

Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 2 nd December Advent 1	9.30 am Holy Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994
Sunday 9 th December Advent 2	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967
Sunday 16 th December Advent 3	8.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 5 vv 8-30 p689 John 5 vv 31-40 p1069
	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 James 5 vv 7-10 p1216 Matthew 11 vv 2-11 p976
Sunday 23 rd December	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 7 vv 10-16 p691 Romans 1 vv 1-7 p1128 Matthew 1 vv 18-25 p965
	6.30 Nine Lessons and Carols	
Monday 24 th December Christmas Eve	5.00 pm Crib Service	
	11.00 pm Midnight Mass	Isaiah 52 vv 7-10 p739 Hebrews 1 vv 1-12 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
Tuesday 25 th December Christmas Day	9.30 am Holy Communion	Titus 2 vv 11-14 p1199 Luke 2 vv 1-14 p1027
Sunday 6 th January Epiphany	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966
Sunday 13 th January Baptism of Christ	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 42 vv 1-9 p727 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 Matthew 3 vv 13-17 p967
Sunday 20 th January Epiphany 3	8.00 am Holy Communion	Galatians 1 vv 11-24 p1168 John 1 vv 43-51 p1064
	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 49 vv 1-7 p735 1 Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1144 John 1 vv 29-42 p1064
Sunday 27 th January Epiphany 4	9.30 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 9 vv 1-4 p693 1 Corinthians 1 vv 10-18 p1144 Matthew 4 vv 12-23 p968
Sunday 3 rd February Quinquagesima	9.30 am Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 2 Peter 1 vv 16-21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 2 nd December Advent 1	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 52 vv 1-12 p739 Matthew 24 vv 15-28 p993
	11.00 am Holy Communion, Holy Baptism & Gift Service	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994
Sunday 9 th December Advent 2	11.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 11 vv 1-10 p696 Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 3 vv 1-12 p967
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	1 Kings 18 vv 16-39 p359 John 1 vv 19-28 p1063
Sunday 16 th December Advent 3	11.00 am Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Isaiah 35 vv 1-10 p719 James 5 vv 7-10 p1216 Matthew 11 vv 2-11 p976
Sunday 23 rd December	11.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 7 vv 10-16 p691 Romans 1 vv 1-7 p1128 Matthew 1 vv 18-25 p965
	3.00 Carol Service	
Tuesday 25 th December Christmas Day	8.00 am Holy Communion	Hebrews 1 vv 1-12 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
Sunday 30 th December Christmas 1	11.00 United Parish Eucharist	Isaiah 63 vv 7-9 p749 Hebrews 2 vv 10-18 p1202 Matthew 2 vv 13-23 p966

Additional celebrations of Holy Communion at 9.30 am at St Michael's 24th, 26th, 28th & 29th + St John's 27th. No services w/c 23rd other than these and those in the above table.

Sunday 6th January Epiphany	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 60 vv 1-9 p746 John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
	11.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746 Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966
Sunday 13 th January Baptism of Christ	11.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 42 vv 1-9 p727 Acts 10 vv 34-43 p1104 Matthew 3 vv 13-17 p967
	5.30 Evensong	Joshua 3 vv 1-17 p217 Luke 3 vv 15-22 p1029
Sunday 20 th January Epiphany 3	11.00 am Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Isaiah 49 vv 1-7 p735 1 Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 p1144 John 1 vv 29-42 p1064
Sunday 27 th January Epiphany 4	11.00 am Holy Communion	Isaiah 9 vv 1-4 p693 1 Corinthians 1 vv 10-18 p1144 Matthew 4 vv 12-23 p968
Sunday 3 rd February Quinquagesima	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	2 Kings 2 vv 1-12 p369 Matthew 17 vv 9-23 p984
	11.00 am Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 2 Peter 1 vv 16-21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984

Copy Date February Magazine 11th January 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday also at 2.00 **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

From the Registers

Baptisms:

14 th October	Daniel Marc Broom	Chatham
14 th October	Aaron James Seth	Larkfield
14 th October	Leo Maurice Broom	High Street
21 st October	Benjamin George Farnham	Hostier Close
21 st October	Rachel Alice Foreman	Chatham
21 st October	Georgina Marie Foreman	Chatham
28 th October	Charley-Joyce Marie Eggesden	Snodland
28 th October	Gabriella Lois Bell	Riggall Court

Congratulations to William (formerly of Wood St) and Rebecca on the birth of their daughter Olivia Mary Milligan-Harrison on 24th October.

Funerals:

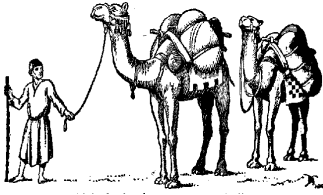
16 th October	Ronald John Homewood (85)	The Street
7 th November	Alan John Martin (65)	Rochester Road Cuxton
12 th November	Allan Edward Austin (80)	Vicarage Close

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Flood (22), Mrs Mitchell (62), Mrs Clark (180), Mr Thorne (32) & Mr Pratt (98) – drawn by Mr Silver.

If you would like to take part in the St John's Draw, please contact Betty Head on 240889.

Church hall Draw: £40 to Di Maxwell, drawn by Sylvia Garland.

If you would like to take part in the Church Hall draw, please contact Buffy Maisey on 727126.



It's a Wonderful World

It is an amazing world when you come to think about it. There are all the plants and animals, the sun, moon and stars and all the things human beings make. We have nice houses, roads, railways, the possibility of flying to any part of the globe. There are telephones and computers, not to mention the internet. It is a wonderful world.

And we are more marvellous still. Our bodies are amazing, the way they work: with muscles and nerves and blood vessels, kidneys, liver and intestines, and, of course, the human brain which is still a lot smarter than any computer the human brain has yet devised.

But human beings are much more than a skinful of vital organs. We have relationships, friendships, romance, family ties. Other people are special, not just as examples of the wonders of anatomy and physiology, but because they are people.

The world is not merely functional, but also it is beautiful. Human beings are creative. We do not merely exist. We enjoy.

Material progress has brought us to a point where at least people like us have more than enough to eat, shelter and effective medical treatment for many of the diseases that killed or crippled our ancestors. We have come to expect, as a right, consumer goods which a generation or two ago would have been regarded as luxuries or even impossibilities. Our diseases are diseases of excess rather than hardship.

Optimistically, we hope that the standard of living we enjoy can be made available to all the world's peoples if only we can solve the technological and economic problems of pollution-free production and fair distribution.

It is a wonderful world and isn't it enough for us? But human beings have mostly not been content to leave it there, because our universe implies three questions.

1. Where did it come from?
2. What is it for?
3. What is its destiny?

Suppose, then, that there is an even more wonderful spiritual realm. Suppose that the spiritual somehow explains the material. The things that we see and touch are created. We are created. We do not simply exist without explanation. We exist because we are created by Being which needs no explanation, because all explanations are encompassed by that Being. The purpose of the material universe is located in the designs of the spiritual. Our ultimate destiny is not to be eaten by the churchyard worms or belched out of the crematorium chimney, but to worship eternally the One Who made us. Suppose all that.

We should not be alone in so supposing. It appears that even in the Stone Age human beings had an intuition that there is a spiritual realm. Most human cultures are religious and always have been. Whenever we speak of "my body" we instinctively imply that I am not quite the same thing as the body which I inhabit and through which I relate to the material world.

Would such a spiritual realm be entirely separate from the world we can see and touch? Christmas says that the spiritual is not separate from the material, that the divine is not utterly alien from the human. Jesus is the Son of God. He is God the Son and the child of Mary and He is born as one person, Who is both human and divine. There is a bridge, an essential connection, between the world we perceive by our physical senses and the essential reality of the spiritual realm. There is a bridge and that bridge is Jesus - Son of God and Son of Man. We cross that bridge into the spiritual realm when we pray and when we prayerfully read the Bible, when we meet with others for worship and when we participate in the Sacraments. We may cross over that bridge in so many ways, because He reaches out to us in the material universe He has made and, if we will only trust Him, leads us across to our eternal home in Heaven.

Merry Christmas, Roger.

Who Employs the Rector?

A couple of us were discussing this question recently in the context of insurance, but it is a good question for all sorts of reasons. Some people would say that God employs His ministers and it is certainly true that the Church ordains and appoints those whom we believe God to be calling. The priest is, of course, answerable to God for everything he does or fails to do – as indeed we all are.

In some denominations a local church calls a minister. That is not how it works in the Church of England, but we are answerable to and for the whole parish – those who belong to the church and those who do not. Traditionally, parishioners are buried facing east, so as to be facing Christ at the Resurrection, but the clergy are buried facing west, to welcome their parishioners to the Kingdom or to face the people they have let down.

Some people think that the Government employs and pays the clergy. That is not true in England, though it is nearly true in some European countries.

The parish clergy are answerable to the Bishop and his officers, but it would not be true to say that the Bishop employs the Rector. The Bishop is, however, responsible for seeing that the Rector is paid. The Church Commissioners administer the payment of the clergy. In this diocese, the Parochial Church Council is asked to supply the money to pay the parish clergy. In most other dioceses the money is taken from parish quota payments which are therefore very much larger than quotas in Rochester Diocese. Either way, the bulk of clergy pay comes from the offerings of the faithful – most of it from what people are now giving, some of it from endowments, which are what people in the past gave – and a proportion from fees for things like weddings and funerals.

The PCC does not employ the Rector. It is a body elected by the Christian laity of a parish to co-operate with the Rector in the work and worship of the Church.

For legal and taxation purposes, clergy are not employees at all. We are described as office holders. As this discussion has been going on and off for a number of years, I asked the Diocesan Secretary to explain the legal position, which she kindly did, as follows.

A priest is not an employee of the PCC but is what is called an “Office Holder”. The duties of those who have the cure of souls are set out in Canon C24 and not through a contract of employment. An “employee” is defined as a person who enters into or works under a contract of employment where that contract is a contract of service – and this clearly is not the case for clergy.

Canon 24 Of priests having a cure of souls

1. Every priest having a cure of souls shall provide that, in the absence of reasonable hindrance, Morning and Evening Prayer daily and on appointed days the Litany shall be said in the church, or one of the churches, of which he is the minister.
2. Every priest having a cure of souls shall, except for some reasonable cause approved by the bishop of the diocese, celebrate, or cause to be celebrated, the Holy Communion on all Sundays and other greater Feast Days and on Ash Wednesday, and shall diligently administer the sacraments and other rites of the Church.
3. Every priest having a cure of souls shall, except for some reasonable cause approved by the bishop of the diocese, preach, or cause to be preached, a sermon in the church or churches of which he is the minister at least once each Sunday.
4. He shall instruct the parishioners of the benefice, or cause them to be instructed, in the Christian faith; and shall use such opportunities of teaching or visiting in the schools within his cure as are open to him.
5. He shall carefully prepare, or cause to be prepared, all such as desire to be confirmed and, if satisfied of their fitness, shall present them to the bishop for confirmation.
6. He shall be diligent in visiting the parishioners of the benefice, particularly those who are sick and infirm; and he shall provide opportunities whereby any of such parishioners may resort unto him for spiritual counsel and advice.
7. He and the parochial church council shall consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.
8. If at any time he shall be unable to discharge his duties whether from non-residence or some other cause, he shall provide for his cure to be supplied by a priest licensed or otherwise approved by the bishop of the diocese.

Quotations

John Calvin: Whenever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, the Church of God exists.

St Augustine of Hippo: Man is one of your creatures, Lord, and his instinct is to praise you. He bears about him the mark of death, the sign of his own sin, to remind him that you thwart the proud. But still, since he is a part of your creation, he wishes to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.

The Bishops Bethlehem Christmas Appeal.

The festival of Christmas focuses our minds and hearts on the little town of Bethlehem. We shall be celebrating the birth of Our Lord some 2000 years ago in our worship and witness and calling to mind the significant events that happened in that town.

Today Bethlehem is a besieged town. It is surrounded by a high wall. The residents of Bethlehem are greatly restricted in their movements. The Christian Church in the town is under enormous pressure not least because of its diminishing numbers.

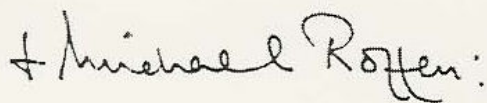
It is therefore important at Christmas when Bethlehem is such a focus of our carols, nativity plays and worship that we use this opportunity to express our support for the town today.

Earlier this year 45 clergy from our Diocese visited Bethlehem on a study tour. During their visit they made contact with the SOS Childrens' Village, a children's orphanage where over 100 children live. It is staffed by both Christian and Muslim teachers. In the village they saw how well the children are cared for and, with the limited resources they have, are growing and learning in a positive environment. They also saw an opportunity in which all of us can share.

Claire Tillotson, a music therapist from Bromley is doing some excellent work introducing music as therapy and working with children who have been traumatised by the recent political conflicts. She has already set up a training course for teachers in Bethlehem and wants to develop this programme. She also hopes to identify 2 music students from the town to come to London to train as music therapists and then after qualification to return to work in Bethlehem.

May I commend this project to your Parish in the hope that you will consider having a collection at one of your Christmas services? 10% of all that is given will be allocated to a similar project being undertaken in Rwanda in Africa so that we can remember our responsibilities to all God's world. Cheques should be made payable to the Diocese of Rochester and sent to Canon Paul Miller, The Vicarage, 37, Kingswood Road, Shortlands, Bromley, Kent BR2 0HG., if possible by January 31st 2008, from whom further information may be obtained. Do, please, use Gift Aid envelopes if you can so as to maximise giving for this very worthwhile cause.

In Christ's Service+



It will not be possible to allocate the collection from any of our Christmas services as they are already earmarked for charitable and missionary purposes. If, however, you wish to support the Bishop's appeal, please send your contribution direct or give it to me or to one of the churchwardens to forward. RIK.



Halling WI

Well our A.G.M. at Halling W.I. has been and gone. Evelyn Low bravely took the chair for our Annual Meeting 2007. Jerusalem was sung, birthday flowers were distributed, and the September's minutes were dealt with. Not much correspondence: invitation to Ditton W.I. Christmas party on the 13th December, District Harvest supper at Ryarsh. We have now been there and a good time was had by all. Betty Head, our stalwart Treasurer, presented the Annual Financial Statement, We have ended 2007 financial year a bit better off than last year. That can't be bad. Good housekeeping by Betty. Notice was given of the 90th Annual Council Meeting of the West Kent Federation 19th March 2008. Mr. David Batty of the Antiques Roadshow fame will be the guest speaker. The Christmas dinner date was put to the members, 4th Dec, lunchtime, at the Wealdon Hall Larkfield.

Ann Hayward then read the Annual Report for 2007.



Cuxton WI

November's meeting had a better attendance than last month, and there were a lot of birthdays this month as well. We were pleased to have Dorothy back again, and she has made a good recovery from her knee replacement. Business did not take up a great deal of time, but several queries that had been raised at the Annual Meeting were dealt with, hopefully to everyone's satisfaction! We were pleased to hear the Craft Sale had raised £25 which will be donated to The Denman College refurbishment appeal. After refreshments and the raffle, we welcomed our speaker, Mr Peter Shear an, assisted by his wife, who gave a most interesting talk on the Life and Works of Rudyard Kipling. He recited several poems written by Kipling and some extracts from his book "Jungle Book", for which he was most well-known. He was an excellent speaker and everyone enjoyed his talk very much.

There have not been many events lately, but some of us went to the Harvest Supper at Ryarsh and

Jean Mattingly was retiring from the committee and Trish Smallwood will fill her place. We ended our A.G.M. without a President, it will be sorted at the first committee meeting. Before our usual refreshments, we had a light-hearted poetry reading session which was different and quite enjoyable, and ended our A.G.M.

Our competitions were judged. Flower of the Month was won by Ann Hayward, with a blue Monkshood, and Evelyn won the "Something to do with Halloween" competition, with a Broomstick. We are all looking forward to our Annual District Carol service at St John's church Halling on Friday 7th December at 7.30pm. We will be host to the other eight institutes in the District. Our service will be more Advent than Christmas but we will end with mince pies and coffee (or tea) as is traditional. Everyone will be welcome
W.I. or
not. PHYLLIS C.

had a super evening. The food was excellent, and left us feeling very full! The entertainment by "The Detling Singers" was very professional, and they sang songs from Musicals and other light-hearted melodies. Unlike some choirs, they did not go on for too long, but left us wanting more. We all thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Cuxton Walking Group went on a walk over Henley Down, visiting Luddesdown Church on the way, and ending up at The Cock in Henley Street, for lunch. We were very lucky with the weather once again, as it was a beautiful day. China Painting and Watercolour Painting Group took a ride down to Canterbury to visit a shop specialising in art and craft material. What a treasure trove! After browsing and buying there we had lunch at a very nice restaurant, and looked round the shops afterwards. It must have been one of the coldest days we have had so far this year!

Next WI meeting is on Thursday December 6th
Christmas Meeting. Ann Harris.

Halling Bell Ringers

Roger dedicated our new ropes, which have now been hung for ringing, on October 28th. We hope these will last another 20 years. New bearings is the next project. We also went an outing with Rochester Cathedral and Frindsbury ringers to East Kent. We wish you as happy Christmas and New Year. God bless. Peter Silver.

Nature Notes October 2007

The month began with overcast skies but it was very mild and the warmth lasted for most of the following days. I walked Murphy along the river path, where, when the sun was shining brightly, the blue of the sky was reflected in the river and when the tide was low, the mudflats, dotted with gulls' claws, glistened in the sun's light. As the days passed, the grassy banks were cut after the last flowers had died. We began to see early morning fog then after its dispersal many days became bright with sunshine and blue skies.

As I walked along the lanes, I was aware of the beautiful colours of the trees and the ripe hips, haws and spindleberries displaying their bright reds and pinks. This autumn has been particularly beautiful.

October 1994

October- bringing golden Indian summer days with fleecy clouds in bright blue skies. The autumn colours of gold, yellow, orange, red and purple light up the countryside. Many species of wild flowers are still to be seen in the fields and along the verges. Particularly beautiful are the delicate field pansies. Ploughing attracts the gulls and crows seeking insects and there is the contrast of colour, brown earth, white gulls and black crows. This is nature's harmony.

October 1996

October began with warm sunshine and blue skies. Wild flowers, hedge cranesbill, viper's bugloss, herb robert, vetch, rosebay willow herb and hedge woundwort, were still to be seen gracing the woods and hedgerows. The green of newly sown crops was like soft down as it emerged from the brown earth, and in the fields where cattle grazed, sparrows and pigeons congregated around the feeding troughs. Southerly winds blowing brought mild temperatures well into the month, also bringing some showers. The leaves in the woods turned yellow and gold, gradually covering footpaths where sweet chestnuts were falling. The leaves' brightness brought an air of sunshine to the dull days, and even in the rain, golden light shone along the paths. The month ended with stormy conditions. Strong winds blew the clouds across the sky. Walking was an exhilarating experience.

October 1997

October has begun with an Indian summer. A very warm sun shines from a blue sky flecked with wisps of cloud. The ploughed fields present new shoots of next year's crops and southwesterly winds blow beginning to dislodge autumn leaves of beautiful yellows, browns and golds. Herb robert, bristly ox tongue, clover, scabious and wild mignonette are still flowering along the verges. The second week brings much needed rain. Sodden golden leaves strew the woodland paths and magpies can be heard chattering raucously. Later, northerly winds bring a definite chill but the sun shines gloriously allowing enjoyable walking in the Weald of Kent. By the seventeenth day, warm sun is shining once again and west winds blow. The Indian summer has returned. In the mornings, webs of gossamer adorn the lawns and shrubs. They sparkle in the hazy sunshine. Northeast winds return causing white horses to form on the river. Canada geese feed on the banks and lapwings forage on the fields. The clocks are put back one hour immediately bringing enclosing darkness but warmth returns. While sitting on a bench in Dean Valley, I watch gnats dancing on the air and listen to birdsong. This summer atmosphere lulls us into a forgetfulness that winter is not far away.

October 2007

Warm weather continued through the rest of the month, which made walking very enjoyable. The 18th was a beautiful day with just a slight breeze from the east. I worked in the garden for part of the morning when the sun's light filled the sky and the surrounding countryside. Spiders had woven their webs, one of which is suspended from the guttering to the heather bed in the front garden.

In the afternoon, I took Murphy for an extended walk by the river, which was low and where gulls circled. Knapweed, pink clover, viper's bugloss, musk mallow and yellow crucifers still bloom.

White frost covered the grass in the churchyard on the 21st then in the afternoon the sun shone warmly. There were days where we woke to fog reminding us that autumn had definitely arrived.

As a result of wet summer months then a warm September with no strong winds the leaves displayed the most beautiful colours and the month closed in a spectacular fashion.

Elizabeth Summers.

30th Strood Scout Group Cheese Auction

7.30pm Saturday 1st December at The Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton.

Back by popular demand - an entertaining and educational event with the thrill of an auction thrown in! An opportunity to get stocked up with your favourite cheeses in time for Christmas.

Entry £4.50 per person - to include light buffet / snacks and cheese samples. Please bring your own drinks.

You can pay on the door, but please call me in advance to book your places, so that we have some idea of numbers. Matthew Wells 01634 727424.

The Birth of the Scout Movement

The ideas of one man have rarely had the impact Baden-Powell's did on the youth of Edwardian England when it seemed there was a need to give idle hands something to encourage them. We often hear that the "youth of today have nothing to do" but today's young people certainly have more to do, and are better educated, than their counterparts in 1907. "B-P" as he became known all over the world was already a celebrity as his defence of the little town of Mafeking in the Boer War had been reported widely. He returned to England a hero of the people. He was also a renowned army scout and intelligence officer, and several military books he had written, especially "Aids to Scouting", a military training manual, was being read and followed by youth organisations. He therefore decided to re-write the book as "Scouting for Boys" and to try out his ideas at a camp for twenty-two boys from mixed backgrounds on Brownsea Island. From this, scout troops began to spring up all over the country and under his leadership the Scout Movement was born. In a very short time the Movement mushroomed into a national and then international organisation. In 1909, 11,000 scouts attended a rally at Crystal Palace and in 1911 scouts were on duty at the coronation of King George V. The scouts, it seemed, were here to stay!

How the Scout Movement Grew

Despite the first world war, scouting continued to grow and by 1922 the scout membership in the world had grown to 1,019,205. In the same year 65,000 cubs and scouts attended the Posse of Welcome to the Prince of Wales at Alexandra Palace. The growth continued steadily and today 100,000 people take part in scouting every day. Worldwide, 28 million people in 216 countries enjoy scouting activities with only a few countries having no scouting at all.

Scouting Today and Tomorrow

So why is this? Well, B-P was a very popular personality and his leadership provided the focus and drive for the movement, and his initial organisation and practical skills provided cohesion. The idea of "getting back to basics", to be as one with nature, to become self-reliant, to be able to take risks and to shoulder the responsibility of our actions can be irresistible in our over-protective world today and would have been so to the kids on the street in 1907. It's almost becomes a primeval driving force to be able to light a fire, cook a meal over it, eat in the open air and sleep under the stars. But is it relevant in our modern world? Today's scouts, whose age ranges from 6 to 25 years, learn by doing, learn to work in teams, learn to think for themselves – all valuable skills in any work environment anywhere in the world. Further, they learn a law and promise to live by which, in turn, helps to make them better persons, and this is the big difference between scouts and any other youth organisation anywhere.

John G Bogg - Assistant Group Scout Leader – 30th Strood Scout Group

Dickens' Country Protection Society



The Society is very concerned about the possible closure of rural post offices. In a number of local communities, the post office and general store is the only shop. The Society's concern is that the social function of post offices is being completely overlooked.

A Happy Christmas to all our members and a good new year too. Kay Roots.