

July 2022			
3 <sup>rd</sup> July Trinity 3 (St Thomas CW)		9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Isaiah 66 vv 10-14 p753 Galatians 6 vv 1-16 p1172 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041
July 10 <sup>th</sup> Trinity 4		9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Deuteronomy 30 vv 1-14 p208 Colossians 1 vv 1-14 p1182 Luke 10 vv 25-37 p1042
July 17 <sup>th</sup> Trinity 5		9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Genesis 18 vv 1-15 p17 Colossians 1 vv 15-29 p1182 Luke 10 vv 38-42 p1042
July 24 <sup>th</sup> Trinity 6		9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Genesis 18 vv 16-33 p18 Colossians 2 vv 6-15 p1183 Luke 11 vv 1-13 p1042
July 31 <sup>st</sup> Trinity 7		9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1-18 p668 Ecclesiastes 2 vv 17-23 p669 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1045
Holy Communion at Cuxton Wednesdays 9.30am		Holy Communion at Halling Thursdays 9.30 am	
6 <sup>th</sup> July	Judges 15 vv 1-20 Luke 12 vv 22-31	7 <sup>th</sup> July	Judges 16 vv 1-22 Luke 12 vv 32-40
13 <sup>th</sup> July	I Samuel 3 vv 1-19 Luke 13 vv 10-21	14 <sup>th</sup> July	I Samuel 4 vv 1-18 Luke 14 vv 1-11
20 <sup>th</sup> July	I Samuel 9 v15 – 10 v1 Luke 16 vv 19-32	21 <sup>st</sup> July	I Samuel 10 vv 1-16 Luke 17 vv 1-10
27 <sup>th</sup> July	I Samuel 14 vv 1-15 Luke 18 vv 31-43	28 <sup>th</sup> July	I Samuel 14 vv 24-46 Luke 19 vv 1-10

Copy Date August Magazine 8<sup>th</sup> July 8.30 am Rectory

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### Bird Lore

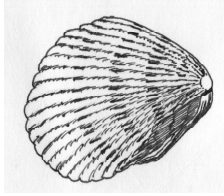
In a recent magazine I mentioned seeing a hoopoe in our garden at Wigmore in the 1960s. One of our readers who keeps a nature diary recently told me that a hoopoe was seen in Mays Wood Cuxton on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1959. The call of a hoopoe was heard much more recently at the Warren, North Halling.

I haven't lately seen the heron I had noticed flying daily over the Rectory at about 7.00 am. Maybe I haven't been out at the right time. Skeins of geese fly over St Michael's regularly. One morning, I thought I heard a cuckoo towards Halling. I've not heard it since, which is odd as they usually stick around for a few weeks. I could have made a mistake as sometimes the call of a pigeon is somewhat similar! I'm not very good at identifying bird song, though I am very conscious of it in the garden. On the day of the spring festival at Halling, there was a bird singing beautifully and extremely powerfully in the holly next to the lych gate all morning. I couldn't see what it was until the afternoon when it was still singing in almost the same place. It turned out to be the humble robin, but wonderful despite the fact that it is so common. I've also seen swifts in the Rectory garden with their amazing aerobatics catching and devouring mosquitoes on the wing.

### Percy Pigeon has Provided us with Some Avian Humour.

Whoever designed the lions in Trafalgar Square really put the cat among the pigeons  
 Why do pigeons watch the News? To get the feather forecast  
 My pet bird can predict the future. He's an omen pigeon

St John' Draw (May): £10 each Mr S Head (8) & Mrs Mr Booth (86)



## Beauty

It was writing the Bible Notes for the next quarter, specifically 30<sup>th</sup> September, which made me think of this topic. It's turned out to be harder than I expected.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! We know what we mean by beauty, but its precise definition is elusive. One of the attributes of God is beauty. We speak of the beauty of holiness and of truth in its beauty. We also use the expression, *as ugly as sin*. But what is beauty?

James Marriott in the *Times* says that our Instagram age has devalued beauty. There is a feeble kind of perfection in all those pictures on the internet. They all seek to earn that superficial *like*, to get thousands of people to agree that this is a perfect picture, whether of a sunset, a cat, a woman or your salad bar. The result is blandness and repetition. Nothing must stand out. There must be no challenge to conventional ideas about what is beautiful. Every picture must be flawless. So they all look the same. They can be *liked* and copied indefinitely. Nothing is special because being different is a risk. Your followers on Instagram might not *like* your tastes. They might not approve of you. Blandness and repeatability.

But what about beauty in the real world? Are you one of the beautiful people? Generally speaking, the things which make other people attractive to us are signs of health. When you are choosing a husband or a wife, you are, at least subconsciously, also choosing the father or mother of your children. So you want someone who is healthy and capable of bearing children and supporting a family and who will also transmit healthy genes to the next generation. Although fashions change, there is a remarkable consistency across cultures and down through the ages in what we find attractive in the opposite sex, particularly the shape of the female form and the male body.

Of course, the superficials vary. Until 20<sup>th</sup> century, a sun tan suggested you had to work outdoors all day in the sun and were probably therefore poor and (by the standards of snobs) of low status. A milk white skin was admired – as in the story of Snow White. Times changed and a tan came to be a sign of wealth and status. You could afford to lounge around on foreign beaches. For most of human history, plumpness was admired as

a sign of health, wealth and importance. That's because for much of human history far too many people were lean and hungry. Nowadays it is the other way round. Skinniness is regarded as a sign of health, education and sufficient wealth to eat good food and go to the gymnasium, whereas fatness is associated with poor health, ignorance of nutrition science and having to rely on cheap processed foods. I'm generalising, not judging! I myself believe in *live and let live*.

There are, naturally enough, complications. Fashion is not always logical and we go through phases when the ugly is regarded as admirable. Teenagers and young adults may be drawn to hair styles and clothes which could have been calculated to enrage their parents. Punk Rock in the 1970s seemed to wallow in ugliness, a rebellion against the conventions of the Establishment.

It is said that, in the bad old days of slavery, some African tribes deliberately tried to make themselves and their children grotesque in order to make them less attractive to slave traders but that then these mutilations actually became fashionable within the tribes themselves and have continued even to the present day.

There is a Chinese custom of binding the feet of girls so that they do not grow naturally. Not having to walk signifies wealth and high status. English women wear shoes in which they can't walk comfortably in order to look smarter and perhaps as a sign of status and being comfortably off. I got into serious trouble once for suggesting that, had the lady in question worn more sensible shoes, we could have walked to the bus stop rather than call a taxi. Actually, we did walk to the bus stop notwithstanding. As a poor student, there was no question of my paying for a taxi.

Good clothes indicate wealth and wearing silk rather than denim shows that you don't have to do manual work. Rather a ridiculous sign of status when you come to think about it. Road menders are of far more use to society than indolent millionaire playboys.

The duelling scars sported by young Prussian aristocrats were ugly, but indicated both courage and that you were of high social status.

The scientist Steven Pinker is all in favour of equality for men and women but he thinks that we'll never get many girls applying to become mechanics or similar because an unblemished skin is regarded as attractive in women but a few scars and even a bit of dirt indicate a ruggedness in men which suggests a willingness and an ability to work hard and therefore to be good providers.

What we regard as beautiful is often indicative of health, but we don't like things too perfect. In historical times, women applied beauty spots so that their complexions would not be completely perfect. If you take a photograph of your face, cut it in half vertically, then photograph one of the halves as its mirror image and put it back with its partner, you will have a perfectly symmetrical representation of your complete face and it will look totally wrong. We are not comfortable with perfect symmetry.

But surely, a beautiful mind and a good character are much more important than a beautiful appearance. When the prophet Samuel is told by God to choose one of Jesse's sons to be Saul's successor as King of Israel (I Samuel 16), Jesse brings each of his seven oldest sons one at a time to the prophet, all fine young men with whom Samuel is suitably impressed. But God tells Samuel that none of them is the right person for the job because *the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart*. Instead, Samuel directs Jesse to send for the eighth and youngest son, David, who is looking after the sheep. It is David whom God chooses to be King of Israel after Saul because he is a man after God's own heart. That's what really matters. Being a good person is much more important than looking good. Though being good looking doesn't necessarily disqualify you from being a good person and God's choice. David is described as *ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to*.

Perhaps a good character makes its mark on the way we look. I had a junior school teacher who told us children always to smile and never to frown so that when we were old and wrinkled at least our wrinkles would be laughter lines.

When I was young, I was counselled, when looking for a wife, to choose a plain girl rather than a beautiful girl, because very likely the

beautiful girl would have been spoilt. As I never married either a plain or a pretty woman I didn't put this theory to the test, perhaps thereby saving some nice girl a life of misery married to me!

There is a problem when fashions in appearance don't coincide with what is healthy. I'm thinking of those dogs and cats which are bred so to emphasis particular traits of appearance that they cannot live natural, healthy lives. There is nothing beautiful about an animal which can't breathe properly or is always in pain and it will grieve any loving owner if a cute little puppy or kitten grows up to have a miserable life. (It will also mean big bills at the vet's.) Most breeds of dogs were bred for particular purposes. They look good as things generally do when form matches function. But, if you look at old pictures of working dogs, you will see that features like flat faces and pug noses used to be nothing like so developed as they are nowadays in some over bred contemporary dogs. Good health is one of the most important aspects of dog and cat breeding.

As you know, I'm a great lover of the beauty of nature. Recent studies suggest that it is good for our mental and spiritual health, as well as our physical health, to get out into open spaces and fresh air. Pinker (who is trying to explain our perception of natural beauty in terms of the science of evolution) suggests that we enjoy looking at pastoral scenes because they suggest a safe and fertile landscape in which we might live peacefully and prosperously. He gets more stuck trying to account for our enjoyment of mountain scenery and seascapes. Perhaps, these appeal to us because they are awe-inspiring. Certainly, one could say that of the night sky. *THE heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handywork*, declares Psalm 19. Such thoughts put us in our place too. Psalm 8<sup>3ff</sup>: *For I will consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers : the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. What is man, that thou art mindful of him : and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him lower than the angels : to crown him with glory and worship. Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of thy hands : and thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; All sheep and oxen : yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea : and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Governor : how excellent is thy Name in all the world!* Sometimes, I wonder if

the present day decline in religious belief and practice can be partly blamed on the fact that so many of us now live in towns, surrounded by the often ugly works of man, rather than by the glories of God's work in Nature.

At the beginning of the first lockdown, when there were no planes in the sky and very little traffic on the roads, when the stars became visible again, the air regained its natural freshness and the flora and fauna seemed to be renewed, I wondered whether we would learn our lesson and, even after COVID, fly less, drive less, consume less and pollute less. But, no, the pressure was to get back to normal as quickly as possible. If we hadn't, there would have been an awful lot of people out of work.

People do need homes and jobs and the ability to get around. Even so, there is a strong case to be made that people would be happier if their homes, our roads and railways, even our factories and places of work were well designed, not only in the sense of being robust, safe, reasonably priced, properly insulated, economical to heat, well ventilated, easy to clean, etc., but also that they looked good, that they were easy on the eye. The government has recently suggested that, if new housing developments were only more attractive to look at, there might be less local opposition to development.

Beauty seems to have something to do with order and proportion. Georgian architecture is very much admired for its proportion. Doors, windows, the shape of the buildings themselves, aspire to what is called the Golden Ratio. They look right. It is a ratio which is repeated in nature time after time. What many consider the ideal body shape for a man reflects this Golden Ratio. Order and proportion. God created the world as we know it out of chaos. Genesis 1<sup>1ff</sup>: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* The Great Architect created order out of chaos, energy out of the void. *And God saw the light, that it was good.* Is this the biblical version of what physicists call the Big Bang? Could be. I don't know!

Order out of chaos, but maybe not too much order. I was thinking about this when I was gardening

this afternoon. What is a weed? A weed is a plant growing where we don't want it to grow. Gardening is imposing order on nature. We pull out the weeds, cut the grass, trim the hedges. We plant what we want to grow. Perhaps perversely, we value the things which are harder to cultivate more than the things which can look after themselves – weeds. But not too much. We're learning to give Nature something of a freer rein to create habitats for desirable plants and animals which an over zealous commitment to order can only too easily destroy. Fifty years ago, I used to say that my grandmother's garden at Betsham was more attractive than all the others in that row of houses – from a distance. They all had neat lawns surrounded by flower beds with some low-growing bedding plants which you couldn't see over the well cut privet hedges. My grandmother was no longer able to keep on top of things. The result was a riot of hollyhocks, phlox, evening primrose and all kinds of colourful flowers visible the length of the road (even above the well cut privet hedge). I dread to think how some of these front gardens have probably by now been totally subdued by concrete, paving or plastic grass.

Life brings order out of disorder. Left to themselves, things fall apart. Hot things get cold. Clocks run down. Even stone crumbles into dust. The whole of the inorganic universe is running down. Scientists call this entropy. Life reverses entropy. An acorn organises the water, carbon dioxide and other nutrients it absorbs from its surroundings and grows into an oak tree. A calf drinks its mother's milk, breaks it down into its constituent chemicals and reconstitutes them as its own growing muscles, organs, nerves, brain, etc. . Life reverses entropy. Life brings order out of the chaos towards which everything would otherwise tend. Perhaps, this is our mission too. As living organisms, as co-creators with God, we find beauty in bringing order and proportion out of chaos and randomness.

But not too much. I remember reading in a book on garden design that straight paths running the length of the garden don't look good, which is true, but wiggles for no apparent reason just look silly. You need to dig a pond or plant a tree to justify putting a bend in your garden path.

Finally and briefly, a reminder that, as we have said before, music has order. There are many different kinds of music, but they are all different

from random noise. There is a close relationship between music and mathematics. Music is beautiful because there is order and proportion. Similarly, as we have also said before, for those who can appreciate it, there is beauty in the equations and proofs of Physics and Mathematics – order and proportion and often a profound simplicity.

So back to the bible note which inspired me to share these thoughts. The July-September quarter this year examines wisdom in the Bible, a study of the Book of Proverbs. I decided to finish the study, however, with a particular chapter from the Book of Job. Here are that day's notes.

September 30<sup>th</sup>      Job 28 vv 1-28

I thought it would be good to finish these thoughts about wisdom with this beautiful chapter from Job. The psalmist talks about the beauty of holiness. Mathematicians and physicists speak of the beauty of the equations and mathematical proofs which express the fundamental truths which make the world go round. Beauty is one of the attributes of God. There is an essential harmony in the way the world works, a rhythm in resonance with the essential nature of its Creator. It is when we are out of tune with God, clashing out a different beat, that things go wrong. Indifference to the needs of others, actual hatred, careless stewardship of creation, selfishness, all defile the pure loveliness of the world God has made. It is only God Who can restore order and harmony. This He does by living and dying

among us the human life which ought to be lived by us all. It is in living in harmony with God, by His grace, that our lives are truly fulfilled and we are enabled to play our part in His plans for His creation.

By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation;  
by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by  
thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation,  
*Good Lord, deliver us.*

By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by  
thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious  
Death and Burial; by thy glorious  
Resurrection and Ascension, and by the  
Coming of the Holy Ghost,  
*Good Lord, deliver 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.*

I offer these bible notes to parishioners and others every quarter. Each day, there is a suggested bible reading and some comments on it which I hope will assist readers as they seek to understand the Bible and apply its teachings in their daily lives. If you would like to receive these notes, I can email them to you if you ask me. They are also on my [webpage](http://cuxtonandhalling.org.uk/teaching.htm) [cuxtonandhalling.org.uk/teaching.htm](http://cuxtonandhalling.org.uk/teaching.htm) after the sermons. They are awkward to print but I can do you a paper copy if you can't receive them in any other way.

Roger.



### *Cantium Singers*

A 30 strong community choir performing at St. John the Baptist Church, Halling

With professional soloist, Jennifer Tatnall,  
on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 7pm for 7.30pm.

*Light refreshments available.*

The concert is free but donations are welcome.

## From the Registers

### Baptisms:

15<sup>th</sup> May

15<sup>th</sup> May

22<sup>nd</sup> May

Rosie Anna Abnett

William George Thomas Abnett

Oliver Lucas

Nine Acres Road

Nine Acres Road

Thomas Harris Close

### Wedding:

21st May

Joseph Alan Kenyon and Louise Stella Castle

Cuxton

### Halling Cemetery & Cuxton Churchyard

I'm sorry that these have got so badly out of hand this year. Of course, there has been a lot of published advice about not mowing in May in order to protect the wildlife, but I must be honest. That is not our policy and I should have liked to have seen the grass cut sooner and shorter. I hope that, by the time you read this, things will have improved.

What happened was this. We had very strange spring weather, hot and dry in March, cold and dry in April and things hardly grew. In fact, farmers and gardeners were getting worried. Then, in May, we experienced a series of deluges and everything took off – crops and garden flowers fine, weeds and churchyard grass not so good. The grass is actually cut for us under the Community Payback scheme and they normally do a very good job, but they have had staffing problems this year and so have not been able to make as many visits as they usually do. The unfortunate result has been only too evident, not only to those of us who attend these sites frequently, but also, I understand on social media.

Churchyard and cemetery maintenance have always been a problem. When I came here in 1987, I was pleased to find that there was a scheme under which the government paid otherwise unemployed people a small wage to perform useful services in the community, such as maintaining both our churchyards and the cemetery and cleaning the churches. This was a relief to me because I had been the one cutting the grass around my previous church. I don't mind doing that. I like taking exercise in the fresh air and gardening, but it would take up a lot of time because the mower was always going wrong. They bought a new one when I left!

The government soon stopped this programme. Understandably, they wanted to use any money provided for the unemployed to train people to get better jobs with better pay. So we now turned to volunteers working monthly. It's quite a task to find enough volunteers to work in two churchyards and a cemetery throughout the Summer. In fact, I used to say that, with those three plots to look after plus the extensive Rectory grounds, there would be enough work to employ a man full time in the Summer, if only we had the money – which, of course, we don't. I said I wouldn't mind being that man if I was spared church meetings, but that idea didn't go down too well with the laity. The other problem with using volunteers is that the ground is very rough and hard on the equipment. We had a few mowers which we found it a struggle to maintain. If people brought their own mowers from home, they were not really up to the job. So we hired equipment, but that brought its own problems. I was very happy to join the working parties in those days. I remember thinking that, if I did my bit when I was young, maybe other younger people would take over when I became old. It hasn't quite worked out like that.

On one occasion, we discovered a thick cable in the bushes running along the boundary between Halling Cemetery and the railway. There were badges on it saying KEPC (Kent Electric Power Company) I don't know how many thousand Volts. As KEPC no longer existed, I thought it was probably redundant, but I checked with Seeboard (which was then our regional electricity company) and they said it was very much live. It supplied electricity to the whole of Halling High Street. We may be thankful that we didn't cut it. Anyway, we're safe now. Seeboard came and buried it for us.

We had Halling Churchyard closed by an act in the Privy Council, because it was full (which was why the parish had acquired the cemetery) and now Medway Council have to keep it tidy for us, which has

considerably reduced the burden on the Church. I think this is fair. Anybody who lives or dies in the parish has the right to be buried in our churchyard or cemetery, whatever their religious beliefs. So it makes sense that the local authority should give the Church a helping hand. If we didn't have churchyards, the council would be responsible for providing burial plots in their place.

There came a time when a man, who had acquired a mower specially designed for churchyards, very kindly devoted many hours to maintaining Cuxton Churchyard virtually single-handed. This was a tremendous help. When this arrangement came to an end, I undertook to cut Cuxton Churchyard for a while. There was a justifiable complaint that I might have neglected the pastoral work which is my job in order to perform a task which is not my responsibility. The Parochial Church Council is responsible for the churchyard and cemetery.

At this point, I should mention another tension. Churchyards are important for the environment. They have not usually been fertilised or treated with pesticides. Both Cuxton Churchyard and Halling Cemetery are full of wildflowers in the Spring. These, we do not want to cut. There are also other less spectacular plants, insects, birds and other wild creatures. What is special about churchyards is that, as well as wild flowers, they are home to various garden flowers planted on burial plots or springing from the seeds of cut flowers placed by people visiting graves. On the other hand, we like to see the graveyard neat, a fitting resting place for the departed, and for graves to be easily and safely accessible to visitors. So we do need to cut the grass!

For a period, we employed professional grass cutters. Even with the financial assistance of the two parish councils and some generous parishioners, however, we cannot really afford to pay what these firms charge. Again, working parties of volunteers were required for additional tidying up.

So, where are we now? Community Payback has been a godsend. I hope very much that they will soon be back at full strength. Thank you to those who maintain your own family graves and to those who do a bit more than that. Any voluntary help is gratefully received. It is not impossible that we shall again try to organise working parties. I'll let you know if we do.

So apologies again for the current state of affairs and thank you for your understanding and forbearance.  
Roger.



#### Ukraine Appeal

You will be pleased to know that our bring and share lunch for Ukraine on 15<sup>th</sup> May raised £270 plus we can claim £51 gift aid. Any other Christian Aid envelopes you still have may be returned to church.

#### **PERCY PIGEON'S PERCEPTIONS**

Good day to you all. Have you been on your holiday break yet? I understand that you have been experiencing some problems with your airports. This is not a problem that we avians share of course. Philippa and are planning our month away. Shall it be Wouldham or Leybourne? Vigo or Harvel? Tough choices. We do like Leybourne lakes: so much to see - wind-surfers in particular. We often perch near the fishermen who brush off their lunch crumbs and occasionally spill some mealworm bait. There are always dogs, and often people with picnic and snacks. There is usually an ice cream van too which is very popular with littl'uns although we do not eat ice creams .....well, except the cones of course.

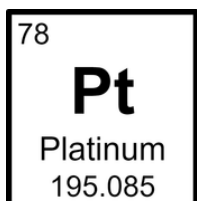
We pigeons don't really have favourite foods, but are very partial to nuts, seeds and grains. You may know that we are also fond of young vegetables and some plants. This is a good time of year for us but many of you put prohibitive nets over your peas and beans.

Harvel is quite pleasant with its farm shop and the goat enclosure ....where much grain is often spilled. We have our own farm shop at Upper Halling of course and now it houses the artisan baker, we are more fond of it. My colourful New Zealand cousin Picton from Palmerstone ....or is that Palmerstone from Picton? - says we would just love his country and invites us to stay but it seems to be even further than Paddlesworth so I don't think that's possible. Always good to hear from him by pigeon post or tree-mail though.



And did you enjoy the Platinum Jubilee celebrations? (Known irreverently by the squabs as the PlattyJubes) I was very pleased to hear that the lighting of a beacon in Lincolnshire had been abandoned as some cousin collared doves had nested and laid their eggs in the beacon.

We flew down to St John the Baptist on the Saturday and bobbed our heads in tune to the concert music, especially the Gershwin and the Radetsky March. We were looking forward to grazing the Big Lunch, but we'd had such a bad time in the crazy ash tree with the storm that we decided to stay home and forage locally. I found a wind-damaged feeder had released a mass of peanut granules and sunflower hearts, so a good decision once those pesky argumentative starlings had left. I hope you have enjoyed the Jubilee celebrations and wish you a good holiday break. Coo coo



This really has been a joyful and exciting celebration. There is so much to admire in the character and conduct of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She is a wonderful example to us all and

she thoroughly deserves the love and respect which she has received at this unprecedented anniversary. There have been so many celebrations of this event all over the world. There have been so many different ways of celebrating the Platinum Jubilee here in this parish. There have been the bunting and the flags, street decorations, parties, our Platinum Jubilee Concert, the Big Lunch, bell ringing and the lighting of beacons in both villages and probably many other celebrations I don't know about in people's homes and round and about.

My Jubilee jubilation began, like every Thursday, with the celebration of Holy Communion at St John's. This was the most important thing we did all day, as it is every time *we do this in remembrance of Him*. If it were not, there would be no point in doing it at all. The King of Kings reigns both from the Cross in time and space and from His Heavenly Throne eternally. Before the service, the bell was rung 70 times (approximately).

Afterwards, we re-convened at the Jubilee Hall. There is a coffee morning at Upper Halling the first Thursday of every month, to which everybody is warmly invited, but this one was special. We marked both her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jubilee Hall (which was commissioned to celebrate her Silver Jubilee). There was a good crowd there, including some of the original committee members and fundraisers and people who have served in various capacities ever since.

### Platinum Jubilee

The hall was built to replace the old St Laurence Church which by that time had fallen into disrepair and closed to worship. There was support



from the big cement companies, especially APCM with whom there was a land swap to facilitate the building of Browndens Road. There were some grants, but much of the money was raised by local people, many of whom donated a pound and took part in various fund-raising events. It was good to see some of them there to mark the anniversary all these years later. There was an exhibition of photographs.

The hall, over the years, has hosted a number of clubs and societies, social events and church services and is still very much a vibrant resource for the community. There has recently been an extensive refurbishment as part of ongoing maintenance and an improvement programme and it is hoped that the kitchen will be the next thing to be modernised.

As well as the usual coffee or tea and scrumptious cakes, a buffet lunch was also served. We had begun with toasting the Queen and the hall built in her honour and singing the National Anthem. It was a very enjoyable occasion.

That evening, Tommy and I enjoyed the bells of St Michael's from the comfort of the Rectory and, after supper, we both headed to Church Hill for the lighting of the beacon. There was a large, jolly and enthusiastic crowd of people and dogs. Being June, even at that time of night, it was not yet dark and it was good to see so many people, some of whom one doesn't see very often. The national proclamation was proclaimed. The beacon was lit. We cheered the Queen and sang the National Anthem. In thousands of other places throughout the country and all over the



world people were doing the same thing. We could see a couple of other beacons from where we were standing and some sporadic fireworks on Bluebell Hill. It is all so very moving and exciting.

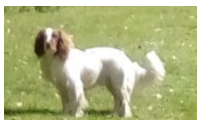
Saturday afternoon at St John's, we had a tremendous time celebrating the Jubilee in music and song with the Halling Sinfonia Platinum Jubilee Summer Prom Concert. Thanks to the performers and all whose presence made the event such a wonderful success. Also to Halling Parish Council, whose generous sponsorship made it possible to put on such a marvellous entertainment and to be able to distribute tickets for free. The programme began with some much loved classics and songs from the shows and culminated in a musical extravaganza replicating the familiar Last Night of the Proms. I have seldom seen an audience so enthusiastic. We all went home smiling and laughing and singing *Land of Hope & Glory* and *Rule Britannia!*.

Sunday was Whitsun or Pentecost (when we remember God's gift of the Holy Spirit to us) and naturally we celebrated the Jubilee at both our services. One of the most sacred points in the coronation service is when the new monarch is anointed with oil. This rite was performed on both kings and priests in the Bible and signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit by Whose grace alone the Queen is enabled to fulfil her vocation. Throughout this Platinum Jubilee celebration, we

have been rejoicing in our admiration for the way in which her Majesty has performed her duty throughout her long life. We should never forget, however, that we all have a vocation, a calling. God has a plan and a purpose for every one of us. We may not be crowned or anointed as she was, but all Christian people have their place and their duty and, just like any king or a priest, we can only fulfil our calling by the grace given to us by God's Holy Spirit. All those who have been baptised are required *to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me*.

And then there was the Big Lunch! The weather was a little disappointing but a good crowd gathered in Cuxton Rec. There were food stalls, a bar and an ice cream van. Local clubs and societies, the two churches and the parish council had stalls showing off what they do, selling things and having fun, very often also raising funds for charity. There was also a roundabout. There was a collection for Ukraine as we went in. Throughout the afternoon, we were entertained with music provided by a variety of local performers from the 'seventies onwards. A good time was had by all.

Sorry, I can't write up the events I wasn't at, but I'm sure they were all characterised by that same wonderful community spirit and sense of celebration. Roger.



#### Tommy's Talking Points

I'm afraid he still hasn't taken me anywhere different since we went to Toy's Hill in March. He asked me if I'd heard the one about the man who came back from his holidays and said, "I thought Chaos was a Greek island until I got to the airport"? Master said that, what with what is going on at airports, congestion on our pot-holed roads, threatened rail strikes, the not entirely negligible risk of COVID and the cost of fuel, not to mention climate change and pollution, he is surprised that there is still such a thing as leisure travel. But then he confesses that he has never been very adventurous. He is easily satisfied. And he has to admit that we live in one of the nicest places in the world. So there is no real need to get away. Anyway, none of that has stopped him leaving me behind and going to London on the train for a swish meal with our friends when there are plenty of places which sell good food within walking distance of the Rectory. He's off to Meopham again next week for the same reason. That is within walking distance, but he's going on his bike! So I shan't be going.

Still, it is very nice around here. We get out every day, usually at least twice, in the fields and woods around Cuxton. We observe the changing of the seasons and the concomitant alteration of the flora and fauna. There is a predominance of white flowers just now, especially cow parsley and beans in the field, but there are also deep blue speedwell, purple vetch and mauve mallow. There are plenty of buttercups to light up the grass with golden yellow. Wild roses are coming out in all shades of pink. There are poppies at the field margins. The brambles are coming into flower and, in a few weeks, there will be blackberries. The lambs are rapidly turning into sheep. There are some skewbald calves which have surely been brought in as they

don't look as if they could be the progeny of the deep brown cows (how now?) which usually reside in Dean Valley.

We notice a minor ongoing conflict in Bush Valley. Despite Medway Council's refusal of planning permission for the winery, the vineyard owners seem to be attempting to discourage people from using some of the footpaths which, while not rights of way, previous landlords and tenants have been relaxed about the public enjoying. The odd walker or horse rider, even mountain biker, must surely do less damage to the countryside than bulldozers and cement mixers! Anyway, notices keep appearing and disappearing and there is a barrier which occasionally moves. There is apparently a war of attrition going on between the multi-million pound developers and one or more concerned local people, whose identity Master does not know and would rather not be informed of. He can't condone law-breaking if it should come to that, but he does incline to support the little guy against the massive corporation and those who would protect our environment against those who would destroy it. He is inclined to liken the situation to that between President Putin and the Ukrainians, but, as usual he is inclined to exaggerate and over dramatise, which, I tell him, is not always helpful!

Finally, for this month, he's been very complimentary. Watching me this morning out for our run, he remarked on how dogs by their very being epitomise the Christian virtues of joy and love. I, Tommy, would also like to add faith and hope. You should see me watching him when he's opening the dog food tins! Tommy.

Tideway Folk Group  
Rectory Grounds  
Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July  
4.00 pm

Please bring a picnic.

Entrance free donations welcome.

#### And Finally What Is Platinum?

"It is a hard, dense, white grey metal." It is lustrous, ductile and malleable. It is more valuable than gold. It is described as a noble metal, which means that, like gold, it doesn't corrode or combine readily with other chemicals. It doesn't dissolve in most acids. As a result, there are a few places in the world, where it can be found as pure metal – including Colombia and Russia. Platinum compounds, mixed with Nickel or Copper or Arsenic, are found and have been mined in Canada, Alaska, Australia and South Africa. Platinum is very rare, accounting for its high price. The compounds are poisonous, but handling the pure metal is perfectly safe.

In ancient times, Platinum's main use was in jewellery. Nowadays, it has a variety of industrial uses in electronics, glass making (because molten glass doesn't stick to it and Platinum itself has a high melting point), and in medicines, including anti-cancer drugs. It's main industrial use, however, is as a catalyst in chemical reactions, the most widespread instance of which is its use in the catalytic convertors which, to some extent, clean up automobile emissions. This is why catalytic converters are often a target for thieves.

The first European explorers to encounter Platinum were the Spaniards in C16 in South America. At first, they couldn't see any use for the material and would throw it away if it was mixed in with consignments of gold or silver. Further study revealed that it was much more useful than that!

Then, of course, there are Platinum credit cards which apparently give you more privileges than gold ones. But that's another story!