the sunlight. We crossed Church Fields where mallow bloomed and hawthorn berries and sloes were ripe. Wild clematis straddled the elder bushes. Some very warm days followed causing us to take early evening walks. On the 18th, in the garden, I watched a yellow and black dragonfly hovering over the pond. While walking in Six acre Wood I found unripe hazel nuts lying on the ground. Squirrels had been foraging.

Some dull days followed but the sun shone on the 21st when I went with the Countryside Group to Ranscome Nature Reserve. I found a variety of flowers, including bristly ox tongue, scabious, knapweed, black medick, wild thyme, yarrow, parsley, goosefoot and knotgrass. Rain fell on the 22nd. The 23rd was a beautiful, warm day when we went to Brookland Lake. Coots glided with their young on the sparkling water, dragonflies hovered over the grasses and a grey heron flew up from one of the fishing jetties. Hips and haws had ripened while willows showed signs of autumn. I found four ladybirds perched on the fading tansy blooms. The 24th was a very

wet and blustery day and it definitely felt like autumn. It was brighter the following day when we walked along the upper path of Six Acre Wood where a few herb robert flowers bloomed and lords and ladies displayed their berries on the banks. I noticed from the soil and stones that a badgers' sett was in use. Up in the fields wild clematis straddled the hedges. Some of it had seeded to become old man's beard. The early morning skies of the 26th were a clear blue, but cloud built up during the day and a northerly wind blew. Recently, I have been aware of early morning and late evening birdsong. On the 29th, while sitting in the garden on what was a beautiful day of very warm sunshine and clear blue skies, I became aware of two long-tailed tits perched on the topmost branches of a dead elm. It was their calls that alerted me to them. We went to the mirror smooth river in the late afternoon. I watched a cormorant fly up river then a heron fly up from the reed bed. In the evening, as the light was fading, I breathed in the warm evening air and listened to rooks cawing and blackbirds chattering. I went with a friend to Leeds Castle the next day. The lakes, where swans, Canada geese and gulls glided, glistened in the hot sunshine and purple loosestrife bloomed along the banks. The final day of the month was extremely hot with golden sunshine beaming down from an azure sky. We had a late afternoon walk across Church Fields where haws were red and mallow, white clover and toadflax bloomed. A few wood avens, herb robert and hedge woundwort flowers were to be found along the path of Six Acre Wood. Clouds began to form so that the evening became somewhat grey. Birds sang beyond the embankment.

Elizabeth

Summers



Dickens' Country Protection Society

Jeskyn's Farm, Cobham: The public may be aware that the Forestry Commission have acquired Jeskyn's Farm as a potential recreation site. The farm includes a large area of Grade 1 agricultural land and the Society is concerned about its loss from agriculture. The public are invited to comment on the project and should write

expressing their views to, The Forestry Commission, Forestry Centre, Pike Lane, Cranham, Upminster, Essex, RM14 3NS. Information may be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf6drin9>.

Kay Roots.

30th Strood (Cuxton) Scout Group CHEESE TASTING AND AUCTION Sat. 8th October 7.30pm at the Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton.

Come and sample at least twenty different types of cheese from various countries and then have a chance to buy them afterwards in our fun auction.

Nibbles also provided, but please bring your own wine and other drinks. Entry by ticket (£2.50 per person) in advance, please. Tickets from Matthew Wells 01634 727424.

August Delights

Some people think August is a dull month, not much going on, but not for us. We have had some lovely happy events to further our fellowship and to raise some church funds at the same time. There was gorgeous summer weather for Chris & Jenny Beaney's Coffee Morning and super Barbecue

Lunch one Wednesday when we all enjoyed ourselves so much we were still there for an afternoon cup of tea, while children played and others just chatted and took in the lovely view.

Next came the Cheese and Wine at the Rectory. Shame we couldn't sit out in the garden because of the damp evening but it was cosy inside where again the company was good, the wine flowed and the refreshments were delectable.

The following week we were all up at "The Pantiles", the home of Janice and Graham Ballard, for delicious cream teas, followed by home made Chelsea buns and lots of tea to keep us chatting. Graham's garden looked lovely in the pouring rain. We would have loved to go and walk round it in the sunshine. (Maybe another year!) But the rain didn't dampen the atmosphere inside where we were all made most welcome and after a lovely lot of chatting we all collected our raffle prizes and our goodies from the cake stall and toddled off home in the rain all the happier for Janice efforts of making us welcome and her seven hours of cooking the day before!

Lastly, just after the children were back at school, we gathered again at 73, Charles Drive, Cuxton, for coffee (Irish and English) and doughnuts, to catch up on the news, sell some of our various garden's produce and surplus goodies, helping us to raise some more funds to bring our total for all four events to c£576.

Thank you to all the hosts and hostesses. Thank you to those who came to support the events. Some people came to all. Some came to only one or two which added to the interest of all there because there was always somebody new to chat to. We even had one lady on two occasions who was here visiting from Letchworth in Hertfordshire. A special thank you to Malcolm for his tireless effort running a raffle at every venue.

We done everyone! We are already looking forward to next year. Shirley Crundwell, Social Committee.



Memories: How many people remember the scene pictured on the left? It shows St Michael's Church at the east end with a lot of bare earth and a retaining wall being built behind numbers 18 & 20 Rochester Road. As older residents know, these two houses were built on the site of the old national school. After the houses were built, there were problems about the drainage and extensive and expensive work had to be carried out to avoid the risk of collapse. The work was carried out by F Hayward and Son of Halling and you can just see one of their workman on the job. Son (Walter Hayward) was churchwarden at St Michael's and provided a good deal of the building work needed to safeguard the building. He installed the beautiful wooden ceiling above the organ at St Michael's in memory of his parents. The old Hayward's yard is now a housing development.

National schools were built by the Church of England when there were no state schools at all. You can see a plaque against the wall being built in the picture commemorating the old school. The old building was too small and was replaced for full time education by Cuxton Council School, which is celebrating its centenary next year. (Miss L Woolmer was the only person I knew to have received full time education there.) The old school was, however, retained. Overflow classes from Halling had lessons there. Mrs G Jeffries had memories of walking from Halling for cookery. The building was also used for music and dancing lessons and as a Sunday School until it was demolished to make way for two houses and these latter functions were transferred to the Church Hall. Roger.

The Church Hall – A New Roof Over The Old.



In July this year it became obvious that the church hall roof was seriously leaking rainwater through the ceiling and into the piano; which subsequently needed drying out with a hairdryer!. An examination of the roof's felt covering showed that the 25 year old felt had cracked at the site of the leak and elsewhere had become hard, with loose fixing nails, also splits and small missing pieces in various places, especially where overhanging trees had been touching the roof covering.

An internal inspection of the wooden structure beneath the roofing felt showed that two planks in the area of the leak were detached from the roof framework, thus needing repair. To plug the leak, felt in stock was used to bridge the cracked area, for a quick repair.

Towards the end of July advice was sought from Mr Mike Roser, a builder from Larkfield. He proposed that an industrial sheet roof – rather like the one recently installed above the Scout Hall in Bush Road – be used. Acting on the builder's advice Messrs Hardy Roofing supplies of Marden were employed to specify and supply the materials required. At this point it was decided that a dark green roof would be most suitable in the hall's wooded setting.

After receiving a gift aid donation of £2,000 from a church member, the work started on Monday 22nd August with Mike cleaning the moss off the roof in quite heavy rain, plus some site clearance and unblocking one of the roof soakaway pipes!. The roof covering materials arrived next morning, after the delivery lorry having an eventful passage up the church approach road!. Working everyday over the Bank Holiday weekend, Mike completed the work on Wednesday 31st; to the satisfaction of everyone who has seen the completed roof . Two unusual features are the black plastic edges to the roof sheets – to deflect rain downwards into the gutters and the securing of the covering sheeting to an existing wooden roof by some 2,200 special screws.

The little angel on the peak of the roof is Mike's idea and design "to look after the new roof" and is to become the new emblem for the Sunday School that meets in the hall below.

Malcolm, Hall Letting Secretary.