

Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> November All Saints	9.30 Holy Communion	Ephesians 1 vv 11-23 p1173 Luke 6 vv 20-31 p1034
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November All Souls (Commemoration of the Faithful Departed)	9.30 Holy Communion	Lamentations 3 vv 17-33 p826 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> November Fourth Sunday before Advent	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Lamentations 3 vv 22-33 p826 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 1 vv 10-18 p685 2 Thessalonians 1 vv 1-12 p1189 Luke 19 vv 1-10 p1053
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> November 3 <sup>rd</sup> Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	10.50 am Holy Communion with Parade & Act of Remembrance	Job 19 vv 23-27a p523 2 Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
	5. 30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	1 Kings 3 vv 1-15 p338 Romans 8 vv 31 –39 p1135
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2 <sup>nd</sup> Before Advent	11.00 am Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Malachi 4 vv 1&2 p9622 Thessalonians 3 vv 6-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> November Christ the King	11.00 am Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060
Services at St Michael and all Angels Cuxton		
Friday 2nd November All Souls	7.30 am Holy Communion	Romans 5 vv 5-11 p1132 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070
	7.30 pm Holy Communion	1 Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
Sunday 4th November All Saints Sunday	9.30 am Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 1-18 p892 Luke 6 vv 20-31 p1034
Sunday 11th November 3rd Before Advent Remembrance Sunday	9.30 am Holy Communion with Parade & Act of Remembrance	Job 19 vv 23-27a p523 2 Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189 Luke 20 vv 27-38 p1056
Sunday 18th November 2nd Before Advent	8.00 am Holy Communion	Daniel 6 vv 1-28 p890 Matthew 13 vv 1-23 p978
	9.30 am Holy Communion	Malachi 4 vv 1&2 p962 2 Thessalonians 3 vv 6-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 5-19 p1056
Sunday 25th November Christ the King	9.30 am Holy Communion	Jeremiah 23 vv 1-6 p782 Colossians 1 vv 9-20 p1182 Luke 23 vv 33-43 p1060
Sunday 2nd December Advent 1	9.30 am Holy Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 2 vv 1-5 p686 Romans 13 vv 11-14 p1140 Matthew 24 vv 36-44 p994

Copy Date December Magazine 9<sup>th</sup> November 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.

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From the Rector

On 25<sup>th</sup> September, a lot of local people were invited to a presentation evening at the Historic Dockyard, arranged by the Army. It is important that the community should have a clear understanding of the nature and role of the armed forces which serve us. I think this may be a bit of

a problem for the Army at the present time. In common with all our historic institutions, the services no longer automatically receive the respect they would once have enjoyed. The days are gone when most men had direct experience of soldiering through National Service or fighting in the World Wars. The Army is at present engaged

in two very bloody, but unpopular, conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

You might wonder why churchmen were invited to a presentation by the Army. Isn't the Church supposed to stand for peace, whereas the Army stands for war? It isn't as simple as that. One view is that Christians should all be pacifists, refusing to fight, no matter what. This, of course, not only means no acts of aggression; it also means no fighting in self-defence. A very brave person might well decide that loyalty to Christ's teaching forbids him to defend himself, but this still leaves the awkward question, would you fight to defend someone else, the innocent victim of a violent attack? I believe that there are times when it is a moral duty to fight to protect the innocent and the vulnerable. Once, however, you accept that there is no moral absolute to prevent you from fighting in any circumstances, you are left with the possibility that you might have to fight in some circumstances or at least to sanction someone else fighting on your behalf. If you think that we might have to fight as a nation, you have to concede that we need effective fighting forces, which can do the job efficiently. Ideally, strong defences would deter an aggressor. Failing deterrence, the sooner a decisive victory can be won, the sooner the bloodshed on both sides is over.

Once we accept that we ought to have an army, two things follow. The first is that soldiering has to be regarded as an honourable profession. We cannot hold our noses when we admit to our need for an army, discourage our best young people from a military career and therefore have to recruit the dregs of society, thugs who enjoy hurting other people, ruthless killers who have no moral scruples about the way in which they achieve their goals. We have to recruit the very best to our armed services, people who will have a sense of self discipline and self respect, who can use force efficiently and effectively, but only as a last resort, the minimum necessary, and then without losing respect for the enemy or for civilian populations.

We also have to take care of our troops and their families. If they are risking their lives for us, we have a moral duty to ensure that they have the very best equipment, that they and their families enjoy living conditions which are acceptable in C21, that they receive prompt and effective medical treatment if they are wounded and that

their dependents want for nothing if they are called to make the final sacrifice.

Defence spending is always unpopular. Nobody wants war. When we are at peace, nobody sees the need to prepare for war. We could always cut taxes or use taxpayers' money to build hospitals or schools and any of these options would be more popular with the public and therefore with politicians. There is always the temptation for government to try to run the armed forces on the cheap and then to demand that they give of their all in extreme situations. We need to be honest. What do we want our armed forces to do? How much will it really cost? Can we afford it? Such national debates must be conducted with integrity. It will not do for politicians to conceal from the electorate the truth about the scope of the tasks for which our armed forces are deployed nor the truth about the conditions in which they have to operate, nor the monetary costs.

Having accepted that we ought to have an army and to be prepared to use it, the question is in what circumstances should we go to war? The most basic requirement would be in order to defend Britain. We might also want to defend British people abroad. We might fight in order to defend British (commercial or political) interests. We might also decide to fight in order to bring peace, justice and freedom to other nations. If we believe that it is right to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations or to get involved as a third party in other people's wars, we have three more questions to ask ourselves. Are we sure that we are right and they are wrong? If we are right, do we have the right to enforce our understanding of justice or to impose our political system in somebody else's country? (For example, do we have the right or the duty to overthrow a foreign tyrant?) If we believe that we have the right to intervene, will our intervention really make things better or might it make them worse?

Iraq illustrates these points beautifully. The First Gulf War was fought when Saddam's Iraq invaded Kuwait. The moral justification for going to war (with international moral and military support) was to protect the innocent victims – the Kuwaitis. Cynics suggested that our real motivation was to protect our oil supplies. What do you think? Having forced the Iraqis to withdraw from Kuwait, the next question was whether to continue the war in order to destroy Saddam's power. This could have been justified

either on the grounds of protecting our oil interests and other strategic interests in the Middle East or it could have been justified in terms of protecting subject peoples such as the Marsh Arabs persecuted by Saddam's regime. Two further vital questions were could we have won at a cost in lives and damage to property proportionate to the good we could reasonably hope to achieve and would we be morally and legally justified in this further step?

For whatever reason, the First Gulf War ended with Saddam still in power – a brutal dictator, with a record of invading neighbouring states, who was known to be storing up and willing to use horrific weapons of mass destruction. So we went to war again, ostensibly because Saddam's refusal to allow weapons inspectors to operate freely strongly implied that he had and was prepared to use WMDs. This time there was much less international support and there were serious questions of legality. When no WMDs were found, the justification was shifted to regime change – the removal of an evil man, who oppressed his own people and threatened his neighbours and who, it was suggested, encouraged and supported the terrorists who were engaged in a jihad against the West. There is still considerable debate about whether we were right to go to war in Iraq that second time, whether we can leave Iraq in a better state than it was under Saddam and whether the cost in lives (Iraqi and Western) and damage to property is worth it.

We must not, however, hold back from personal support for our soldiers even if we are unhappy about the reasons for going to war or the way in which it is being waged. There is a compact between government, service personnel and the whole nation. We might have disagreements among ourselves, but we are all on the same side. It is morally reprehensible if we recoil from what our nation has been doing and try to make scapegoats of those who were sent to serve us. This was the fate of Bomber Command after the Second World War. At the time, most people believed that huge bombing raids directed against German cities were the best way to end the war swiftly. There were a few exceptions like Bishop George Bell of Chichester, who maintained against Churchill and majority public opinion that the mass bombing of civilians was wrong. (It probably cost him the chance to be Archbishop of Canterbury). After the War, however, many people (and especially politicians) recoiled from

what we had done to cities like Dresden and the brave men of Bomber Command were left out in the cold when it came to honours and memorials. In the moral morass of total war, they were as guilty and as innocent as the rest of the population and a good deal braver than most of us. We share responsibility with our government and with our troops and, if we believe that we, as a nation, have made mistakes, the point is not to look for scapegoats, but to search for honourable solutions.

Soldiers are generally required to obey orders. There are exceptions to this. *I was only obeying orders* is no defence to a war crimes charge and a soldier (whether a general or private) is under a legal obligation to refuse to obey orders which conflict with national or international law or basic moral decency. Generally speaking, however, armies act under the orders of governments and, in democracies, that means that ultimately they act on behalf of the whole nation. If this compact is to survive, again we depend on the integrity of politicians. We need to believe that Government is being honest both with the electorate and with the military.

Obviously, there have to be secrets in the national interest. It would not do to tell the enemy everything about our troop dispositions, their equipment and planned operations. It is too easy, however, for politicians to equate the government's interests or even the governing party's interests with the national interest. So the public are not told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We are told what supports the Government's case for its programme and protects it from criticism for its mistakes, irrespective of whether what official spokesmen say is the truth or not. In my own personal dealings with our local council, I was deeply shocked by the casual ease with which council spokesmen would evade the truth and even tell downright lies when trying to maintain the council's position and to avoid justifiable criticism. I strongly suspect that what is true of local government is equally true of national government. What we are told is what those in power want us to believe, whether it happens to be true or not.

It is easy to see that, if it turns out, for example, that there is a serious design flaw in, say, our tanks, we, as a nation, do not want to advertise that fact to an enemy. On the other hand, official secrecy about such a design flaw will not only

serve to protect our troops and the national interest; it will also protect any incompetent or corrupt politicians or officials, who may be responsible for the flaw. Integrity on the part of Government requires that the need to keep secrets from our enemies is not abused as an excuse to protect official wrong-doing or incompetence.

[The same suspicion sometimes arises in child protection cases. Strict secrecy is usually enforced by the courts in order to protect the children concerned, but there have been some notorious cases in which children have been badly damaged by the failures of Social Services departments and official secrecy has been used to protect officials at a great cost to the families involved.]



#### Halling WI

We had a few new faces at our September meeting, it was great. Jean Mattingly was in the chair as Evelyn is still poorly. Jerusalem was sung and the birthday roses were given out, not quite as many as in August. As our speaker wanted to go first we had to turn our meeting around. Mr. Harris had come to talk and show us his slides of Cobham Hall. Cobham Hall has a long and interesting history, the house being partly Elizabethan and is quite a lovely building right on our doorstep, so to speak. As a W.I. we did have an outing to the Hall many years ago. Perhaps we need another one. The County Federation held a craft exhibition there a few years back. I was quite surprised that Mr. Harris didn't have a slide of the Mausoleum now that it has been restored, thanks to a grant from somewhere or other. Mr. Harris then judged our competitions. Flower of the Month was won by Evelyn with a Amaranthus, the posh name for Love-lies-bleeding. This is a really old-fashioned plant with its long red tassels. The monthly competition was won by Margaret Sullivan with

So loyalty and trust go hand in hand. The Army is a good career for the right type of young person. Army training will develop qualities of self-respect, self-discipline and self-reliance (the kind of values we would like to see all our young people develop) and offers the opportunity to qualify in trades and skills which will be useful in civilian life. It is also good for the country to have a body of disciplined, trained personnel on hand for civil emergencies such as floods. The bottom line, however, is that some of our finest young people are willing to risk their lives on our behalf. We owe them our respect and our support. It is a matter of our own integrity. Roger.

an ingenious cut out of a red tulip, a lovely idea as there isn't any thickness to strain the spine of the book. You can use anything for a bookmark, I use a little red feather from a Galahs which I picked up in Aus, but please, please don't turn the corners over. After refreshments it was down to business. The minutes were read and signed, and the piles of correspondence was dealt with, mostly from the National Federation. Also notice of the District Harvest Supper to be held at Ryarsh with the Detling Singers as the entertainment, it's only a fiver. To pass the time away I read an article from a Scottish Home and Country which I think could have been written especially for me. I gave out the Blythwood box leaflets. I hope some of our girls will do one as they are still definitely needed. Jean then emphasized the fact that November will be our A.G.M.. We badly need some younger faces on our committee, please girls have a go even if it is only for a year. It is the only way forward as some of our committee are getting a little tired and deserve a rest.

PHYLLIS C.

**CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING:** This year's box opening will be held on Thursday November 1st from 10 am to 12 pm, at 204, Bush Road, Cuxton. I would be very grateful if anyone who has a box could either bring it to church on a Sunday and give it to me there before this date, or drop it in. If you are unable to get it to me, I would be perfectly happy to collect it from your house. It is helpful to have all of the boxes there on the day as we can then do all of the counting in one go. Just give me a ring on 727424 and I will arrange to collect it. Julia Wells

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Eileen Knight, drawn by Di Maxwell.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Chidwick (27), Mrs Warman (56), Mrs Mitchell (61), Mr Silver (77) & Mrs Smith (112) – drawn by Mrs Ballard.

#### Bell Ringing at Halling.

Apologies to our new captain for getting her surname wrong last month. She is, of course, Julia Hodnett. Our new bell ropes will be arriving soon.

### Bell Ringing at Cuxton

Owing to repairs to the tower, bell ringing is temporarily suspended at Cuxton. When the repairs are complete, new ropes will be hung and there will be a service of dedication.

### Church Hall Piano

We thank Mme Freda Fournier for her kind donation of a piano to the church hall.

### Children in Church

It is important that children feel comfortable in church, starting from when they are babies, up until they start school and right through to adult life if possible. That is why we encourage young mothers to bring their children to a short service during the week, when they spend a short time hearing about Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God the Father; they learn their own short prayer and choruses they come to love to sing. After the service, they have time to play while the mums (or dads or other carers) chat over a cup of tea.

Those of us who help Roger in this work do so because we remember the benefits we found ourselves as young mothers in similar situations. We also know that our children, now grown up with families of their own, will always feel they can walk into church and turn to God in times of need, even though they haven't always got time to attend church regularly.

Since Roger asked some of us to start a new group at St John's eight years ago, it has been a joy to see the numbers go from strength to strength. Some come and go and some have stayed the course and now are members of the After School Club and some of them attend our Sunday School at St Michael's. It is also a pleasure to see how the mums support each other in times of trouble or the joy of new additions to their families. A new baby, the youngest of three brothers, was there for all to mother and even took the part of Jesus in the Nativity Play. All the children enjoy dog walking Max round the church when they are old enough. Max is very gentle with children and knows not to pull like he does with his master.

It is for these reasons that we are hoping to increase our numbers at *St Michael's Angels* on Wednesdays at 2.00 pm. Please think about bringing your children along to Church and let them know the love of God and the Christian family. Remember how toddlers love to dress up? The Wednesday before Christmas, we shall need them to come as angels, shepherds, wise men and the Holy Family. We don't mind if more than one child comes dressed as a particular character. They make a wonderful tableau.

The Sunday School at St Michael's welcomes all children from four years upwards. They meet in the Church Hall (start in St Michael's Church) 9.30 in school term time, except the first Sunday in the month, when children and adults alike all meet together in celebration of our Family Communion. The Sunday School will perform the Nativity Play at the Christingle on Christmas Eve.

Shirley Crundwell, Mothers Union.

### **Cobham Amateur Dramatic Society New Members Wanted**

At some point in your life you probably wanted to go on the stage, whether as a child or maybe much later in life. The stage has a magic but there is also a fear. The magic draws us to it but the fear of failure warns us to keep our distance. *Can* you overcome the fear to enjoy the magic? Those who overcome the fear are the ones who reap the treasure on the other side of the barrier.

CADS are looking for new members and you are invited to join us. If you would like to join a dramatic group but are maybe a little nervous, remember every member we have has had to find the courage to walk through the door for the first time. Most people who join a dramatic group do so to go on stage and we are looking for people of all ages to join us and do just that, but there are also the technical aspects such as lighting and sound, set design and construction. So we have the need for electricians for lighting and handymen, or women, for set building and painting. And the back stage roles of properties, costumes and stage management also have to be filled. We have room for everyone. You don't have to go on stage to belong to a dramatic group but you can still enjoy the magic that the theatre holds for all of us.

We are a very friendly group and meet at the Meadow Room in Cobham village and if your desire to enjoy the magic of the theatre has overcome the fear then please call Ron and Linda on 01474 814250 or Peter and Shirley on 01634 724997 and they will gladly answer any questions you have and tell you when we are having our next meeting.

Shirley Crundwell.

### **Nature Notes September 2007**

The first week of the month was warm and sunny and it was very pleasant walking Murphy along the river path at the leisure centre. The grassy banks still displayed beautiful flowers, sweet peas, crucifers, yarrow, vipers bugloss, white melilot, clover, clematis, bedstraws scabious, goats rue, toad flax, poppies, musk mallow and hawkweed. I took Murphy along Pilgrims Road to Upper Halling where the hedgerows were straddled with old man's beard and mallow and white campion peeped out from among the nettles. Elm, field maple and hawthorn were quite autumnal and leaves were falling onto the road. By the 17<sup>th</sup> the weather was definitely autumnal with plenty of grey cloud and chilly southwest winds. I enjoyed some woodland walks.

### **September 1994**

September, the month bringing autumn; golden fields and a myriad of colours in the trees. Warm sun and blue skies alternate with blustery winds and stinging rain, while the swallows skim and swoop anticipating their migration. Gulls follow the plough as the ground is prepared for new seed, while squirrels hoard a supply of beechnuts for the winter. Old leaves will wither and fall but nature is busy with the formation of new buds, which will be tightly closed ready to emerge in the spring. The cycle of time continues on its way.

### **September 1996**

September emerged with early mist followed by warm sunshine ideal for the farmers who were busy finishing the harvesting. Glorious weather continued well into the month with wild flowers-self heal, vipers bugloss, chicory, scentless mayweed, tansy, ragwort, willow herb, mallow, hedge woundwort, hedge cranesbill, white deadnettle, dandelion, clustered bellflower, toadflax, clover, vetch, wild mignonette, hawkweed and herb robert still in bloom. Hips, haws, blackberries, and elderberries were ripe in their fullness on the bushes, while swallows and swifts were preparing to fly away for the winter. Later in the month, a cold northeast wind blew for several days, then a weekend of hot weather followed bringing another touch of summer. The north wind returned, but there were periods of warm sunshine enabling the fields to be ploughed and winter sowing to take place. Colours in the woods changed from greens to golds and yellows and pale skies replaced the deep blues of summer. The month ended with heavy rain, which drummed on the woodland leaves and footpaths bringing the aroma of autumn.

### **September 1997**

September has dawned sunny and warm with meadow vetchling, gypsywort, vetch, willow herb, water mint and common fleabane colouring the banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal where we walk on holiday. At home once more, we observe, on Halling Marshes, hips turning a ripe red. A newly born calf lies contentedly by its mother which gives a warning moo to us which says "Keep Away" The golden days of an Indian summer continue. Juicy blackberries and clumps of elderberries adorn the hedgerows as autumn tints the foliage. The farmers plough their fields, sowing them with new crops, which soon reveal young shoots pushing up through the rich, brown soil. By the third week the tides are high and the cows are moved from the marsh in case of flooding. The river is a wide magnificent stretch of blue as the beauty of the sky is reflected in it, while on the newly ploughed fields a flock of lapwings appear to sit motionless until they rise gracefully into the air. East winds bring cooler temperatures for a few days, then the south westerlies return, ending the month on a very warm note. Spiders are weaving their intricate webs in the garden and butterflies hover in the sun. An atmosphere of summer continues to linger.

### **September 2007**

The 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> were beautiful warm days with bright sunshine and white clouds scudding across a blue sky. We walked by the glistening river and observed that flowers still bloomed along the banks although the grass had become straw coloured. The 24<sup>th</sup> began with leaden skies and strong westerly winds and rain fell. This cleared, however, enabling us to walk by the water, which lapped against the wall, and the wind sighed in the reeds. For three days northerly winds blew bringing a distinct chill to the air. The mudflats revealed their meandering streamlets for the river was very low. Grey clouds bowled across the sky

and the autumn leaves trembled on their branches. The early morning of the 30<sup>th</sup> was quite cold but as the morning progressed it became much warmer. In the afternoon I walked across Church Fields and into Mays Wood. A few wild flowers still bloomed. The month ended on a bright note. Elizabeth Summers



#### Cuxton WI

October was our Annual Meeting night, and attendance was fairly good.

Our President, Dorothy was not able to be at the meeting as she had just undergone an operation for a knee replacement. So Vice-President Sheila Underdown took the meeting in her place. She read out a message of apology from Dorothy and gave out birthdays for the month. The Record of the last meeting was read and signed and everyone agreed that the Produce Show had been a great success. The rest of the normal business followed, with Repts, reports etc., and then we moved onto the Annual Meeting. Sheila read out the WI Constitution and Bye-laws and Decisions made by Cuxton WI. An Amendment to the Bursary Bye-Law was put to members and unanimously agreed. The Financial Statement followed and, after several questions, was proposed and adopted. The Committee Report, detailing events of the past year, was read, followed by the President's address. The Committee Report was then adopted. As twelve members had volunteered for Committee for 2008, there was no vote required, and, similarly, as Dorothy was willing to continue as President, members unanimously voted for her to carry on.

By now we were all dying for a welcome cup of tea or coffee, and during this break, we were able to look at and buy lots of beautifully made craft items which were on sale. The work is of a very high standard and the craft group have been working hard all year. Also on exhibition was work done by two of our members, Maureen Lauder and Coral Singleton over a three year course for the Embroiderer's Guild. The work was excellent and intricate and these are two very talented ladies. The evening ended with a light-hearted quiz put together by Sheila.

Next meeting: Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November - Life and Works of Rudyard Kipling with Peter Shearan.

The Walking Group travelled over to Bredhurst for their September walk, on a beautiful, warm, sunny day and covered quite a distance, taking two hours, over some lovely countryside. We ended with a superb lunch at The Bell pub.

Not much else has happened in recent weeks, but some of us are looking forward to the Harvest Supper at Ryarsh at the end of this month.

Ann Harris

#### Post Office Closures

It appears that neither Cuxton nor Halling Post Office is on the list presently marked for closure, but the process continues and there is no room for complacency. If you think it is important that our village post offices remain open, please write to Gay Herbert, Network Development Manager, National Consultation Team. FREEPOST or e mail [consultation@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:consultation@postoffice.co.uk) by 12<sup>th</sup> November.

#### Church Hall Hire

The Church Hall is available for hire on Monday and Tuesday evenings on a regular basis. Also the hiring diary is being prepared for 2008 and reservations taken for 2009. The hall accommodates 99 people and has a well equipped kitchen and all the usual facilities. It is very suitable for meetings and social events such as children's parties for which it is appropriately licensed. Please contact Malcolm Curnow on 719585.

#### From the Registers

##### Baptism:

7<sup>th</sup> October

Olivia Emma Cottrill

Howlsmere Close

##### Funerals:

20<sup>th</sup> September

John Frederick Russell (51)

Vicarage Close

25<sup>th</sup> September

Roylance John Chapman (91)

Formerly of Upnor Lodge

10<sup>th</sup> October

Malcolm Thomas Gardiner (67)

Chatham

11<sup>th</sup> October

Beatrice Francis Knott (82)

Meadow Crescent

### Harvest 2007

Another wonderful Harvest Festival! Thanks to those who decorated the two churches, sang in the choirs, prepared the Harvest Supper and took part in the Sunday School Presentation.

### Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

Please bring filled boxes to church for the 4<sup>th</sup> November or (at the very latest 11<sup>th</sup>).

### Remembrance Sunday

The fact that what were formerly two parishes have to share one priest in these days when far too few people are committed to the Christian religion always presents us with a dilemma on Remembrance Sunday. Either only one village can have its own rector for the Remembrance Sunday service or both villages have the Rector but one of them cannot have the traditional time. After some years of inviting a retired clergyman to conduct one of the services, public comment suggests that people would prefer that we revert to the practice of holding Cuxton's Remembrance Day service at 9.30 (the normal time for Sunday service at St Michael's) and Halling's at 10.50, with the Rector taking them both. We look forward to the presence of scouts and guides at Cuxton and fire-fighters at Halling, as well as representatives of the respective parish councils. There will also be tea at 4.30 and Evening Prayer at 5.30 in the Jubilee Hall that Sunday. Roger.

### **Cuxton Community Infant School News**

Almost at half term, the last six weeks have flown by. Our new intake of 35 little ones have settled well, found their feet and are confident, happy and very chatty! They have enjoyed staying to lunch this week and were so excited to bring their packed lunch boxes into school that I think many of them were starving by about 9:30am!

The remainder of the Children in Key stage one are working and playing hard. They have very full days and cover many subjects during the day. In fact by lunchtime they have often worked hard at Maths, Literacy, handwriting practice and reading / phonic work. The afternoons are spent focussed on topic work which incorporates History, Geography and Science, or Art and Design, RE and PE. They use the computers in their classes, including interactive whiteboards and the Internet or those in the suite. I am not sure I learnt about all of these areas when I was 5, 6, or 7 yrs. I also distinctly remember RE being Scripture, doing rows of adding up sums and making a house out of a cardboard box!

Our year 2 children visited the Carriage museum in Maidstone as an end to their topic work on Transport. A great place to visit by all accounts; they had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Today we had our Harvest Festival. The Children said poems, sang songs, said prayers and as usual sang with great gusto Cauliflowers fluffy. We have collected items this year for Serbia and I thank the Parents who have donated toiletries, stationery, toys and clothing. We also invited folk as usual to coffee afterwards but this time charged and raised about £60 towards Macmillan Cancer.

This Saturday we look forward to the FCS Craft Fayre held at the Junior school. The FCS continues to work so hard in support of our school. I have just nominated them for an award, so hopefully we will hear soon from KCC as to whether they have been successful.

Our news is that we have been awarded The Healthy Schools Quality Mark for all our hard work in promoting positive images in school, creating a happy, caring environment, providing lots of physical activity for the children and promoting incentives like fruit, water bottles, brain gym and learning styles. There are lots of other criteria to meet but the list is long and if you would like to know more do come into school.

Our quiet area to the rear of the school has a lovely fence around it now and I hope this weekend to buy some plants for the children to plant up around the outside of the school as the Summer containers as you can imagine have seen better days!

I attended the public meeting in the Junior school about the road network around Cuxton, and the need for a crossing and speed cameras on Sundridge Hill. I am sure many of you left as I did feeling it all boils down to money, and seems to have to take fatalities before anyone will act seriously. I would like to point out though, with reference to a comment made in the meeting, that both the Infant and Junior schools HAVE been asking for a crossing patrol on Bush Road since at least 2001 and a Lollypop person. We have recently



been successful in a school travel plan, thanks to the hard work of some of my Governors and a crossing has been promised by Medway Council, for outside the schools and a Lollypop person also to be funded by Medway. So let's hope this happens very soon.

Following Half term we look forward to a few busy weeks leading up to Christmas with all the festivities. I hope to see some of you village folk at them. As always you are welcome in school. My thanks to you all for your support of our school, As always, best wishes from Cuxton Community Infants and take care and keep safe.  
Sincerely, Sandra Jones Head teacher.

#### Channel Tunnel Rail Link

As you know, this is about to be opened through to St Pancras with great savings in the journey times between London and the continent. There is also to be a huge new station at Ebbsfleet and, apparently, the biggest car park in Europe. In a few years' time, there are to be high speed commuter services from Kent to the capital, using the new line.

If you saw the two Meridian TV programmes presented by Penelope Keith, you may have formed the impression that the high speed rail link was unquestionably a good thing, perhaps even a necessary development, unnecessarily delayed by incompetent railway executives, dithering politicians and the selfishness of people in Kent who only wanted to protect their own homes and their way of life and did not care about the national interest. I think this will be the received and official position from now on. So I would like to use this magazine at least to make sure that the other side's case is heard and not just swept under the carpet.

Back in 1987, when the Channel Tunnel Bill was before parliament, both British Rail and the government insisted that there would be no need for a new rail link for the channel tunnel. The likely number of rail passengers, they said, could easily be accommodated on the existing network. It was only when the channel tunnel was under construction and past the point of no return that British Rail and government ministers started to insist that a new high speed rail link was absolutely necessary. They claimed that they had been taken by surprise by a rise in number of rail passengers on domestic services<sup>1</sup>. [A more recent example is this sort of thing is the cost of the 2012 Olympics. A reasonable figure which the country was prepared to afford was used to sell the project. Once, it was agreed that we had won the bid, we were told that, in the space of a few months, costs had escalated by 400%.]

There are only two possibilities. One is that the promoters of the rail link [and the Olympic bid] knew all along what they intended to do and what it would cost and quite simply misled parliament and the public for fear that, if we had known the truth, we would never have accepted the channel tunnel [or the Olympic bid] or else they were not competent to plan a major project and estimate its political, social, environmental and financial costs.

In either case, we have cause to worry. These people exercising huge powers of compulsory purchase, remodelling communities and spending billions of pounds of taxpayers' money are either dishonest or incompetent or (very probably) both!

The then Conservative government maintained that the channel tunnel was a purely private endeavour and would receive no taxpayers' money and likewise the rail link. In fact the tunnel has received all sorts of subsidies and still cannot be described as a financial success. The incoming Labour government (despite apparently supporting those who objected to the rail link while in opposition) immediately guaranteed the project 1 ½ billion pounds of taxpayers' money and the project finally cost over 5 billion.

I can see only two moral reasons for subsidising public transport. One is to enable poor people to make necessary journeys who would not otherwise be able to afford to do so. The other is to lure people who would be travelling anyway away from cars and planes to less environmentally damaging forms of transport like railways. I cannot quite see the morality of taxing all of us in order to subsidise the middling well off to make journeys they would probably not have made if the subsidised rail link did not exist. When you stand on Cuxton station waiting for your slow, dirty,

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<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, it is still unclear whether the number of passengers necessitated the new link or can justify its costs. Of course the new link will attract far more passengers than would have travelled on the older much slower lines. It will also stimulate house building in Kent and this will in turn bring it more passengers. None of this proves, however, that the existing railway lines through Kent could not have carried the number of channel tunnel passengers there would have been had the new link not been built. It is also true that it was expected that the ferries would cease to operate once the tunnel was opened. This has not proved to be true. 20 years ago, no-one expected the rise of budget airlines. Both these factors mean that there may be fewer passengers for the CTRL than the company's more optimistic predictions.

over-priced domestic service, it will no doubt lift your spirits to think that your taxes have helped to pay for the 186 mph service you can see flashing past on the Medway Bridge so that people like Penelope Keith can boast of breakfast in London and elevenses in Paris!

Even supporters of the rail link must agree that people in Kent were badly treated. In France, people, whose property was compulsorily purchased, received its market value plus generous compensation. In Kent we were first told that there would be no rail link. Then huge swathes of the country were blighted by the publication of four possible routes (drawn up on a kitchen table). Whether you lived in a newly built estate or what had been your family home for centuries, you could be evicted and only paid the market value of your house at a time when market prices were depressed by rail link blight. Those who needed to move for other reasons could not sell their houses at a decent price. As is so often the case in British public life, officials and business people dismissed the concerns of ordinary people with contemptuous arrogance. The bottom line, as always, was they had the power to do whatever they wanted and they did not need to concern themselves with decency and fairness when dealing with the public.

Among the broken promises was that there would be through services from the rest of the country beyond London. These have never materialised. Putting passenger trains on the high speed link was supposed to free up the existing lines for rail freight taking lorries off the roads. In fact, of course, the M2 and M20 motorways were widened and still there is more motor traffic and more congestion. The amount of traffic will always multiply to fill the roads and railways and airports we provide. Building more transport links does not simply reduce journey time for existing freight and passengers. It creates a society in which people go to Prague for the weekend and millions of tons of bottled water travel hundreds of miles by lorry because pampered people claim not to like the taste of what comes out of their taps! We were also told that East Kent would be linked with the continent by frequent high speed services from Ashford. This promise is about to be broken. We were also told that, when St Pancras was opened, the award winning new terminal at Waterloo would still continue to operate. In fact it is to be closed and South West Train's reasonable request to take it over for domestic services has been turned down and it will be replaced by office blocks.

The two points often made in favour of the rail link are that train travel is more environment friendly than most other forms of transport and that the presence of the rail link will stimulate development in deprived areas of East London, South Essex and North Kent. The environment argument only works if the rail journeys are instead of car or plane journeys. If the CTRL encourages people to take journeys they would not otherwise have taken, e.g. by encouraging commuters to live farther away from their offices, it will have a negative effect on the environment.

And then there is development. If development is such a good thing, surely it should be shared out. People in Manchester and Liverpool are subsidising these huge infrastructure projects in the South-East while government is knocking down houses in northern cities because they say no-one wants to live there, where there is high unemployment and those with jobs work mainly in the public sector. If huge infrastructure projects bring such benefits, why are they always in London and the South East?

But is development so beneficial? Do you really want to see what is left of the Garden of England disappear under commuter estates and industrial parks? Do you really want more cars on the roads and more pollution in the atmosphere? Isn't it time, we all decided to make do with less so that not only England but the whole planet can remain a green and pleasant planet.

Even the social benefits of development turn out to be. New homes for yuppies can bring a lot of money into an area, but it is doubtful how far that new money benefits the existing inhabitants. Judging by the experience of Docklands, local people may find that their old community way of life gets disrupted, the jobs they are offered are minimum wage jobs as cleaners and security guards and their children are priced out of the local property market. I recently attended a meeting at which a senior officer of Gravesham Council expressed the hope that department stores would soon replace pound shops and charity shops in the town centre, prompting the question what happens to the people who can't afford to shop in department stores? Local people may find themselves living in the next street to wealthy executives, but they may not in any sense be neighbours.

So we should not assume that the rail link is necessarily an unmitigated benefit, neither should we dismiss those who questioned its worth as stupid and selfish.

Roger.

#### Sundridge Hill / Rochester Road

Our latest local campaign (following the terrible accident on 19<sup>th</sup> September) is to improve road safety. Given all the proposed new housing and commercial developments in the area, traffic levels are likely to continue to rise. Safety must be paramount. Then environmental concerns. I'm sure we will all support anything that helps with both. Roger.