

We're carrying on with Holy Communion at Cuxton at 9.30 am on Wednesdays and Sundays and at Halling at 9.30 on Thursdays and 11.00 on Sundays. Cuxton Church is open for personal prayer Wednesdays & Sundays. Please sanitise and socially distance.

For now, we shall be producing the magazine online only. It can be found on my webpage <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk> and I can email it to anybody who asks. There will be no charge until we are back on paper. I'll carry on with the advertisements in the online edition, but I shan't charge advertisers for 2021 unless and until we can return to paper copies. Copy date for May is April 9<sup>th</sup> 8.30 am at the Rectory.

I'm sending out a weekly email newsletter and a weekly sermon which can also be found on my webpage. If you would like to be added to the list of those who receive these, please let me know. Please also feel free to share the contents, forward them, print them, pass them on in any way you would like to. The thing is to keep in touch and to support one another.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

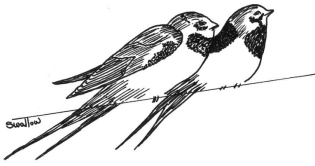
Services May 2021			
2 <sup>nd</sup> May Easter 4/5	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Genesis 22 vv 1-18 p22 Acts 8 vv 26-40 p1101 John 15 vv 1-8 p1083	
9 <sup>th</sup> May Easter 5/6	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 55 vv 1-11 p742 Acts 10 vv 44-48 p1105 John 15 vv 9-17 p1083	
13 <sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion Halling	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Mark 16 vv 14-20 p1024	
16 <sup>th</sup> May Easter 7 / Sunday after Ascension	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 1-26 p1092 John 17 vv 6-19 p1085	
23 <sup>rd</sup> May Pentecost / Whitsun	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 15 vv 26&27 p1083	
30 <sup>th</sup> May Trinity Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 6 vv 1-8 p690 Romans 8 vv 12-17 p1134 John 3 vv 1-17 p1065	
Holy Communion Wednesdays @ Cuxton 9.30 am		Holy Communion Thursdays @ Halling 9.30 am	
5 <sup>th</sup> May	Leviticus 25 vv 1-24 Luke 5 vv 1-11	6 <sup>th</sup> May	Numbers 9 vv 15-23 Luke 5 vv 12-26
12 <sup>th</sup> May Rogation Day	Jeremiah 14 vv 1-9 John 6 vv 22-40	13 <sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 Mark 16 vv 14-20
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Numbers 22 v36 – 23 v12 Luke 7 vv 11-23	20 <sup>th</sup> May	Numbers 23 vv 13-30 Luke 7 vv 24-35
26 <sup>th</sup> May	Micah 3 vv 1-8 Matthew 11 vv 25-30	27 <sup>th</sup> May	Exodus 35 v30 – 36 v1 Matthew 12-32

Copy Date June Magazine: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 8.30 am Rectory.

### Being Practical

A man takes his little boy to the zoo. He warns the little chap not too get too near the dangerous animals in case they eat him. "But, Daddy," says the son, "If they eat you, which bus do I need to take home?"

Two old ladies take Concorde to New York. One asks the stewardess to tell the pilot not to travel faster than sound. They want to have a nice little chat!



I was sent these two very pretty pictures for the May magazine. Actually (as you might remember if your memory is good), we first used them on the cover of the May 2019 magazine. It hasn't seemed fair to ask our artist to produce cover pictures so long as we're only able to publish online. People have asked me when we shall be able to print on paper again. This will depend on COVID

regulations and how they change and whether people are still willing to deliver magazines or perhaps to take up doing so even if they hadn't before. Our paper circulation had been in decline and, if we do start printing the magazine again, I hope that we shall be able to recruit some more regular customers. It would be good to have a round in St Andrew's Park. The

magazine is available online or by email, but not everybody has that access. In any case, I think that it is more pleasurable to read a printed paper than to scroll through something on a screen. (That's why I still have a newspaper delivered). On the other hand, you do get coloured pictures online, which our paper printer isn't capable of replicating.

I have hope because I have faith. I don't know what the future holds for all of us. We're told so many confusing things about COVID (as we are about so many other things). Some people talk about our soon being back to something like normal. Others say that we are not out of the woods yet. In the end, it will be a balancing of risk. We can't have perfect safety. Neither should we care to suffer the consequences of recklessness. But, where do we strike the balance? How much risk of catching COVID are we prepared to run in the interests of restarting our economy and returning to some sort of normality in our social lives? How long are we prepared to put up with some degree of isolation and how much damage are we prepared to see to people's livelihoods and education in order to keep down the risk of infection? How effective are measures such as vaccination, test & trace, and possible local lockdowns? Time will tell, but the indications are good, particularly with regard to immunisation. Whatever happens, however, I have faith in God. I trust God. I know that He is in control. I know that His purposes are good. *We know not what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future.* So however things turn out I have faith and, because I have faith, I'm never without hope.

Pause to take Tommy for a walk, to say Evening Prayer and to have tea.

This is Bank Holiday Monday. We didn't get the forecast snow, though a couple I met in the woods said that there was a brief flurry in the morning. By the afternoon, it was still biting cold but the sun was shining brightly. There is strength in the sun at this time of year. We walked around Dean Valley and Bush Valley. The sky was bright blue with fluffy white clouds. The landscape was shades of green and brown. There was the green of the grass in the pastures where lambs were cautious not to venture too far from their mothers on whom they depend for comfort, safety and milk. The woods were dotted with the dark shades of evergreens, the bare browns of the as yet unawakened deciduous trees and the pale greens of the first of this year's new growth. The white flowers of the blackthorn or sloe light up the hedgerows at this time of year, joining the catkins of hazel and willow, which have been in evidence for many weeks, and providing a foil for the tender greens of the young hawthorn leaves. There are so many violets in the woods this year. Why is it that we call a deep purple violet when in fact most violet flowers are what we call mauve and some are white? Only a minority of violets are violet. There are anemones at the top of Church Hill in the woods and a few celandine. Nearer the bottom, in the open fields, there are buttercups and dandelions as well as that wonderful view across the river to Wouldham and Burham in the south and to the City of Rochester with its castle and cathedral in the east. The first of the bluebells are blooming and it looks as if once again we shall have substantial patches of wild garlic. Hope? *Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth* (Psalm 124<sup>7</sup>).

Then Evening Prayer which puts the day and life in general in its proper perspective – a time to recognise that our lives are in God's Hands, to confess our sins, to pray the psalms and to read the Scriptures prayerfully, to pray for the Church, to pray for an end to the plague, to pray for our nation and the world in

general and for all those individuals who are on our hearts, to express our thanks to God for all that He has done for us in making us, caring for us and making us fit for Heaven. I'll include today's OT lesson because it chimes in so well with my thoughts today. It celebrates the coming of Spring, romantic love and our love for the Risen Christ. (The turtle referred to is the turtle dove, not the marine reptile.)

Song of Songs 2<sup>10-17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

<sup>11</sup> For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

<sup>12</sup> The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

<sup>13</sup> The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

<sup>14</sup> O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

<sup>15</sup> Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

<sup>16</sup> My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

<sup>17</sup> Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

My sunny Easter holiday mood had been somewhat discombobulated earlier. I had read in the paper that Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, is to have a personal assistant who will receive an annual salary of £90,000. Now, the Archbishop of York is leading a strategy to close churches in the countryside and the suburbs because the Church of England is supposed to be running out of money. Maybe this makes sense, but I have yet to see it! However, *Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth* (Psalm 124<sup>7</sup>). It's God's Church and, if it's His Will that the Church of England will continue, it will do so in spite of us, if not because of us. Good to have our daily prayers and the Bible and the Sacrament to put things in perspective.

Then tea – T for Tommy and tea for me. We both had corned beef today and I had bread and butter, cucumber and cake, which he didn't. Good food and a pot of tea also do wonders for the way we feel.

*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* (Romans 5<sup>2</sup>). By Whom? That's Jesus. By our faith in Jesus and His faithfulness to us, we have access to the glory of God. Therein we stand and we rejoice in hope. *Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (5<sup>7</sup>).

Faith and hope, but what about charity? It was charity that I wanted to write about this month. Charity is a synonym for love in the English bible. Charity is love. It is the self-giving love of God. It is the love which we have for God when we

are at our most fully human. It is the love which God commands us to have for one another. (I Corinthians 13) <sup>1</sup>*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* <sup>2</sup>*And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

I've gone on about this because it looked to me as if this was turning into the charities edition of our parish magazine. There are three very good causes which I want to mention. And sometimes it can all seem a bit much. There are so many charities, so many causes, so many reasons for people to ask for our money and perhaps for our time and talents as well. We may feel a little bit guilty if we can't help the ones which we feel to be genuine. With the best will in the world, we can't help them all. Some charities we may have our doubts about. Are they really good causes? Even if they are, are they causes we personally would want to support? Do they spend our donations wisely? There are charities which have been shown to have very poor governance which has led to some appalling abuses.

I'm glad to say that the Church has a reputation for being charitable. If we weren't, we wouldn't be Christians! But this does mean that charities quite often approach us for support and we have to decide how we can reasonably respond. "No, I'm sorry," is sometimes the right response. "Yes, I'll do everything I can to help you," might also be the appropriate response. We have to decide logically and in love how to use the good gifts God has given us for the common good. Generally speaking, it makes more sense to give £100 to one charity than £10 each to ten different charities working in the same area. It costs money to process donations and we want to minimise charities' spending on administration.

So what are the three charities I have in mind at this time? First, there is the Children's Society which we have been supporting in this parish for longer than I've been here. We have a note from Julia Wells who organises our local support for the Children's Society.



#### CHILDREN'S SOCIETY NEWS

Dear Boxholders,

I would like to thank you for your fantastic contributions towards the Children's Society this time. I finally managed to count the boxes in March and the total was £294.40. I think this is very impressive when you consider that we have barely been leaving our houses and certainly not using cash very much over the last year. The Children's Society will have an enormous amount of work to do over the coming months as young people continue to adjust to the huge changes in their lives caused by the pandemic. The charity continues to advocate for some of the most vulnerable members of society as well as offering practical support to children and teenagers in challenging family situations, often with emotional or financial problems. All of your donations will help towards this work. If anyone else would like to join us by keeping a collecting box in their home, I would be very happy to provide you with one. Julia Wells 727424.



Then there is the Church Army. This too we have been supporting for many years. Gillian Feraday is our parish rep and will be pleased if you would like to know more about the work or would like to offer your financial or other support. We receive regular publications about the work

of the Church Army and prayer diaries which are normally available in Church, but COVID complicates this as it does so many other things.

I had a 'phone call from a potential speaker from the Church Army who would like to come and talk to us. We'll try to arrange this when COVID is over and congregations are back to normal. In the meantime he has sent us this about work in Medway. As Julia said with regard to the Children's Society, the need is greater because of COVID, but charities' income has been adversely affected by lock down. So any help we can give. The prospective speaker is Michael Cooper who was actually christened at Halling. So some of you might know him, though it's getting on for sixty years ago that he was baptised.

#### MEDWAY CENTRE OF MISSION

In its glory days Chatham was home to Henry VIII's navy, but over four centuries have gone by and the town is now a place where people with many needs live. Stephen Ramshaw (Lead Evangelist) is determined that people's lives will be better because of the centre of mission. The centre of mission wants to give people hope in a place where there is low aspiration, security where there is practical need and a Saviour in a place where many people don't know how much God loves them. The vision is for the Medway Centre of Mission to be a beacon of light and love to the people of Chatham and the surrounding Medway towns, telling people how much they are loved, valued and worth. Stephen is involved in a number of different initiatives in the area, including: a Sunday service at the Tap 'n' Tin nightclub in Chatham, where they also help to run a heavy metal church, chaplaincy work on a Monday evening at the same nightclub, a community cafe and fortnightly pop-up furniture shop in Strood and weekly prayer walking in the area. They are building relationships with the homeless in the area and have launched Medway Oaks, a



weekly drop-in on a Sunday with a 'God slot' in the middle. They are also working closely with Medway Night Shelter and Open House Project Rochester to reach the homeless in the area. Another group that the centre of mission wants to reach out to are the children and young people. They do this through school assemblies, youth groups and a Journey's Course for families (all currently online due to COVID-19). The centre of mission's plans for the New year include running a CAP Fresh Start course, starting a Garden Project and launching a youth Alpha, TEFL course (in partnership with St. John's Chatham) and Messy Church online. You can watch a short film about Stephen's work with the homeless on [our films page](#) (film by the Diocese of Rochester). Find out more about what's happening in Medway Centre of Mission by reading their [latest newsletter](#). **Support this centre of mission by [donating today](#).**

**Christian Aid**

A Division of The British Council of Churches



May is normally the month in which we collect for Christian Aid. Door to Door collection is of course impossible. We shall have a supply of envelopes in Church for your donations. Or else, of course, you can give to Christian Aid directly online or by sending a cheque in the post. See

below.

**With every gift, with every voice, with every prayer, with every action, we stop this climate crisis.**

Our planet is changing, but some people are feeling the effects of this more than others. Weather extremes are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis and one place that has experienced this is Kenya. In parts of Kenya in 2020, drought was followed by relentless rainfall and flooding, which damaged crops that had struggled to grow. Together, the climate chaos and corona virus are a double threat to lives and livelihoods.

**Climate chaos is causing a hunger crisis**

In Kitui, eastern Kenya, 8 out of 10 people depend on rain to grow crops. Without water, staple crops like maize and beans wither up and die. People can't earn a living and they go hungry. People are forced to walk further and further to collect water. This daily burden robs them of the chance to farm and grow food for their families. Elderly women and children are especially vulnerable on these dangerous journeys and can face robbery or conflict as people battle over scarce resources. Cows, sheep and goats are becoming weaker and weaker. They can't produce milk or be sold. People are struggling to cope. Lives are at risk. Families need every last drop to survive this climate chaos.

Christian Aid has been working in Kenya since 1997. One of our long-standing partners in Kenya is Anglican Development Services – Eastern (ADSE). Christian Aid and ADSE are working together with communities in Kitui county to help them to adapt to drought as well as flooding, as climate chaos robs people of control over their lives. ADSE helps communities build earth and sand dams, and rock catchments, so they can harvest water near their homes. Dams are simple and cost-effective natural storage solutions. They catch the rain when it falls, increase the amount of stored water available to communities, defend against intense rain and flooding, and free women and girls from making long and dangerous journeys to collect water.

**Meet Rose: a loving, hard-working grandmother**

One woman who is experiencing the worst of the climate crisis is Rose. A grandmother, Rose is an experienced village leader. She is proud to be able to cover the costs of her grandchildren's education by working as a casual labourer. After her husband died in 2006, Rose began to feel ill. She went to hospital and was diagnosed with HIV. She says: 'My faith has helped me to accept my status and I believe that, with the doctor's advice, I will live a long life.' The medication Rose takes requires her to eat a balanced diet, but because of the long journeys to get water, she can't farm the vegetables she needs and she goes hungry. In this desperate climate chaos, Rose battles to bring water home for her grandchildren. Every morning, after nothing to eat, she sets out on a long, dangerous journey, walking six hours to collect water.

While she walks, her stomach gives her stabbing pains. She feels weary under the hot sun and the full jerry cans are heavy (40 litres of water weigh 40kg). Her aching legs walk on, because if she gives up, her grandchildren will suffer hunger and thirst. 'We have to walk long distances. We are suffering,' she says.

### **Rose needs every last drop to survive the climate chaos**

Rose remembers her childhood when the rain was reliable and there was plenty of food. She wishes her grandchildren could have the same lives; instead, she hopes that her sacrifices will give them the chance of a better future. But the climate crisis is driving her to the brink. When she arrives home, exhausted, her grandson Charles cooks her a meagre bowl of porridge – but he knows she is still hungry. But it shouldn't have to reach this breaking point. There is a nearby earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home. It should be a lifeline. But it's not wide or deep enough for everyone's needs. It runs out of water too quickly. Rose and her community need a bigger dam, to help them capture the rainfall and create a long-lasting source of water for their families.

### **A song of hope and power**

What happens when the search for water does not consume people's lives? What happened when people have the water they need to thrive? We can find out by meeting Florence: a woman who has transformed her life with access to a dam full of water. Florence is a soulful, joyful woman: full of life, love and laughter. The women in her farming group look up to her. She's courageous and kind – a survivor. A few years ago, her husband died, leaving her a widow. At that time, she had no water to grow crops. Her children were hungry. Like Rose does now, she had to walk for hours to collect water. 'Life was miserable,' she told us. Florence could easily have been defeated. But she is a fighter. With help from Christian Aid's local partner, Florence and her community were able to build a dam together, just 30 minutes from her house. Using water from the dam, Florence grows tomatoes, onions and chillies on her farm. Her children can eat healthy, nutritious vegetables, and she has enough left to sell. It's her source of life and joy. Florence also uses the dam to keep bees: the microclimate of plants growing around the dam means the bees don't need to search long distances for nectar. She sells the rich, golden honey at the market. She says: 'I have been sustained by the earth dam. My life has changed. I am very happy. You can see it in my face: my face is shining. I have strength and power.'

### **Blessings for all in need**

You can see Florence's strength and power as she hauls heavy buckets to water her crops. You can see her strength and power as she sings to encourage the women with whom she farms. You can see her strength and power as she takes climate justice into her own hands. Florence is a generous woman of faith. She knows others are struggling to cope without a reliable water source, and wishes the same blessings she has received will be granted to them: 'There is a village nearby – they don't have an earth dam. They are suffering. I am thankful to people who have donated to build this earth dam. I am praying God will increase their giving.'

### **This Christian Aid Week, will you stand with people like Rose and Florence?**

Please donate this Christian Aid Week (10-16 May). Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, providing a regular and reliable source of water in affected areas of Kenya.

- **£4.40** could teach 10 farmers how to plant **drought-tolerant crops** that can survive the drought.
- **£10** could buy a pair of taps at a **water point** which will be installed at an earth dam, making it easier for people to fetch water.
- **£42** could buy 350kg of **cement**, which is needed to build an earth dam.
- **£545** could pay for a **skilled labourer** to work on the construction of an earth or sand dam.

Every pound raised, every prayer said and every action taken, are expressions of our Christian love and compassion, of our belief that all life is equal and precious in the sight of God. Together, we stop this

climate crisis, and give brave, hard-working women like Rose the chance to thrive. You can also join us as we call on the UK Prime Minister to lead the world with ambitious climate action that will also address inequality. Also, pray with us for a radical change of heart for politicians, and that as a global community we will care for our common home and for people living in poverty. We can all be part of the solution. All we need is courage and determination. Stand together with us to fight this climate crisis. Join us this Christian Aid Week. Donate at **caweek.org**

#### Payroll giving

Did you know that you can make a regular, tax-free donation to Christian Aid directly from your pay packet? To find out more, email [info@christian-aid.org](mailto:info@christian-aid.org) or call **020 7523 2046**.

#### Online Direct Debits

The most effective way to give to Christian Aid is by making a regular donation. Like you, if we know how much money's coming in every month, then we know how much can go out. A regular income means we can not only distribute aid among those who need it now but also plan ahead for the future.

Ways to set up your direct debit:

- Use our simple, [secure online form](#)
- Call **020 7523 2046** and speak directly to our regular giving team
- Download our [direct debit form \(PDF, 80.7kb\)](#) and post it

#### [Online Direct Debit](#)

#### Online cash donations

You can safely and securely make a one-off donation using our online form. If you would like to link your individual gift to a church or Christian Aid group you can do so by filling in the church name or reference number on our donation form.

#### [Online cash donation](#)

#### CAF card donations

If you have a Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) card you can donate online through the CAF website.

#### [CAF card donations](#)

#### Telephone and postal donations

Unfortunately under the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, there is a delay to processing donations by post. Please give via the website where possible or call **020 7523 2269** to donate by telephone.

#### Paying directly into our bank account

For details on how to pay money directly into our bank account please call **020 7523 2226**.

Pause overnight. Sleep. Put on washing. Eat breakfast. Take Tommy out for a run. It really is an incredibly beautiful day. There was a light frost when we started out. So the air was clear, fresh and bracing. Although we went to the same places that we went to yesterday afternoon, everything looks different with the sun shining from the other end of the heavens. What lifts my spirits so much this morning is the sheer brightness of the early sunshine. *THE Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom then shall I fear: the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?* (Psalm 27<sup>1</sup>).

I thought that it was not inappropriate to have a charity issue, a love edition, in the month following Easter. At Easter, especially, we remember all that God has done for us – His immense love in dying for us on the Cross and the difference His love in so doing makes to us - that in Him, we are cleansed, refreshed, braced, transported from darkness into light, renewed, brightened up, saved from sin and the fear of death, comforted and strengthened. Our only rational response is to be filled with thanksgiving and praise and to offer our lives back to God in His service. (II Corinthians 5): <sup>14</sup>*For the love of Christ constraineth us;*

*because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: <sup>15</sup> And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

I was interested to read that the word *thank* has the same root as the word *think*. We thank someone when we think about or remember what they have done. It's also been observed that to be thankful is to be thoughtful. It's a kind of courtesy and courtesy is what makes it possible for us to live in harmony with one another.

In May, we celebrate Christ's Ascension into heaven (13<sup>th</sup>) *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men* (Ephesians 4<sup>8</sup>). In other words Jesus destroyed the power of sin in the world and the devil and poured out upon us the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Lord & Giver of life. On 23<sup>rd</sup> we celebrate Whitsun or Pentecost when the Spirit came. On 30<sup>th</sup> we worship the glory of the Holy Trinity as we shall in all eternity.

Roger.

## Harrietsham to Lenham

Gradually, as restrictions ease, it is good to feel free to explore the outskirts of my 'local' area. Today's walk begins in Harrietsham at the church of St John the Baptist. Harrietsham lies within the Maidstone area of Kent and is described as a rural and industrial village. It is noted in the Domesday Book. The Saxon church has Grade 1 listed status. Sadly, the church is not open today however it stands in a well maintained churchyard and to the right of a moving war memorial and garden.



There is a footpath that starts just to the left of the war memorial. It leads up hill around the outskirts of the church grounds and enters an open field known as Teers Meadow which has a wooden picnic table and an information board detailing the wild flowers, butterflies, birds, reptiles and mammals. This is a good venue for an early snack. I walk diagonally across the meadow to a pedestrian gate and cross a well-used footpath. I carry on, straight ahead, into a series of fields with friendly horses and up to a stile which leads to a lane and Pilgrims Way. I turn onto Pilgrims Way and walk along the quiet lane. The lane passes behind the extensive Marley Works which are well screened with trees and bushes. Pilgrims Way takes a right hand turn but I fork left to follow a path up a hill. As I look to my right, from this path, I can see a wide expanse of arable land running down to the A20. Further over I can see parts of Lenham and

the countryside beyond. The footpath leads to Faversham Road. I walk down this hill to a terrace of cottages, known as Lime Tree Terrace. At the end of the terrace I fork left to take the Pilgrims Way again. I pass a few very pleasant looking houses with well tended gardens. There are so many primroses along the edge of the path and in the hedgerows. At the top of this hill, beyond the last house, the path is closed to motor vehicles but opens out to provide more amazing views to my right. My attention is drawn to the left where there is an enormous white cross on the hillside. It is known as the Lenham Cross and can be seen for miles around.



The Lenham Cross is carved into the chalk on the North Downs. It was designed by a local head teacher, Mr Groom, as a memorial to the fallen of the parish during WW1 and WW2. The cross measures 61.5m north to south and 21.6m east to west. Impressive! 27m south of the cross there is a gated enclosure with iron railings. It has some concrete steps and a bench set in concrete. The memorial plaque fixed to the gate explains that the original memorial stones sited in the enclosure have been removed to the churchyard (1960) and the bench was presented to the people of Lenham in 1977.



I leave the cross and head down to the village of Lenham. First, I walk down the

footpath, through a ploughed field, carefully cross over the A20 and then rejoin the path. There are early stages of a housing development but the

footpath is maintained. I follow the footpath and turn right at the bottom where the path meets the Old Ashford Road. Some 50yds further, on my left, there is a shaded pond with a grassy bank and park benches. This is a quiet and secluded area but there are busy water fowl; coots, mallard ducks and moorhens. I walk along Old Ashford Road and within minutes I find the village centre and St Mary's Church.

This is a delightful walk with so many things to see and observe on the way. I recommend the area and will re-visit in the near future. Holly Croft.

### An Interesting Story from the History Books.

One day, when John Fisher the last Bishop of Rochester to live at Halling was waiting for his dinner, his cook informed him that he couldn't dish up because all the plates had been stolen. These were found by John Botyll (or Butyll) who was Rector of Cuxton. He served from 1522-1576, the longest serving Rector of Cuxton so far. As a young man, he'd been a scribe and chaplain to John Fisher. Henry VIII was King of England when Botyll was appointed. He was chaplain to Prince Edward, and remained in that post when the prince became King Edward VI. He served as Rector of Cuxton throughout the reign of Queen Mary and for the first eighteen years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. He would have seen tremendous changes from mediaeval Catholicism, through Henry's limited concessions to Protestantism to Edward's radical reformation of the Church of England, Mary's reversion to Roman Catholicism and the sensible Elizabethan Settlement in which we delight today.

Was John Botyll like the Vicar of Bray trimming his sails without principle to every change of the wind? Was he personally convinced of all the ages he had to work under? Was his loyalty to authority such that he felt that he had to obey the will of the king or queen whatever his own personal thoughts? I believe I have read somewhere that he was respected by all sides in those tumultuous times as a man of integrity, but I can't find the reference. Do any readers have any more information about him? It might be in *The Church and Village of Cuxton*: the Reverend R A Smith MA, but I can't currently locate my copy.

Whornes Place of course straddled the boundary between Cuxton & Halling. According to Derek Church (*Cuxton A Kentish Village*), there were disputes about which tithes were due to Halling and which to Cuxton. In 1529, it was agreed that the Vicar of Halling would pay the Rector of Cuxton 16d every Easter. Presumably, I have to pay myself 1/4d (7p) this month. I'll put it with the 5p annual rent I'm due for the Jubilee Hall!

### Tommy's Talking Points

This is me (and Master) in the River Swale opposite Harty Ferry a couple of years ago now. We dogs don't ask for much in order to be happy and, to be honest, I have all I require in order to enjoy a wonderful life. We have missed our outings because of COVID. More on that later, but I'm really very content with life even with the restrictions imposed on us since the Spring of last year.

What does a dog need to be happy? People to love and people to love him. A comfortable and safe place to sleep. Sufficient food of a decent quality. Exercise, play and the opportunity to behave in accordance with our nature. Things going on which stimulate our interest and ingenuity. Being made a fuss of and the opportunity to show affection. Company. Why do people demand so much more?



This has been the pattern of our life all this year until now. Master gets up between 5.30 and 6.30, depending on how tired or lazy he feels. He greets me with a *Good Morning, Tommy* and a tickled tummy and has breakfast. He used to give me breakfast but I'm not really interested in eating at that time in the morning, so long as I get dinner and tea later on. So I stay in my basket and watch him. After breakfast, he says Morning Prayer and then we go out for a run. We are



very blessed to live where we do. It is good for dogs and people to take exercise, especially in the open air. Sunshine kills the virus. It helps human and even canine bodies to produce vitamin D, which is a defence against infection (and rickets). Being out of doors, surrounded by the wonders of nature, is good for your mental health as well as your physical health. Doctors say that! Master also thinks it is good for your spiritual health to enjoy God's creation undefiled by industrialisation and commercialisation, but then he's always been a bit of a romantic. He does wonder, however, why so many people seem to be afraid of the outdoors? They are afraid of the heat, the cold, snow, rain, drafts, mud, frost, fog and mist. No wonder they stay indoors all the time. They don't know what they are missing. A bit of a challenge meteorologically is good for you!

He and I really like to see all these lockdown puppies out and about. People have been getting dogs in lockdown. They couldn't look for better companions. It's lovely to see all these wagging tails and happy young dogs. Dogs are characteristically joyful and they fill the world with joy. As people go back to work and school, however, they mustn't forget that their best friends still need their love and their company. Master's quite keen on people continuing to work from home where possible. Less traffic on the roads. People would have more time if they didn't commute. They'd see more of the people they love and their pets. When they take a break from work, they can get on with something in the house or garden or take the dog for a walk. What a pity it is that not everybody can be a clergyman.

One bad thing about there being more people out and about in the countryside is the amount of litter there is. He can't understand why people would spoil the beauty of God's creation by smothering it in rubbish. If you can take a bottle or can or wrapper to the woods when it's got drink or food in it, surely you can take it home again when it's empty. Nearly the nastiest litter is those plastic bags of canine excrement that people hang on trees. Worse still, since COVID, are the discarded masks and tissues, which might themselves be infected with the virus. What's the point of wearing a mask if you don't then dispose of it hygienically?

[He did see in today's paper that the risk of catching the disease out of doors or from surfaces is very low. So, unless you get very close to people, you don't need a mask out of doors. The real risk is from droplets in the air indoors.]

After our morning run, I have a nice rest while he reads the paper and does some work. Sundays and Wednesdays, I usually go to Cuxton Church and see some of my friends there. I've missed seeing my Halling friends so much and we've not had our teas at the Jubilee Hall for months. We usually get another walk late afternoon.

Lockdown has been eased, however, and we did get out for a special outing yesterday. We attended S John's and then took the car to Fetcham in Surrey to meet Master's friends. We only got slightly lost on the way. After the human beings had had lunch, we went in the car to a car park on Ranmore Common. We had directions for a nice walk from there around the Common and taking in Polesden Lacey. We followed the directions, but soon realised that we were going wrong. We had parked in the wrong one of two car parks. As the man said, *If I was going there, I wouldn't start from here*. Master says that it is like making sense of your life and living it in the way in which it is meant to be lived. If you don't start from faith in God, you'll never find your way.

Well the metaphor is probably apposite, but it wasn't quite as bad as that for us on the literal walk. We had a very pleasant excursion around the lanes and tracks of rural Surrey on what came out to be a very pleasant day. The countryside is very beautiful and there are some attractive buildings. Master spent some time standing in a gateway looking at a couple of magnificent horses. While he was there, a man arrived and gave them a feed. Master remarked that what he was giving them didn't look much for two horses and it turned out that it was really to help down a dose of antibiotics which the one with a liver problem had to take. A spoonful of oats makes the medicine go down. They got to discussing how many ailments horses seem to be susceptible to. The man told Master about how sheep ingest and destroy the parasites which are harmful to horses and horses perform the same service to protect sheep. So they alternate having sheep and horses in their pastures. Master told him that Master's great-grandfather had had a bit of a reputation for treating horse diseases. So often did he tell the owners *Give him a bran mash*, that people in the village called him *Old Bran Mash*. The guy Master was talking to agreed that bran would often do the trick because a lot of horse disease is in the digestive system. Back when I'm talking about, there were no antibiotics and even vets couldn't do much for sick horses – except shoot them. We did see Polesden Lacey from afar.

We got back to the car park, stopped for a drink (water) and drove home. That wasn't so straightforward. There is a three way junction in Leatherhead and no sign post to the M25. We tried one route and it turned out only to go to the station. Our second attempt resulted in our fetching up in Fetcham again after driving for miles. The third go got us onto the M25 but heading for Heathrow. Then there were long delays at Wrotham. But we made it! Tommy.

## Even Newer Jokes

If buttercups are yellow, what colour are hiccoughs?

Burple

Why do you never hear any good steak puns?

It's a medium rarely well done.

Why was the maths book so unhappy?

It had a lot of problems.

What's conjunctivitis.com?

A site for sore eyes.

How would you describe multi-storey car park crime?

Wrong on so many levels.

What do you call a cow on a trampoline?

A milk shake.

What does it take to become a zombie?

dedication

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