

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 31st May Pentecost	9.30 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 22-27 p1135 John 15 v26 – 16 v15 p1083
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity Sunday	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 6 vv 1-8 p690 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 1	9.30 Confirmation	Ezekiel 17 vv 22-24 p844 Mark 4 vv 26-34 p1006
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> June Trinity 2	8.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 10 vv 1-16 p768 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038
	9.30 Holy Communion	Job 38 vv 1-11 p538 II Corinthians 6 vv 1-13 p1161 Mark 4 vv 35—43 p1008
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 3	9.30 Holy Communion	Lamentations 3 vv 22-33 p826 II Corinthians 8 vv 7-24 p1163 Mark 5 vv 21-43 p1007
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 4	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 1 (paraphrased dramatically by Rector) Ezekiel 2 vv 1-5 p831 Mark 6 vv 1-13 p1088
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 31st May Pentecost	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 Romans 8 vv 22-27 p1135 John 15 v26 – 16 v15 p1083
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Revelation 4 vv 1236 Mark 1 vv 1-13 p1002
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 6 vv 1-8 p690 Romans 8 vv 12-17 p1134 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 1	9.30 Confirmation at Cuxton	
	4.30 Holy Communion followed by tea. Jubilee Hall *	Ezekiel 17 vv 22-24 p844 Mark 4 vv 26-34 p1006
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> June Trinity 2	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Job 38 vv 1-11 p538 II Corinthians 6 vv 1-13 p1161 Mark 4 vv 35—43 p1008
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> June Nativity of St John the Baptist	6.30 pm Holy Communion Concert at 8.00 pm. See below.	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 Galatians 3 vv 23-29 Luke 1 vv 57-66 & 80
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 3	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Lamentations 3 vv 22-33 p826 II Corinthians 8 vv 7-24 p1163 Mark 5 vv 21-43 p1007
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> July Trinity 4	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 14 vv 1-17 p1140 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 2 vv 1-5 p831 II Corinthians 12 vv 2-10 p1165 Mark 6 vv 1-13 p1088

\* Because there is no Communion at Halling on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> June, the evening service at the Jubilee Hall that day will be Holy Communion at 4.30, with the tea to follow so as not to communicate on a full stomach.

Readings Wednesdays at 9.30 HC at St Michael's		Readings at 9.30 HC at St John's	
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	1 Peter 1 vv 18-25 Mark 12 vv 18-27	4 <sup>th</sup> June	1 Peter 2 vv 2-12 Mark 12 vv 28-34
10 <sup>th</sup> June	2 Corinthians 3 vv 4-11 Matthew 5 vv 17-19	11 <sup>th</sup> June Corpus Christi	1 Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 6 vv 51-58
17 <sup>th</sup> June	2 Corinthians 9 vv 6-11 Matthew 6 vv 1-18	18 <sup>th</sup> June	Matthew 6 vv 7-15
24 <sup>th</sup> June Nativity of St John the Baptist	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 Luke 1 vv 57-80	25 <sup>th</sup> June	Genesis 16 vv 1-16 Matthew 7 vv 21-29

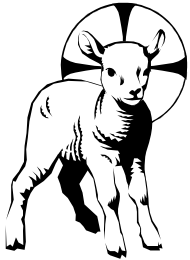
Copy Date July Magazine 12<sup>th</sup> June 8.30 am Rectory.

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

### Music in June

This Summer the Brook Concert Orchestra and Cuxton Music Group will be putting on a concert at St John's Church, Halling. The programme will be light classics and music from the shows. The date is our Patronal Festival, 24<sup>th</sup> June. The starting time is 8.00pm.

The Patronal Festival Eucharist will be at 6.30 pm.



#### How Do We Think about God?

I guess that there are some people who don't think about God at all. Many atheists seem antagonistic. They not only do not believe in God; they seem angry at those of us who do.

For some people, God is a last desperate resort when all else fails. Some people resent a God Who apparently wants to tell them how to live their lives. Some people feel let down by God. For some people, God is a great comfort. They find great strength in prayer. Some derive their moral principles (and the strength to live by them) from their knowledge of God. If you belong to one of the world's great religions, what you think about God will partially be determined by the official teachings of your faith and partly by your own personal experience of Him.

On Trinity Sunday (7<sup>th</sup> June) this year at our 9.30 service at St Michael's we shall be exploring what it says about what we believe about God that we decorate the church building in certain ways and carry out our worship in a particular manner. (If you are wondering why I am not yet saying we will do something similar at Halling, it is because the furnishings at St John's are too heavy to move around easily, but I am exploring ways around that problem!) However, it is true that we decorate our church buildings in a particular way

and we conduct our worship the way we do and we behave as we do in church because we think of God in particular ways. We may keep silence out of a sense of reverence and awe or we may chatter to other people in a celebration of Christian fellowship. We may keep silence because it excludes other people or chatter because we don't care about reverence or awe. We may treat certain areas of the building with extra respect in order to emphasise the holiness (the separateness) of God. Or we may not respect particular areas like the chancel and sanctuary (or the church building itself) for either of two reasons. The first (and, I suspect, most common) is that we don't treat holy things with reverence because we have little sense of the holy. The second (and much better reason) for not treating any particular space as holy is that we believe that we are incorporated into God's holy people and that therefore nothing is common or unclean to us. To the pure, everything is pure. To the holy, all things are consecrated and there is no need to make distinctions or to separate the ordinary from the sacred.

It is certainly true that how we think about God determines how we behave. If we believe that God is intimately involved in our daily lives, we will act in ways that we think will please Him or else in conscious rebellion. If we believe that God is distant, apathetic or non-existent, the way we behave will be without reference to Him. If we

fear the judgment of God, we will be careful to live in accordance with His commandments. If we believe that those commandments are summarised in the command to love, we will base our lives on love. If we are in love with God, our lives will reflect that love. If we trust His mercy to set us free from sin and the fear of death, we will live as His children in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. If we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, we will look to the Bible for guidance as to how we should behave.

Whether we worship, whether our lives are offered back to Him as a living sacrifice, whether we find in Him the strength and guidance that we need, whether the way we treat other people derives from our relationship with God, how we envisage spending eternity - all these things depend on how we think of God.

Can I tell you how I think about God? I believe that there is nothing except what God has made. The whole universe depends on God and He is all in all. He is not only infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; He is intimately involved in everything that happens - from the creation and destruction of galaxies to the quantum level of subatomic particles. All things are sustained by Him and nothing is outside His love and providential care. God is love. His special care is the human race. He has made us in His image, that image of love. He commands us to live by the Law of love. He made me and every human being who has ever lived and He made each one of us the person that he or she is. God is intimately involved in the personal story of each and every human being and He holds the history and destiny of all the nations in His hands.

It is only in loving relationship with God that any of us can truly live.

Yet God, in His infinite goodness, has given us the gift of freedom. We are free to rebel against God, to ignore Him or even to oppose Him, to reject His commandments of love. We all do rebel and the consequence of our rebellion is alienation from God. We turn our backs on Him, the Source of all that is good. We choose death instead of life. We shut eternity out of our souls.

But, such is the love of God, that He never gives up on us. He reaches out to us in love. He becomes one of us in the person of Jesus. He shares our life and death. He teaches us again and again, by word and example, how we ought to live, what we should believe, how we ought to act. In Jesus, God pours Himself out in love and the Death of Jesus on the cross is therefore the propitiation for all the sins of the world. God has done everything in Jesus to restore us to Him. All that it is necessary for us to do is to repent and to believe.

God the Holy Spirit is God active in the world, dwelling in the hearts of believers, restoring us as children of God. All that it is necessary for us to do is to repent and to believe.

If you don't know this, you really need to find out for yourself. Maybe you could find the way if you joined us or some other worshipping congregation as together we seek the way of God and open ourselves to His grace?

Roger.

### Ringling For St George

The Bishop asked us to ring our bells in honour of St George on 23<sup>rd</sup> April this year and to fly our flags. Despite very short notice, I am proud to say, we rang our bells in both our parish churches.

Flag flying was unfortunately a little more difficult. It is years since the flag pole disappeared from St John's. Does anyone know where it meant? The problem at St Michael's is that we have only three categories of people:

- Those who know how to fix the flag to the pole but cannot or will not climb the tower,
- Those who can climb the tower but do not know how to fix the flag to the pole and
- Those who can neither climb the tower nor fly the flag.

Obviously we need people in a fourth category. Are there any out there?

(This came by e mail. I know who sent the e mail on, but I'm not sure where it originated. RIK.)

Last week I was in West London attending a meeting. While I was in the airport, returning home, I heard several people behind me beginning to clap and cheer. I immediately turned around and witnessed one of the greatest acts of patriotism I have ever seen. Moving through the terminal was a group of soldiers in their uniforms, as they began heading to their gate everyone (well almost everyone) was abruptly to their feet with their hands waving and cheering. When I saw the soldiers, probably 30-40 of them, being applauded and cheered for, it hit me. I'm not alone. I'm not the only red blooded Briton who still loves this country and supports our troops and their families. Of course I immediately stopped and began clapping for these young unsung heroes who are putting their lives on the line everyday for us so we can go to school, work, and enjoy our home without fear of reprisal. Just when I thought I could not be more proud of my country or of our service men and women a young girl, not more than 6 or 7 years old, ran up to one of the male soldiers. He knelt down and said 'hi,' the little girl then asked him if he would give something to her daddy for her. The young soldier didn't look any older than maybe 22 himself, said he would try and what did she want to give to her daddy. Suddenly the little girl grabbed the neck of this soldier, gave him the biggest hug she could muster and then kissed him on the cheek. The mother of the little girl, who said her daughter's name was Courtney, told the young soldier that her husband was a Corporal and had been in Afghanistan for 5 months now. As the mum was explaining how much her daughter, Courtney, missed her father, the young soldier began to tear up. When this temporarily single mum was done explaining her situation, all of the soldiers huddled together for a brief second. Then one of the other servicemen pulled out a military looking walkie-talkie. They started playing with the device and talking back and forth on it. After about 10-15 seconds of this, the young soldier walked back over to Courtney, bent down and said this to her, 'I spoke to your daddy and he told me to give this to you.' He then hugged this little girl that he had just met and gave her a Kiss on the cheek. He finished by saying 'Your daddy told me to tell you that he loves you more than anything and he is coming home very soon.' The mum at this point was crying almost uncontrollably and as the young soldier stood to his feet he saluted Courtney and her mum.

I was standing no more than 6 feet away as this entire event unfolded. As the soldiers began to leave, heading towards their gate, people resumed their applause. As I stood there applauding and looked around, there were very few dry eyes, including my own. That young soldier in one last act of moment turned around and blew a kiss to Courtney with a tear rolling down his cheek. We need to remember everyday all of our soldiers and their families and thank God for them and their sacrifices. At the end of the day, it's good to be British.

## **RED FRIDAYS**

Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing Red every Friday. The reason? British men and women who support our troops used to be called the 'silent majority'. We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for Country and home in record breaking numbers. We are not organized, boisterous or over-bearing. We get no liberal media coverage on TV, to reflect our message or our opinions. Many British people, like you, me and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of Britain supports our troops. Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home, sending a deafening message that every Briton who supports our men and women afar will wear something red. By word of mouth, press, TV -- let's make Great Britain on every Friday a sea of red much like a homecoming football team. If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family, it will not be long before Britain is covered in RED and it will let our troops know the once 'silent' majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than the media lets on.

The first thing a soldier says when asked 'What can we do to make things better for you?' is...'We need your support and maybe your prayers'...

Let's get the word out and lead with class and dignity, by example; and wear something red every Friday.

### Interesting Thought

Two gunslingers in a western town are shaking hands. One says to the other, "You know, once we started talking and respecting one another, it turned out that there is, after all, room in this town for the both of us!"



### Halling WI

Hurrah! For the first time in quite a while all our members were present at our April meeting and all in good spirits (no sad news). Margaret welcomed us all and we sang our theme song "Jerusalem". It starts the evening off well. Minutes were read and signed, and Trish was our only birthday girl. Watch out Trudy. May is coming. Correspondence was varied. Aylesford and Eccles W.I. are organizing an outing to Michelham Priory to which we were invited should we wish to go. An Invitation to Halling Primary School for their Macmillan Nurses Tea Party The school did a very good social afternoon. We were entertained by some of the pupils. The W.I. like to receive these invites as some of us like to get involved with the community. A Craft day at Snodland in July, with various crafts on offer, including Stump Work. A young mum spoke to Ann Hayward recently. She said she didn't want to join the W.I. because she couldn't knit. What do people think the W.I. do. Don't they read the newspapers?

Our speaker for the evening was Jennifer Smith from "Valley of Vision", the organization who are supposed to be "sorting out" the mess behind St John's church, the Bishop's Palace site, with those dreaded sycamore trees covered with ivy. I was very surprised at the area this organization is covering. It includes eight villages and according

to Jennifer ,in May we are going to be linked up for a while. Who do you think we are going to be paired up with? Yes, you have guessed it, Wouldham. They have got to quickly build a bridge, open the ferry (first mending the ferry steps) or we have all got to learn to swim. Personally, I can't see the point of it, as the whole project has got to be finished by 2010, or when the funding runs out. Jennifer had a few nice slides but mostly facts and figures. We weren't very enlightened. Ann Seagar gave the vote of thanks.

After refreshments, which this month were provided by two of our younger members, Jennifer Smith judged our competitions. Flower of the Month was won by Ann Hayward, and I won the photograph of "Somewhere in Halling". Jennifer must have liked my Three Graces fountain, but Ann Heaseman's lych gate in the Snow and Margaret's Chapel Lane were much better in my opinion, but you don't argue with the judge.

At our May meeting we have a B in our Bonnets, one resolution to be discussed at the Albert Hall in June."SOS for Bees". Perhaps we had better have a Beatle drive for our Social time or even a Spelling B. We are not encouraged to knit at our monthly meetings, but we do have a laugh. Phyllis.

### On the Subject of Trees

Cuxton residents will have noticed how much the Six Acre Wood has been improved by the recent extensive thinning. There is more light for ground cover plants and wildlife. The remaining trees have a better chance of healthy growth. There are more open views from the public paths and there is less shade for gardens in Woodhurst Close. It makes me wonder why the council stuck a tree preservation order on the identical and contiguous woodland in the Rectory grounds. Maybe things would have been different if officers had followed correct procedures regarding representations from the public and access to the site, officers with a personal interest had been kept out of the determination process, officers had consistently stuck to the truth, and elected councillors had had a genuine voice in the decision – something I have doubted since I read the committee's decision in the local paper published the day before the committee actually met! Roger.

### Parish Lunch June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Christine Eede is not able to prepare our lunch on this date as she normally does so sumptuously on other first Wednesdays. The lunch will, however, go ahead at 12.00, but it is suggested that some of you might like to bring things we could share. All welcome.

### Grass

At the Annual Meeting we learned that we are very short of money for cutting Cuxton churchyard this year. In previous years, we have been very grateful for the generous donations which have enabled us to keep it tidy. Any help would be gratefully received by me or the churchwardens. Thanks in anticipation. Roger.

## Nature Notes April 2009

April 1<sup>st</sup> is a beautiful day with clear blue skies and warm sunshine but with a nip in the air. I look up into the early morning sky and watch silver gulls flying high. The garden is full of colour and birdsong. I sit in the garden drinking in the warm sunshine. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is a day of contrasts in the weather. The morning is grey and there is dampness in the air as I walk by the river with Murphy. A sharp northwest wind blows. The water, which is low, is grey matching the colour of the sky. Gulls call and forage along the mudflats. Cowslips, grape hyacinths, dandelions and red deadnettle bloom on the banks. We then walk by the ponds. In the afternoon the clouds disperse and warm sun shine beams down from clear blue skies but the wind is cold. I cross the fields and through Mays Wood with a friend. Violets and carpets of celandines and wood anemones raise their beautiful heads to the sky. A speckled wood butterfly settles on dog's mercury near a clump of pale yellow primroses. The wych elm buds have burst. The next morning begins with misty skies but eventually the sun shines. I take Murphy to the river and walk round the ponds over which a heron glides. Celandines, red dead nettle and ground ivy bloom and hawthorns have broken into leaf. Gulls hover over the river. On the 6<sup>th</sup> I listen to the songs of great tits, a greenfinch and a robin. The next day, I notice along a roadside verge, white honesty which I have not seen before. Purple flowers bloom alongside the white. In the afternoon, Murphy and I walk by the river, where the wind is quite strong and cold and where gulls forage on the mud flats. Their feet leave tiny patterns on the wet mud. Cowslips bloom along the banks. The 8<sup>th</sup> after early rain becomes full of sunshine with a north west wind blowing. I walk along the path in Six acre Wood and along Purty's Shaw where wild cherry blooms like snow then climb up into Mays Wood where I gaze on clumps of violets, early bluebells, carpets of wood anemones and celandines and pink lady's smock. I gaze across the valley where trees are gradually bursting into leaf. The ash trees remain asleep. Beech leaves have been born like newly formed butterflies' wings. Flower buds have formed on the hawthorns. Rain has fallen during the night and it remains damp with drizzle while I walk by the river with Murphy. Mists hang over the valley and, as I look up river, I am unable to see Cuxton. The sky, the river and the mudflats are grey and a westerly wind blows rain into my face and Murphy is not impressed.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, a beautiful jay comes to the garden and pecks at the nuts from one of the feeders. It is very alert, watching what is occurring in the garden. I remain very still watching this beautiful bird. Easter Day is grey and cool. A pair of magpies fly across the ponds where we walk the next day and the sun shines

brightly. On the 15<sup>th</sup> I take Murphy to the Brookland Lakes where, on the sparkling water, I watch a graceful swan and coots. The trees are dressed in their beautiful spring greens and golden dandelions and coltsfoot bloom. Some of the coltsfoot has developed large seed heads. Blackthorn is fading but a few dainty blossoms remain. I see speedwell and red deadnettle and butterflies hover over the grasses. Murphy enjoys new scents but isn't keen on the puddles along one green section of the walk. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> I watch a jay as it feeds on the peanuts. Its large body, clinging to the feeder looks almost comical. The flower heads on the lilac are showing signs of displaying their purple heads. Rain falls all day on 17<sup>th</sup>. The next day we walk with Murphy on St Mary's Island where moored boats sway on the river which is being whipped up by the wind which is cold. On the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> I walk across the fields full of golden buttercups and dandelions to Mays Wood where I find celandines, wood anemones, violets ground ivy, sanicle and lady's smock. I make my way up into Wingate Wood where seas of beautiful bluebells fill the air with their fragrant perfume. I watch two speckled wood butterflies dancing together on the air. The early evening skies are a clear blue. On the 21<sup>st</sup> we drive with Murphy along the flower bedecked lanes to Camer Park where the trees display their spring beauty. The grass is very wet with dew. We sit in the sun for a while before returning along the country lanes past woodland filled with bluebells. The morning sky of the 23<sup>rd</sup> is very pale, almost grey and a north west wind blows as I walk by the river with Murphy. More flowers are adorning the grassy banks. I see two ox eye daisies and a single scabious peeps out from among the grasses. In the garden I watch fluffy seed heads floating on the air. When we walk round the ponds on the 25<sup>th</sup>, I watch five mallard ducks as they snooze in the sun. Large deep blue clumps of ground ivy bloom along the way. The next day I see carpets of white stitchwort flowers in Mays Wood. They have replaced the now faded wood anemones. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, after early morning mist, the sun beams down from a blue sky. A spider's web hanging between the twigs of a dead elm glistens in the sunlight. The ivy leaves shine after yesterday's rain and a song thrush trills from a conifer branch.

Early mist greets the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> but this soon clears to give a beautiful sunny day. The skies are blue with a few white clouds drifting across from the south west. In the afternoon I take Murphy to Brookland Lakes which sparkle in the bright sunshine. Red and white deadnettle, speedwell, garlic mustard, buttercups, daisies, green alkanet and dandelions bloom. May blossom is beginning to cover the

hawthorn branches. Soon it will look like snow. The banks are adorned with frothy cow parsley. As we walk the grass covered paths I hear the cuckoo calling. Later I hear a nightingale. What a beautiful sound that is! The warmth continues throughout the afternoon with birdsong filling the air. It is cooler on the 30th but it is bright with some sunshine as, in the morning, I walk with Murphy by the river. The tide has ebbed leaving the mudflats glistening. The aspen leaves quiver in the westerly winds. Later, in the afternoon, I

sit in the garden breathing in the beautiful perfume of the lilac and basking in the late afternoon sunshine. A young chaffinch and a wood pigeon come to the seed tray. I hear it calling from the holly tree afterwards. Two squirrels come to the seed which explains why the feeder has emptied so quickly. A handsome song thrush perches in the topmost branches of a dead elm and trills melodiously.

Elizabeth Summers.

### **Home Thoughts from Abroad" by Robert Browning**

Oh to be in England  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, Some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf  
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
In England-now!  
And after April, when May follows,  
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!  
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge

Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops-at the bent spray's edge-  
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first fine careless rapture!  
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
The buttercups, the little children's dower  
-Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

St John's Draw April: £5 each to Miss Thorne (14), Miss Jade Thorne (23), Mr Mitchell (70), Mr Pratt (97) & Miss Crowhurst (158) – drawn by Mrs Ballard. Please contact Betty Head if you would like to take part.



### Cuxton WI

This was the Annual Resolutions Meeting where members discuss the resolutions that will be taken forward to the AGM in the summer. This year there was only one item on the agenda - namely SOS for Honey Bees. Great concern has been shown for the plight of bees whose numbers are in serious decline all over the world. These insects are of immense value to us all as they are natural pollinators of our food crops, indeed without them, scientists are predicting that civilisation will gradually starve to death. Bees are being infected by a Varroa mite, chemical crop spraying, changes in habitat especially lack of Red Clover crops as these are essential for the bees, and several unknown causes

which completely destroy hives. The WI is planning to ask the government to invest serious amounts of money into researching for a cure. Cuxton WI voted 100% in favour of the resolution.

After the business part of the meeting, members enjoyed a Tombola stall and raised £45 towards our funds. With costs of speakers, travel and entertainment increasing we are always having to find ways to raise money. Next month will be our birthday celebration and we are all looking forward to an enjoyable evening with good food and lively entertainment.

Sheila.

### Dickens' Country Protection Society



The AGM was held in March. We would like to have seen more members, but there was much to discuss about matters the Society is currently pursuing. Mr Theobald and Mr Fribbins were returned unopposed as chairman and deputy chairman. Mrs Lippiatt and Mrs Yarworth likewise as secretary and treasurer. The committee was re-elected en bloc. Please contact Mrs Lippiatt [palippiatt@aol.com](mailto:palippiatt@aol.com) if you have any planning concerns.

### Riddles

What's the difference between a railway locomotive and a deciduous tree?

The locomotive leaves its shed and the tree sheds its leaves.

Why did the butterfly flutter by?

Because it saw the dragon fly drink the flagon dry.

## From the Registers

### Baptisms

17<sup>th</sup> May

Daniel Ray Butlin

Nine Acres Road

### Funerals:

24<sup>th</sup> April

Elsie Dorothy Moore (95)

formerly of Cuxton

8<sup>th</sup> May

Freda Ernestine Fournier (96)

Rochester Road

Please remember in your prayers our Confirmation candidates: Denis Hills and Patrick & Sylvia Mitchell.

### Thanks

I was very moved by the most generous gifts you gave me as I retired as one of the churchwardens of St Michael's at the APCM this year. Over the years I have tried to serve the Rector and congregation to the best of my ability and always (I hope) in the best interests of the parish.

Thank you, Roger, for your personal gift to me of the Book of Common Worship. It will be much treasured.

The superb pen and address book, together with the most generous B & Q token, were so kind of everyone, as were the thoughts expressed on your thank you card.

I trust you will give the support you gave me to my successor, Jenny Beaney.

Yours sincerely, Peter Crundwell.

I was very moved at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to receive a retiring present. The flowers were lovely and the book token yet to be redeemed. Roger's book I will also treasure.

It seems a little unfair for one person to receive a reward when so many others give so much to our church life. But I do appreciate the loving thoughts that went into those gifts. During my six years in office I received a lot of help and encouragement from my fellow wardens, especially Norman, who carries much of the responsibility for St John's. Thank you.

I wish Jenny and Phyllis well as they take up their duties and pray that they will have as much support and help as I had. Reversal of roles!

Mary Acott.

### A Prayer for the High Court of Parliament, to be read during their Session

Most gracious God, we humbly beseech thee, as for this Kingdom in general, so especially for the High Court of Parliament, under our most religious and gracious Queen at this time assembled: That thou wouldest be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, the safety, honour and welfare of our Sovereign, and her Dominions: that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations. These and all other necessities, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

### The Uselessness of Rules

Over the last few days, we've got sick of hearing members of parliament attempting to justify shameful conduct by insisting that they didn't break any rules. Much more seriously Haringey Social Services and Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust recently received top marks for keeping the rules just before it came to light that people in their care were dying of neglect. Obsession with rules undermines personal responsibility, excuses the lazy and incompetent, provides cover for wrong-doers and demotivates those who really care. Perversely, rules may have the reverse of the effect intended as policemen, social workers, teachers, medical staff, etc. are forced to devote their time and energy to soul-destroying paperwork when they ought to be out doing the jobs they love. Rules can even be used by corrupt or incompetent officialdom to avoid blame as when they struck off the nursing register the nurse who blew the whistle on the appalling treatment of geriatric patients at the Royal Sussex Hospital. They said she broke confidentiality rules! War criminals were not allowed to excuse themselves by saying, *I was only obeying orders*. The only way to run the world is for people of integrity to take personal responsibility for their actions. Good people ought not be constrained by rules. Bad people ought not to be allowed to shelter behind rules. What matters is not outward conformity to the rules, but character. And our character is determined by our relationship with God. It is only as children of God that we become the people we ought to be and behave as we should. External rules imposed in the moral vacuum which is a secular and multicultural society are worse than useless! This is the premise of the above prayer which should perhaps say more often!

Roger.