

Services At Michael & All Angles Cuxton		
December 7 th Advent 2	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 2 Peter 3 vv 8-15a p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002
December 14 th Advent 3	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 1 Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1062
December 21st Advent 4	8.00 Holy Communion	Zechariah 2 vv 10-13 p951 Luke 1 vv 39-55 p1026
	9.30 Holy Communion	2 Samuel 7 vv 1-16 p310 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1026
	6.30 Nine Lessons & Carols	
Monday 22 nd December 7.00 pm Scout & Guide & Carol Service		
December 24th Christmas Eve	9.30 Holy Communion	Acts 13 vv 16-26 p1107 Luke 1 vv 67-79 p1027
	5.00 Crib & Christingle Service with Nativity Play.	
	11.00 Midnight Mass	Isaiah 9 vv 2-7 p693 Titus vv 11-14 p1199 Luke 2 vv 1-20 p1027
December 25th Christmas Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Hebrews 1 vv 1-12 p1201 John 1 vv 1-14 p1063
December 28th Holy Innocents	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 15-17 p792 1 Corinthians 1 vv 26-29 p1145 Matthew 2 vv 8-13 p966
January 4th Christmas 2	9.30 Family Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 7-14 p791 John 1 vv 10-18 p1063
Tuesday January 6th Epiphany	7.30 am Holy Communion	Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966
January 11th Baptism of Christ	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p3 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002
January 18th Epiphany 2	8.00 Holy Communion	Hebrews 6 v17 – 7 v10 p1205 Matthew 8 vv 5-13 p972
	9.30 Holy Communion	1 Samuel 3 vv 1-10 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-10 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51 p1064
January 25th Conversion of St Paul	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 1 vv 4-10 p755 Acts 9 vv 1-22 p1102 Matthew 19 vv 27-30 p987
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
December 7th Advent 2	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 15 vv 4-13 p1141 Matthew 11 vv 2-11 p976
	11.00 Holy Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 2 Peter 3 vv 8-15a p1224 Mark 1 vv 1-8 p1002
December 14th Advent 3	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 1-11 p748 1 Thessalonians 5 vv 16-24 p1188 John 1 vv 6-28 p1062
	5.30 Evensong Jubilee Hall	Malachi 3 vv 1-4 & 4 vv 1-6 p961 Philippians 4 vv 4-7 p1181
December 21st Advent 4	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen!	2 Samuel 7 vv 1-16 p310 Romans 16 vv 25-27 p1143 Luke 1 vv 26-38 p1026
	3.00 Carol Service & Christingle	
December 25th Christmas Day	8.00 Holy Communion	Titus 3 vv 4-7 p1199 Luke 2 vv 8-20 p1027
December 28th Holy Innocents	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 15-17 p792 1 Corinthians 1 vv 26-29 p1145 Matthew 2 vv 8-13 p966
January 4th Epiphany Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Baruch 4 v36 – 5 v9 (see JB or NEB) John 2 vv 1-11 p1064
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 60 vv 1-6 p746 Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 p1174 Matthew 2 vv 1-12 p966

January 11 th Baptism of Christ	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 vv 1-5 p3 Acts 19 vv 1-7 p1115 Mark 1 vv 4-11 p1002
	5.30 Evensong Jubilee Hall	Ephesians 2 vv 1-10 p1174 Matthew 3 vv 13-17 p967
January 18 th Epiphany 2	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen!	1 Samuel 3 vv 1-10 p274 Revelation 5 vv 1-10 p1237 John 1 vv 43-51 p1064
January 25 th Conversion of St Paul	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 1 vv 4-10 p755 Acts 9 vv 1-22 p1102 Matthew 19 vv 27-30 p987

Wednesday Communions 9.30am St Michael's		Thursday Communions 9.30 am St John's	
December 3 rd	Isaiah 25 vv 6-10a Matthew 15 vv 29-37	December 4 th	Isaiah 26 vv 1-6 Matthew 7 vv 21-27
December 10 th Ember Day	Isaiah 40 vv 25-31 Matthew 11 vv 28-30	December 11 th	Isaiah 41 vv 13-20 Matthew 11 vv 11-15
December 17 th	Genesis 49 vv 2-10 Matthew 1 vv 1-17	December 18 th	Jeremiah 23 vv 5-8 Matthew 1 vv 18-24
December 24 th Christmas Eve	Acts 13 vv 16-26 p1107 Luke 1 vv 67-79 p1027	December 25 th Christmas Day 8.00 am	Titus 3 vv 4-7 p1199 Luke 2 vv 8-20 p1027
December 31 st	1 John 2 vv 18-21 John 1 vv 1-18	1 st January Naming of Jesus	Galatians 4 vv 4-7 Luke 2 vv 15-21
January 7 th	1 John 3 vv 2-4 Matthew 4 vv 12-25	January 8 th	1 John 4 vv 19-5v4 Luke 4 vv 14-22
January 14 th	Hebrews 2 vv 14-18 Mark 1 vv 29-39	January 15 th	Hebrews 3 vv 7-14 Mark 1 vv 40-45
January 21 st	Hebrews 7 vv 1-17 Mark 3 vv 1-6	January 22 nd	Hebrews 7 vv 25-8 v6 Mark 3 vv 7-12
January 28 th	Hebrews 10 vv 11-18 Mark 4 vv 1-20	January 29 th	Hebrews 10 vv 19-25 Mark 4 vv 21-25

Weekday Services Christmas Week: HC 9.30 am 26th, 29th, 30th & 31st December at Cuxton & 1st January at Halling only.
Copy Date February Magazine: 9th January, 8.30 am Rectory

On Thursday afternoons we have a Mother & Toddler (**Thursday's Children**) service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday (**St Michael's Angels**) 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. We shall not meet 24th & 25th December.

Confirmation 2009 is on June 14th at St Michael's. Please contact rector if you are interested in being confirmed.

Don't forget that, owing to retirements, we shall need two new **churchwardens** at our vestry meeting in April for Halling and Cuxton. Could one of them be you? (You have to be 21, a communicant member of the Church of England and on the electoral roll of the parish.)



Life Is Like A Piece of Christmas Cake

(Marriage is Like A Pint of Beer)

I used to preach a sermon *Marriage is Like A Pint of Beer*. A preacher is always looking for new ways of putting things and headlines that will grab people's attention. How is marriage like a pint of beer? Well a pint of beer has a bit of froth on top, the head, and the body which contains all the goodness. It is good for you in reasonable quantities, even if it is no longer politically correct to say so. Beer contains calories, vitamins and other nutrients. Even alcohol seems to be good for you if not taken to

excess. Certainly, total abstainers generally live longer than heavy drinkers, but moderate drinkers live longer than total abstainers!

The point of the sermon is this. A marriage that is all body, the worthy, stodgy component which contains all the goodness, could turn out to be flat and uninteresting, whereas a marriage which was all froth and no body probably would not last very long. You need both the worthy and the exciting to have a worthwhile marriage.

It also occurs to me that life is like a piece of wedding cake. The material side of life is the cake – the flour, eggs, sugar, butter and fruit all mixed together and baked into one delicious

whole. The spiritual side of life is the icing, nice to look at, very sweet to the taste. For some people, the cake must be the important part. It contains all the nutrients for your every day life. Probably most people would say that the cake is the important part.

A few people might say, however, that it is the icing that matters. After all, people are hardly hungry by the time a wedding cake is cut. What matters is the cleverness of the design of the icing and the skill with which it is executed. People are more interested in seeing and photographing the wedding cake than in eating it. Cutting the cake is the key ceremony, not eating it.

Of course, they are both wrong. You need the cake and the icing. Eating a piece of wedding cake is a sort of communion with the bride and groom. That is why pieces of cake are sent to people who are unable to be at the ceremony. It is why we feel we have to a small piece of cake even if we are already full. For a similar reason, people often save a tier of the wedding cake to be re-iced and eaten at the first christening. The cake is meant to be eaten – but we would probably be disappointed if we were offered a piece without any icing. Cake and icing matter.

Much of what I have said about wedding cake equally applies to birthday cake and Christmas cake. They are extremely nourishing food, but their symbolic significance far outweighs their nutritional value. In fact, at Christmas, your anxieties about your figure are probably telling you to give that cake a miss, whereas the sociable side of you wants to have a piece along with everyone else.

Now I guess that most people are cake people when it comes to life. For them, real life is principally about bread and butter issues – work, housing, food on the table, maybe sport or hobbies. The spiritual is like the icing on the cake. It tastes nice – though too much of it might make you sick. It makes the ordinary look brighter and better, but you can do without it.

On the other hand, there are a few people who only want the icing. They have become so wrapped up in the joy of the spiritual that they have almost become selfish. They have forgotten their obligations to this world. They have

forgotten that it is the same God Who made the spiritual and the material, the icing and the cake. And that is my point, a Christmas cake that was only icing would be pretty unsatisfactory, but a Christmas cake without icing would be a disappointment too. A Christmas cake is an iced cake. Without icing, it is just a fruit cake. Without cake? Well, you could ice a cardboard box, but it would be very disappointing when you came to cut it!

It is the same God Who made Heaven and earth, the spiritual and the material. Christmas celebrates the Word made flesh, the Son of God become Son of Man. The spiritual and the material are one person in Jesus Christ as (but not just as!) icing and fruit cake are one Christmas cake.

A life lived purely for the material, the daily humdrum, without regard to the spiritual, is a flat, empty life. Worship makes life special. Prayer elevates us from the humdrum. Praise is the thrill in life. The icing may, in your opinion, be an optional extra on a Christmas cake. But worship is not an optional extra in life. It makes life what it is meant to be, just as icing that rich fruit cake you made months ago, makes it into this year's Christmas cake.

However, a life which merely looked like a Christmas cake, a veneer of spirituality covering an empty cardboard box, an allegedly spiritual life, which did not care about the material world and the people who live in it, would be merely a sham.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is spiritual and material, divine and human, immortal and mortal. Christians are called to be like Him – cake and icing, rooted in the earth, nourished by the sun in heaven. Don't give up on either. You are incomplete without the spiritual; you are incomplete without the material. We believe in the resurrection of the body. It is a body and it does rise.

I'm tempted to say that the Church is the marzipan, holding it all together, but that would be a metaphor too far!

Merry Christmas. Roger.

Parish Lunch December 3rd. This will be a Christmas dinner. All welcome. 12.00, Church Hall.

Thomas Harris Close

Monday 6th October saw the official opening of Thomas Harris Close, mhs home's new housing development in Halling High Street. It was a special occasion attended by the mayor, Cllr David Carr, and our ward councillor, Cllr Ray Maisey, Brigadier Holman and other representatives of the Royal West Kent Regiment (now part of The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment), the vice-chairman of Halling Parish Council, Cllr Leslie Hitchcock, plus many members of the Harris family and numerous other local people.

The new development provides attractive accommodation for people seeking an economical home with the opportunity to part buy / part rent. It was quite an occasion with a First World War soldier, a bugler and the unveiling of an appropriate memorial to Sgt Harris MM VC. Terrence Mundy had produced an informative booklet for mhs homes and this was distributed at the event.

The project has not been without controversy. At the opening there were people present who still questioned whether our council housing ought to have been made over to mhs and there is still a strong feeling in the village that the old Harris House (sheltered accommodation for elderly people) ought not to have been demolished.

We were all united, however, in wishing to honour Sgt Harris' bravery and devotion to his country even after 90 years. His service with the Buffs began at the very beginning of the Great War in August 1914. He served throughout the War, twice being wounded, and was awarded the Military Medal in 1918. It was in August 1918 that, with incredible bravery, he mounted three attacks on machine gun positions which were holding up the British advance. He lost his life in that third attack, which apparently he undertook purely voluntarily in support of his lieutenant, who would otherwise have gone in alone. Sgt Harris' courage and self-sacrifice encouraged others to follow. This advance by the British Army was the beginning of the end for the Germans, who, of course, were forced to agree to the Armistice on November 11th that year.

One final note. It was pointed out to me that the picture in Mr Mundy's brochure of the front of Halling Church with the German field gun which was placed there in honour of Sgt Harris between the two world wars, is captioned *Lynch Gate*, whereas of course it should read *Lych Gate*. A lynching is a hanging and we don't practise that in the village, despite the wry comment of my correspondent that maybe Medway Council would like to lynch the present incumbent! *Lych* means corpse and the lych gate is where the priest meets the body at the beginning of a funeral service. Ours has the Latin inscription *Mors ianua vitae*, which means *Death is the gate of life* - an appropriate reminder, which puts all our struggles and triumphs in this life into their proper context. When we die, we shall stand before God and have to account for the way we have used our time on earth. Then there is eternal felicity for those who have died in the Lord. RIK.

Nature Notes October 2008

On the first day of the month, cool North West winds drove billowing grey clouds across the sky from which the sun shone. We drove to Larkfield along the by-pass where the colours in the trees were beautiful in yellow, gold and orange. On our return, we took Murphy to the river which was low and rippled in the wind. There were some heavy showers in the afternoon between periods of golden sunshine and blue skies. The evening skies were clear with twinkling stars. The following day, fresh North West winds blew again bringing clouds of white and grey scudding across the sky. I took Murphy to the river in the morning and watched sparkling water meandering across the mud flats. On the 4th a cold west wind blew grey clouds across the sky in the morning. There were some sunny spells with blue sky in the early afternoon, then clouds scudded across the sky again and the strength of the wind increased. Rain fell in the late afternoon.

The following day, which was also wet, a sparrow hawk came into the garden and perched on the handle of a fork. It sat for a while before flying away across the railway cutting. It was a magnificent creature. I took Murphy by the river on the 7th where I noticed that the grassy banks had been cut revealing thick roots of the trees. Rushes in the water had turned a rich brown. A flock of starlings dipped and dived over the river and waste ground. It was a beautiful sight. Once again, David drew my attention to the spider's web in the garden. It was glistening with raindrops.

The following afternoon, which was sunny and warm, we walked by the river where I watched five beautiful swans as they flew down river and I could hear the whirring of their wings. We walked

by the river again on the 10th and along the hedgerows I saw black privet berries and deep pink spindle berries. Along the grassy banks a few flowers had escaped the mower - yarrow, clover, mallow, yellow crucifers, and dandelions and scabious.

I heard birds singing early on the 12th which began foggy. By mid day it was dispersing and the warmth of the sun broke through revealing blue skies. I watched a beautiful dragonfly as it sunned itself on the garden seat. The next day, by the river, I saw cormorants, with outstretched wings, perched on two buoys in the river. Some of the trees lining the path and road had lost most of their leaves and I realised autumn really was here. Fresh North West winds brought a chill to the air on the 16th, and then on the 18th westerly winds brought some warmth.

The 19th was a beautiful autumn day with golden sunshine beaming down from a clear blue sky. Grey, billowing clouds drifted across the sky in the afternoon but they brought no rain and it was glorious as I walked through the churchyard and the edge of Six-acre Wood to the village. Walking up the alley from Bush Road, I made my way up to Mays Wood. The woodland paths were strewn with brown and golden leaves which crunched beneath my feet. The sun lit up Dean Valley and the ancient beech tree displayed its autumn tresses. Tiny catkins clung to hazel boughs. I emerged from the woods into Church Fields where bristly ox tongue, dandelions, pink and white clover, speedwell and mallow bloomed. Hips, haws spindle berries and old man's beard adorned the hedgerows where a few blackberries lurked. Red deadnettle bloomed on the bank beside the churchyard wall. The sun's beams lit up the garden in the early evening.

Along by the river on the 20th, screeching gulls flew overhead, while a black crow, perched on a lamp post, cawed loudly. The next day we left the river to walk the grassy paths round the pools where a heron flew and redshank called. Hawthorns, bedecked with deep red haws, were losing their leaves. Bristly ox tongue and dandelions bloomed. A fox disappeared into the undergrowth as we made our way across the grassy tussocks and where brown teasel heads stood like sentinels. The sun shone brightly into the late afternoon.

Billowing grey clouds marched across the sky all day on the 23rd from the west as we walked by the Grey River and grey mud flats. Two large crows strutted along the path ahead of us before flying across the water. On the afternoon of the 25th, I watched a beautiful red admiral butterfly perched on the garden tap. British Summertime ended for another year. Rain fell steadily all day on the 26th then the 27th brought an early taste of winter. The next day the skies were blue and there was a chill in the air. A great spotted woodpecker came to feed on the nuts along with great tits and a collared dove. Dunnock foraged on the grass beneath the lilac tree. The afternoon of the 30th was sunny as we walked by the river, then in the evening the skies became very overcast and there was a loud thunder crash which threw the trip switch in the house cutting off the electricity. This happened again later in the evening when heavy rain fell. The early morning of the final day of the month brought clear blue skies but clouds drifted across later driven by a cold North West wind. As the sun came up, the sycamore leaves, wet from last night's rain, glistened. As the sun set at 4 pm, the garden was lit, momentarily, with a golden glow.

Elizabeth Summers.

Windy Nights Robert Louis Stevenson

**Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long, in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?**

**Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.**

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Thorne (3), Mrs Burr (10), Mrs Chidwick (26), Mrs Warman (51) & Miss Crowhurst (158) – drawn by Mrs Heasman.

Church Hall Draw: £40 to Dorothy Taylor, drawn by Matthew Wells.



Halling WI

November is the month for Halling W.I.'s Annual meeting, but as always all of our members attended with the exception of a couple having a late holiday. Mary Fennemore welcomed us all, and after Jerusalem presented the birthday roses. The minutes of the previous meeting were read. The invitations for Christmas parties from other W.I.'s in the District are coming in fast and furious and it's not even November. Kings Hill Ham Hill and Snodland and Ditton are all keen for some of our ladies to visit them. We had a large amount of correspondence from the National Federation, regarding a passed resolution on disturbed people being sent to ordinary prisons, and a new 3yr project which has been launched at National level, called "WOMEN REACHING WOMEN". The questionnaire has been sent back to National, duly filled in. Ann Hayward read the Annual Report for 2007-2008, and Betty Head went through the Annual Financial Statement. A great deal of money passes through her hands during the course of the year, which also means a great deal of work, Thank you Betty. You do a great job.

Mary then asked for names for next year's committee, and yes we have managed to "persuade" two new members onto the committee. Ann Heaseman was willing to come back on as Craft Representative, and Trudy Fenton-Scott is our completely "new girl". As Mary is standing down as President, we now have a new one.

Margaret Sullivan has agreed to have a go in the chair, Good Luck Margaret, we are all behind you.

After tea, Ann Hayward produced a funny "peculiar", and funny "ha-ha" quiz, causing a lot of brain strain and a lot of laughs. All the answers were parts of the body. Here are a couple of examples, Clue, Prayer House. What on earth could the answer be? Church, chapel, or Synagogue. Nobody has anything like that on their torso. Answer. Temple. Simple really, when you're told the answer. Clue. Tom. Could I think of an answer? I must be getting old, Answer Thumb. See what I mean, funny and peculiar.

Flower of the Month was won by Betty Head with a lovely seasonal Michaelmas Daisy and the competition, something beginning with A, was won by Jean Mattingly with 4 Aces.

Our November speaker is Mr. Phillip Godliman, his subject, The History of Gypsy Travelers. Should be interesting. The competition letter is the last letter of Michaelmas, S, and there are dozens of things to choose from. So come on girls, we should have over twenty for Mr. Godliman to sort out. You can bring your Slippers, Shirts, or even your "Stays". Then you might like to bring some Sugar, Soap or Salt, but whatever you bring you can all bring your Smiles.

Come and join us, We always welcome a visitor.
Phyllis Chidwick.



Dickens' Country Protection Society

HIGHAM, CHEQUERS STREET

The Society was delighted to learn that Gravesham Borough Council has designated Chequers Street, Higham as a Conservation Area. The Society has been concerned for some time that the Chequers Public House could be at risk as they view this as an important building in this part of Higham. Whilst the building may be converted with some development in the remainder of the site, its demolition would be a serious loss.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

We should like to take this opportunity to wish all our Members a Happy Festive Season.

Kay Roots.

Suffi poem - attributed to Hazrat Inaya Khan

*I asked for strength
And God gave me difficulties to make me
strong.
I asked for wisdom
And God gave me problems to learn to solve.
I asked for prosperity
And God gave me a brain and brawn to work.
I asked for courage*

*And God gave me dangers to overcome.
I asked for love
And God gave me people to help.
I asked for favours
And God gave me opportunities.
I received nothing I wanted.
I received everything I needed.*

From the Registers

Baptisms:

18th October (St Luke)
19th October

Rhys Tony Reid
Jake Robertson

Poplicans Road
Charles Drive

Wedding:

25th October

Michael Tynan & Helen Osborne

Cuxton

Funerals:

17th October
23rd October
29th October

Dorothy May Trufitt (89) Rochester Road, North Halling
Kenneth William Oliver (69) Bush Road
Ethel May Heighes (84) formerly of Formby Terrace

Parishioners were also sorry to hear of the death in October of Peter Chesmer of Pilgrims Road North Halling.

Confirmation 2009

The Bishop of Rochester is coming to confirm on 14th June next year at 9.30 am at St Michael's. If you are thinking about Confirmation at this time, please speak to the Rector. Classes will begin in the New Year.

With a Confirmation at Cuxton at 9.30 on that date, it will not be possible to hold an 11.00 service at Halling. I hope Halling people will wish to attend the Confirmation at Cuxton, but, if you think that there ought to be a Communion service at Halling that day (as there probably ought) I will hold a celebration at 8.00 am. Please let me know if you wish me to do this. Roger.

Thanks

A letter has been received from Sandy Weaver of the Redvers Centre, thanking us for the harvest gifts we sent for children and families. Toys from our December 7th Gift Services will also be sent to the Redvers Centre.

Halling Historical Society

December 18th: 7.30 Jubilee Hall. Mr Jones will speak on a History of Medals. Please bring any medals you may have.



Cuxton WI

The November meeting was well attended in spite of it being a horrible wet night. We were pleased to welcome one new member and a visitor, and also the return of Jeanne Harris, a former member who has recently returned to Cuxton. As well as a number of November birthdays, we also congratulated June Hanrahan who celebrated her Golden Wedding Anniversary last month. Business included several invitations from other WIs to their Christmas meetings. This is always a very busy time of year socially for the District. Our speaker was an enthusiastic young worker from the Wildlife Trust, telling us, with the aid of slides, about the management of Queendown Warren. This is a large area situated near Bredhurst which has quite a history, going back as far as King Henry II. We learned a lot of things

about Glow Worms, Dormice, Bats, flowers and insects which are only found in that area. They graze the land with different breeds of sheep, cattle and ponies. We all sat there enthralled and came home knowing quite a lot more about wildlife than when we started!!

The Walking Group went on a 2 ½ hour walk around the East Malling area on a beautiful, sunny day, finishing as usual at a pub for lunch. Next walk around Jeskyns, near Cobham.

Three of us went to the super new Holmesdale School (real state of the art) for "A Day with a Difference" organised by the West Kent Federation. What a marvellous day! Three speakers who all held us spellbound, a young man telling us about the Wild Beasts of Kent and the research he has done to prove they are not just a

myth. After lunch a retired Forensic Officer (top notch) from Scotland Yard, who told us how they were sent out to the Tsunami area to identify bodies. What a task he and his team had. We could have listened all day. The third speaker was the 2006/7 High Sheriff of Kent, a lady, who told us about her year in office and what she achieved. A marvellous speaker who had flown in from

Florida that morning and showed no sign of jetlag! A really memorable and thought-provoking day!

Our next meeting is on Thursday 4th December - Christmas Party.

Ann Harris.

CUXTON COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Friends of our School,

The time has passed so quickly since September, in fact so many folk have remarked how quickly this year has flown by.

The foundation stage children have settled well into school, and come in each day happily and brimming with confidence. They are a sociable group, who like to share anecdotes, and only yesterday showed me their crepe paper streamers which they took onto the playground and swirled around in the wind. They were also keen to share their topic on spiders (I wasn't so keen!) and show me the spiders they had made from dough and baked.

Over half term Mr Thomas worked extremely hard creating a garden for the younger children, with sensory paths, a 'billy goat gruff' bridge and posts fixed firmly into the ground to create shelters. They also have several planting areas for vegetables, shrubs and bulbs. Thank you for your kind donations of Morrison's 'Let's Grow' vouchers, which will be put to good use with this project.

Children in years 1 and 2 have also settled well into their new classes, and are working hard. They have been enjoying work on materials, clothes and famous people. It was interesting however to note how few children knew about Guy Fawkes, and why we have fireworks. However, I was pleased to learn that Lizzy, one of our year 2 girls, knew there is a new president elect in America, and she almost pronounced his name correctly. Well done Lizzy! Each week I set the children a challenge which they can take part in. They enjoy this, and it gives them the opportunity to research at home with parents, or on the internet, and develop their writing/handwriting skills, and their understanding of what is required. This week the challenge is Hibernation - what it means, and to name 5 creatures that hibernate. It is interesting to see how many take part, their age and gender.

Soon we will be rehearsing the Christmas play, and the various school festivities will be upon us. Our play this year is Baboushka, and for those of you who may not know, the meaning of 'Baboushka' is Mother Christmas, and the story is about Baboushka going to see baby Jesus to celebrate his birth. If you are a grandparent and would like to see the play, please contact the school office on 718162. The performance for grandparents will be held on Thursday 11th December at 9.30am.

On Friday 12th December we will be holding our Christmas Bazaar in the school hall from 3.30-5.30pm. Do come along and support us. The money goes towards resources for both schools. Everybody is welcome - you may even glimpse that figure in red too!

The last week of term will be spent making cards and calendars, watching a performance of Dick Whittington from a theatre company visiting school, a Christmas party and a roast turkey lunch! We finish on Friday 19th December, children excited, and staff looking forward to spending the holiday with their families.

The staff, children and I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas, and a healthy and peaceful new year. Sandra Jones, Headteacher.

Christmas Coffee Morning

Cuxton Church Hall 10.00 – 1.00, Saturday 13th December.

Various stalls and attractions. Christmas Raffle.

Father Christmas!

Refreshments include Beaney's mince pies!



What Christmas Means to Me.

By Max, the Rectory Spaniel.

At Christmas, all my routines get changed. Daily church services are at different times (and much better attended). I see lots of friends at church and all my family come to the Rectory. I love seeing people. Master says I am a very gregarious dog. There is plenty of good food around – not all of it entirely what is recommended for dogs. Everybody seems to be in a good mood. Daily walks become less predictable. I don't necessarily get taken out at the times I expect, but sometimes I get taken farther and to new places when he does eventually decide to take me out.

Everybody talks about peace and good will and they can't be bad, can they? Master says that, if you read the Bible, you will see that the Good News is not just for humans, but for the whole creation. So that must include dogs, mustn't it?

A merry Christmas and A Happy New Year from all of us at the Rectory!