

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
31 st August Trinity 11	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 15 vv 15-21 p774 Romans 12 vv 1-21 p1139 Matthew 16 vv 21-28 p985	
7 th September Trinity 12	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 33 vv 7-11 p864 Romans 13 vv 8-14 p1140 Matthew 18 vv 15-20 p985	
14 th September Holy Cross Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Numbers 21 vv 4-9 p158 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 John 3 vv 13-17 p1066	
21 st September S Matthew	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP S Matthew	
	9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 3 vv 13-18 p637 II Corinthians 4 vv 1-6 p1160 Matthew 9 vv 9-13 p973	
28 th September Trinity 15	9.30 Holy Communion	Philippians 2 vv 1-13 p1179 Ezekiel 18 vv 1-32 p845 Matthew 21 vv 23-32 p998	
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	
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
31 st August Trinity 11	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 15 vv 15-21 p774 Romans 12 vv 1-21 p1139 Matthew 16 vv 21-28 p985	
7 th September Trinity 12	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ezekiel 12 v21 – 13 v16 p839 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010	
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 33 vv 7-11 p864 Romans 13 vv 8-14 p1140 Matthew 18 vv 15-20 p985	
14 th September Holy Cross Day	11.00 Holy Communion	Numbers 21 vv 4-9 p158 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 John 3 vv 13-17 p1066	
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 63 vv 1-16 p749 I Corinthians 1 vv 18-25 p1144	
21 st September S Matthew	11.00 Holy Communion and Stop! Look! Listen!	Proverbs 3 vv 13-18 p637 II Corinthians 4 vv 1-6 p1160 Matthew 9 vv 9-13 p973	
28 th September Trinity 15	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 18 vv 1-32 p845 Matthew 21 vv 23-32 p998	
5 th October Trinity 16, Harvest & Dedication Festival.	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	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	
Holy Communion Wednesday 9.30 Cuxton		Holy Communion Thursdays 9.30 Halling	
3 rd September	I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 Luke 4 vv 38-44	4 th September	I Corinthians 3 vv 18-23 Luke 5 vv 1-11
10 th September	I Corinthians 7 vv 25-31 Luke 6 vv 20-26	11 th September	I Corinthians 8 vv 1-13 Luke 6 vv 27-38
17 th September	I Corinthians 12 v31 – 13 v13 Luke 7 vv 31-35	18 th September	I Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 Luke 7 vv 36-50
24 th September Ember Day	Proverbs 30 vv 5-9 Luke 9 vv 1-6	25 th September	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-11 Luke 9 vv 7-9

Copy Date October Magazine September 12th 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>



The Matrix Trilogy

I've just watched these films again in the hope of understanding them. I thought I ought to try to comprehend what is generally considered to be a seminal cultural experience. Having seen them again, I will just say this. If you understand them, can you explain them to me, please?

It did make me realise that there is no point in dumbing down the Christian story to make it more popular. Millions of people have seen and enjoyed the Matrix (many of whom are the young adults we are trying to connect with) and are obviously not put off by what is extremely hard to grasp. For some it may be the special effects. Well, we in the Church can do better than CGI (Computer Generated Imagery). Real miracles happen in church.

For most, hopefully, it is the plot – complex as it is. And that is my second point. There are many parallels between the plot of the Matrix and the Christian story. At least some of these parallels are obviously deliberate. It is not surprising that a film with a similar plot to the Bible should resonate with human beings. The human story is the Christian story. The Christian story is true.

Basically, as I understand it, the story begins in a world very like our own. It quickly turns out, however, that the world our heroes initially inhabit is an illusion, a computer program, the matrix. The real world has been destroyed in a battle between men and machines. We made the machines but they mastered us and effectively they are now farming us. We are living a dream while they fatten us up to feed themselves, the machines.

In the Old Testament, human beings make for themselves false gods. They reject the path of freedom under God for what they think will serve their interests better – the worship of objects which they have made for themselves. The false gods obtain mastery over them. In the worst cases, they even sacrifice their children to them. Generally, the worship of gold and silver leads to selfishness, indifference to the plight of others, dishonesty and violence. In time the worship of false gods brings about the destruction and enslavement of their civilisation.

I hope that we are not so lacking in imagination that we cannot see how widespread in our world

today is the worship of that which we have made, of gold and silver, money, power, celebrity status. The worst false god of all is the worship of self. The consequences of human beings effectively worshipping what human beings have made are evident all around us in war and crime, family breakdown, the failure of social cohesion, chronic poverty, ignorance and disease. We are effectively enslaved by our desires for things that can never satisfy our needs. If we worship what we own, it effectively owns us.

Further, the Christian story would have it that this world of time and space, this material world, is not ultimate reality. It had a beginning and it will have an end. Our material bodies will die and return to the dust from which they came. Ultimate reality is God and what He has made to last for ever.

In the Bible, the false gods are generally portrayed as merely the work of human hands. Sometimes, however, they appear to have a separate reality and power. They are diabolical spirits. They act of their own volition. Then there is Satan, the fallen angel. Human folly and wickedness are mingled with demonic evil in bringing about the destruction of what is good. Smith and his many clones in the Matrix films is reminiscent of the devil and all his angels, Satan and his legions. There are also other apparently evil powers such as the Merovingian, the architect and the train man. There is a sense in which they all play their part in the plan for salvation, even though that is the opposite of their intention. This theme too runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. God is in control – even of the devil and his angels.

There is the Oracle, maybe reflecting the Word of God spoken variously by priests, prophets and wise men in different guises throughout the Bible – even through Caiaphas, the high priest who brings about Jesus' execution. Then there is Captain Morpheus who is like a prophet, John the Baptist, who prepares the way for the One who is to come.

Interestingly, the builders of the matrix soon discovered that a universe cannot function without choice. In the same way, the Old Testament describes God setting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with the possibility of making the wrong choice, of eating the forbidden fruit. The matrix builders manage to contrive a world in

which nearly everybody makes the wrong choice. The exception is the One who is to come. This makes me think of the Christian doctrine of original sin. We all have genuine choices, but all human beings have made the wrong choice. We have all rebelled against God. There is no health in us. We are all miserable offenders who have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. The only exception is Jesus, the One Who is to come, Christ Who is tempted in every respect as we are and is yet without sin.

A recurrent theme in the Matrix is that we make genuine choices, but apparently the outcome is predetermined. This is a recurrent theme in the Bible, too. The Matrix talks about one day understanding the choices we have made and their consequences. I suppose that is the equivalent of the Last Judgment, when we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God and give Him an account for what we have done with the lives which He gave us.

In the Matrix films, some human beings are citizens of Zion, outside the matrix itself. The comparison with the Christian story is obvious. Zion is Jerusalem. In the Matrix, Zion is set at the centre of the earth with the temple at its heart. Christian iconography conventionally represents Jerusalem as the centre of the earth. The Lord Himself is the Temple in the New Jerusalem which is the eternal dwelling place of the people of God. Zion in the Matrix reflects the Church. Superficially, Zion is a much less desirable place to live in than the Matrix, just as to many the Church looks a much less attractive place to be in than the world outside. The difference is that the citizens of Zion, Christians, citizens of Heaven, are free, whereas the inhabitants of the matrix, the world, are its unwitting slaves and ultimate prey. Citizens of Zion periodically enter the matrix to contend for good, but their rest and their safety are in Zion.

Just as the world seeks to destroy the Church in our world today, by indifference, ridicule and outright persecution, so those who run the matrix are determined to destroy Zion.

So, redemption? In the Matrix trilogy, a group of free human beings, citizens of Zion, have been

resisting the power of the Matrix and awaiting the One who is to come, whom the prophecies say will save the world. Many doubt and, just as in the Church today, there are sharp differences of opinion among the citizens of Zion about what should be done. In the trilogy, Morpheus, the John the Baptist figure, recognises Neo (anagram) as the One who is to come. Just like John with regard to Jesus, Morpheus has his doubts when some of what people believe about the Messiah does not appear to be fulfilled by Neo. Neo, however, exhibits supernatural powers. In one scene, people come to him for healing. The dead are (occasionally) raised. In particular, he can (with a struggle) overcome the demonic powers of the agents Smith.

A very important difference, however, from the Christian story is that Neo and his followers use a great deal of violence to conquer the powers of the matrix – the false gods, the objects human hands have made, the devices of the evil one. (Hollywood writers and producers are as prone to original sin as the rest of us and therefore struggle with the notion that self-sacrificial love is the only true remedy for all the powers of evil.) Remarkably, nevertheless, (Spoiler Alert!) Neo ultimately triumphs over the Satanic Smith by briefly taking Smith's nature on Himself and thereby overcoming all its power. This is what Paul says of Jesus: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (II Corinthians 5²¹). It is such a striking parallel that I cannot believe that it wasn't meant. Indeed Neo appears in a cross shape in a blaze of glorious light at this point in the film. Neo then disappears from view, leaving his people to live in the world which he has redeemed in a manner worthy of what he has accomplished. The battle with evil is evidently not over yet. It is hinted that Neo will return again. Is this or is it not the Christian story? The story we repeat every week in the Christian Creeds? If the story makes sense to you, what is your response to the story? How do you relate to Christ? Freedom or slavery? Life or death? Church or world? God or Satan? Heaven or Hell? It's up to you. You choose.

Roger.



Halling WI

Hi folks, I am back on the radar. So here is a report for the July meeting of Halling W.I.. It seems like a new trend as it appeared that we are having our icing first and then the cake last. Our speakers seem to come earlier and earlier. So instead of having our business first as we used to do, we let the speaker go first. Then they don't have to sit through all of our W.I. business, but we always start with Jerusalem how ever small we are in number. This month we had Mrs Allison. Oh, she must be going to talk about bread Allison's make posh flour. No, no, no. I got it all wrong. She was going to talk about Old Toys .Goodness me, did she bring back some memories. She started by telling us how toys must have come about - a little piece of wood, two nicks with a flint for eyes, one each for nose and mouth and marks for arms and legs, a simple dolly was made. Marbles, the children would roll clay from the garden into balls, mum would bake them in the oven and there was your little balls to play all kinds of games. We did just that when I was a child. The dirt in the hop garden was never wet enough to roll up. Yes we did spit on it, most unhygienic but it didn't do us any harm. When I was about five years old, I found my best toy and friend. It was a large white heavy flint stone in the perfect shape of a dog. One leg was a bit short. I found him in the hop garden and I dragged him everywhere. He was my pet. I think he ended up in one of my dad's rock gardens. Crazy paving paths and rock gardens were my dad's passion. Back to Mrs Allison. The most expensive dolls were made in Paris. Their faces were made of wax and their bodies were some times made of leather and were very expensive, but the Germans were the best doll makers in the world - best footballers at the moment. The next little dolls she showed us were the Dutch dolls, always sold without any clothes on and sold by their height - six inch ones, six

pennies, one inch one one penny. She did have one of those in a match box

Her next toy was a tatty very old little teddy, a toy most children and some grownups love to have. Of course the little golliwog had to come next. How we loved to eat our bread and jam so that we could collect the little golly badges. I would like as many shillings as I have made golliwogs. There is nothing sinister about them. She had snakes and ladders, invented in India, dominoes, invented in China and tiddlywinks, jigsaws and toy soldiers, books and fag cards. I was surprised Mrs Allison didn't have a whip and top but she did have a toy typewriter but not a toy sewing machine. It was a very enjoyable talk Mrs Allison was a lovely lady and she greatly admired Lily Hesketh's doll given to her in hospital when she was eight. Lily is now ninety four. That is an old dolly and Lily had also bought a lovely big golliwog for the competition.

After our refreshments, Jemma went on with the rest of our meeting as Margaret wasn't with us. Lots going on. We are not having a meeting in August, but a picnic in Ann and Jemma's garden 26th July, a cream tea, £4 per person, also in Ann and Jemma's garden. Because of the school concert (You will hear about that later) our ploughman's lunch has had to be moved to August. That will be held in Mrs Head's garden. A Fashion Show will be held at Aylesford 30th September. The District Conference is at Ryarsh 12th September 7.15pm. Other Correspondence: "Light's Out" Monday 4th August 10pm-11pm ,just have a candle to remember WW1.

Iris Relf from Larkfield judged the competitions. Lily won the old toy competition and there were quite a few entries. Ann Hayward won flower of the month with a little Marigold, there weren't many flowers this month. There you go, we are still up and running ... for now. Phyllis.

Halling School Play

A couple of months ago, I had a V.I.P. invitation from Raven's class at Halling Primary School to go to see the end of year play by year six. What a treat! I haven't enjoyed anything so much in a long time. It was so good I went back the next night for a second helping.

[Some of you will have seen pictures from the play in the exhibition in Halling Church for the Centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. Halling School had other exhibits – including a photograph of the the then headmaster, Mr Scholey. These blended in with all the other exhibits which other people kindly lent for the occasion.]

A LETTER TO THE TRENCHES.

The gist of the play was: When WW1 broke out, all of the village lads wanted to join up to fight for their country. The girls had to say goodbye to their boyfriends and then go off to the station to see them off. Our youngsters of today sang "It's a long way to Tipperary" with such gusto that it made me think how many of today's songs will be sung like that in a hundred years from now. The children will still be singing "It's a long way to Tipperary".

Back to the play. The village girls are sent to work in the ammunition factory, and whinged because they are paid three shillings less than the men, but are quite happy. Grace, one of the village girls, writes a letter to her boyfriend, Joe, who has gone to be a soldier. She gives the letter to one of the village boys to post it for her. He, being a bit of a scallywag, mislays it and then loses it completely. His friends decided he must have left it at his music teacher's house when he went for his piano lesson. So off they go to Mrs Schroder's house to see if they can find it. Mrs Schroder had been married to a German, long since deceased, but some of the village kids decided she was a spy and taunted the old lady. Mrs Schroder's character made quite an impression on me. A small little person with a white curly wig, she leant on a stick like a shillelagh and her accent was more Irish than German but at this point I have to apologize to Mrs Schroder, and I am sorry, Kian, I really did think you were a girl.

Back to the story. This next scene was a very poignant part of the play but also amusing. The soldiers were in the trenches, covered in mud, cold and fed up. They sang a funny little song with a line like this "We have got mud in our boots, mud in our hair, mud in our bedroll and mud everywhere". They wished that they could go home to have a bath with lots of bubbles. In the distance they could hear someone singing *Silent Night* in German. It was Christmas Eve when the guns stopped and they supposedly had a football match with each other. When all the children sang *Silent Night* together in German, it was a rare moment for me.

By this time Grace had gone to London to be a nurse. She still hadn't had a letter from Joe. The post arrived for the soldiers in France and at last Joe got the letter from Grace and it wasn't long before Grace got one back.

The school in the play arranged to have a fund raising fete in aid of the Red Cross and Mrs Schroder's choir was going to sing. The song that touched me in the finale was "We will remember them, we will remember them, long ago, but always in our hearts". Such lovely words. Yes, we had "Pack up your troubles," such joyful singing, brilliant acting (no prompter) and dancing, and excellent diction.

The hard work that must have gone into this production was amazing from caretaker to producers and everyone in between especially the children. You should be very proud of yourselves because I am proud of you. What a grand lot of children. Thank you Ravens for inviting me. You made an old lady very happy. Phyllis Chidwick.

Harris Family "Re-union"

I feel sure that many readers will remember the notes in this magazine earlier in the year about Sgt Thomas Harris VC MM and the proposed "re-union" of members of the Harris family. I am pleased to tell you that this meeting did take place, on April 26th at Halling Community Centre and almost 100 Harrises were present, many of whom had never previously met.

I am also pleased to report that a collection taken on that day has enabled us to send a cheque for £313 to the charity Help for Heroes. Jack Payne.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Not Just Names

As you know, we have been collecting the stories of those who died in the First World War and, where appropriate, publishing them in this magazine. This Angela Devlin's story about her grandfather. If anyone else has stories we could publish, we should be glad to do so. It is important to remember humanity behind war.

He was a submariner with the Royal Navy when he came home on leave in December 1917 for the birth of my mother (Ethel Povey). He went back to sea shortly afterwards and his submarine (H10) was lost in the North Sea on 16 January 1918. Although the German navy had a presence in the area at that time they never claimed it. The sad irony was that he should not have been on board because shortly after he left home a letter arrived notifying him of a promotion, and telling him to report to Gosport for training. My Grandmother was notified of his death in the usual way and was also informed of a memorial service, but was unable to attend because my mother was so young. She also received an enhanced pension based on the promotion that he was never aware of. My Grandmother always hoped that the submarine had been hit by a torpedo, rather than sunk by mechanical failure, as she thought that would have been a quicker death.

Then, just over 10 years ago, we heard that H10 had been found and an ex-navy friend of mine offered to try to find out if it was true. It wasn't. So he then contacted a friend at the Gosport Submarine Museum to find out if he had any new information. Unfortunately he didn't, but what he did tell us was that my Grandfather's name was not listed as being on board when she sank. We knew this was a mistake, so we sent him copies of all the documents we hold relating to the loss of the vessel, the memorial service, his pension etc., and on the strength of this he arranged for the history of the boat to be changed and so Ernest John Hunts name was added to the list of the dead.

Christian Aid

A Division of The British Council of Churches



Christian Aid Walk & Quiz

Thank you all those of you who supported this event. We collected £225.50 in this parish. Total for Strood area £409. This year's Christian Aid Quiz will be on Saturday 20th September 7 for 7.30 @???



Ride and Stride for Friends of Kent Churches

13th September

Cycle, run or walk round as many churches as you feel like. Funds raised split equally between our parish and Friends of Kent Churches. If you would like to take part, please obtain a sponsor form from the Rector. If not, please sponsor someone who is taking part.



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.

Just Teasing the Bureaucrats, Sarcasm Being the Lowest Form of Wit!

We were all surely grateful for the advice we received recently from the government about what we should do in hot weather. *Keep out of the sun. Keep cool. Drink plenty of water.* It might, however, be even more helpful to have some bureaucratic advice for all eventualities. So here goes. Try not to go out if the sun is shining or it is raining or the wind is blowing or it is foggy, misty or icy. On no account go out of doors when there is snow about. They even close schools for snow and every day of a child's education is so important that parents are fined for every day of unauthorised absence. If you are thinking of doing anything fun or exciting, there must be some health and safety reason why you should not be doing it. On the other hand, don't spend your life as a couch potato, slumped in front of a screen all day. If you are thinking of joking, remember that all jokes are potentially offensive to somebody. So a sense of humour could get you prosecuted for hate crime. If food tastes good it is bad for you. If you are enjoying that drink, it probably contains sugar or alcohol or both and is therefore forbidden. To be on the safe side, just do as you are told, exercise safely indoors, avoid eating or drinking or doing anything you enjoy and don't make jokes!

From the Registers

Baptisms:

13 th July	Dexter Dominic Streets O' Callaghan	Gravesend
3 rd August	Amelia Catherine Elizabeth Rose Anderson	Snodland

Thanksgiving for Marriage: Andy and Min Le Grove St John's

Betrothal:

19 th July	Gerhard Puelenger & Helen Swain	St Michael's
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Weddings:

26 th July	Reece Brosnan & Charlotte Ashlee Law	St Michael's
27 th July	Toby James John Payne & Jo-Dee Lofthouse	St Michael's
2 nd August	Shannon Ross Dyke and Kathrine Ellen Bryant	St John's

Great War Centenary Services

I should very much like to thank all the people who made these services a worthy commemoration of the awe full events of 1914-18. I want to thank the bishop and the archdeacon for their sermons and all those of you who brought things to share in the exhibitions. I especially want to thank Halling School for sharing with us the materials they had unearthed. I should like to thank Cuxton Parish Council for so beautifully printing the order of service for 3rd August and for arranging it to be distributed to every home in the village. I should also like to thank those people who were able to share the stories of family members and those of you who researched the lives of strangers in order to put flesh on those heroic bones. Some of your researches, of course, have raised more questions than they answered. Possibly more information will come to light as the years go by. We were honoured by the presence of our member of parliament, Mr Mark Reckless, and the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of Medway, Councillor and Mrs Raymond Maisey, also by members of our parish councils. Thank you, too, as always, for the contributions of servers and vergers, churchwardens and sidesmen, of choristers and ringers, flower arrangers and cleaners – all those who ensure that the practicalities of services work out. We never ever forget our appreciation of the people who arrange the catering on these occasions. And, not least, we thank all those who simply came along and took part. Without participants, nothing can happen. Roger.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Head (1), Mr Mitchell (69), Mrs Fuller (78) & Mrs Rogers (162) – drawn by Mrs Acott,
St Michael's Draw: £10 each for Mr Gates, Mrs Crewe and Mr M Hills – drawn by Mr Silverthorn.

The Medieval Chapel of St Lawrence, Upper Halling

Over 800 years old, this Chapel lies at the crossing of two Neolithic trackways, named in more recent times **Chapel Lane** and **Pilgrim's Way**. **St. Lawrence's Free Chantry** is a Norman building dating from between 1190 and the mid-1200s – roughly contemporary with Rochester Cathedral – and consisting of a simple chancel and nave. St. Lawrence's Day is celebrated on 10th August. It has been suggested that the Grade 2 Listed Chapel may be the oldest inhabited building in Kent. Its outer walls are of flint rubble and lime mortar, 3 feet thick and tapering slightly to the eaves. Under present floors is solid chalk, upon which the walls are built without foundation.

The main purpose of a Chantry was for Masses to be said for the dead, assuring their safe passage through Purgatory to Heaven. Patrons could also secure a measure of salvation for themselves by pre-paying Masses. Medieval times were steeped in existential fear, religious piety and polarity. Travellers and cattle- and sheep-drovers would have used the chapel for shelter. A member of Kent Archaeological Society has suggested that a **stone cross** would have marked the centre of the crossroads by the chapel. The main entrance is thought to have been in the Southern wall, accessible from the crossroads.

The Eastern end of the **chancel** held the **altar** where present Nos. 3 & 4 Chapel Houses share a vertical dividing wall. Present Nos. 2 and 1 form the **nave** to the West of the chancel arch, now the wall between Nos. 2 and 3. At the **East end**, looking from Pilgrims' Way, the top of the central window of what was a typical three-fold altar light is still visible. The 1826 sketch by **William Twopeny** already shows how these were crudely obscured by two rectangular windows. **Lancet windows:** those referred to in *The Lost Chapels of Kent* by Alex Vincent as being on the South wall are no longer visible, subsumed into first floor windows. However, an original **medieval lancet** window has recently been uncovered inside the North-West nave in No. 1, obscured on the outside by an 18th century scullery chimney. The outline of its corresponding lancet is visible to the rear of present No. 4. High on the **Western gable** an intact **6-foot lancet** window awaits re-opening, obscured for decades and rendered over by Blue Circle Cement, the company which owned the Chapel until its conversion into 5 dwellings in 1985. The present kitchen extension of No. 1 was the pay office for Blue Circle's Houlder / South Hill Quarries until its closure in the 1920s.

St Lawrence's Chapel predates Temple Manor, Strood, and is roughly contemporary with the Bishop's Palace in Lower Halling. St. Lawrence's is one of a **trinity of chapels** that were served by shared chaplains over the course of many centuries. It measures 50 x 27 ft, and is of uniform height end to end, an archetypal Norman 2-cell structure similar to its sister chapels of **St Benedict, Paddlesworth** outside Snodland and **Dode Chapel** of unknown saint (measuring 45 x 17 ft) on Wrangling Lane near Buckland off the Cuxton - Luddesdown valley.

The Font fallacy: Baptismal fonts traditionally belong in the 'secular' nave section of church buildings that form roughly two-thirds West of the chancel arch. **No remains of a font** have been found in the nave (Nos. 2 & 1). The solid chalk ground under oak floors installed in No. 1 in 2006-7 show no trace of a font-base nor of any **rumoured tunnel** connecting the chapel with the ex-Black Boy pub opposite. What Alex Vincent and others mistakenly call a font is the **piscina**. This does still exist intact in No. 3 - a small trefoil niche containing a shallow, round depression in the Eastern wall to the right (South) of the altar position. A Piscina is used for the washing of communion vessels by the priest or chaplain.

The chancel arch is likely to remain intact, encased in the dividing wall between Nos. 3 and 2. A large 17th or 18th century fireplace in No. 3 suggests that this arch was filled in rather than demolished. A wooden **rood screen**, long gone, would have separated Medieval populace from priest under the great divide of the chancel arch, separating the secular from the spiritual.

A wheelwright's workshop occupied Nos. 1 & 2 of Chapel Houses for many years during the 17th and 18th centuries, having an opening in the South wall large enough to accommodate wagons (illustrated). No. 3 (Chancel) was already inhabited during this time by the wheelwright.

No **burial ground** has been unearthed around the Chapel.

Taking a ruler to Ordnance Survey maps of the area, it becomes apparent that St Lawrence's Chapel lies on more than one **ley line**.¹ For example, one runs from St. Lawrence's Chapel North-Eastwards through **Rochester Cathedral, Hoo St Werburgh** church and onwards through a church near the Essex coast. To the South-West, this line runs through St Lawrence's Chapel, the Neolithic **Coldrum Stones**, Dryhill Neolithic hill fort near East Grinstead onwards to Harrow Hill (another hill fort) near Worthing.

These notes were received for our celebration of St Lawrence's churches at Upper Halling on 10th August. If you have any more information on the old chapel or the church which stood where the Jubilee Hall stands now, we should be glad to have it. The thinking behind chantry chapels was one of the reasons for the Reformation. The mediaeval Church had come to believe that only a minority of Christians died in a sufficient state of grace to go straight to heaven. Non-Christians would go to hell. The rest of us, it was believed, would be sent to a place called purgatory (not unlike hell) for as long as it took to make us fit for heaven. This process could be speeded up, they thought, by prayers or masses said on our behalf, good works, etc.. The Reformation recovered the biblical truth of the matter. It is by God's grace alone that we get to heaven. What we have to do is to repent and believe. Christ has done everything necessary and, if we have faith in Him, we shall spend eternity in heaven with God. Nothing else is required. Goodness on our part follows from our being saved by grace through faith. Good works on our part do not earn our salvation. They are a consequence of the salvation which God freely gives us through faith in Jesus Christ. Our Baptism is a sign and seal of this truth.

HELP!!!!

At C.C.C. we need help to meet up 1 day a month, for 2/3 hours on a rota system, to "Clean Cuxton Church", on a day and time to suit. All equipment is supplied. Ever Hopeful!! If you think you can help please contact Jeanne Harris on 722773 or email 4jeannetry@gmail.com for any information. Thank you.

Nature Notes July 2014

"God's Grandeur" Gerard Manley Hopkins.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with
toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell; the
soil

The first day of the month is beautiful with blue skies and golden sunshine. Jays frequent the garden at regular intervals. Birds aren't singing for they are renewing their feathers. In the afternoon, when I am in the garden, a feral pigeon comes quite close to me. The evening skies are clear. The 2nd is a sunny, warm day which I spend at Rodmersham for one of Kent Schools' cricket cup finals. Along the route, I observe plenty of wild flowers adorning the verges: meadow cranesbill, ragwort, mallow, ox eye daisies, marjoram, rosebay willowherb, daisies, and buttercups. The cricket ground is beautiful and I hear sparrows chirping in the hedge bordering a farmer's field. A green woodpecker swoops over the ground, calling as it flies. The sun shines brightly on 4th. The field mice living under the heather in the front garden feed on bird seed. They are a delight to watch as they dart out from the heather stems to collect the seed. The day becomes very hot. In the afternoon while I'm in the garden, three jays pay a visit to the feeders. Rain is falling on 6th when I walk to church but the skies have cleared by the time I am coming home. The evening sky is a pale blue but is also adorned with high grey and salmon pink clouds. The 8th is another beautiful day when I take Murphy to "The Nook", kennels near Cobham which he loves. Scabious adorns the verges along the lane leading to our destination. On my return, I drive to the river by the leisure complex. As I walk along the path, the banks are full of wild flowers: sweet peas in a glorious pink, mallow, marsh mallow, hedge bedstraw, lady's bedstraw, viper bugloss, poppies, umbellifers, lucerne, birdsfoot trefoil, bindweed, marjoram, ragwort. Grey clouds bank up in the sky during the late morning and early afternoon when there is some light rain. The evening is overcast. The next day, while in the garden, I watch the caterpillars of cinnabar moths munching away on

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward springs-
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings.

ragwort and plantain. The 10th we go to Rodmersham for another schools cricket cup final but the weather is not fine but grey and chilly and it remains overcast all day. Later, as we go home, driving rain falls which is not at all pleasant. It feels like autumn which has already been mentioned in a newspaper article. On the evening of 12th there are rumbles of thunder. Rain falls during the night. The 14th is sunny and warm when I walk round the lake at Bluewater. The flowers are beginning to fade and tall grasses have become straw coloured. Cob nuts will soon begin to ripen. Horse chestnut trees have developed rust on their leaves. The 15th is another beautiful day. I walk round the lake again with Murphy. It is hotter than yesterday. Burnet moths, meadow brown butterflies and damsel flies hover over the grasses. After some rain, the wild flowers have begun to thrive again—knapweed, lucerne, goat's rue, bird's foot trefoil, clover, umbellifers and ragwort. The afternoon remains sunny and warm. Three very hot days follow. Then on the evening of 18th, the skies become yellow as the setting sun lights up the grey clouds. Lightning flashes across the sky and thunder rumbles. The storm crashes overhead. Murphy does not like it. A storm occurs again on 20th. Five hot days follow when we need to seek the shade, especially Murphy. In the afternoon of 26th, I watch great tits hopping among the lilac branches and a pair of collared doves feeding on seed. Then a blackbird hops across the patio. The 28th is bright but grey clouds gather as we drive to Bluewater to give Murphy his walk round the lake. A fresh breeze blows. The once green grasses have become straw coloured; wild flowers bloom but not in such profusion. The sun shines brightly in the afternoon when a beautiful jay comes into the garden. The skies become grey again in the evening and some rain falls. The early morning of 29th is grey but

eventually the sun breaks through to give a beautiful day. I spend some time in the afternoon out in the garden. I look up into the blue sky to see it brushed with thin white cloud. I watch a pair of collared doves as they feed on the seed. The sun is hot in the early evening. Later, all is calm. I water the flowers before darkness falls. The 30th is another hot day with hardly a breath of wind. On the last day of the month I visit,

with a friend, the gardens at Great Comp. We traverse the winding grassy paths where the borders are aflame with the beautiful colours of the many flowers. Tall trees bring much needed shade. There is an indescribable peace and tranquillity as we sit along the way drinking in the beauty of nature, God's creation. Elizabeth Summers.

Mysterium Lunae – The Mystery of the Moon.

Fulget Ecclesia non suo sed Christi lumine

The church shines not with its own life, but that of Christ.

S Ambrose of Milan.

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.

An Excerpt From Next Quarter's Bible Notes

October 19th

Genesis 28 vv 20-22

Back to Jacob. Everything Jacob expects to receive is the gift of God. Having received everything he has from God, as God's unmerited blessing, as God's grace to him, Jacob promises to give back a tenth of what God has given him to God. This is the first reference in the Bible to tithing. Does a tenth seem painfully small? After all, we owe absolutely everything to God. Offering back a tenth doesn't seem like much. On the other hand, if we think about it, giving God £10 out of every £100 of our income might seem quite a lot. We would be putting £15, £20, maybe £50 some of us, in the collection plate each week or otherwise giving away those sorts of sums to missions or charities. £20 in the church collection, a lot of money? How far does £20 go in a pub or restaurant or when we're out shopping? How far do you get on a train journey for £20? Is £20 really so much? If God is worth less to me than a return to London via the high speed train, can I really continue to maintain that He is the most important thing in my life? We might well say that feeling obliged to give a fixed proportion is legalistic and more Jewish than Christian, more OT than NT. We might say that our taxes now pay for a lot of things that in the past would have been paid for by charity – education, health care and welfare, for example. You might ask whether you should tithe your net or your gross income. If you are living on a pension or benefits, you might wonder whether you should be giving any of it away. You might feel that giving your time and talents pays a proportion of your tithe. As Christians, we probably shouldn't be legalistic, assigning a fixed proportion of our income, the same proportion of everyone's income, as an obligation. We wouldn't want to forget, however, that *it is more blessed to give than to receive* or that *God loves a cheerful giver*.

I would make two practical points. One is, that short of a miracle, our parish cannot survive on its current income. Not only are we not contributing our share to the diocesan budget, we are relying on the diocese to pay the rector's stipend instead of meeting it ourselves as we are supposed to. Are our members really giving as much as we ought to give? Answers in prayer! My other point is that the Church is a good cause! When we decide to hold a collection for or give money to a charitable cause, why do we so seldom choose the Church as the beneficiary?

Hymn Composers 1

Ralph Vaughan-Williams 1872 - 1958

Having written previously about fifteen or so hymn writers, I felt it was time to turn my attention to the writers of music associated with our hymn books. Ralph (pronounced Rafe) Vaughan-Williams sits at the very point where congregational hymn-singing finishes and the worship song begins. He is presently the last of the big-melody, multi-

sing writers of church music and one who was determined to bring pure English music to everyone. Writing in "The Vocalist" in 1902 he stated, "*What we need in England is real music, even if it be only a music-hall song.*" He was a great setter of English poetry having vocal music as a large part of his output. England was known in musical circles as the "Land Without Music" because there have been very few good English composers between Purcell (1659-95) and Elgar (1857-1934). Of course, there had been some quite well-known composers between them, but not in the same big-hitting league. V-W, although having a Welsh-sounding name, was purely English and received his initial training at the hands of the Victorian founders of the English musical renaissance, becoming a key British composer of the twentieth century. His influences came from diversity, varied sources from English folk song to Tudor part-writing, composing in many genres and exploring his distinct musical style until well into his eighties. We find him in the hymn book composing the music for such favourites as 'For All the Saints Who from their Labours Rest' and 'Come Down, O Love Divine' as well as arranging some traditional English melodies to other hymns like the harmony to 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.

Born into an affluent, professional family and educated at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music (RCM), he firmly believed in 'music for everyone'. His energies were devoted not only to the high art of symphony writing but also to the more everyday music such as hymn writing and folk music. His *English Folksong Suite*, *Fantasia on 'Greensleeves'* and *The Lark Ascending* are influential of the English "pastoral" style and indicate a knowledge of nature and the countryside, but he lived much of his time in London and his symphonies and film music are comparable with any 20th-century European composer for technical skill and challenge. Vaughan-Williams' output was prolific, but his creativity matured slowly as he constantly revised his work until he was entirely satisfied. He trusted the opinion of his good friend Gustav Holst on current musical projects. Although acknowledged as an agnostic, he did use Christian ideology and morality as the basis for many works including his hymn scores and for his opera, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, based on John Bunyan's novel. Whilst at the RCM he received good grounding in contemporary German music through his teachers Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood. He also found access to the earlier traditions of the English Folk-song tradition and early music while he was engaged in editing the English Hymnal, and he blended these styles and techniques with that of the 16th century, of the Baroque of the 17th and that of French orchestration as practised by Ravel. During his long life, V-W composed in almost every genre and was active right into his eighties when the creativity of many other long-lived composers has dried up. He is regarded as one of the most important composers of the 20th century making a huge contribution to the development of Classical music. Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst and numerous others owe him a particular debt, as do film composers including Jerry Goldsmith. Of particular interest, apart from the hymns mentioned above, are his arrangements of "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" (Lasst uns erfreuen), "Father hear the Prayer We Offer", "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say", the Sussex Carol, "Jesus, Good above all Other" and, possibly the most famous of his use of traditional English folksong as a hymn tune "Who would true Valour See" from the text of John Bunyan and a good choice for a school hymn.

Vaughan-Williams is my favourite composer because he captures the Englishness of a tune and often creates a musical picture of the English landscape or what can be seen within that landscape. The "Lark Ascending", for example, is exquisite with its weightless portrayal of the lark in the air which eventually disappears into the distance. Walk up onto the Downs on the Cuxton side overlooking Upper Bush when the skylarks are nesting and you will hear and see his inspiration for this piece for violin (the lark) and orchestra (the setting). The score for the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1949) under the title *Sinfonia Antartica* places you in the middle of a white landscape in which stormy and changeable weather can be experienced, as well as the dramatic foreboding of what is to come. Westminster Cathedral made the first liturgical use of his Mass in G minor which makes use of 15th century style many voice writing and his *Fantasia* on a theme by Thomas Tallis uses a melody encountered when editing the English Hymnal from Archbishop Parker's Psalter of 1567. Ralph Vaughan-Williams uses sweeping themes against wonderful harmonies but he is not stuck in one genre but uses what has gone before in a modern and well-constructed manner. JGB.

Date for your diary: By popular request, the Bexley Ukulele Music Society (BuMs) is returning to the church hall by popular request on Saturday, 27th September, 2014 for another fun evening. Just come along and join in.

STAMPS – you will be interested to know that we delivered a massive 5.5 kilos of stamps to OCD UK in June and these were greatly received. The collection goes on so please keep your used, or unused, stamps coming in. Thank you – JGB.