

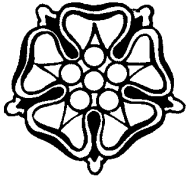
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> March Lent 1	9.30 Family Communion	Genesis 9 vv 8-17 p10 I Peter 3 vv 18-22 p1219 Mark 1 vv 9-15 p1002
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 2	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 17 vv 1-17 p16 Romans 4 vv 13-25 p1131 Mark 8 vv 31-37 p1012
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 3	8.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 5 v1 – 6 v1 p61 Matthew 10 vv 16-22 p975
	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus p77 I Corinthians 1 vv 18-25 p1144 John 2 vv 13-22 p1065
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	9.30 Family Communion	Numbers 21 vv 4-9 p158 John 3 vv 14-21 p1066
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> March Passion Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 31 vv 31-34 p793 Hebrews 5 vv 5-10 p1204 John 12 vv 20-33 p1080
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April Palm Sunday	9.30 Family Communion	Mark 11 vv 1-11 p1016 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Mark 14 & 15 p1020
Sunday 1st March Lent 1	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Romans 5 vv 12-19 p1132 Luke 13 vv 31-35 p1047
	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 9 vv 8-17 p10 I Peter 3 vv 18-22 p1219 Mark 1 vv 9-15 p1002
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 2	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 17 vv 1-17 p16 Romans 4 vv 13-25 p1131 Mark 8 vv 31-37 p1012
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Genesis 12 vv 1-9 p13 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 3	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Exodus 20 vv 1-17 p77 I Corinthians 1 vv 18-25 p1144 John 2 vv 13-22 p1065
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Numbers 21 vv 4-9 p158 Ephesians 2 vv 1-10 p1174 John 3 vv 14-21 p1066
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> March Passion Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Jeremiah 31 vv 31-34 p793 Hebrews 5 vv 5-10 p1204 John 12 vv 20-33 p1080
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April Palm Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 Mark 12 vv 1-12
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9a p737 Philippians 2 vv 5-11 p1179 Mark 14 & 15 p1020

Wednesday Communion @ St Michael's		Thursday Communion at St John's	
March 4 <sup>th</sup>	Jonah 3 Luke 11 vv 29-32	March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 55 vv 6-9 Matthew 7 vv 7-12
March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Jeremiah 18 vv 18-20 Matthew 20 vv 17-28	March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Jeremiah 17 vv 5-10 Luke 16 vv 19-48
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 Matthew 5 vv 17-19	March 19 <sup>th</sup> (St Joseph)	II Samuel 7 vv 4-16 Romans 4 vv 13-18 Matthew 1 vv 18-25
March 25 <sup>th</sup> (The Annunciation)	Isaiah 7 vv 1-14 Hebrews 10 vv 4-10 Luke 1 vv 26-38	March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Exodus 32 vv 7-14 John 5 vv 31-47

Copy Date April Magazine 13<sup>th</sup> March 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](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk) <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>



### The Widow's Mite

In Bible Study recently we found ourselves discussing the well-known story of the Widow's Mite (Mark 12 vv 41-44). The story is that Jesus and His disciples are sitting in the Temple watching what people put into the treasury. Several rich people ostentatiously donate large sums of money. Then comes a poor widow who gives two mites which make a farthing. This was a very small sum of money, the mite being the smallest coin then in circulation, but it was all that she had. Jesus said that this widow's offering of one farthing was worth more than all the big offerings made by the rich people.

Notice. Jesus is not saying that it is better to give a little than a lot. The point is that the widow gave everything she had, whereas the rich only offered back to God a proportion of their wealth. The widow was acting in the spirit of the first and greatest commandment (the one which many Jews recite every day): *Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and with all thy strength.*

This story instantly raises two questions. The first is this. Was the widow wise to put everything she had in the temple treasury? How would she feed and clothe herself and any dependents she might have? We'll come back to that one.

Secondly, we must wonder whose offering the temple authorities would rather have? Which is more useful in maintaining a religious institution – a farthing from somebody who only has a farthing, or £1,000 from a billionaire? In our parish we have to pay for the heating, lighting and maintenance of two extremely expensive mediaeval buildings. We have to pay our rector. We have to contribute our parish share (something like £8,000 pa I think) to the running of the diocese. We might want to improve our buildings. There are obviously sundry other expenses<sup>1</sup>. And, of course, we want to support missions and charities. So which would we prefer for St Michael's and St John's, congregations of billionaires, ostentatiously writing us cheques for thousands of pounds, or congregations of poor people giving us all that they had (in our money perhaps a single hundred pounds)? If we don't

answer this question the way Jesus does, I think we need to re-examine our priorities for the Church. After all, it is His Church, not our Church!

The Church is about building up people spiritually, not about stone buildings, their care and maintenance. What kind of giving builds us up spiritually? Giving generously in order to impress other people does not build us up spiritually. It is a form of boasting and shows other people up. It is more likely to damage us than to make us better people. I can, however, think of three good reasons for giving away our money and our possessions.

1. We might give to meet a need. We see news of a disaster in Africa and we send money. Our son is trying to buy a house and we give him some money towards a deposit. Certainly we give to the Church because the Church needs the money to pay its bills.
2. We give simply because we love. We give people presents of things they do not need just because we love them. I think this is one big reason why people give to God's Church.
3. We give our money and possessions away in order to get rid of them. We recognise that an excess of material things blunts our spiritual perceptions. So we give them away to someone who needs them more than we do.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March we celebrate the Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel told the Blessed Virgin Mary that she had been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus. Mary responded by offering her life to God. We are all called to do the same – to offer our lives, everything we own, everything we are, back to God – because it is only in giving that we can receive. The offering of your life to God does not necessarily mean putting your whole income in the plate each week! Offering your life to God includes looking after yourself and your family. Nevertheless, it also means regarding everything we have as His, being wise stewards of our property, our talents and our time. It means a life of unselfishness and generosity. It means becoming increasingly God-like in our self-sacrificial love. Only so do we experience the fullness of eternal life.

<sup>1</sup> If you come to the Annual Meeting at Halling at 10.00 on 25<sup>th</sup> April, you will find out all about our finances.

## BOGNOR CONFERENCE 2009 ( In a nutshell)

People, Passion, Purpose, Prayer, Praise, Priests, Phyllis, and-----a Paddle.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 09.

After a safe journey to Bognor, accommodation sorted, the conference proper began at 3 o' clock, on the central stage of Butlin's Holiday camp. After the ceremonial washing of our hands, upwards of 600 delegates were welcomed by the Bishop of Chichester and our own Bishop Michael, who had flown in from the U.S.A, that morning. After the mad rush for tea and coffee (we didn't bother) our first Bible reading, by the Rev Chris Wright, an excellent speaker. Could he unravel Deuteronomy? (Something he did every day of the conference at sometime or another.)

Now the wine and soft drinks began to flow before the *getting to know you* session. This was not appreciated by many as you couldn't see clearly who you were getting to know. (The lighting left a lot to be desired, not the organisers' fault.) Supper, our first meal, took me back to school days, lots of food, something to suit everyone, and this was the only time we really had time to socialise. For those who had still got a bit of stamina left there was the late night movie, but us poor old souls retired to our beds, which were very comfortable, I might add. End of the first day.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 09.

Although the day started at 7. 30am for the energetic ones, (some even went jogging) Mary, Margaret and myself decided that breakfast would be our beginning, preparing us for our first session of bible study "Singular Love" led once again by Chris Wright

The first main speaker of the day was the Rev John Bell, a lovely man, Scottish, silver haired and he wore red shoes. His message was *One People*. He was so inspiring, could have listened to him for another hour. As it was, the seminar that John Bell presided over in the afternoon attracted over 150 delegates. He had expected 50. After lunch, the seminar sessions began, all of us going to various venues of our choice. I chose *Preaching from the Old Testament Why and How?* So good was the Rev Chris Wright. At this point one word seemed to keep cropping up – *Imagine*. Tea over, our second main speaker for the day was Dr Paula Gooder. Her theme was *One Passion*. Paula was a fairly young mum, and had her work cut out to follow John Bell. She wasn't quite so

sure of her message, we had a few *This is what I think* or *It might have been*. So here *Imagine* came to the fore again. For me, she was a bit harder to understand. At this point we had our first worship sessions, with eight different forms of worship to choose from. I decided to go to the Celtic/Ionian service taken by the man in the red shoes. It was very moving and lovely. More wine, a *getting to know you* session, and supper, after which we had our first entertainment of the conference. We were having *An audience with Adrian and Bridget Plass*. Poor Bridget had had a fall. So Adrian had to entertain us on his own which wasn't a problem. I had been led to believe that Adrian was like Jim Davidson. As I was sitting behind Bishop Michael, I was a bit on edge. My information was very wrong. Someone had been telling me porkies, but he was so funny, and what he said was so true, especially when he put a piece of the Bible in today's teenage language. It made Bishop Michael laugh. Bishop Michael asked me if I was going to the late night movie, *Brideshead Revisited*. I told him no, but I may do *Mama Mia* tomorrow. Off to bed we went Haven't seen the sea yet, but with the rain and the puddles it looked as if there had been a very high tide. 2<sup>nd</sup> day over.

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 09

Weather bright and fair, but a bit chilly (After all it is only January). As the previous day we started with porridge and a fry-up to stoke us up for another full day, starting with a little bit more Deuteronomy. I am getting very familiar with Deuteronomy. The main speaker for the morning was Mark Russell. Mark is well up in the Church Army, a very vibrant speaker, Rochester's answer to Ian Paisley (voice wise) no chance of nodding off in his talk. His message was *One Purpose*. He certainly had us sitting on the edge of our seats. Such energy! Still he was quite young, but I don't think I ever had that much *get up and go*.

We went to find the sea before lunch and the brave or stupid among us had a PADDLE. Much refreshed with clean feet and ample lunch we had our daily seminars. I went to Jean Kerr's sensory worship. This I thoroughly enjoyed, it brought out the kid in me, (I've had to buy myself a bubble machine. Next week I will buy some play dough).

At my second seminar *Sharing One Church, One Faith, One God*, I met up with visitors from our link partners, from Estonia, Tanzania and Zambia.

Our second main meeting of the day was for me the least interesting, a bit above my head, but the speaker Rev Alison Morgan didn't put her subject *Together* over as well as the rest and the soft chairs did get a little bit hard, Mary and I then went to Choral Evensong, led by St George's Beckenham. But we still hadn't had what I would call a good sing. The powers that be might get the message before it is time for us to go home. I kept putting out gentle hints.

Our evening entertainment was a magician. Magicians are for children's parties. I was quite prepared for him to saw me in half, but he wasn't that clever, and I wasn't born yesterday, but his little snowstorm at the end was pretty. For Margaret and myself the evening was only just beginning. We were off to the pictures to see *Mama Mia*. I haven't been to the cinema for a very long time. Screens are not my scene, but the antics of some of the audience were very entertaining. We went out into the most horrendous weather of the conference. I prayed that it might clear up before it was time to go home the next day. 3<sup>rd</sup> day over.

Church Hall January 2009 draw. : £40 to Julia Wells, drawn by John Bogg.  
St John's Draw: £5 each to Mr Head (2), Mr Mattingly (66), Mr Smith (113), Mr Mitchell (69), Mrs Parris (53) – drawn by Mrs Ballard

#### NAFAS

The National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year and, to commemorate the event, a pedestal arrangement was placed on the north side of the altar at St Michael's at the beginning of February. Cuxton Flower Arrangers is a members of NAFAS and their support of the Church has been much appreciated, including the splendid flower festivals we have held in the past. RIK.

#### Churchwarden Situation

As you know, one of our wardens at Cuxton and one at Halling have decided to retire this year. I hear rumours that the Halling vacancy is likely to be filled, but so far nothing for Cuxton. I do not really like to interfere as these wardens are lay people elected by lay people to work with me. My only formal role in their appointment is to preside at the election (in which I do not have a vote) and, in extreme cases, to veto unsuitable appointments. Candidates must be at least 21 years old, communicant members of the Church of England and on the parish electoral roll. Nominations cannot be taken at the meeting, which is at 10.00 on 25<sup>th</sup> April at Halling Church. So please consider beforehand if it could be you or whom you could nominate. Nomination forms are available in church or from me.

Roger.

#### A Biblical Puzzle

Lot was told to take his wife and daughters and flee. Lot and his daughters escaped the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. But what happened to the flea?

Joke: Did you hear about the pregnant bed bug? She have birth in the spring!

Last morning, packing done, still raining and nearly blowing a gale. After breakfast, Rev Chris Wright presented our last Bible study, *Ultimate Choice*. I really have enjoyed the four sessions. Our last main meeting of the conference was *The Way Ahead* including the Eucharist, our own Bishop Michael presiding, and at last someone had got the message. God had answered our prayer. *Guide me O thou Great Redeemer* was our first hymn, easier to sing than *Ancient Words* and with much more gusto. Bishop, Dean, and a few odd clergy were in their robes. It felt much more reverent. After the Eucharist, we ended the service with *How Great thou Art*. What better hymn to end the conference. We went out into Surprise! Surprise! Bright sunshine and blue sky. It wasn't long before we were saying our good byes and went our separate ways. My postscript must be driving through the beautiful South Downs, the sky in front was as black as ink and above us the sky was a brilliant blue, the biggest brightest rainbow spanned the heavens and the dual carriage way. We couldn't have had a better end to our conference than God's smile. Amen. I'm sorry but I haven't mentioned Doris or Nathan, but that's another story. Phyllis.

## From the Registers

### Funerals:

16 <sup>th</sup> January	Lindsey Jane Coomber (50)	Vicarage Road
11 <sup>th</sup> February	Daisy Margaret Gibson (92)	Downsland House
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Edward Thomas Parris (86)	Essex Road

Parishioners were sorry to hear of the death of Sheila Monkton. Sheila was well known in her professional role as a nurse and as a great supporter of the Guiding Movement. She will be much missed by her many friends.

We were also sorry to hear of the death of Rex Wilkin, formerly of Cuxton.

RIK.

### Bluebell Wood Charity Walk 2009

This will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April in the woods above Upper Halling. Meet at 10.00 in the Browndens Road car park and please join me and my family and friends for a second time in a sponsored Bluebell Wood Charity Wood in aid of registered charity *the Eve Appeal*. This is the charity for research into ovarian cancer and other gynaecological conditions. The walk will be the same as last year (4.2 miles) and will be the same route, taking about 2 ½ hours. Bring a drink and a biscuit!

For sponsorship forms and any other queries, please call Patrick Lawry on 01634 240892. Thanks. Let's do it again. We will make a difference.

Pat Lawry.

### Musical Plans For the Future

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 planned 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.

### Dickens' Country Protection Society



Some years ago, the artist Geoffrey Hammond died tragically in a canoe accident at Yantlet Creek. Following his death, the Society erected a cairn on the foreshore in his memory. Later, when his wife died, her name was added. Both names were recorded on a bronze plaque. Unfortunately, these have been stolen from the cairn. The Society will be looking at ways of replacing the plaques, but it is doubtful whether they will be done in bronze. Kay Roots.



If anyone would like to advertise in 2009/2010 magazines to contact Margaret Guest on 240644 by the 6th March 2009.

To hire the church hall, please contact Malcolm Curnow on 719585.

To join the planned giving scheme, please contact Marie Hendey.

## Nature Notes January 2009

This New Year has begun grey and cold. There is not a breath of wind so that the bare branches of the trees remain so still, standing like sentinels watching over the scene. Birds come to feed while the squirrel wrestles its way through the branches of the lilac in order to tuck into the nuts in the bird feeder. I can hear bird calls coming from within the branches of the conifer and the holly as I replenish the supply of nuts and seed. Later in the day as the light begins to fade all remains so still and only occasionally a bird flies into the lilac branches. Will it snow this month I wonder?

The 2<sup>nd</sup> is almost spring like with blue sky and sunshine. In the middle of the day a white egret comes to the garden pond looking for fish. It is driven off several times before it eventually flies away to the river. I see gorse bushes in full golden flower along the banks as we drive to St Mary's Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> reveals a carpet of snow over the grass, plants and trees and the countryside across the railway cutting. There are animal tracks, probably a fox, leading up the drive. Blackbirds chase each other over the snow laden grass. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, a golden sun rises above Bluebell Hill and its light streams through the windows. Snow still lies on the fields and in the garden while the pond and bird baths are frozen. Later, in the afternoon, the setting sun lights up the trees on the embankment. For a brief spell they turn to gold. Pink light adorns the sky as the light begins to fade. The next afternoon, I walk along Pilgrims Road when beneath grey skies it does not feel so cold. I watch and listen to rooks circling overhead as they prepare to roost for the night. On the 9<sup>th</sup> the skies are grey before the sun rises. There has been another frost but not as severe as on previous days. The sun shines lighting up the garden and melting some of the ice. The squirrel investigates the lilac only to find the nut feeder has disappeared after all the nuts have fallen out of the feeder thanks to the little rascal. I watch grey and pink clouds drifting across the sky from the east. Night falls and a grey mist, almost obliterating the moon, wafts across the sky. On the 10<sup>th</sup> the air is so still. The trees and shrubs and grass are white with frost and a grey mist covers the hills and fields beyond the river. A lone great tit feeds on the nuts in the lilac and two large crows perch fleetingly at the top of a bare sycamore tree. The sky brightens as the sun rises over the hill still shrouded in mist, then it

disappears as the fog wraps its tentacles over the scene. In the afternoon, I walk along the river path with Murphy. The water and the sky are grey and a cold wind blows off the river.

The 12<sup>th</sup> is frost free and grey. The next morning I listen to chaffinches' cheerful songs heralding spring, probably premature but it signals hope of new beginnings in the world of nature. Having walked to the village via the main road, I return through Six acre Wood where ivy leaves shine after a shower of rain, and the stems reveal green berries. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, fog, quite dense, hovers over the scene and the air is damp and cold. Birds come to feed and I hear some birds singing despite the bleak surroundings. The fog does not lift and darkness falls early. Grey days follow. There is some pale sunshine on the 20<sup>th</sup> but keen westerly winds blow. The next day salmon pink and grey clouds drift across the sky from the west as the sun rises over the hill, while mist hovers over the river and the fields beyond. The trees are silhouetted against the sky, their bare twigs like bent and twisted fingers.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, frost lies on the grass and the skies are grey, but as the light increases, it becomes clear that the sun will shine. The sky becomes an egg shell blue and golden sunshine beams down as I walk to the village. I hear birdsong in the garden where great tits and a robin come to feed. Dunnock peck on the grass, a long tailed tit alights on the nut feeder, a collared dove pays a short visit and two blackbirds take a bath in the pond. On the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>, I walk through the churchyard and along the upper path of Six acre Wood, where, along the bank I spy a tiny white feather on the tip of an ivy leaf. Further along, frost lies on thick branches and a single floret of white deadnettle blooms. In Mays Wood arum leaves and cow parsley plants are emerging through the moist earth. Elders have burst into leaf. In Church Fields, where the golden sun is beautiful, hawthorns bear lichens and hips cling to their twigs. Beyond the river, glistening in the sunlight, the fields are covered in water after heavy rain. Rooks and magpies fly out of an ash tree near the church. As I descend our steps, a red admiral hovers in front of me, a beautiful sight.

The early morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> is grey and cold but eventually the sun, very pale, disperses the cloud, the skies become a pale blue from which the golden sun, by late morning, gleams. Murphy and

I walk along the river path where several pigeons are foraging. Gulls call from the glistening mud flats for the river is very low. Mist hangs over the hills towards Cuxton and beyond. I hear a mistle thrush singing. The next morning, mist hangs over the hills and fields and frost covers the grass. The pale sky is flecked with salmon pink clouds in the east which then become golden as the sun rises over Bluebell Hill. Cold winds blow from the east. We drive to Hartley to see a friend and on our way along Bush Valley I spy catkins hanging delicately on their twigs. Later in the afternoon Murphy enjoys running in the large garden. The early morning eastern sky of the 31st is aflame,

then it pales as the sun rises. Later in the morning, I walk to the village where I see catkins, a starling chirping on a bare twig and two blackbirds scuttling across the grass. A cold east wind blows. In the afternoon I take Murphy to the rippling flowing river which reflects the blue of the sky as we return to the car, the sun beams brightly in our faces. As the light fades in the early evening, the bare branches are motionless against the clear, pale sky.

My poem for this month is a favourite of mine and is most applicable for the time of year.

**Elizabeth Summers**

Perched on my city office stool  
I watched with envy while a cool  
And lucky carter handled ice  
And I was wandering in a trice,  
Far from the grey and grimy heat  
Of that intolerable street  
O'er sapphire berg and emerald  
floe  
Beneath the still cold ruby glow  
Of everlasting polar night,  
Bewildered by the queer half  
light,  
Until I stumbled unawares  
Upon a creek where big white  
bears  
Plunged headlong down with  
flourished heels  
And floundered after shining  
seals through shivering seas of  
blinding blue.

**The Ice Cart    Wilfred Wilson Gibson**

And as I watched them, ere I  
knew,  
I'd stripped and I was swimming  
too  
Among the seal pack, young and  
hale,  
And thrusting on with threshing  
tail,  
With twist and twirl and sudden  
leap  
Through crackling ice and salty  
deep,  
Diving and doubling with my kind  
Until at last I left behind  
Those big white blundering bulks  
of death  
And lay, at length, with panting  
breath  
Upon a far untravelled floe  
Beneath a gentle drift of snow

Snow drifting gently fine and  
white  
Out of the endless Polar night,  
Falling and falling evermore  
Upon that far untravelled shore  
Till I was buried fathoms deep  
Beneath that cold white drifting  
sleep  
Sleep drifting deep,  
Deep drifting sleep

The carter cracked a sudden  
whip:  
I clutched my stool with startled  
grip,  
Awakening to the grimy heat  
Of that intolerable street.

Christian Aid Lunch

19<sup>th</sup> March, St John's Church from 12.00.

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY NEWS

Thank you to all our box holders for their donations towards the Children's Society in 2008. The money was counted at the end of November this time and paid in to the account in December and January. The final total

was £288.06, which is very good in view of our slightly depleted numbers. Some of the boxes are looking a little worn out so if anyone would like to trade in their trusty old box for a shiny new plastic one, please let me know. If anyone else would like to join us in our efforts by keeping a collecting box at home and putting spare change in it during the year, I would be very happy to supply you with a box as well. Please contact Julia Wells on 01634 727424.

ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Rectory Garden, Easter Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> April. All welcome as usual.

Log on and listen for an audio presentation of the Bible [http://www.moreloveradio.com/audio\\_bible/](http://www.moreloveradio.com/audio_bible/)

## News from Cuxton Community Infant School

Dear friends of our school,

We are now at the end of what has been a busy half term, and finish school tomorrow with a pantomime- Cinderella! I am sure there will be much excitement and Boos, hisses and laughter!

We had to close due to the bad weather conditions for two days, a difficult decision to make because it affects so many folk, but safety has to come first and bad roads, paths, access to the school site and staff living some distances away in many cases had to be taken into consideration. On return to school, some children went out to play- carefully, in small groups and made a snowman- pictures can be found on the school website. They had a marvellous time!

Jeremy from the Guildhall museum came into school and met with each class showing old toys and house hold artefacts from the 'olden days'. The children were quite amused at some of the toys, a great difference from all the Nintendo machines and super hero equipment around now!

Classes have been on village walks to study the 'street furniture' in Cuxton and to read maps, learn about a key on a map etc. Discussions have taken place about how we can make Cuxton a better place. In the past when this area has been covered, we have had a funfair mentioned, a big supermarket/ toy shop, an adventure theme park and an Olympic sized swimming pool! The children have then been asked to think about all the effects this would have on the village!

We celebrated Chinese New Year in school by talking about the celebrations that happen across the world, including the importance of the colours red and gold, the stories behind the dragon/ beast and how the years were named after animals. The children have had fun finding out which animal year they were born in and the character traits of the animals. Mr Tang, very kindly provided each child with a fortune cookie to take home.

After half term the year 2 children visit the central hall in Chatham to sing with other Medway schools, in a Music festival. We also begin performing our class assemblies to parents and of course, Mothers day and Easter celebrations. A busy time continues!

Well that's all from us at the Infants, take care, keep healthy and lets hope we have no more snow,

Sandra Jones, Head teacher.



### So What Did You Think of the Snow?

By Max the Rectory Spaniel

I was very pro-snow! It looked great, all those flakes falling and swirling in our garden. You can watch them through the window and they are nearly as much fun to chase as wind-blown dry leaves, although, for some reason, I'm not normally allowed out unsupervised until the postman has been! You can also roll in lovely thick fallen snow and I am trying to decide whether or not it is better to roll in than frost. Really hard frosts have their attractions too. You can walk in the woods when the mud is frozen without getting filthy, and when there is a full moon! But that is another subject.

Snow was good on the walks front too. When the snow first came, Master got so excited that we had extra walks. He even trusted me off my lead in the woods, which was great, but then I got so excited that he had a job to catch me and, when I ran on ahead coming back and made him run to catch up with me, he came over all spoilsport and put me back on the lead long term! [Master is really still a schoolboy at heart. When he went to London last week, instead of getting on a number 11 bus which was going where he was going, he got a number 15 because it was a Routemaster and then had to find a way to get from Fenchurch Street to Liverpool Street in no time flat.]

Even when the novelty had worn off, the snow and frost were still good for walks. Most mornings, Master either takes me for a walk before Mattins or else he goes for a run. Well, I'm glad to say, he has become something of a wimp. In the old days, nothing would put him off going for a run if that was what he had put



his mind to doing. I've known him come in from running bleeding where he has slipped over on the ice or so cold that the sweat is frozen to his running vest. Not any more. Master is getting old too! Too cold and he doesn't go running and, if doesn't go running, I get a walk. What else is there to do at that time in the morning?

The cold weather does, however, seem to have led to a decline in church attendance and that has been reflected in poorer collections. The treasurer is quite worried. Not only are we behind in what we owe in parish share to the Diocese by several thousands of pounds; she is afraid that the parish can't, at this stage, pay anything towards Master's stipend. Just so long as he doesn't decide to economise on dog food, I suppose I'm all right, but I don't know where it leaves the Church? Still God has given the people of Cuxton and Halling plenty of time, money and talents to maintain His Church here. So, I suppose, if you let it go under for lack of resources, that is your choice.

Anyway, I don't want to finish on a discouraging note and Master won't let me anyway. God pours out His love on the world just as the snow comes down from heaven. It blankets and purifies the world, forcing us to reassess our priorities. What matters is surely how we respond to that love.