

Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
4 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 15	9.30 Family Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
11 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 16	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 32 vv 1-14 p90 I Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
18 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 17	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 I Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
25 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 18 Sister Gill Martin of the Church Army	9.30 Holy Communion	Amos 6 vv 1-7 p921 I Timothy 6 vv 6-19 p1194 Luke 16 vv 19-31 p1050
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> September Michaelmas The Rural Dean, Rev'd David Green.	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064
2 <sup>nd</sup> October Trinity 19 Harvest Festival	9.30 Family Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1052
	6.30 Evening Praise Followed by Harvest Supper in church hall.	Deuteronomy 26 vv 1-11 p203 Philippians 4 vv 4-9 p1181 John 6 vv 25-35 p1070
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
4 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 15	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 43 v14 – 44 v5 p728 John 5 vv 30-47 p1069
	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
11 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 16	11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 32 vv 1-14 p90 I Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 60 vv 1-22 p746 John 6 vv 51-71 p1071
18 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 17	11.00 Holy Communion Stop! Look! Listen!	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 I Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
25 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 18 Sister Gill Martin of the Church Army	11.00 Holy Communion	Amos 6 vv 1-7 p921 I Timothy 6 vv 6-19 p1194 Luke 16 vv 19-31 p1050
2 <sup>nd</sup> October Trinity 19 Harvest Festival	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Nehemiah 5 vv 1-13 p489 John 9 vv 1-41 p1075
	11.00 Holy Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 II Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1052

Holy Communion at Cuxton Wednesdays 9.30 am		Holy Communion at Halling Thursdays 9.30 am	
31 <sup>st</sup> August	I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 Luke 4 vv 38-44	1 <sup>st</sup> September	I Corinthians 3 vv 18-23 Luke 5 vv 1-11
7 <sup>th</sup> September	I Corinthians 7 vv 25-31 Luke 6 vv 20-26	8 <sup>th</sup> September	I Corinthians 8 vv 1-13 Luke 6 vv 27-38
14 <sup>th</sup> September Holy Cross Day	Numbers 21 vv 4-9 Philippians 2 vv 6-11 John 3 vv 13-17	15 <sup>th</sup> September S Cyprian	I Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 Luke 7 vv 36-50
21 <sup>st</sup> September S Matthew	Proverbs 3 vv 13-18 II Corinthians 4 vv 1-6 Matthew 9 vv 9-13	22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-11 Luke 9 vv 7-9
28 <sup>th</sup> September Ember Day	Job 9 vv 1-16 Luke 9 vv 57-62	29 <sup>th</sup> September Michaelmas	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 John 1 vv 47-51

Copy Date October Magazine: 9<sup>th</sup> September 8.30 am Rectory.



### Hateful Psalms

The biblical Book of Psalms is a compendium of passion, penitence and praise. I find that, in reading the other books of the Bible, I am generally studying the Word of God from the outside, if you know what I mean, a third person experience. It is like reading a book. The reader isn't one of the characters in the story. I'm learning about what God has said and done in the past and what He is saying to us today through the pages of the Bible and what He is doing in the present and what He is going to do in the future. Reading any part of the Bible is a spiritual experience (especially if it is read devotionally either in church with a congregation or in a bible study group or in our individual daily quiet times when we read it alone by ourselves) which works because God the Holy Spirit interprets God the Word to those who turn to Him. To encounter the Word of God in any scripture is to encounter God and to be changed into a better human being, if we will only let go and let God.

Psalms are special, however. When you read psalms, you utter the words, the divinely inspired words, for yourself. You are a character in the story praying the Word of God. It is a first person experience. I am praising, praying, confessing, giving thanks, worshipping, crying out. It is I, Lord. Equally, it is we, Lord. These psalms are our prayers and the prayers of all the people of God, the praises of this congregation and the praises of *the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth*. (I would imagine that the psalms are subsumed into something even more infinitely wonderful in heaven when the whole of creation is united in the worship of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.)

We are often reminded that the boy Jesus and the man would have learnt the psalms and used them in His own personal prayers and in public worship in the synagogue and the Temple. When we sing or say the psalms in acts of worship, we are praying with Him and in Him and through Him.

[I admit that psalms can be difficult to sing. In order to preserve as much as possible of the original Hebrew and to be faithful to the biblical text, English translations are not generally in metrical verse, unlike most hymns and songs. We therefore chant the psalms. You can chant any text at all, even the telephone directory, if you point it (mark it for chanting) but you don't

always have the same number of syllables to each note in every verse. Saying the psalms is very worthwhile. They were, however, written to be sung and I think it is worth making the effort. When we get it right, the music enhances the words in communicating the meaning and the passion.]

The psalms cover the whole gamut of human emotions and experience in the Word of God. The first psalm deals with the blessedness of the person who lives his life in the way of God in contrast to what happens when people reject Him. The stark choice is between life and death. The last psalm (150) exhorts everything that is to praise God. This is life and joy and eternal love, "lost in wonder, love and praise". The 148 psalms between these two cover everything. There are psalms of worship and praise, psalms of thanksgiving, psalms of joy. There are psalms which express the desires and fears of the whole community. There are psalms for the lips of individuals. Some psalms celebrate the glory of God in the wonders of creation. Some recall and rehearse God's mighty acts in redeeming His people. There are psalms which speak of what God has done for individuals. Many psalms celebrate the justice and mercy of God. Justice and mercy are written into the very fabric of the universe. The Ten Commandments have the same status as the laws of gravity and relativity and thermo-dynamics. There is one law-giver and He is to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness. We shall all be judged and God's judgment is just. We are not the playthings of chance or misfortune. Ultimately, Evil cannot triumph, because everything that is is in the Hands of God Who is infinitely good. We cannot always understand, we cannot sometimes do more than grope in the dark. The psalmist has been there too and we can share his confidence, *Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in him: and he shall bring it to pass* (37<sup>5</sup>).

Some psalms are celebrations of the Law of God, the Law which is summarised in the commandments to love God and our neighbours. This is what God is like. God is love. This is what we are called to be, people who keep His commandments, people of love. When we walk with God, we and the world are blessed. When we neglect God or reject Him and disobey His holy law, we bring trouble on ourselves and trouble on the world around us. It is true for individuals. It is true for nations. Do I dare to say

that it is true too for churches? Israel was the Church of the Old Testament. What was true for them then is true for us now, which is why we read the Old Testament and, with the people of God in every age, pray the psalms.

The oppressed cries out against the oppressor. The persecuted appeals against the persecutor. Those who forget the poor are warned of the consequences to themselves. Those who worship false gods of gold and silver are revealed as being on the path to perdition. It's all in the psalms.

Many of the psalms are cries of distress. Sometimes the psalmist dwells on what God has done in the past as evidence that God can and will act in the present and in the future. Occasionally the psalmist just seems to despair. This too is an authentic experience. God is always present with us. He never stops loving us. But it doesn't always feel like it. It isn't faithless to admit that we sometimes feel abandoned by God or even doubt that He exists or cares. Jesus Himself prayed these prayers. All the time we keep talking to God, questioning, doubting, resenting, however we may feel, we are still in touch with Him.

Sometimes we are very conscious of God's presence with us. *The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing* (23<sup>1</sup>). But sometimes, with Jesus, we might pray, *My God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me: and art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint?* (22<sup>1</sup>). We may very well discover the truth of *For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in his pleasure is life: heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning* (30<sup>5</sup>).

Some psalms meditate on why things are the way they are, questions unanswerable by us, but somehow we can have faith that God is the answer to all our problems. There are psalms which accurately describe the human condition. *But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable: there is none that doeth good, no not one* (14<sup>4</sup>). There are psalms which speak of how God deals with us as we are so that we may become what He wills us to be. *For he cometh he cometh to judge the earth: and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.* (96<sup>13</sup>).

Many of the psalms are prophecies of Jesus and of truths which only become fully apparent in the New Testament – the kingly and priestly nature of Christ, the divine sonship, His suffering, the resurrection of Jesus and of all believers, the persecution of Christ and His Church, the final dissolution of Heaven and earth, when God will create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (II Peter 3<sup>13</sup>).

In the face of all this wonder about the glory of God: His awesome works in creation and redemption; His transcendence and imminence, His infinite greatness over everything that is and yet His intimate concern for each one of His creatures; the beauty of His holiness; His providence upholding and guiding everything that happens on earth, the life story of His people; the perfection of His holy Law, the psalmist is only too conscience of his and our own unworthiness – the reality of our sin and its consequences. *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me* (51<sup>5</sup>). There are psalms of abject repentance for sinners who, if we are realistic and honest, can only say, *there is no health in us, miserable offenders*. That is so for everyone of us when we measure ourselves against the standard of Jesus Who is our example. But the psalmist also knows that God is always ready to forgive and to restore us if we return to Him. *The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise* (51<sup>17</sup>). *Praise the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me praise his holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul: and forget not all his benefits; Who forgiveth all thy sin: and healeth all thine iniquities; Who saveth thy life from destruction: and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness;* (103<sup>1-4</sup>).

And so we come to the hateful psalms. There are psalms and some verses of psalms which are hateful. The psalmist in demanding justice for himself asks God to wreak a terrible vengeance on his enemies. It is true that this is usually from the standpoint that the psalmist or his people or the people he is praying for are innocent or poor and weak and their oppressors are cruel, violent and treacherous. The most notorious example is 137<sup>8&9</sup> in which, when the psalmist contemplates the way the Babylonians have laid waste the city of Jerusalem, killing and maiming its inhabitants amidst all the horrors of war, after a long

campaign which had brought hunger and disease to the city and to the surrounding countryside, committing war times such as the deliberate mutilation of the king and, no doubt, other prisoners, knocking down God's Temple and deporting many of the people who had lived in the city to exile and captivity in Babylon, the psalmist exclaims: *O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery: yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Blessed is he that taketh thy children: and throweth them against the stones.* What do we do with sentiments such as these?

The easy answer of course is just to leave them out when we read the psalms. There is a very strong tendency to ignore all those parts of the Bible which make us uncomfortable and to leave out of our reading anything that is too hard, too long, too boring, too violent or too distasteful or that fails the test of political correctness. It is no accident, however, that the collect addresses God, *Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning.* The whole of the Bible is a gift from God. The psalms put our deepest emotions into words. If we try to deny that human beings ever experience such raw feelings, we are obviously deluding ourselves. If, on the other hand, we accept that people (perhaps even we ourselves) sometimes do have such horrible thoughts, but exclude them from the Bible, we remove its power to save us from ourselves. The psalms cover the whole gamut of human emotions. They put into words all the thoughts that we might have. There are bible stories which include the most dreadful behaviour of which human beings are capable. We make sense of our world through stories and history and myth. If we cut the nasty bits out of the Bible, we render the Church powerless to help people to come through their worst experiences and to deal with the awful emotions which they may generate. If Church is just a pleasant way of spending Sunday, if you happen to enjoy that sort of thing, faith is scarcely relevant to everyday life. No wonder people don't bother to belong or even to come. We have to be open to hearing the Word of God in every situation, good and bad, if we are to be Christians at all. God is everything or else He is nothing.

So, if we can't just ignore these hateful psalm verses, what should we do with them? It might be

tempting to think that the desire to see your enemies perish in a horrible way is simply Old Testament. "The ancient Israelites might have been like that. Maybe Jews and people of other religions are still like that – vengeful, punitive, unforgiving, but we Christians know better. We know that we must always forgive." To think like this would be complacent. We might know better, but can we honestly say we are better? I think we should have to be very careful about judging other people and reckoning ourselves to be morally superior. Both Jesus and St Paul warn us against judging others.

I am sure that we do have to remember the context. We have comparatively easy lives, but what about people who are under great pressure? Back in the two world wars, didn't British people, British Christians, celebrate the deaths of our enemies? On a battlefield, surely we would rather see our enemies die than our own side. Isn't it true that, in a situation of total war, we were prepared to see the carpet bombing of cities like Dresden and Tokyo, knowing that the dead and injured would include women and children and non-combatants, even perhaps people who opposed the war? Under enough pressure, we might feel like the psalmist and desire the deaths of our enemies or the punishment of our persecutors or that our oppressors should get their comeuppance. One definition of justice is that people get what they deserve. *He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and rich he hath sent empty away.*

Yes, we ought to forgive, but forgiving isn't pretending that the evil hasn't happened. Neither is it making out that the wrong doesn't matter. It isn't just walking away without retaliating or pretending to forget what we still resent. Forgiveness takes the evil action with absolute seriousness and yet still seeks to be reconciled to the offender. Maybe those terrible words *O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery: yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us* are an honest expression of how we should feel in the circumstances the psalmist was in, but that then they are a platform on which genuine, sincere forgiveness can be built. If we don't confront the evil and if we're dishonest about how we feel about it, we cannot truly forgive. If we can't forgive, we cannot be healed.

*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Another way of looking at these hateful verses is to ask ourselves whether our behaviour might lead other people to cry out against us for justice and even for revenge? Have we injured other people to the point where they might hate us or want to see us getting the punishment we deserve? This might be some wrong we have done to an individual. There might also be a collective guilt. Do we connive in slave labour in other countries when we buy cheap clothing? What about the involvement of our nation in other people's wars? How far are we responsible as individuals for what our country does?

Finally, we come back to the point that Jesus knew and used these psalms in His personal and in His public worship. We know that He took evil with the utmost seriousness. On the Cross He bore all the sin of the world and all the pain and punishment that human sin inflicts. He was absolutely sincere. He knew in Himself the enormity of wickedness. Yet He didn't curse us

or demand vengeance from the Cross. His words were, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* We pray in Him and with Him and through Him. Our prayers then will take the evil done in the world and the evil done to us ourselves with the utmost seriousness and, in Him, we shall be sincere in praying for our enemies, for God's love to express itself certainly as justice but that justice may be incorporated in mercy so that justice and mercy may combine in love. That is our hope for ourselves and it must be our hope for others. It is this we bear in mind when we pray those hateful verses in the psalms.

I hope all this has encouraged you in your personal use of the psalms, both in church and in your daily prayers. Scripture is an amazing resource for living. Make sure you don't neglect it. Roger.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3<sup>16</sup>).*

**Venite, Exultemus Domino**

Psalm 95

O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving : and show ourselves glad in him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods. In his hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your fathers tempted me : proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said : It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways. Unto whom I swear in my wrath :

that they should not enter into my rest. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. **Amen.**

**??? TWO QUIZZES FROR YOUR DELECTATION???**

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September  
St Nicholas Strood  
Quiz for Christian Aid  
7.00 for 7.30  
Teams 6-8

£7.00 includes food but not drink

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October  
Cuxton Church Hall  
Quiz for Parish Funds  
7.00 for 7.30  
Teams 6-8

£7.00 includes food but not drink



### The Chris Ellis Centre Lauds its Local Lad

James Watts has been a member of the local community in Halling for the past 31 years and takes an active role in producing his parish magazine as well as working for Age UK Medway for 13 years as a driver of the mini buses. Although James has reached retirement age he is still happily driving the customers from their homes to Age UK Medway, the Chris Ellis Centre, and safely returning them on a daily basis. As part of the centre's activities James has appeared as a Wild West Sheriff, Santa Claus, a wise man, an ugly sister and more recently in a tutu as a ballet dancer during themed events and Christmas productions. As the oldest member of the Age UK Medway team, James is a great advocate for showing people that there is no age limit to what you can do. James is highly thought of by all those that use the Chris Ellis Centre and champions that Age UK Medway is the "go to" place for people who need help.

The Chris Ellis Centre catchment area covers Rochester, Strood and Hoo, as well as Cuxton and Allhallows. If you are interested in finding out more you can contact us on 01634 724745 or email [seniorstrood@ageukmedway.org.uk](mailto:seniorstrood@ageukmedway.org.uk)



### Christian Aid

This year's collection amounted to £567. Thank you all who collected and all who donated. Last year's total was £854. In the past, we used to collect more than a thousand pounds. It's not that the need is getting any less, but street collections are getting harder – fewer people able and willing to go out collecting and possibly a less generous response at the door than there used to be. You can still give to Christian Aid directly, however. Also you can support our Poverty and Hope Appeal. Brochures about this year's projects and collection envelopes will be available at our harvest services on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Also, please see below.



### Poverty and Hope

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

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

### Bible Society

We heard a very inspiring talk from Michael Hudson of the Bible Society at our tea and Evening Prayer on 10<sup>th</sup> July at the Jubilee Hall. He told us about the origins and growth of the Church in Cambodia. During those terrible days of the Vietnam War, the conflict spread into neighbouring Cambodia and Laos. At one time, Cambodians were forced to take refuge in Vietnam itself. There they met Christians who eagerly shared their faith with them and, when they were able to return to their own land, these new Christians established churches in Cambodia. It is a country which has suffered terribly and it was very moving to see a picture of a dear old Christian man in his nineties who had seen and lived through it all. The Cambodian language has two written forms and the Bible Society provides copies of the Scriptures in both of them, to the great joy of the people who live there.



In China, he told us, the Church was suppressed for many years. During the Cultural Revolution, Bibles were burned and reading them was banned. Today, despite the continued

opposition of the Chinese state, churches are so full that people spill out onto the pavement. In rural areas, villagers walk for hours each week to attend services. Young people are turning to Christianity, a new way of thinking. City high fliers are coming to faith because without it their lives feel so empty. They reckon that there are a million new Chinese Christians every year. There is, however, a great shortage of Chinese bibles. People are desperate to have access to a copy and the Bible Society is printing and distributing as many as it can and the state will allow. They cost only 80p per copy for the paper and the appeal is for donations, not only for ordinary Christians to have their own bibles, but also for trainee pastors and ministers. Learning to read the bible is also often the way out of illiteracy for otherwise uneducated people. If you would like to contribute, you could send a cheque payable to "Bible Society" to Bible Society, FREEPOST RTKK-GREU-BHSB, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG or you could log onto [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk) to give online and to find out more about the worldwide work of this vital missionary organisation.

#### Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

SPONSORED  
RIDE AND WALK



This takes place on 10<sup>th</sup> September this year. If you would like to ride, run or walk to as many churches as you can and be sponsored (half to our church, half to FKC), please ask Rector for a form. It is also good if our churches are manned to welcome visitors and maybe to give them some squash. You can also be sponsored for this. Please let me know if you can help. You could kill two birds with one stone, manning the church and getting on with something like cleaning, polishing the brass or weeding the churchyard!

St John's Draw June: £5 each to Mrs Warman (51), Mrs Warman (56), Miss Mitchell (74) & Mrs Catchpole (79) – drawn by Mrs Mattingly.

July: £5 each to Mrs. Baker (46), Mrs Mitchell (61), Mr Pratt (98) & Mrs Terry (125) – drawn by Mrs Baker.

#### Nature Notes Follow Up

Following last month's query about what readers might have noticed about our local flora and fauna this year, one reader was able to tell us that she had frequently heard the cuckoo in Charles Drive and another mentioned one she could hear at Wouldham. There also appear to have been plenty of butterflies, although I am not sure what kinds. Another correspondent reported seeing different varieties of woodpecker in her garden.

#### Forthcoming Attractions

31<sup>st</sup> August: 3.00 Afternoon Tea with Strawberries for Church Funds at 95, Pilgrims Road, North Halling.

17<sup>th</sup> September: 7.30 Quiz for Christian Aid at St Nicholas.

25<sup>th</sup> September: Sister Gill Martin of Church Army addresses us at 9.30 & 11.00 services.

29<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm St Michael's Patronal Festival – preacher the Rural Dean.

2<sup>nd</sup> October: 6.30 pm Harvest Praise at St Michael's, followed by Harvest Supper in Church Hall.

15<sup>th</sup> October: 7.30 pm Quiz for Church Funds in Church Hall.

19<sup>th</sup> October: Mothers' Union Tea in Church Hall.

10<sup>th</sup> December: 10.00 Christmas Coffee Morning in Church Hall.

6<sup>th</sup> January: 9.30 St Michael's Epiphany HC followed by brunch in church hall.

**Harvest Supper  
Follows Evening Praise Service @ St Michael's  
6.30 2<sup>nd</sup> October  
Church Hall**

## From the Registers

### Baptisms

31<sup>st</sup> July

7<sup>th</sup> August

7<sup>th</sup> August

Reuben Ernest Crayford

Harry James Easton

Logan Christopher John Morris

Chatham

High Street

Strood

### Funerals

14<sup>th</sup> July

15<sup>th</sup> July

10<sup>th</sup> August

Pauline Elsie Williams (81)

Brian Keith Jefferys (77)

Walter Patrick Nunn (71)

Kent Road

East Malling

Pilgrims Way.

## The "White Hart" and Halling School

Copies of "Cuxton Remembered" by Lillian Bennet, mainly concerning her life in the "White Hart" during both world wars, but covering other subjects as well, are still in terrific demand. You can secure your copy for a donation of £1. It appears that we shall also shortly be able to supply reprints of the centenary history of Halling School. These will also be available for a donation of £1. They are a fascinating insight into the difficulties of setting up and running a school and some of you will remember it and for some of you your parents and grandparents may have been among the early pupils.

There is a proposal to update with further publications recording people's more recent memories. Margaret Booth or I (Roger) would be pleased to hear from anyone prepared to write up some of our local history from a personal perspective. It might initially be published here in this magazine and then bound into a book.



## Church Flowers

One of the joys of going into church is to see and smell the lovely flowers. The flower arrangers work quietly behind the scenes and perhaps we do not always fully appreciate the amount of hard work they put in. So, thank you to all our flower arrangers in both churches.

Flowers are, however, expensive to buy and it seems that they have been heavily subsidised by some of the arrangers themselves. This is very kind and generous but it can't be viable in the long term. If, therefore, anyone would like to donate to the flower fund at either church, we should be most grateful. Donations may be given to the rector or wardens or direct to the flower arrangers. If you give by cheque, I'm afraid it has to be made payable to "Cuxton and Halling PCC", but, if you write on the back what the money is for, we shall make sure it goes to the right place.

## Cemetery and Churchyards

Sorry. I had hoped to be able to write of more progress on this front by now. The legal position is that the two churchyards and Halling Burial Ground are (like the church buildings and Rectory) the legal property of the Rector and the Parochial Church Council is responsible for maintaining them. (The Parsonages Committee is responsible for the Rectory.) Because Halling Churchyard is legally closed by Order of the Privy Council, Medway Council have to keep it in order, which they do well (apart from under the trees, of which there are too many and they are too big!). We have to take care of Cuxton Churchyard and Halling Burial Ground. Frankly, we are too few to do them ourselves and too poor to pay for them to be maintained commercially. We thought we had solved the problem when the Probation Service undertook to look after them under the Community Payback Scheme. For all sorts of reasons, they have not yet (12<sup>th</sup> August!) made a proper start and, with a wet and warm early Summer, things have got out of hand to the point where twice I have found notices tied to the cemetery gates telling people to get onto me if they are unhappy. Let me assure you that, if there were anything I could do, I would have done it. But thanks to all those who have done so much. There are those who maintain their own families' graves and sometimes a bit more. This is a great help. Some people have voluntarily cut quite a lot of the churchyard themselves and others have very



generously paid for someone else to do some work on a professional basis. Even I have had a go. Some have also generously donated funds for us to pay professionals. Both Cuxton and Halling Parish Councils have offered grants as has the Halling Association, with the support of Cllr Fearn. I am not sure, however, how we can gain access to this money and what conditions might be attached. A lack of communication between volunteers, the Probation Service, local authorities and the official representatives of the church (the churchwardens and rector) has been one of the difficulties this year as it is hard to plan what to do when one doesn't know what other people might be doing.

Over the years, we've had this work done by people on a government job creation scheme (which unfortunately for us ceased to exist), groups of volunteers, individual volunteers (including me), professionals (who probably charged us less than they ought to have done) and the Payback Scheme. That is the situation and I apologise once again that things have not been as they ought to have been this year. It has always been a struggle. Bear with us and we will get it done, but I'm afraid that there is no guarantee that small village churches will ever be sufficient to fulfil all the tasks that come their way. If more people joined us, we could do a lot more for the community! Roger.



Cuxton WI  
Since our AGM in May, we now have a new President, Wendy, and all wish her well. Our June meeting was our annual Birthday Celebrations with entertainment from the Cuxtones choir, a good time was had by all. July welcomed a speaker whose subject was

the Medway Queen and August a very interesting talk about a 19<sup>th</sup> century lady, Lola Montes, who happens to have a portrait displayed at Leeds Castle. Our meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> September sees us welcoming Steve Edney who is the head gardener at Salutation Gardens in Sandwich. Highly recommended to any visitors.

*When Adam delved and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?*

John Ball was a radical priest from St Albans. For his trouble, he was imprisoned at Maidstone, but released by the Kentish rebels in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and preached a sermon on Blackheath, including the following passage, From the beginning all men by nature were created alike, and our bondage or servitude came in by the unjust oppression of naughty men. For if God would have had any bondmen from the beginning, he would have appointed who should be bond, and who free. And therefore I exhort you to consider that now the time is come, appointed to us by God, in which ye may (if ye will) cast off the yoke of bondage, and recover liberty.

David Burrell: To be God is to be "to be".

Mark Hart: To use a crude image, intercession is not a lever to move God, for on what fixed point would it rest? (The laws of the environment? Immediately we see that it is no longer God whom we are talking about.) Rather, intercession is a lever to move the world, and it rests on God.

Ashley Null: Grace leads to gratitude, gratitude births love, love leads to repentance, repentance produces good works, good works make for a better society. What better missionary strategy could a church follow?

*All three cited in Faith & Worship Number 79 published by the Prayer Book Society.*

#### HOLIDAY CONNECTIONS

Seated on a very hot and sandy Woolacombe beach with my granddaughters in Devon, I could see the island of Lundy twelve miles off the coast. In 1625, the Turks occupied the island and they were fearsome North African pirates who attacked shipping in the English Channel, the Irish Sea and the Bristol Channel. In those days all 'Mohammedans', or more correctly by today's standard Muslims, were called Turks. Englishmen were taken prisoner by them and forced to work on these pirate ships from their base on Lundy, although the terrible fate has been somewhat eased as sails had replaced oars. The former rector of Cuxton, Archbishop William Laud led a Church of England enquiry into how men who had been forced to become Muslim when taken prisoner could be readmitted as Anglicans. One such man, an Exmoor sailor who had managed to escape and return home in 1627, had a sermon preached over him on his readmission in Minehead Parish Church by the Rector of the village of Selworthy. JGB.

## MUSIC NOTATION - BREAKING THE CODE

Music communicates very emotionally and powerfully. It is used in all kinds of mediums sometimes to promote calm, to engage inner peace and to aid relaxation. Sometimes it can create quite the opposite responses. Like any form of communication it is a language which allows the thoughts and ideas of one person be transmitted to another. It helps if the receiver is open to the style and ideas of the composer, but this is not a basic requirement as people can be receptive even if they don't understand why this happens. Whether or not you play an instrument or sing in a choir, you probably can already tell what a piece of written music looks like. Usually five lines with blobs on gives it away. But historically this is a very young development in the scheme of musical history.

It is believed that the first musical instrument specifically crafted for the purpose was made by Neanderthals living 50,000 years ago. A discovery in 1995, in what is now Slovenia detected the leg bone of a young bear from that period deliberately broken at each end and with holes along the length, it has been suggested, was a form of "flute" although there is fierce scholarly debate about this. It is almost impossible to state when the first musical instrument was made but it is known for sure that in c.5000BC primitive wooden flutes were being made in India and from that time music was passed down the generations as were also the customs of various peoples. Hollowed out tree trunks, rattles made of all sorts of things, skins stretched across wooden frames and strings stretched across wooden boxes are the prime sources of early musical instruments.

But writing down music came about when it was decided that the whole process needed to be organised and stylised in a way that it could be passed to different people in different places or to be kept for posterity. In 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, inscribed on a piece of stone was a Greek song of the day showing notation and lyrics which history has called the "Seikilos Epitaph". But this wasn't discovered until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, long after the 10<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine monk Guido d'Arezzo had devised a form of notation that is similar to that we use today. The main difference is that Guido used four lines and his notes were square or diamond shaped instead of five lines with oval shapes that we use today (when writing used pens with nibs it was simpler to make rounded notes). Guido was an academic, and not only did he create a way of writing down music, he also challenged the ways music, especially sacred music, should be sung which unfortunately did not go down too well with the establishment. Several centuries down the line sees the invention of the printing press which allowed music to be sent here and there, to all corners of the known world, a feature that Guido d'Arezzo could never have imagined but established the form and structure he invented.

So, how does it work? A set of five lines is called a Stave and each line and each space between the lines indicates a position for a note. So five lines + four spaces = 9 notes. Then there is a space each side of the stave giving another 2 notes thus making 11. The position on the stave indicates the height of the note, therefore the higher a note is placed on a stave the higher it sounds. The shape of the note tells you its length which is always relative to the speed of the music where filled-in notes are at the shorter end of the spectrum and clear notes are longer. The range of an instrument or the voice is usually covered by one stave using temporary additional short lines to increase the range as necessary. Some instruments have a vast range, so the 88 notes of the concert pianoforte for example uses two staves joined together (called the Great Stave) and the organ, which has foot pedals as well as manuals, uses three staves (i.e. the Great Stave plus an extra stave below).

It was probably the Great Stave that Guido worked with originally. A horizontal line was drawn across the middle of the page. This was known as the Common Line because it divided the lower sounds (bass) of the singing men written below it and the high sounds of perhaps boys' (trebles') voices written above it. One line was written above or below the Common Line with a space in between continuing until there were lines (and spaces) above and below this line. The Common Line was given the letter name 'C' and then each space and line above was given a letter in order D, E, F, G and then below B, A and so on. It was difficult to focus on which set of notes you were on with all those lines on one page so the Common Line was removed and only inserted when it was needed and because it was between the low and high voices became known as Middle C (i.e. the Common Line in the middle of the Great Stave named 'C').

As the musical alphabet only contains seven letters A to G, you have to start again going up or down as follows:

F \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
G \_\_\_\_\_  
F \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle C \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
G \_\_\_\_\_  
F \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
G \_\_\_\_\_

Middle C is the middle note of the Great Stave (used for piano/keyboard music but is generally not the middle note of the piano but it is close. JBG.



#### Tommy's Talking Points

Whew! Master nearly made a mistake and used my puppy picture. I'm a puppy no longer, even though he still calls me his perfect puppy. I'm a mature adult, sensible, responsible dog of nineteen months! In fact, not long ago, he was telling some people about how he had used my puppy collar to replace a broken toe grip on one of his bicycle pedals. One lady was quite horrified until he explained that I wasn't wearing it at the time. I've graduated to Max's grown up collar now, with my adolescent collar still in reserve in case I break or lose it. Max had a dear little puppy collar with a bell on it, but, first he lost the bell, and then his straining on the lead broke the collar. While we're on the subject of collars and leads, he always takes my lead when we go out in the car just in case something goes wrong and we have to walk. His last car was always threatening to give up the ghost. Then he forgets and leaves the lead in the car. So, one day lately, looking for a lead at short notice, he came up with a short lead in the store cupboard. My feet barely touched the ground! Then he found one with a heavy chain. Lucky I've got strong neck muscles. All right, I exaggerate for comic effect. He's got plenty of leads passed down from dog to dog.

I was glad I wasn't wearing my puppy collar when he found a new use for it. I was also glad he wasn't wearing his glasses when they were run over by a car. Mind you, it was his fault. He was in the garden in a deckchair and he had taken his glasses off to read and put them under the chair so they wouldn't get trodden on. He forgot to pick them up when he took the chair in and his niece's husband ran over them in his car. They were all a bit relieved really as they thought for a moment that I might have been the scrunch and the bump as they couldn't see me for a minute. So he's wearing his distance glasses that are not bifocals and making a bit of a spectacle of himself when he has to strain to read things like service books. He's waiting till the end of the month, however, when he's due for a free eye test. He didn't like the bifocals for watching

TV because he'd find himself looking through the wrong bit when he laid back in his recliner. Only the recliner won't recline any more now the lever has come off in his hand and so it doesn't really matter.

Anyway, I'm afraid I can't report that we've done the Wrotham-Otford section of the North Downs Way yet. The humans in the party need to get their diaries organised. Hopefully, we'll do it in the next couple of weeks and I'll tell you all about it next month. Apart from that, we've been having some lovely walks. These long Summer days, we've been out early mornings and sometimes late evenings. The countryside around here is very beautiful and not only does it change with the advancing seasons, but also it alters daily with different kinds of weather, and even hourly as the light changes. It's always beautiful, whether bare in the Winter, flowery in the Spring, lush in the Summer or colourful with Autumn leaves – sun, cloud, rain, mist, snow or frost. We are very privileged to live here and not in some horrible great town. You dog owners are lucky to have us as your motivation to take a daily walk, which is also good for your health – body, mind and spirit. At this time of year, the mornings are yellow gold and the evenings are red gold. It's been wonderful of an evening to run across Dean and Bush Valleys with the sun low in the western sky, its acute angled rays gilding the eastern fields and woods. It reminds Master of that hymn which talks about what Christians have to look forward to when their time on earth is over in these terms:

The golden evening brightens in  
the west;  
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors  
cometh rest.  
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the  
blest.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

But, lo, there breaks a yet more  
glorious day;  
The saints triumphant rise in  
bright array;  
The King of Glory passes on His  
way.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from  
ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in  
the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy  
Ghost,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

I said that he might as well have these thoughts in the morning and sing the hymn taught to him by a wonderful woman whose funeral he travelled all the way to Lancashire to take and where they sang it even though the organist didn't know it or like it. Morning and evening and all time and all space point us to eternity if we will just open our eyes and see.

When the trumpet of  
the Lord shall sound,  
and time shall be no  
more,  
And the morning  
breaks, eternal, bright  
and fair;  
When the saved of  
earth shall gather over  
on the other shore,  
And the roll is called  
up yonder, I'll be  
there.

*Refrain:*  
When the roll is called  
up yonder,  
When the roll is called  
up yonder,  
When the roll is called  
up yonder,  
When the roll is called  
up yonder, I'll be  
there.

On that bright and  
cloudless morning  
when the dead in  
Christ shall rise,  
And the glory of His  
resurrection share;  
When His chosen ones  
shall gather to their  
home beyond the skies,  
And the roll is called  
up yonder, I'll be  
there.

Let us labour for the  
Master from the dawn  
till setting sun,  
Let us talk of all His  
wondrous love and  
care;  
Then when all of life is  
over, and our work on  
earth is done,  
And the roll is called  
up yonder, I'll be  
there.

The lady concerned ran a Christian youth club when Master was a teenager. She was a greater believer in Proverbs 22<sup>6</sup> and she was right. *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* So its down to you parents, grandparents and godparents.

I suppose, as the days get shorter and the mornings and evenings are dark once again, it will be back to walking on the road on my lead. I hate traffic and so does Master. He loves to see me bounding without boundaries: free, joyful, fun-loving, faithful, friendly, full of love, fulfilling my Maker's intentions for me. He says he would like to see human beings also free, joyful, fun-loving, faithful, friendly, full of love, fulfilling their Maker's intentions and he could tell them how they could be through faith in Jesus Christ, only they won't listen to him. Odd isn't it? You know that the washing machine will go wrong if you don't follow the maker's instructions and yet you don't realise that the same thing applies in your own lives!