

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
30 th August Trinity 13		9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 p182 James 1 vv 17-27 p1213 Mark 7 vv 1-23 p1010
6 th September Trinity 14		9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 James 2 vv 1-17 p1214 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010
13 th September Trinity 15		9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 p737 James 3 vv 1-12 p1214 Mark 8 vv 27-38 p1012
20 th September Trinity 16		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
		9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 11 vv 18-20 p770 James 3 v13 – 4 v10 p1215 Mark 9 vv 30-37 p1013
27 th September Trinity 17		9.30 Holy Communion	Numbers 11 vv 4-29 p147 James 5 vv 13-20 p1216 Mark 9 vv 38-50 p1013
Tuesday 29 th September Michaelmas		7.30 pm Holy Communion Preacher: The Archdeacon.	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064
4 th October Trinity 18 Harvest & Dedication Festival		9.30 Family Communion	Genesis 2 vv 1-25 p4 Mark 10 vv 1-16 p1014
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
30 th August Trinity 13		11.00 Holy Communion, Holy Baptism & Marriage Blessing	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 p182 James 1 vv 17-27 p1213 Mark 7 vv 1-23 p1010
6 th September Trinity 14		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Exodus 14 vv 5-31 p71 Matthew 6 vv 1-18 p970
		11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 James 2 vv 1-17 p1214 Mark 7 vv 24-37 p1010
13 th September Trinity 15		11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 p737 James 3 vv 1-12 p1214 Mark 8 vv 27-38 p1012
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Exodus 18 vv13-26 p76 Matthew 7 vv 1-14 p971
20 th September Trinity 16		11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Jeremiah 11 vv 18-20 p770 James 3 v13 – 4 v10 p1215 Mark 9 vv 30-37 p1013
27 th September Trinity 17		11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Numbers 11 vv 4-29 p147 James 5 vv 13-20 p1216 Mark 9 vv 38-50 p1013
4 th October Trinity 18 Harvest & Dedication Festival		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Joshua 3 vv 7-17 p218 Matthew 10 vv 1-22 p975
		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 2 vv 1-25 p4 Mark 10 vv 1-16 p1014
		6.30 Harvest Praise Jubilee Hall followed by Harvest Supper	Joel 2 vv 21-27 p913 I Timothy 2 vv 6-10 p1194 Matthew 6 vv 25-33 p971
Holy Communion at Cuxton Wednesdays 9.30 am		Holy Communion at Halling Thursdays 9.30 am	
2 nd September	Colossians 1 vv 1-8 Luke 4 vv 38-44	3 rd September	Colossians 1 vv 9-14 Luke 5 vv 1-11
9 th September	Colossians 3 vv 1-11 Luke 6 vv 20-26	10 th September	Colossians 3 vv 12-17 Luke 6 vv 27-38
16 th September S Ninian	I Timothy 3 vv 14-16 Luke 7 vv 31-35	17 th September	I Timothy 4 vv 12-16 Luke 7 vv 36-50
23 rd September Ember Day	Ezra 9 vv 5-9 Luke 9 vv 1-6	24 th September	Haggai 1 vv 1-8 Luke 9 vv 7-9
30 th September S Jerome	Nehemiah 2 vv 1-8 Luke 9 vv 57-62	1 st October	Nehemiah 8 vv 1-12 Luke 10 vv 1-12

Copy Date October Magazine September 11th 8.30 am Rectory



It Is Very **Meat**, Right and our
Bounden Duty.

We had some fun with puns and wordplay, a linguistic safari if you like, at St Michael's on Whitsunday (Pentecost).

Unwanted e mails are classed as spam. Before e mail, the only kind of spam I knew was pink. It's something you put in sandwiches or make into fritters and fry. Tommy and I often share a tin of spam for tea. It's chopped ham and pork. If you have a clever computer or ISP, it sorts out the spam e mails from the rest for you, so that you aren't troubled by them. Unfortunately, however, they're not always that clever and sometimes e mails you actually want to receive are classified as spam and disappear into the aether (or onto the hard disc, maybe). Emails you want which are wrongly classified as spam are known as ham. (Maybe they take the pork out of them!) If you get in touch with the relevant ISP, you can get them to stop classifying the e mails you want as spam by submitting a ham report. If you use e mails at work, you may need to do this in order to bring home the bacon.

We got onto a much wider discussion about all forms of communication – the spoken word, letters, texts, social media and the telephone. They all have their good points and bad points. You can't always get to see the people you want to talk to. Writing a letter and posting it takes time and the price of stamps is extortionate. Social media can be overwhelming and are sometimes used for bullying. Texts are very short. It's too easy to be rude by e mail. The telephone can be a nuisance if people ring up at awkward times. Having said all that, communication is a good thing. Indeed it is essential to all human relationships and we should welcome opportunities to be in touch with other people and

to share. There is a lot to be said for eating together and for prayer and for Holy Communion.

Then we started thinking about what other kinds of cold meat there are and if they have any relation to communication. For example, cold cuts are very nice on the sideboard when you are having high tea, but cold calls are an odious intrusion at any meal time. We went through brawn, salami and chorizo. I had a momentary longing for a saveloy which I don't think I've had since I was a child at my aunt's house at Bromley. None of these was very promising in respect of communication. But then we came to tongue – basic to human speech. On the day of Pentecost, *there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* God Himself speaks to us by His Word Jesus, the Word made flesh, and through the Bible, which He *caused to be written for our learning.* With our tongues, like the apostles, we proclaim the Word of God as the Spirit gives us utterance.

We sing God's praises with our tongues. We may, by God's grace, speak words of wisdom to others or words of consolation. St James warns us of the power of our tongues to do evil as well as to do good. *Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.* On the contrary, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, our words will be words of blessing, blessing the Name of God and a blessing to the people we speak to (or write to, or ring up, or text or e mail or whatever you call it when you post a message on your message board.) Roger.

*It is very **meet**, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.*

Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

This will be on September 12th. The proceeds are divided equally between our parish and Friends of Kent Churches who help all the churches in Kent. The idea is to visit as many churches as you can – walking or cycling, though it has been done on a moped! If you can't take part, please sponsor someone who can. Sponsor forms and further information from the Rector.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Where Do You Stand on Baptism or Christening</u> (which is another name for the same thing)?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Church's Baptism policies seem to come in one of these four categories or a combination of them.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strict/Strict Baptism Policy</u></p> <p>Baptism is extremely important. When you are christened, you become a member of God's Church. You undertake to follow Christ to death if necessary. You are an heir of eternal life. You are baptised because you have received God's gift of faith and, by His grace, you offer your life back to Him.</p> <p>If you are not christened, you have no right to expect the privileges of church membership, such as getting married in church or being buried in consecrated ground. You cannot expect to go to Heaven when you die.</p> <p>Because Baptism is so important, the Church should not baptise people who are not totally committed. If babies are to be baptised, the Church should only christen the babies of committed Christian families who make a plausible undertaking to bring up their children to belong to the Church.</p> <p>A strict/strict Baptism policy may build strong churches, but it seems to consign most of the human population to outer darkness.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strict/Nice Baptism Policy</u></p> <p>Baptism is extremely important and only truly committed people should ever be baptised. Babies should not be christened if their parents are not church members and are not willing to commit themselves to belonging to their local Church.</p> <p>However, God is nice and the Church is nice. So, although Baptism is important, surely all the privileges that come with Baptism should be available equally to the unbaptised. Of course, anyone can be married in Church. Anyone can be buried in consecrated ground. Most people (if not everyone) will get to Heaven, whether or not they have been baptised or have made any Christian commitment at all.</p> <p>It's hard to see what difference Baptism or Christening makes to people who have a strict/nice Baptism policy. If Baptism makes no essential difference to anything in this world or the next, why withhold Baptism from those who do not appear to be sufficiently committed? Why indeed baptise?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Nice/Strict Baptism Policy</u></p> <p>Baptism is extremely important and necessary if anyone desires to be a member of God's Church, with all the responsibilities and privileges that church membership entails. Heaven is where baptised Christians go when they die.</p> <p>Because Baptism is so important, the Church ought to baptise anyone who asks to be baptised and to baptise all the children who are brought by their families to be christened. The task then is to nourish people in the faith in which they have been baptised and to support them in growing up into the full stature of Christ.</p> <p>A nice/strict Baptism policy treats Baptism with the utmost seriousness, whilst welcoming everybody. The problem is that all too often, Baptism is the last the Church sees of the people she baptises and there is often very little evidence of any growth in faith, which can seem to make a mockery of the whole thing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Nice/Nice Baptism Policy</u></p> <p>God is nice and the Church is nice. We want to make people happy and give them what they want. So we baptise or christen all comers without worrying about whether they have made any genuine commitment to God in Christ.</p> <p>We don't withhold from the unbaptised church weddings, the right to be buried in consecrated ground, or any other of the privileges of church membership. We don't really think that being baptised or making a profession of Christian faith makes much difference to your life on earth or to your eternal destiny.</p> <p>So what's the point to churches with a nice/nice Baptism policy? We may be popular. We may fill our churches if our programme appeals to people, but such churches are not likely to be strong churches or to have any real commitment to mission. You might as well join a voluntary organisation or charity if you want to do some good in the world.</p>

My Thoughts about Baptism.

I am not sure how best to approach a subject on which millions of words have been written by sincere and learned Christians who, in the end, have not been able to agree. In such cases, the vital thing is that we remain united in love even as we wait for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth.

There is a compelling case for adult only Baptism as practised by a substantial minority of the Christian Church. There is little evidence for infant Baptism in the New Testament, and it does not seem to have been generally practised in the first few centuries of the Church. Moreover, we are Christians by the grace of God alone. We receive His grace by faith, yet faith itself is a gift of His grace. We would expect, however, on the basis of the New Testament, that genuine faith would be manifest in good works – in lives lived in accordance with God's Commandments, summarised in love. So we might restrict Baptism to those in whom we see the evidence of saving faith. This raises a number of issues, however, not least the need for us to judge other people. In the light of texts such as Matthew 7¹ and Romans 14⁴, Christians must be very cautious about judging people. It also raises questions about at what age people might be considered to be sufficiently mature to be baptised and whether those with mental handicaps could ever be baptised. If Baptism is the rite of Christian initiation, there ought to be no unbaptised believers and yet there must be, if children cannot be baptised and adult converts are made to wait until the Church decides that they are ready. If the Baptism service (and Article 27 of the Thirty Nine Articles) means what it says, the unbaptised children of Christian parents, even if the children themselves have a meaningful relationship with God in Christ, are not members of the Church. Finally, I think it is unlikely that all of those baptised as adults remain faithful to the ends of their lives.

If one holds the traditional belief extra ecclesia nulla salus (outside the Church there is no salvation) and that the unbaptised do not go to heaven, it is an extremely serious matter to deny Baptism to anyone. On the other hand, if we are universalists (or at least more generous than our forefathers in the faith) and we believe that God will open heaven to the unbaptised, that ultimately there is no difference between those who have professed faith in this life and those who haven't, then it follows that Baptism is not especially significant. If Baptism is insignificant, it is a matter of indifference whether or not it is administered and in what spirit it is received.

A strong case can be made that the heads of families are responsible for the religious nurture of their households. This is certainly the case in the Bible. In the OT, all the males in the household are circumcised from eight days and upwards. In the NT, whole households are baptised together. Naturally Christian parents want to include their children in membership of God's Church with all the privileges and responsibilities membership entails. I am convinced (with the majority of the Christian Church for at least the last 16 centuries) of the case for infant Baptism. In modern Britain, this does involve us in the Baptism of children whose parents and godparents we may doubt are really Christians. We must not allow that to be a question of their intellectual understanding of the theological propositions to which they are expected to give assent in the Baptism service. God is infinite and the understanding of the greatest theologians among us of the apostles' creed is an infinitesimally small fraction of the Truth to which it bears witness. Likewise I doubt if any of us understands ourselves sufficiently thoroughly to repent of all our sins. Neither can we know what we are letting ourselves in for when we promise to devote our lives utterly to God. We cannot say that some families are worthy to have their children baptised and some are not. We are all unworthy. If people are deliberately lying to God, He knows and judges. If they are making the responses sincerely but with very limited understanding, I'm sure Jesus honours them. He does not quench the smouldering flax. Given the Church of England's mainstream Christian belief that Sacraments effect what they signify and that Baptism is the most important thing in anyone's life on earth, it would be a terrible thing to refuse to baptise a child because the Rector or congregation had misgivings about that child's family and their choice of godparents. In modern Britain, turning away the minority of families which still request Baptism does risk quenching the smouldering flax and it contributes to the alienation between the Church and the commonwealth – the secularisation of modern Britain. It is this reasoning which informs my very open Baptism policy. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* (John 6³⁷). Roger.

SHORNE CHURCH OPEN DAY

Monuments, brasses, old furnishings and medieval architecture are what most visitors are looking for in country churches. St Peter and St Paul at Shorne has all of these. The building has examples of all periods of architecture from Anglo-Saxon to Perpendicular in the 15th century. Unfortunately, like many churches in this area, it is locked when it is not in use. On Saturday 12th September it will be open from 10 am to 6 pm for anyone to visit and see what it has to offer. In the morning you can guide yourself round using a free leaflet. In the afternoon there will be guided tours at 2, 3 and 4 pm. These are free and there is no need to book. Afternoon teas will be served from 2.30 to 5 pm. This coincides with the national Heritage Open Days and the Friends of Kent Churches 'Ride & Stride'. You can get further information from Andrew Moffat 01474 822280 or aimoffat@btinternet.com or from our web site www.shorneparishchurch.co.uk.

Forthcoming Attractions

September 19th: 7.30 pm Christian Aid Quiz in Cuxton Church Hall.
September 27th: 4.00 pm Michaelmas Tea with Tideway in Church Hall
September 29th: 7.30 pm Patronal Festival Eucharist at St Michael's, preacher the Archdeacon.
October 4th: Harvest Festival. Harvest Supper to follow evening service at Jubilee Hall.
October 24th: 7.30 pm: Quiz for parish funds in church hall.
December 12th: 10.00 Christmas Coffee Morning in Church Hall.
December 16th: 12.00 Christmas Parish Lunch in Church Hall.
December 19th & 20th: Christmas Tree Festival at St John's.

Celebrating St Michael at Cuxton	
Sunday 27th September 4.00 pm Music by Tideway Tea in the church hall.	Tuesday 29th September (Michaelmas) 7.30 pm Holy Communion at St Michael's Preacher: the archdeacon followed by refreshments.

Cry Freedom!

We have just been informed that some of the sillier provisions of the Licensing Act have been repealed. So we no longer need to waste money and effort on a licence for the church hall and we can have a little bit of music at our barbecue even when we don't hold it on a saint's day!

St Michael's Draw: 1st Jack Payne £10, 2nd David Joyce £10, 3rd Carole Nunn £5. Drawn by Janice Cheesmer.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Burr (12), Mrs Farrow (25), Mrs Mitchell (62) & Mr Tower (146) – drawn by Mr Wooding.

Christmas Tree Festival

This will take place at St John's Church the weekend of 19th & 20th December. Village clubs and societies and individuals are invited to produce and decorate a Christmas tree. Be as imaginative and creative as you like. Trees may be real or artificial. They need to be set up on Friday 18th. On the Saturday, the exhibition will be open to the public and there will be refreshments on sale. The exhibition will also be open on Sunday with our usual service of Holy Communion at 11.00 and our Christmas Carol Service, Nativity Play and Christingle at 3.00. Please contact Phyllis Chidwick or the Rector if you would like to display a tree. It would be nice if you could leave them in church until twelfth night, but, if you need them for your own domestic festivities, you can have them back after the Carol Service. We hope to have an enjoyable celebration with plenty of things to see and to raise something for church funds by way of visitors' donations.

??? Two Quizzes to Exercise Your Minds ???

both at 7. 30 pm in the Church Hall, Cuxton.

£7.00 includes ploughman's but please bring your own drink.

Teams 6-8 or come as individuals.

Book with Roger on 717134 roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk

Quiz for Christian Aid
19th September
???

Quiz for Parish Funds
24th October
???

Harvest Festival 4th October

Services of Holy Communion will be celebrated at 8.00 in the Jubilee Hall, 9.30 at St Michael's and 11.00 at St John's. Gifts may be brought for the Foodbank. Generally speaking, tinned and packeted goods with long use by deeds are what is needed. Always required are sugar, UHT or dried milk, custard, tinned or packeted deserts, instant mash, pasta, spreads, washing powder, toiletries, lavatory paper and maybe sweets for the children. Small or medium packet sizes are easier to process than giant economy. There will also be envelopes for contributions to the diocesan Poverty and Hope Appeal supporting projects in Argentina, Burkina Faso, India, Kenya, Tanzania and Kent. <http://www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/poverty-amp-hope>

There will also be a service of Evening Praise in the Jubilee Hall at 6.30 pm, followed by our annual **Harvest Supper**. This will be professionally catered this year. Tickets are £7.00. Any profits will be for the diocesan Poverty and Hope Appeal.



Open Garden at Bishops court on Saturday 5 September and Sunday 6 September from 1.00pm to 5.00pm as part of the National Garden Scheme (www.ngs.org.uk). There will be, teas, home-made cakes and a plant stall. Entry £3.00, children free. Bishops court, 24 St Margaret's Street, Rochester, ME1 1TS. All enquiries to: Bridget Langstaff: 07816 828439 or email: bridget.langstaff@btinternet.com



Cuxton WI

We had a dog join our meeting this month, This was one of those amazing creatures who can diagnose all kinds of illnesses in humans just by sniffing their blood or urine or even just their breath. Some of you may have seen them talking about it on Breakfast TV. With the use of the dogs severe diseases can be diagnosed often years in advance and so early treatment can be preventative rather than curing when the symptoms appear later. Our President's table was graced by a lovely vase hand painted by Maureen who runs our China and Water painting classes. She has a few spaces in her china painting class if anyone would like to have a go at this. Also the cookery class has split into two sections, one to cook in the evening and the other at lunch times. And again if you feel like joining the

lunchtime group there are spaces available. It may be well worth a visit to Andrew Lingam's farm at Upper Halling as while you are choosing goodies from the farm shop you can also have a look around and see all the home made scarecrows from the huge display recently held at Lullingstone Castle for the centenary of the WI movement. Next month is our Produce Show and Chris has been working hard organising the classes. We try to reflect a range of interests ranging from cookery - cakes, flowers, arranged or as a bunch from our gardens, vegetables and herbs plus paintings and poetry and greetings cards. Usually everyone tries to have a go and the display looks really colourful and interesting. Sheila from Cobham who will be our judge should have a busy time looking at the entries. Sheila.

NATURE NOTES : JULY 2015

Moonlit Apples John Drinkwater

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

A mouse in the wainscot scratches and scratches, and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep sea light.

The first day of the month is hot and humid. Skies in the morning become rather grey but no rain falls. The sun shines brightly in the afternoon. It is raining the next day when we drive to Rodmersham for cricket then the sun reappears. In the evening the skies are clear and I watch a heron as it flies overhead. On 6th, I take Murphy round the lake at Bluewater. The grasses have become straw coloured while the variety of flowers continue to adorn the scene. The 8th is a day of variable cloud and some sunshine and a cool westerly wind blows. A family of great tits comes to the bird table where I have put some seed. The 10th is very warm and sunny with blue skies brushed with wispy clouds. A light westerly wind blows. Warm days follow; then 13th is grey and damp. Feral pigeons come to feed then, later, a crow visits. I've seen very few butterflies in the garden so far this season. The 17th is a fine, warm day. The skies are blue from which shines the golden sun. The grass in the garden is in need of rain. Magpies and pigeons come to the garden for seed, then great tits, dunnoek and a robin join them. The 19th is another beautiful day when I walk with Murphy round the lake at Bluewater. Knapweed, ragwort, vetch Lucerne, goat's rue and clover bloom among the straw coloured grasses. A warm westerly wind drives white clouds across the sky. A pair of grebe float on the rippling lake. Clouds build up in the afternoon. On 20th the air is humid with sunshine and variable cloud as we drive to Bluewater where I walk with Murphy. The flowers brighten the scene and the lake ripples in the breeze. The afternoon is warm with some sunshine and rather

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

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

more cloud. At the end of the day a few drops of rain begin to fall. The 21st is beautiful with warm sunshine and blue skies. A blackbird visits the garden in the late afternoon and a red admiral butterfly hovers over the nettles. Evening skies are clear. We walk round the lake again the next day. The grass paths have been cut and are the colour of straw. A warm breeze blows. The afternoon becomes rather cloudy which lingers well into the evening. A crescent moon hangs in the sky. Rain falls almost all day on 24th. The ground is in need of it. The 25th is sunny giving us an enjoyable walk round the lake. The 26th is grey with more rain. There is another lake walk on 27th. Flowers bloom among the grasses - bird's foot trefoil, lucerne, vetch, clover, buttercups, and a variety of umbellifers. The westerly wind is warm as it drives clouds across the sky. The afternoon is dry and I hear a woodpecker in the woodland. Although there is some sunshine on 30th, the air is cool. Later in the morning, we drive to Bluewater. Dark clouds build up threatening rain so I walk quickly with Murphy round one of the car parks at Bluewater. This is not the most inspiring route but at least we are outside and there are plenty of inviting sniffs for Murphy. No rain falls but the skies are grey with intermittent sunshine. The evening is dry but quite cool for the time of year. A full moon hangs in the sky as the light fades. The last day of the month is fine and sunny. A red admiral butterfly comes into the garden and perches on the grass near the washing line. In the afternoon I watch a pair of blackbirds as they hop over the grass looking for insects.

Elizabeth Summers

Psalm 15: 1 Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle : or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?
2 Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life : and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.
3 He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour : and hath not slandered his neighbour.
4 He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes : and maketh much of them that fear the Lord.
5 He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not : though it were to his own hindrance.
6 He that hath not given his money upon usury : nor taken reward against the innocent.
7 Whoso doeth these things : shall never fall.

Where Should I Have Put Them?

I had just taken delivery of two die cast models – a Supermarine Spitfire Mark I and a Messerschmitt 109, representing the aircraft which fought in the Battle of Britain – though, in fact, there were more Hurricanes than Spitfires in the skies in 1940.

I have a personal soft spot for the Spitfire because my first flight ever was in a two seater Spitfire – second prize in a raffle at RAF Manston, for which I didn't even have any tickets, but that's another story. It was quite something to fly out over the channel in a Spitfire and return to Manston over the White Cliffs of Dover.

While I was officiating chaplain at Manston, I was also chaplain to the Ramsgate and Broadstairs branch of the Royal Airforce Association. The duties included preaching on Battle of Britain Sunday – the Sunday on or following Battle of Britain Day which is 15th September. We would follow the service with a parade through the town led by a marching band and civic and RAF dignitaries to our club house where we enjoyed a few drinks and a reception. It would be my job to cycle on ahead and form a one man welcoming committee – not so much *after the Lord Mayor's Show* as in front of it.

Having to preach on this occasion annually made me very sensible of what the Battle of Britain means for us. When Hitler marched into Poland in 1939, the allies had no alternative but at last to declare war. A British Expeditionary Force was despatched to France and at first so little happened that it was referred to as the phoney war. In May 1940, however, the Germans invaded the Low Countries and France, the French Army surrendered and the British Army was evacuated from Dunkirk. The next logical step was Hitler's proposed invasion of Britain – Operation Sealion. In order for this to be successful he needed control of the English Channel, which the Royal Navy and the RAF had to prevent at all costs. There followed the Battle of Britain in which the Luftwaffe attempted to bomb our ports and airfields and also our munitions factories and civilian population in the Blitz. Fighter Command had to stop them and, over the long Summer of 1940, eventually succeeded in repelling the waves of German bombers so that Operation Sealion had to be cancelled and Hitler made the disastrous mistake of invading Russia.

It is almost certain that if the Battle of Britain had not been won, Germany would have had victory in the Second World War and the whole of Europe (like Poland in 1939) would have been divided up between the evil regimes of Nazism and Stalinism. So it is right to be thankful for that victory. It is also right to honour the extraordinary courage of the fighter pilots who took off on mission after mission, knowing that casualty rates were high and that living with horrific injuries was as much a possibility as sudden death. It is also right to remember other service personnel and civilians who all played their parts and the general population who endured the Blitz with a fortitude which no one had anticipated. It had been thought that civilian populations would capitulate under sustained bombing, but this has not proved to be the case. Human beings are more resilient than we appear.

But what to do with these fine models in my all already cluttered Rectory? The first place I tried was on top of a cupboard in front of a picture of Jesus and the apostles at the Last Supper. I had to move them. It seemed so wrong to display implements of war in front of that scene. Probably there are occasions when war is unavoidable and, as well as bringing out the worst in us, the challenge of armed conflict can bring out the best in human beings – courage, fortitude, endurance, loyalty, self-sacrifice –but war is never a good thing. It is not how things are meant to be. There is a more excellent way – the way of love – a way which we should never cease to seek in this world of sin and grief. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and it is for His Kingdom that we long. My fighter aircraft models are now on the other side of the room. The picture and the models both have their honoured place but my ultimate allegiance can only be to the One Who gave His life for the sins of the world. Roger.

This Summer is 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

12th July

19th July

19th July

Oliver John Edward Blenko

Ryley Daniel Chance

Reginald David Hawkins

Plaxtol

Snodland

Snodland

Michaelmas Tea With Tideway

“Michaelmas Tea with Tideway” is to be held in the church hall at 4pm on Sunday, 27th September, 2015. Michaelmas-tide is at the end of September falling near the equinox and the beginning of Autumn with the shortening of the days. It is associated with the end of the harvest and the preparation of the land for the winter period. The feast of St Michael and All Angels is actually celebrated on the 29th September when we are holding a Patronal festival service at St Michael’s Church, but on the Sunday before we will begin our festivities with afternoon tea together with a concert given by Tideway Folk Group who were last seen here during our Christmas Truce (Kerstbestand) concert in January.

Michaelmas marked the end of the productive season of the land and the beginning of the new cycle of farming. It was a time when new servants or labourers were hired, land was exchanged and debts were paid. As one of the year’s quarter days, rents were due, magistrates elected and it was traditionally the beginning of new legal and educational terms. As the principal of God’s warriors against Satan, St Michael is associated with protection against negative forces that were believed to have been stronger in these darker days of the year. Traditionally Satan having been beaten by the forces of St Michael was cast down, landing in a prickly blackberry bush, its fruit made black by his fiery breath. Satan is supposed to have cursed the bush, trampled and spat upon it making it unfit for consumption. Therefore blackberries should not be picked and eaten after Michaelmas, which in the Middle Ages was October 10th.

In the British Isles a well-fattened goose, fed on the stubble from the harvested fields, was eaten at the feast of St Michael. It was thought that the goose would protect the family against hardship in the coming twelve months. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I, whilst dining on goose at Michaelmas, heard that the Armada had been defeated and she resolved to eat goose every Michaelmas in the future. The tradition of the goose at Michaelmas became common and it was called “Goose Day” in some parts of the country. Goose Fairs were held up and down the land and even today the Nottingham Goose Fair is still held around the 3rd October.

The European Michaelmas daisy (*Aster amellus*) is a perennial herbaceous plant which flowers late in the growing season between late August and early October providing colour and a feeling of warmth to gardens at a time when the majority of flowers are past their best. This daisy seems to provide colour at a time when the gloom of Autumn and Winter is advancing in the same way as St Michael is celebrated as the protector from darkness and evil, although the flower symbolizes saying farewell. An ancient rhyme says:

“The Michaelmas Daisies, among dede weeds, bloom for St Michael’s valorous deeds,”

and it seems to have been reckoned the last of flowers that stood till the feast St Simon and St Jude (28th October).

The folk group Tideway has been in situ since the late 1960s and was the resident organiser of the Plumstead Folk Club which met in the scout hut behind the Wesley Hall in Timbercroft Lane at The Slade, Plumstead Common. It cost a florin to get in to see a performance and apart from come-all-ye evenings and an evening with Tideway and invited guests, some very influential folk musicians would come along to sing to packed houses. Often performers who had top billing at the “Tram Shed” Woolwich (another local venue for folk artistes) would come along and do a stint for a small financial reward. Original members of Tideway were Peter and Paul together with two young ladies who had some connection to scouting and guiding in the area. Still in Scouting, Peter is currently District Commissioner of Horsham, Sussex and Paul was DC of Woolwich and for a long period producer of the famous Woolwich Gang Show. Mick came along a little later bringing his musical talents on mandolin and (later) melodeon playing and after the girls left, the three of them continued running the club and entertaining the locals. They felt that a bass instrument would bring an added dimension to the group and John was asked to join them. (Mick is still performing folk music and accompanying folk dancing mainly in West Sussex). John was then playing string bass with a Bexleyheath (Scout) folk group ‘Cotton Fayre’ as well as conducting the Bexleyheath Scout and Guide choir

and District Gang Show, and he joined Tideway in the very early 1970s. John had no real connection with the others before this, except his great uncle owned the greengrocer's on The Slade where the boys' parents bought their cabbages, carrots and cucumbers (and Scouting, of course).

Tideway is fast approaching its 50th anniversary as a folk group. They still perform many of the songs they did in Plumstead (or as they refer to it - Plumstone) but the club is long gone, although there is still local support for the group in Plumstead even now. In the past they have performed all over in the south-east in many folk venues but have now started rehearsing again, giving a new breadth to their programme by introducing new songs to their ever enlarging folk book. The name Tideway derives from the tidal waters of the River Thames.

Michaelmas Tea with Tideway is a bookable event for catering purposes. JGB.

STAMPS - We are still collecting used (and unused) stamps that will benefit charity. Please send them in to us and we will ensure they are sent to OCD UK for their use. Thank you.



Tommy's Talking Points

Since I last wrote, I've grown quite a bit and I'm still having a lot of fun. We're very fortunate in living so close to the open countryside and we usually have a walk in the woods and fields every day – some days two walks or even more. He reckons I am entitled to at least four miles and that's good for him too. The other day we saw a couple of badgers out early in the morning. Master put me on my lead and wouldn't let me get too close to them. Just like the way he won't let me chase those foxes we see in the garden when we go out last thing.

We do also have indoor play. I like him to play tug of war and throw dog toys for me while he is having tea and watching television in the evening. I do know the difference between dogs toys and things which are fun to play with but are not toys – socks, towels and tea towels, handkerchiefs and pot plants. Playing with the latter gets me more attention, but not always nice attention.

On the subject of behaviour, says Master, I need to be less exuberant and express my affectionate and loving nature more gently. People, he says, do not like being jumped up on, especially with sharp claws and muddy paws. Neither do they like their limbs being taken into my mouth for a friendly chew. He says I really should not try to grab hold of his legs when he is coming downstairs, especially if he is carrying something. He shocked the congregation the other day by telling them that he didn't care when I ran off because I was so naughty. He didn't mean it though. He was just trying to teach the children how important it is to love no matter what the other person (or dog) does and to care for them even if they are naughty and how important it is to have people who love us even when we are not as good as we should be. Only God is perfect love, but you human beings are meant to be like Him. And maybe He made us dogs to show you how to love unconditionally, because we do!

I told you in last month's magazine about how we walked from Canterbury to Shepherds Well on the North Downs Way. We have just done the next section from Shepherds Well to Dover with Master's friend. We met him on the train at Rochester. It was raining rather when we arrived at Shepherds Well and it took us a little while to orientate ourselves and head out on the right route. Master can't see when his glasses are wet and he can't see without them either. Master's friend is wiser than Master and brings a guide to which he refers. Otherwise, with Master's sense of direction and short sightedness, we might just as well have finished up in Ramsgate as Dover.

Wasn't it fun to run through the fields in the wet? The oil seed rape hung right over the path. I reckon I had a whole year's baths in one go. It's so much fun getting wet through and running on ahead and back and to either side. The two men were interested in a couple of birds (larks?) which Master's friend spotted ascending, but Master couldn't see. There were also a tower and a beautiful manor house and a little

country church in a place where hardly anybody lived and they no longer had regular services. There was also a special plantation of trees, planted by someone the sign said was a maid of Kent, but Master said she wasn't, because she wasn't born in East Kent. Being wet didn't matter because it was so warm and, as the rain left off, there were some wonderful views to see. Kent is a very beautiful county, though Master says that it was better still before they built all the main roads and housing estates.

At one point, he got really scared. I ran on ahead and got out of sight. He chased after me where he thought I had gone, but he was wrong. I had taken the route the wrong side of the fence and I might still be there now, had his friend not heard me whimpering because I was stuck. There is a very good pub at Guston which provided them with beer and lunch. I had water. Since I've been sick straight after eating on the other occasions he's brought my meal on walks, I was only offered a dog biscuit, which I did not deign to eat. Then on to Dover, which wasn't far. We took photographs on the plaque beside the seaside which marks the end of the walk. They would have been better, had I not squirmed. Then ice creams for the people and all of us headed for Dover Priory Station and home. One more walk from Strood to Cuxton. Great fun, but why don't Medway Valley line trains connect with the ones up from the coast? We'd already waited twenty minutes at Rochester and Master wouldn't wait another half hour at Strood, (though we'd have got home quicker if we had)!

This might have been my last talking point. On my early morning walk this morning (2nd August), as soon as Master let me off my lead, I ran away. He followed for two miles in the direction he thought I would have taken, but to no avail. He had to come back then and take the three morning services. He and I would both like to thank all the people who went looking for me, searching woods and fields. At lunchtime I was still missing and people were very gloomy. Just then, a kind man brought me in the front gate. I had followed him and his dog to his house. He had to go to work and he looked after me till he finished, taking me to work with him, and then he brought me home. Everybody was very relieved and Master and I are very grateful to the kind man. Whether I am ever let off my lead again remains to be seen. Tommy, the Rectory Spaniel.

(Since 2nd August, Tommy has been allowed more limited opportunities to run off his lead. As soon as he has shown any inclination to run off, he's been put back on it! He has, however, enjoyed a walk to Luddesdowne for a drink in one pub and lunch in the other. He brought Master back by a path which Master hadn't been down for years, probably since Bobby's time. Great fun. He had hoped to do Dover- Folkestone on the North Downs Way run, but the humans in the party only made it to the "White Hart" at Cuxton! Here's hoping for next time.)

Appreciation

It is said that at the height of the oil crisis, Sheikh Yamani came to London to confer with the British Government about the high price of oil and its economic consequences. One of the British said how he envied Saudi Arabia's abundance of oil. The sheikh replied, "You have something much more valuable. Just look out of the window." It was raining.

Baptism Commission

Those who are baptized are called to worship and serve God.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

With the help of God, I will.

May Christ dwell in your heart through faith, that you may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. *Amen.*