

We don't know what we shall be allowed to do over the course of the next few months. I'm afraid it will still be social distancing, masks and no singing for the foreseeable future. Unless things change, we'll carry on with said services of Holy Communion at Cuxton at 9.30 on Sundays and Wednesdays and at Halling at 11.00 on Sundays and 9.30 on Thursdays. It has been good to see so many of you able to come. Please keep in touch whether you are able to attend church or not and let me know if I can help you in any way. There will be a sermon for each week on my web page [cuxtonandhall.org.uk](http://cuxtonandhall.org.uk). If you'd like to receive my weekly email newsletter, please ask me and give me your email address. It is not likely that this magazine will be printed for general distribution, but please feel free to forward it by email to anyone who would like it. You're also welcome to print this if you wish. Magazines are also available on my webpage. There will also be daily bible reading notes which I can send you by email on request and they too will be on the webpage.

I'm still saying Morning & Evening Prayer daily at the Rectory with the Litany on Sundays, Wednesdays & Fridays plus the Ante-Communion when there ought to be a celebration in church but there isn't. Please let me have any prayer requests.

If you wish to arrange christenings, weddings or funerals or need any other of the Church's services, please ask me. Roger.

Services Planned		
4 <sup>th</sup> October Trinity 17 Harvest Festival Dedication Festival	9.30 Family Communion Cuxton Poverty & Hope Donations for Food bank.	Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 p689 Matthew 21 vv 33-46 p990
4 <sup>th</sup> October Trinity 17 Harvest Festival Dedication Festival	11.00 Holy Communion Halling Poverty & Hope Donations for Food bank.	Isaiah 5 vv 1-7 p689 Philippians 3 vv 4b-14 p1180 Matthew 21 vv 33-46 p990
11 <sup>th</sup> October Trinity 18	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 25 vv 1-9 p708 Philippians 4 vv 1-9 p1180 Matthew 22 vv 1-14 p990
18 <sup>th</sup> October S Luke	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	II Timothy 4 vv 5—15 p1197 Luke 10 vv 1-7 p1041
25 <sup>th</sup> October Bible Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Nehemiah 8 vv 1-12 p492 Colossians 3 vv 12-17 p1187 Matthew 24 vv 30-35 p993
1 <sup>st</sup> November All Saints Day	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Revelation 7 vv 2-12 Matthew 5 vv 1-12 p968
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November All Souls Day	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070

9.30 Communion Wednesdays at Cuxton		9.30 Communion Thursdays Halling	
30 <sup>th</sup> September S Jerome	Job 9 vv 1-16 Luke 9 vv 57-62	1 <sup>st</sup> October	Job 19 vv 21-27 Luke 10 vv 1-12
7 <sup>th</sup> October	Galatians 2 vv 1-14 Luke 11 vv 1-4	8 <sup>th</sup> October	Galatians 3 vv 1-5 Luke 11 vv 5-13
14 <sup>th</sup> October	Galatians 5 vv 18-26 Luke 11 vv 42-46	15 <sup>th</sup> October	Ephesians 1 vv 1-10 Luke 11 vv 47-54
21 <sup>st</sup> October	Ephesians 3 vv 1-12 Luke 12 vv 39-48	22 <sup>nd</sup> October	Ephesians 3 vv 14-21 Luke 12 vv 49-53
28 <sup>th</sup> October S Simon & S Jude	Jude John 15 vv 17-27	29 <sup>th</sup> October	Ephesians 6 vv 10-20 Luke 13 vv 31-35

Copy date November Magazine: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> 8.30 am Rectory.

Frustrated Diner: I didn't think anyone could burn salad, but this is chard.



### Prayer

Preparing Bible Notes on the Book of Revelation chapter 6, I wrote, "The scroll or book has seven seals. As each seal is opened, there is a revelation of what is to come. The first four seals unleash the four horseman of the Apocalypse. (Apocalypse is another word for Revelation.) The four horsemen represent the disasters which human sin brings upon the world: war and violence, famine, disease. We are only too familiar with the reality. We rightly pray: *From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine, from battle and murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us.* We do depend entirely on God. We pray that human beings will be granted the will and the wisdom to seek after peace and justice, health for all, freedom from want and enlightenment, and that we shall be

granted the means to achieve these goals." We need to pray. All of us need to pray for our daily lives, for the people we love, for the Church and for the world. Prayer is our communion with God, our communication with Him, and it is from God that all good things come. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning* (James 1<sup>17</sup>). Prayer is as natural as breathing, more natural perhaps as we shall be in communion with God in all eternity if only we come to Him in faith.

But how do we talk to God in prayer? What words should we use? In a way, it doesn't matter what we say to God. God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what we need better than we do. If you remember that God is always with you, wherever you are, caring for you, sustaining you with His love, no matter what trials you may be undergoing, you are very close to praying even if not consciously doing so. I'm glad that I was taught from childhood to talk to Jesus about everything that is on my mind.

1. Immortal love, for ever full,  
For ever flowing free,  
For ever shared, for ever  
whole,  
A never-ebbing sea!

2. Our outward lips confess  
the name  
All other names above;  
Love only knoweth whence it  
came,  
And comprehendeth love.

3. We may not climb the  
heavenly steep

To bring the Lord Christ  
down;  
In vain we search the lowest  
deeps,  
For Him no depths can drown:

4. But warm, sweet, tender,  
even yet  
A present help is He;  
And faith still has its Olivet,  
And love its Galilee.

5. The healing of His seamless  
dress  
Is by our beds of pain;

We touch Him in life's throng  
and press,  
And we are whole again.

6. Through Him the first fond  
prayers are said  
Our lips of childhood frame,  
The last low whispers of our  
dead  
Are burdened with His Name.

7. Alone, O Love ineffable,  
Thy saving name is given;  
To turn aside from thee is hell,  
To walk with thee is heaven.

But, mostly we do use words when we pray. What words should we use? We can actually just talk to God. We can use any words we like so long as they are honest. We can confess our sins, say thank you for all the blessings we receive, ask for His help and guidance, His protection and His healing power. We can offer praise in any way we like. And we can bring all our negative emotions to Him too. He understands our fears, our resentments, our questionings, the weakness of our faith, why we sometimes find it hard to forgive those who have trespassed us against, our folly and our stupidity. Christ understands. He is

human too. Christ has all the resources necessary to help us. He is also God.

We also find it helpful to use words in prayer that other people have composed and taught us. Jesus Himself gave us the Lord's Prayer. When you really think about the Lord's Prayer, maybe it is the only prayer we need to pray. Everybody used to be taught the Lord's Prayer and everybody joined in praying it in school and Church and meetings as well as saying it daily at home alone or with the family. It is tragic that this is no longer the case. Many people no longer know the

Lord's Prayer and those who do know it may not say it daily. The Church is possibly partly to blame for this because there are now different versions of the prayer in English so that we don't all know the same one, but it is not entirely our fault that so many children do not now get taught any version of the Lord's Prayer in any language.

Personally, I pray constantly in whatever words occur to me as I go about my daily life. S Paul said we should! I Thessalonians 5 v 15: *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.* These words of S Paul are, in fact, the secret of a fulfilled, joyful life.

I do, however, also pray more formally, using the resources provided by the Church. They expand my mind. Otherwise I might just pray in ways that I can imagine. Set prayers make it possible to pray together in a group or service. Using these words which so many other people are using today and have used in the past is an expression of our fellowship with one another – Christians all over the world today, Christians in heaven in all eternity. When we were in lockdown praying alone, it was especially good to think of other Christians, my family and friends, as well as millions I don't know, all praying somewhere each day, together in spirit if not in body. *Common Worship*, which we generally use in Church, is an excellent resource for communal and personal prayer. I'm a great fan too of the Book of Common Prayer, which we sometimes use in Church and which I generally use when I am praying formally on my own, just as I tend to read the King James Bible for my own personal devotions. To be honest, I have mixed feelings regarding whether we've lost or gained by introducing new services and new translations of the Scriptures. The honest answer is that we have probably both lost and gained. Certainly,

wherever we stand on these matters, we should be open to what other people have to say about them, and charitable, even if finally we continue to disagree about what is best: to the glory of God, for the edification of His Church and for the sharing of our faith with the world.

One prayer I say nearly every day, sometimes more than once as it can be used at both Mattins and Evensong, is what is called *A Collect or Prayer for all conditions of Men*. I'll take you through with me some of the thoughts with which it inspires me.

**O** GOD, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men: that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially, we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those, who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; [*\*especially those for whom our prayers are desired;*] that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake. *Amen.*

*O God the Creator and Preserver of all mankind.* Collects often start by proclaiming aspects of God's Nature and His attributes. They open our minds to something of the divine mystery. They inspire our praise and help to establish our faith in the One Who can do anything. They both teach us about God and enable us to express what we have learnt of Him.

Sometimes people think of God as something out there, a mysterious force, or as if He were like a giant clockmaker, Who built the universe, wound

it up and left it to run. God is our Creator, but He is much more than that. He is our Preserver. His love sustains us all the time and in all eternity. If God stopped caring for us, we should simply cease to exist. He is never absent, but always present. *In Him, we live and move and have our being.* [This prayer was written of course before people started worrying about whether saying mankind or men leaves out women. It certainly doesn't in this case. God is the Creator and Preserver of us all, of everything, in fact, that is.]

*We humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men:* Good to think, when we pray, of all people on earth of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. This is the world which God so loved that He gave His only-begotten Son, the world which we too, as Christians, should love and care for.

*That thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations.* What does this mean? When I first used to use this prayer, I think I thought it meant missionary work – Christians obeying Christ's commandment before His Ascension to preach the Gospel to all nations. I'm sure it does mean that, but it also means a lot more. God makes Himself known in the wonders of the world we live in. He makes Himself known by the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals. He is known in establishing justice and showing mercy and pity. God's ways are manifest in His actions in the world, in the preaching and teaching of the faith, in the life of the Church and, above all, in Jesus Christ. *Saving health* is salvation from sin and the fear of death. It is also peace because the divisions between humanity and God, between nations, and between individuals are healed. *Saving health* is healing of all kinds of sickness of body, mind and spirit. *Saving health* cleanses us from the sins of selfishness, greed and indifference to the plight of others, and therefore sets us free to share the good things we have so that nobody goes without the necessities of life. If we enjoy *saving health* ourselves, we are a blessing to the world, making known God's ways by bringing in His Kingdom of justice, mercy and peace.

*More especially, we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church;* Charity (love) begins at home

and flows outwards, just as the love of God originates in the love between the three persons of the Trinity and flows eternally outwards to create, sustain, redeem and sanctify everything that He has made. The Church is our home, our family. Our love for God, our heavenly Father, for our brother, Jesus, and for all our brothers and sisters, all Christians throughout the world, sustains us and inspires us as we live in the world and do God's work on earth.

*That it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.* "All who profess and call themselves Christians." We don't want to be hypocrites. We don't want other people to be hypocrites. If people say that they are Christians, then our prayer is that they will actually be Christians, which means being in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, from which will follow living in a particular way. What we ask for ourselves and for *all who profess and call themselves Christians* in this prayer – *that they may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life* – follows on one thing after another. If we walk in the way of truth (Jesus is *the Way, the Truth & the Life*), then we do live in unity of spirit with Jesus and with one another (He told us to *love one another as He loves us*), and the bond of peace (*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*), and in righteousness of life (*By their fruits, ye shall know them*).

*Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those, who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; [\*especially those for whom our prayers are desired;] that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions.* I think this is self explanatory, if we pause and think about it. Just two points, I think it is also the right thing to do to pray for ourselves and for other people in the good times as well as the bad, to remember not only the sick and the poor, but also those starting a new school or job, those getting married, those with new opportunities opening before them, decisions to



take about their lives, fresh ways of serving God and showing love for other people.

There is also the matter of the ultimate *happy issue out of all their afflictions*. I once told a woman that I would pray for her very sick husband. At first, she asked me not to pray for him, thinking that life for him had become only pain and distress and that we should not pray for him to live any longer. I explained, and she then understood, that praying for what is best for someone may mean letting go and letting God bring his sufferings on earth to an end and take him home to be with God for ever. This is the ultimate *happy issue out of all their afflictions* for all of us.

In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, *Good Lord, deliver us.*

*And this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.* Our prayers ascend to God the Father through Jesus Who is both God and man. He understands everything about us. He knows why we are praying. He and the Holy Spirit pray on our behalf when we cannot pray or do not know what to pray for. The Son and the Spirit are one with the Father and Jesus has done all that is needful to open the way from earth to heaven, from our humanity to His divinity. We know that our prayers are heard and answered in accordance with His perfect love for us and for the whole of His creation.

O worship the Lord in the  
beauty of holiness,  
Bow down before Him, His  
glory proclaim;  
With gold of obedience, and  
incense of lowliness,  
Kneel and adore Him; the Lord  
is His name.

Low at His feet lay thy burden  
of carefulness;  
High on His heart He will bear

it for thee,  
Comfort thy sorrows and  
answer thy prayerfulness,  
Guiding thy steps as may best  
for thee be.

Fear not to enter His courts in  
the slenderness  
Of the poor wealth thou  
wouldst reckon as thine.  
Truth in its beauty and love in  
its tenderness,

These are the offerings to lay  
on His shrine.

These, though we bring them  
in trembling and fearfulness,  
He will accept for the name  
that is dear;  
Mornings of joy give for  
evenings of tearfulness,  
Trust for our trembling, and  
hope for our fear.

Roger.

### All Souls Day

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> November each year, the Church commemorates the Festival of All Souls. It is a day specially set aside to remember the faithful departed. In the words of the Creed, we believe in *the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body*.

In other words, we believe that we can trust God for those whom we love but see no longer. Death is not the end, but a new beginning, a new phase of existence. Our love for them and their love for us continues within the love of God. The things we have done wrong on earth can be forgiven if we ask God in Christ. Our personality, our soul, is not extinguished by death, but finds its fulfilment in God's love. These are the kinds of thoughts to remember when we think about our loved ones who have died.

In this parish, we remember by name on All Souls Day all those whose names are in the Books of Remembrance, those whose funerals we have arranged in the last year and any other individuals we are asked to commemorate.

The All Souls services this year are on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at 9.30 am at St Michael & All Angels' Church Cuxton and 11.00 am at St John the Baptist's Church Halling. At both services we remember all those whose funerals we have taken in this last year and people from the parish we have heard about. If you or other members of your family or friends would like to be present at either service, you would be most welcome. If there are other names you would like remembered, please give them in writing to the Rector.

## From the Registers

### Funeral:

4<sup>th</sup> September

Eileen Laycock

formerly of Cuxton

### Postponed Annual Meetings.

The Meeting to Elect Churchwardens and the APCM will take place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October in Cuxton Church Hall at 10.00 am– outdoors if fine. Please consider prayerfully whether you might be called to serve as a churchwarden, deanery synod representative, PCC member or sidesman. Deanery synod representatives serve for three years. Churchwardens and PCC members serve till the next Annual Meetings, which should take place by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, but who knows?

### On Fanatics

Edmund Burke: By hating vices too much they came to love men too little.

### Harvest

Like so many other things, Harvest Festival will be very different this year, but we shall still want to thank God for the harvest and to share the good things He has given us with those in need. So, we'll be pleased to accept tinned and packeted goods for the Foodbank at our services on 4<sup>th</sup> October (and at other times when the church is open too at any time). Also, we must continue our support for the annual Poverty & Hope Appeal. Details of this year's projects are in the September magazine and online. See below..

There are a number of ways to make donations

- through your Church,
- by e-banking to Rochester Diocesan Society and Board of Finance, sort code 20-54-29, account 90760099, reference P&H plus something to identify you, unless you wish to remain anonymous),
- by card via the Poverty and Hope page on give.net (<https://www.give.net/povertyandhope/fundraising>),
- by cheque made payable to 'Rochester DBF' with 'Poverty and Hope' written on the back and posted to the Finance Team Rochester Diocese, St Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL,

Your donation can be increased by gift aiding it. There are details how to do this at [www.bit.ly/PovertyHope](http://www.bit.ly/PovertyHope) where you can find full details of the Appeal and the projects we are supporting.

St Michael's Draw: £10 to Mrs Booth (35), £5 each to Mrs Fenton-Scott (38) & Mrs Wells (7) – drawn by the Rector. The St John's Draw is proceeding as normal and the results will be published when this becomes possible.

### **Yalding to Teston Lock**



The summer is beginning to fade but there is good 'walking weather' most days. My journey today starts in Yalding at the tearoom just up the road from the medieval Town Bridge and the church dedicated to St Peter & St Paul. Whilst enjoying a morning latte I learn about the village and check my route.

Yalding is a village and civil parish some 6 miles to the south west of Maidstone. It is the joining point for the Rivers

Medway, Teise and Beult and there are three quite different but well known bridges. I think that Twyford Bridge and Town Bridge are the most popular. To my amusement I discover that there is an annual contemporary music festival called 'The Vicar's Picnic'.



Usually it is held in July and takes place around Yalding Lees but 2020 has silenced yet another event.

I begin my walk at the war memorial in Vicarage Road. My route follows a section of the Greensand Way passing some almshouses erected in 1863, through a small

housing estate and Blunden Lane before leaving the village by an ancient byway by Buston Farm Cottages. At the cottages I turn left and follow the well marked footpath up



the the gentle hill. I take another left turn to continue uphill towards Downs Farm. At this point there are lovely views over the River Medway and across to Nettlestead and Watlingtonbury. I cross the B2010, Yalding Hill, and follow a footpath down hill through farmland, over Small Profits and find an orchard. Here, there are extensive poly-tunnels with a variety of fruit trees at different stages of development and a large numbers of busy farm workers. They were engaged in activities such as planting, pruning, picking fruit, weighing boxes of produce or having a well earned rest and having a cup of tea. I walk across another field and emerge onto Hunt Street, near the entrance to Marshall's Cottages, and turn right. In a few yards I rejoin the footpath which leads across grazed fields and into West Farleigh.

West Farleigh is a small, quiet village with three popular pubs, eg The Good Intent, The White Horse and The Tickled Trout. All Saints Church is a distance

from the centre but is close to the cricket ground. From the village I walk down a footpath and join up with The Medway Valley Walk shortly before crossing the River Medway over a narrow stone bridge. I turn left and go down to the towing path beside the river. To my right is a large delightful meadow/country park, car park, information board and amenities. To my left is the river. There is an abundance of wildlife, both swimming and flying. The vegetation beside the river



is colourful and lush. Further along this path is my destination, Teston Lock. This lock was originally constructed in the 1740's as part of a navigation system

to transport iron products from the Weald. The lock has been updated a number of times. Its main use, nowadays, is for pleasure craft. There is a hive of activity. There are comfortable leisure craft, dinghies, canoes and kayaks as well as land venturers, as in cyclists, walkers and families exploring and having picnics.

A beautiful walk across the rich countryside of Kent. A lovely way to spend an afternoon. Holly Croft



### Tommy's Talking Points

At dinner time on the radio today, they were talking about dogs. Lots of people bought dogs for company at the beginning of lockdown. Well, that's not surprising. We are, after all, man's best friend. We love unconditionally, the way you are supposed to love. The way the ladies make a fuss of me, I think I must also be woman's best friend – and, no doubt, children's best friend. Anyway, dogs and people have been enjoying spending time together. I nearly wrote *quality time*, but that isn't really the point. Sure, we enjoy quality time – walking and running in the countryside, eating good food, and playing (although I am choosy about when I condescend to play with him), and being made a fuss of. But just being together is good too. If he is reading or working on his computer or watching TV, it is good just to have him around. Company is comfortable. People need to be together too, not only to do things together, but just to be together. Anyway, there is now a problem. Children are going back to school. More and more adults are going back to work. And some dogs are suffering from separation anxiety. Dogs generally don't like being alone. We are pack animals. Years and years ago, when Master was a curate at Orpington, he really wanted a dog, but thought that he went out so much, that it wouldn't be fair on the animal. But he was burgled so often there in the lawless suburb of Greater London which that formerly respectable Kent country town had become by the 1980s, that his father suggested he get a dog and promised to look after it when Master had to be away from home. Hence Ben. This is Ben on a Christian Aid walk. You can see he likes spaniels, although everybody says that the best behaved dog he ever had was Bobby, a cross collie / labrador. I'm not sure I agree with that. Master forbears to comment. He says that all his dogs have had their virtues and he loves them all equally!



Anyway, Master got Ben to protect his house from burglars, but Ben really, really hated being left alone. The day after Master had him, he jumped out of an upstairs window onto a neighbour's shed roof. Master had Ben as an adult dog who had been a stray and half-starved by the time he found a good home. So, naturally he feared abandonment. The person on the radio said that some dogs with separation anxiety are not only very unhappy, but also bark all day to the annoyance of neighbours or chew up the



family home. Dogs do need to learn from puppyhood that they have sometimes to be on their own, but Master says it is still not fair, if they are left for too long and do not get enough exercise. In fact, many of the problems people have with dogs are due to lack of exercise, just as human health and behavioural problems are. So get a dog and go for a long walk each day and insist that the whole family comes too!

Ben made friends with the lads Master suspected of breaking into his house, although the youths in question remained wary of him and only once returned for nefarious purposes after Ben arrived and that when they knew he was out. Master found that Ben was welcome most places he went. So, nearly wherever Master went, Ben went too – and that is how should be, a man and his best friend going everywhere together.

Anyway, the radio also said that there would be more restrictions on people socialising because the R Rate was going up. What with holidays, beach & street parties and returning to school and work, the virus is spreading again. So, the government says, keep the rate down by not meeting with family or friends. Now, surely from a dog's point of view, it would be more sensible if people gave up school and work to keep the R rate down while continuing to spend time with their friends, families and dogs. That's what I'd do if I were human. Then your dogs wouldn't get separation anxiety and you'd be spending time with the people you love doing the things you like doing. Do you live to work or work to live?

I'm getting used to the new normal. When I see him reach for his mask, I've worked out that we are probably going out. You can teach an old dog new tricks. He does sometimes say that I am the most intelligent dog he has ever had. I'm sure he's right. I am also doing all right for exercise. Master noticed that the trainers he has had for about three months were starting to wear. So he did a rough calculation. For much of the Summer, we have generally been having two hours exercise in the morning while many people are still in bed and another hour in the afternoon. Six days a week, for the morning excursion he adopts that ungainly gate slightly faster than walking which he likes to call running. Assuming we average 4 mph, he says, for three hours a day, that's twelve miles. If he is right, over the three months he has had those shoes, they have covered 1,000 miles. No wonder the vet says that I am muscular!

We're hoping very shortly to meet friends at Westerham for a walk around the SE of the county, but, so far, we've stayed local since COVID struck. That's no hardship though. We live in some of the most beautiful countryside in the world. Where they have not planted vines in Bush Valley, there is a field of poppies. There are plenty of other wild flowers too. The leaves are just beginning to adopt their autumn tints. He was saying Morning Prayer in his garden the other day when the rays of a low sun were shining golden on the subtly yellow foliage. He thought he'd gone to heaven. There are plenty of insects about – butterflies and dragon flies or damsel flies. He liked it when one of the latter settled on his knee and remained there for a stretch. He's not so keen that there is a much larger number of mosquitoes about than there has been for some years. He has a number of bites. In the old days, even in England, mosquito bites transmitted the ague or malaria. One of Master's predecessors as Rector of Cuxton, William Laud, left the village at least partly for that reason. However, he went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury and was eventually beheaded on the orders of Parliament. Master has always thought he might have done better to stay here.

Master says to keep in touch. He'll try to do the same.

Tommy, the Rectory Spaniel.



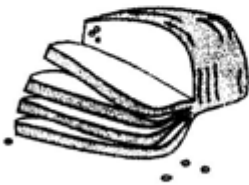
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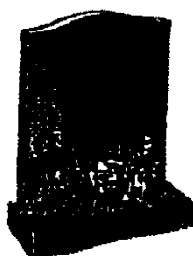
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