

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
5 th February 4 th Sunday before Lent Epiphany 5 BCP	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ephesians vv 17-32 p1175 Mark 1 vv 29-39 p1003
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 1-9a p744 I Corinthians 2 vv 1-16 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 13-20 p969
12 th February Septuagesima	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 21-37 p969
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Amos 3 vv 1-8 p918 Ephesians 5 vv 1-17 p1176
19 th February Sexagesima	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 v1 – 2v3 p3 Romans 8 vv 18-25 p1135 Matthew 6 vv 25–34 p971
26 th February Quinquagesima	11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 II Peter 1 vv 16-21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984
1 st March Ash Wednesday	9.30 am Holy Communion	Joel 2 vv 1-17 p912 John 8 vv 1-11 p1073
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
5 th February 4 th Sunday before Lent Epiphany 5 BCP	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 1-9a p744 I Corinthians 2 vv 1-16 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 13-20 p969
	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 21-37 p969
12 th February Septuagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 p1145 Matthew 5 vv 21-37 p969
	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP
19 th February Sexagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 1 v1 – 2v3 p3 Romans 8 vv 18-25 p1135 Matthew 6 vv 25–34 p971
	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 II Peter 1 vv 16-21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984
26 th February Quinquagesima	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 24 vv 12-18 p82 II Peter 1 vv 16-21 p1222 Matthew 17 vv 1-9 p984
1 st March Ash Wednesday	7.30 pm Holy Communion	Joel 2 vv 1-17 p912 II Corinthians 5 v20 – 6 v10 p1161 John 8 vv 1-11 p1073

On Thursday 2nd March, the 9.30 am Holy Communion service will be at St Michael's.

Holy Communion Wednesdays at 9.30 at St Michael's		Holy Communion Thursdays at 9.30 at St John's	
1 st February	Hebrews 12 vv 4-15 Mark 6 vv 1-6	2 nd February Candlemas	Malachi 3 vv 1-5 Hebrews 2 vv 14-18 Luke 2 vv 22-40
8 th February	Genesis 2 vv 4-17 Mark 7 vv 14-23	9 th February	Genesis 2 vv 18-25 Mark 7 vv 24-30
15 th February	Genesis 8 vv 6-22 Mark 8 vv 22-26	16 th February	Genesis 9 vv 1-13 Mark 8 vv 27-33
22 nd February	James 1 vv 19-27 Mark 9 vv 38-40	23 rd February	James 2 vv 1-9 Mark 9 vv 41-50
1 st March at Halling Ash Wednesday	Joel 2 vv 1-17 p912 John 8 vv 1-11 p1073	2 nd March at Cuxton	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 Luke 9 vv 22-25

Copy Date March Magazine: 10th March 8.30 am Rectory.

Contributions of articles, opinions, questions and historical and nature notes are welcome for possible inclusion – anything in fact which might be of interest to the inhabitants of Cuxton and Halling. Please send e mail or paper contributions to the Rectory by 8.30 am on copy day. Advertisements are also welcome at an extremely reasonable yearly rate £40-£80 depending on size. If you think this magazine is good value, please encourage your friends and neighbours to take it. Ask your street distributor or the Rector to add new subscribers.



Why "Why?"?

Enjoying the sublime Nine Lessons and Carols at St Michael's this Christmas, I found myself thinking about two people whose birthdays fall on that date. One of them has been dead for many years. At Christmas, I find, we often think about those *whom we love but see no longer*. We needn't be afraid for the Christian departed. We don't have to be *sorry as men without hope for them that sleep in Him*. Those who die in the Lord are with Him forever and we shall one day see them again if we too are Christians.

*Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

The other person I thought of appears to me, I'm sorry to say, somewhat indifferent to the Christian faith, good chap though he is. When we think about what Christmas means, it's hard to understand how anyone can be indifferent to Jesus, though human indifference to Him explains most if not all of the problems that follow.

*Child for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

Then I got to thinking about other people, family members and former members of our congregation who are no longer able to be with us. It's good to think of those who've died in the Lord worshipping in heaven with the angels and the archangels. I like to think of people who were friends on earth now being together again in heaven, but why did some of them have to die so young or in such horrible ways? What about those who are still alive in this world but housebound, maybe in pain or crippled, in hospital or in homes? What about those whose minds are going or gone with dementia. Why? If God loves us so much (and the Christmas story makes it quite clear that He does), why does He allow all these terrible things to happen to people. If He gave sight to the blind, restored the hearing of the deaf, loosened

the tongues of the dumb, enabled the lame to walk, cleansed the lepers, cast out demons and raised the dead to life, why doesn't He do the same for us and the people we love today?

Then my mind shifted to some of the things we read about in the newspapers. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life*. God so loves the world, but what a lot of pain and suffering and wickedness there is in the world today and always: war, terrorism, serious crime. How many people live in chronic and acute poverty at home and abroad? What about the homeless? What about the ruthless exploitation of desperate people by major corporations whose products we buy in this country and congratulate ourselves on having obtained a bargain? I know families with members in prison and prison officers with all the responsibilities they have to carry in difficult or even impossible conditions. I can think of people in this parish whom I know to be ruining their own lives and hurting the people who love them by their misuse of alcohol and other drugs. Why should these things be so in a world created by a loving God and redeemed by the Son of God Who was prepared to become one of us and to die for our sins? How can people be indifferent?

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousands years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing.*

Why? My tentative answers would be along the lines that God has created, together with everything else, freedom. God's Creation is free. We have the choice. We can choose the path of life or the path of death. We can cleave to God or we can alienate ourselves from Him. The fact is that the human creation has done the latter. We have used our freedom to alienate ourselves from God and to choose the path of death. That is why there is evil in the world. We have opened the gates of the citadel and let in the devil. There is, however, always hope with God. Christ has overcome the world. Christmas and Easter tell you both that God shares our pain and that He has redeemed us. He has set us free. In Him we are

born again to everlasting life. What is required of us is to put our faith in Him and to repent of our sins. Everything else follows from faith. *Faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.*

I'm getting ahead of myself, however, and I come back to my original question, Why "Why?"? It is one of the first things young children learn to say, Why? And sometimes it gets on your nerves (and they know it does). They keep quizzing you about things until they finally find something you don't know. We once got from *Why is grass green?* through *Because chlorophyll absorbs every other visible wavelength of light*, to *Plants store the energy in sunlight in the carbohydrates they make from carbon dioxide and water which we then eat to give us energy* with a group of inquisitive four year olds. They didn't understand then, but they were encouraged to believe that it is worth questioning. There are answers out there to be found – answers which lead to more questions. This is the origin of science, the fundamental belief that the universe makes sense and that we can make sense of it. So we keep on asking "Why?" and it's to be encouraged in children how ever irritating or even embarrassing it can be. Don't dumb down to children. Obviously, you've got to start where they are, but the sky's the only limit to what they might achieve (and that leads into a glorious infinity of space).

I think the same is true of arts subjects. We're trying to make sense of the world. Poirot identifies the murderer. David Copperfield discovers what life is really about and what sort of person he is. The young couple find the path to true love. Music brings order out of noise, mathematical order actually. The visual arts strive to say something about the essential reality of things. Even nihilists are having to react against the idea of meaning and purpose. They are denying what most people instinctively assume to be the case, that there is always a "Why"; there is a reason for the way things are. Is it going too far to suggest that for nihilists the meaning is that there is no meaning? But there has to be meaning for us because we are rational beings. Beauty and Truth are closely connected concepts. The equations which make best sense of physics are elegant.

*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.*

Your toddler and your teenager will also raise "Why?" questions about behaviour. *Why shouldn't I eat the last cake on the plate? Why must I tidy my room? Do I have to go to school?* There may well be times when you can only answer, *Because I say so. Because I say so*, however, isn't good enough in the long run. There are reasons why we shouldn't eat too much or deprive somebody else of a cake or expect someone else to tidy up our rooms for us or neglect our responsibilities to ourselves and to other people. Indeed, if there is no good reason for a rule or a law, probably that rule or law should be repealed. There are reasons for the way we should behave. I've said it before. There are natural laws like gravity and the laws of electromagnetism and aerodynamics and there are moral laws like the Ten Commandments. The world makes sense because the world is the creation of a Mind which is infinitely greater than our minds but nevertheless a Mind in some sense like our minds. There are scientific laws and there are moral laws, but there is only One Source of all law. To run your life or your country without regard to God's commandments to love Him and to love one another is as foolish as trying to fly an aeroplane without regard to the laws of gravity and aerodynamics.

So now the final paragraph I've been struggling to lead up to. All these "Why?" questions, especially the ones about evil and suffering make me (and perhaps you) question my faith. How can there be an all powerful, all knowing, everywhere God of love if there is so much evil in the world and so much undeserved pain? Is Christmas just a sweet story for cute children and a sentimental tear jerker for their parents and grandparents? What I come back to, however, is that I instinctively keep asking the questions. The reason why I keep asking "Why?" is because I just know that there are answers out there somewhere and I know that there are answers because I know that the universe is the creation of an infinitely more wonderful Mind than my mind. I may not know now, but I shall know hereafter and so will you, one way or the other. Happy New Year, Roger.

Psalm 19.

The heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handywork. One day telleth another : and one night certifieth another. There is neither speech nor language : but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands : and their words into the ends of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun : which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again : and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever : the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold : sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant taught : and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can tell how oft he offendeth : O cleanse thou me from my secret faults. Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me : so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart : be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord : my strength, and my redeemer. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. **Amen.**

Christmas Thanks

Thanks as always to all those who work so hard to make our Christmas celebration what it is. The church buildings and their surroundings are kept clean and in good repair. There are beautiful flowers. The organist and choristers work so hard. The bellringers give voice to our celebration across the village. Servers, sacristans, churchwardens and sidesmen make sure the services run smoothly. There is huge labour in preparing all those Christingles at both ends of the parish. Then there is all the work that goes into the Nativity Play, not to mention the preparation of refreshments for afterwards. Thanks too for the donation and decoration of our Christmas trees. Thank you everybody for all that you do at Christmas and throughout the year – by no means least your prayers and participation in the public worship, teaching, pastoral care and contribution to the general life of the village we seek to make as part of the Church in Cuxton and Halling. Outside the curtilage, Fresh Expressions combined with Cuxton Parish Council to hold an evening of carols at the library, whose staff kindly opened up for the occasion on 20th. Halling Parish Council brought Santa to a grotto on the site of the Bishops' Palace. There were side shows and real reindeer, though your correspondent missed seeing them draw the sleigh over the rooftops. This was on 22nd and we said Evening Prayer in St John's Church.

What Will You Do In 2017?

Confirmation?

We are expecting Bishop James to preside at our Michaelmas celebration on 29th September at Cuxton. If there are candidates this year, this will be a confirmation service. If you have been baptised, but not yet confirmed, it is the same level of commitment. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you should be baptised and (in the Church of England) confirmed. There will be a time of preparation in which we study together in order to deepen our understanding of Jesus. Please ask if you would like to know more.

Have Your Baby Christened?

In the New Year's Day episode, Sherlock Holmes was asked to be Dr Watson's baby daughter's godfather. He declined on the grounds that he didn't believe in God. Christening is Baptism and it is the Sacrament by which people who have come to faith become members of the Church of God. We welcome people of any age from birth to the end of their lives on earth to join us. All that is required of candidates is faith and repentance, appropriate to their age and degree of understanding. Godparents support these new Christians in their faith. If those being christened are too young to make these affirmations on their own behalf, their godparents speak for them. It follows that godparents must be baptised Christians themselves. Sometimes parents are disappointed because they would like to ask people who are not themselves baptised to be godparents to their children and I tell them that they cannot. Sometimes this causes offence, but, if they think about it, I'm sure they wouldn't want their friends to tell lies, claiming to believe if they don't, and, if they do believe, there is no reason why they shouldn't themselves be baptised. Please direct enquiries about Baptisms to me.

A Formal Role in the Church?

Our Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church meeting take place simultaneously in St John's Church on 29th April at 10.00. There will be reports of the condition of our property and our financial situation and, more importantly, our activities over the past year and possibly of our hopes for the future. We shall also elect two representatives to the Strood Deanery Synod (who will be ex officio also members of our PCC), ten PCC members, an indefinite number of sidesmen and two churchwardens for each parish church. In order to vote at the APCM, you must be on the church electoral roll. Application forms will be available in good time. In order to stand for office, unless you are under eighteen, you must have been on the ER for at least six months prior to the meeting. We must find a new treasurer definitely (who should probably but not necessarily be on PCC) and other long standing office holders are talking about giving up this year. So could you be the person God is calling? I don't know what happens if all the offices aren't filled. Presumably things just don't get done. Then we should see just how much we would miss the contribution all these people make. If nobody don't do nothing, I guess there'll be no Church of St Michael's or Church of St John's, but that's in God's Hands. If the treasure's job were left to me, I'd put the income in a biscuit tin and pay the bills out of it without writing anything down or bothering with banks. So you probably don't want that!

In Defence of Preachers

There were some pretty harsh words about preachers in the pages of a national newspaper between Christmas and the New Year. I'm sure some of the criticism is justified. We preachers are, after all, only human, but do people ever consider the magnitude of the task? We have an audience which covers all ages from babyhood to extreme old age. We are speaking to people of very different experience of life, education and general intelligence. [Teachers and lecturers teach age groups or sets or at least students all qualified in and studying the same subject.] Many of our listeners think we ought to be able to cover anything worth covering in a quarter of an hour. [If the sermon is too long it shifts the balance of the service away from prayer and praise, which is not a good thing, but teachers and lecturers get 40 minutes or an hour or more.] Many of the "students" don't read the set text. Quite a few of them think that what they learnt as children decades ago is quite sufficient. Too many of them are inclined to make invidious comparisons with preachers they have known in the past, possibly remembered through the rosy mist of nostalgia for better times when we were all much younger and anything seemed possible. Unlike school teachers, preachers can't compel people to listen to lessons which they may find too difficult or challenging. Too many people just aren't really interested in the Word of God.

Sermons may, however, achieve more than we suppose. One man complained that he'd heard a sermon every Sunday for a whole year and didn't remember a single one of them. It was pointed out to him that he didn't remember what he'd had for dinner on every Sunday of the year either, but it had still done him good.

Yes, we are grateful for constructive criticism. Tell us if you can't hear* or can't understand or think we have misinterpreted the Scriptures. But please don't be unreasonable. We can't please everyone. Some things are hard to understand and take a lot of explaining. Some difficult or controversial issues might be discussed afterwards in study groups or one to one discussions or email correspondence. But resist the temptation to negative criticism. As Christians, we're called to build one another up in the Lord, not put one another down and discourage other Christians in their ministry. Sometimes, the fault is with the hearer or the message is meant for somebody else in the congregation and doesn't perhaps apply to you this week. Roger.

*I know I'm reluctant to use microphones. I feel they come between me and you. I tend to speak in a very animated way because I'm enthusiastic about what I believe. Because of that, microphones tend to distort and I'm sometimes told I should speak in a slow, dull monotone, which I'd hate to do. Some people say they hear me worse distorted by a microphone than they do when I don't use one. I will try to come to terms with the one at St John's, if it's what most people want. We shall have a sound system at St Michael's which I hope will work well when all the interested parties have agreed. I can boast that I was once told that I managed the microphone at Canterbury Cathedral better than the then Archbishop.



CHILDRENS' SOCIETY BOX COLLECTION 2016

I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who filled their home collecting boxes for the Children's Society last year. The total raised was £364.18, a brilliant amount when you consider that our numbers have fallen slightly compared to the previous year. Thanks also to Sue Cockburn for helping me to count it all. If anyone would like to join us in raising money for this charity by collecting their spare change at home, please contact me and I will supply you with a box. Julia Wells 01634 727424.



Poppy Appeal

We collected £19.46 at St John's and £92.40 at St Michael's. As HPC provide the boxes,, both our church collections go in with the Halling village total of £517.47. I don't know what other collections in Cuxton amounted to, but thanks to all who contributed to this very worthwhile cause.

Gift Services

The Christmas gifts we collected at our December Gift Services were well received by Demelza House (to whom the collection at the Scout & Guide Carol Service was also given) and the Food Bank who knew families that would benefit from them.

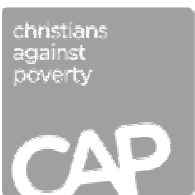


Foodbank Christmas Message

Another year has almost passed and I never cease to be amazed at what we are enabled to do by the volunteers, donors and supporters of Medway Foodbank.

The numbers in need of our help in Medway continue to grow, by almost **20%** year on year. Fortunately this is matched by the amazing generosity shown by the public. The December supermarket collections were the biggest ever, with a whopping **6,808Kg** and the Christmas donations directly to centres and the warehouse, following our appeal in November, have also exceeded expectations. "I wouldn't be surprised if the total for December topped 10 tonnes" agreed Kevin today. We are so glad that so many will not lack for Christmas, including treats toys and gifts.

Thank you all so very much, for everything that you do. The whole team here sends you the warmest regards of the season. May you be blessed with Peace, Joy and Love, Regards & Blessings, Ian Childs.



Christians Against Poverty

Medway has serious personal debt problems, no doubt including Cuxton and Halling. Both rich and poor people can get into debt and it becomes a nightmare when you can't repay your debts. You may lose your home. Goods may be repossessed. The emotional strain can lead to relationship breakdown, ill health and even suicide. Debt can become an unbearable burden and people may feel very alone with their problems.

Christians Against Poverty is a national organisation which works here in the Medway Towns. If you need help call 0800 328 0006 and you can pass on this number to anyone you know who might need it. You will be contacted and receive a home visit from someone who will help you to deal with your debt problems, getting your expenditure under control, prioritising your creditors, dealing with creditors to rearrange payment schedules, etc.. They will also offer to pray for you and with you and some of the people who are helped by CAP may decide to become Christians. CAP is an explicitly Christian organisation which knows how Jesus can turn lives around. However, you don't have to be or to become a Christian to get help. If you don't want to be prayed for, CAP will still help you to manage your money and find a solution to your financial problems.

As well as providing financial advice, CAP offers befrienders to support the people who turn to them for help. CAP is looking for volunteers from local churches to take on this role. You need to be a sympathetic person rather than a financial whiz to become a befriender. The service is entirely free to those who use it, but of course it does cost money to run and CAP is assisted by donations from Churches and individual Christians.

For more information on helping or if you need help with debt relief <https://capuk.org>

More About the History of Local Shops

We have now been told that, before Mr Pether made two into one and created a general store where Cuxton Coop now is, there were already two shops on the site – one run by the Saunders family, the other by the Wellards. This goes back to World War II. There was also a dairy. We are also informed that there was a sweet shop next to Bush Road Chapel on the east side and that, on the other side, many years ago, Flora Villa was once a butcher's shop.

The WRVS club which used to meet in the Rugby Cement works canteen once asked older people about the shops they could remember in Halling. They came up with over thirty, many of them very small and run from what are now ordinary houses. A booklet was compiled listing them, of which some of you may still have copies.

I remember there being a ship's chandler's shop at Upper Halling, which had formerly been a post office and general store run by the Baker Family. The post box has only fairly recently been removed to Crab's Corner (opposite where the "Robin Hood" used to be).

Which reminds me of a story. My grandparents and great grandparents ran a post office and general store in a terrace of old houses opposite the Colyer's Arms in Betsham. There came a time (between the two world wars) when the council decided that the road needed widening and the houses were not up to standard for human habitation. So they knocked them down and the residents were rehoused round the corner in Orchardlea. These were council houses and allegedly there was a promise that the rent would never rise above the initial 5/= (25p) a week. That certainly didn't last! The family reopened the post office in the new house, but very soon the council made them close it down because they wouldn't allow a business to be run from a council house. As my grandfather was unwell much of the time, the family was reduced to living on what my already elderly great grandfather could earn as a farm labourer – not much! The post office was moved to Ingress Terrace which has also subsequently been demolished and it is many years since there has been a post office in Betsham. They had had the telephone installed at Orchardlea for post office business, but had to have it taken out when they lost the post office because of the cost. My grandfather wrapped the wires left dangling by the engineers who removed it around the radio aerial. Subscribers to the Southfleet Exchange couldn't understand why they were receiving radio programmes on their telephones. The brick pillar which had contained the post box remained at Orchardlea for decades after my family were made to give up the post office. The loose ends of the story are that, when she was old and alone, the council put pressure on my grandmother to move out of the house so that it would be available for a family on the council's housing list. She died before they succeeded in removing her, but, soon after, it was sold into private ownership and is no longer a council house and it would be far beyond the reach of any poor family needing to buy or rent a home. Ironically, there is now a little way up the road from those houses a barrier to make the road narrower as a traffic calming measure, arguably nullifying one of the reasons for demolishing my father's family's original home, where they had been very happy and reasonably prosperous. The Colyer's Arms has also been demolished and replaced with a small housing development. For anyone interested, the pub was named after the same family as Colyer Road, Northfleet, one branch of which lived in the big house at Betsham, known as Joyce Hall, in the grounds of which there is now another small housing development known as Crayburne. RIK.

Answers

In response to a couple of last month's queries, wasps can be cannibalistic. It was important to preserve eggs in the war because they were in short supply and most were taken by the EGG Marketing Board to make powdered egg. What I still don't understand, however, is the need to preserve them in isinglass. Eggs just don't seem to go off how ever long you keep them, unless they are cracked or fertilised in which case they should be eaten up as soon as possible.

Words of Wisdom

Never date a tennis player. Love means nothing to them.

What happens to a frog's car if it breaks down? It's toad away.



Spot the Differences

What's different about this view of Cuxton Church? There's more space between the building and the churchyard. There appears to be a cross on top of the tower instead of a flagpole. Most significantly, the vestry hasn't yet been built. The vestry was added in memory of Canon Toone, Rector 1901-34. So that gives us some idea of the age of the picture. My guess is that it is around 1900. There can't be many people left in the village who remember when it looked like this.

Facebook & Digital Evangelism

Martin Sewell, who has preached at both Cuxton (some time ago) and Halling (this December), sent us this helpful information.

Dear Friends at Halling,

I was very pleased you have worshipped with you this morning, and thank you for your welcome. As promised I am sending you a couple of samples of the kind of material that is available across the internet and which we can easily share with our friends outside the Church. Imagine folk beginning to watch such videos on a daily basis whilst on their daily commute. Many catch up on Facebook habitually. Without realising it they would become engaged in daily engagement with God!

When Downtown Abbey was on television, the Church contacted the producers to point out that no house of that magnitude at that time would have begun the day without morning and evening prayer. Asked to bring in an occasional accurate historical reference they refused. That is an indicator of why we need to stop relying on others to acknowledge God in daily life and start encouraging ourselves!

Can I ask that you share this with folks at Cuxton. It was conversation with some young mums there that prompted the idea of supporting them with our initiative <https://www.facebook.com/faithin5minutes> we are also on twitter @faithin5minutes

With best wishes, Martin Sewell.

Brands Match

(It seems that the author of this short story got his brands confused. Can you see where he was going wrong?)

Because George had lost all his money on a night out with the *Leylands* at the *Green Line* track, he and Cynthia would not be having a foreign holiday this year. Indeed George owed *ERF* more than he could afford to repay and *ERF* was demanding his money back with menaces.

Still it was a lovely day. The birds were *Instagramming* in the trees. The *Bryant & Mays* were swimming on the lake. The scent of *Senior Service* filled the air. A bit nippy, maybe, first thing, but if they went out for the day, it would save having to put any more *Pepsi* on the boiler.

“Come on, Cynthia,” said George, “We haven't been out together since that time we went to Oxford with the *Morrises*.”

“Actually,” said Cynthia, “It was when the *Austins* took us to Cambridge. Still, it's a good idea. I'll make us up a *Bounty Bar* and you go and get a tin of *Palmolive* for dessert.

They got in the car, crossed the river at the *Vauxhall* and headed for the coast. “Where are the best views of the bay?” George asked a hippy camping out on the cliff top.

“Just up that *Chrysler*,” the hippy replied.

“O yes!” George exclaimed to Cynthia. “What a view. Look, the *Omo*’s up. I wish I’d brought my board. Wait a minute. Isn’t that *ERF* down there, picking up *Essos* on the beach. I don’t think I want to meet him. Let’s go somewhere else.”

But the bay was captivating - golden sand, pounding *Omo*, *Glenlivets* capping the waves far out in a deep green blue ocean, a warm *Express* bestowing its benison on the entire scene, and, besides, it had been a rotten drive, and Cynthia said, “No. Nobody’s going to spoil my day out and we’re going to the beach.” So down they went and, removing their shoes and socks, paddled in the bracing waters of an English early summer morning.

ERF signalled to George. “Now listen to me and we’ll say no more about what you owe me if you do what I say. There are drugs hidden in these winkle *Essos* along the breakwater. What you have to do is to check which ones have the drugs in them, collect them in this bucket and hand it to the skipper of that yacht in the bay when he comes on shore in about an hour. Do that right and we’re quits.”

George wasn’t happy about this and he went to buy himself and Cynthia an ice cream while he thought about it. “Psst,” said a voice in his ear, “I want to talk to you, but not in the ice cream parlour. *Lyons* have ears.” So George left Cynthia to enjoy her ice cream and withdrew into the shadow cast by the cliff. “I’m an agent with the FBI,” explained the man who had accosted him. When George looked puzzled, the agent explained, “You know the agency established by J Edgar *Electrolux*, not to be confused with President *Dyson*, who the dam’s named after. We’ve got our eye on *ERF*. His nefarious activities stretch from *Decca* to the District of *His Master’s Voice* and to Cornwall. With your help, catching him will be as easy as *Odeon*.”

“But I owe him big and he’s promised to let me off if I help him just this once...”

“And you believe him? Trust me, where he’s going you’ll never hear from him again, not in a million years. But if he gets away? Well I wouldn’t want to be in your Dorothy Perkins. Turn me down and you’re on your *Designer*; label him for this and I’ll see you right.”

So George did as he was told. He found all the winkles with drugs in them and replaced the drugs with TNT. The captain of the yacht took the bucket off him and returned nonchalantly to his craft, shortly afterwards to be joined by *ERF* on a voyage which would soon prove to be much shorter than either of them had anticipated. The captain weighed, the *Kerrygold*, *ERF* released the sail and they bounced out of the harbour into the *Omo*. It took just one big wave to work its magic on the TNT. *Essos* exploded all over the deck, rending the rigging asunder, chewing up the steering mechanism and the yacht was helpless. Soon, *ERF* and the captain were in custody, and no longer as free as Birds!

George and Cynthia returned home to *Benson and Hedges*.

What he should have written: guys, greyhound, Denis, twittering, swans, woodbine, coke, picnic, pears, ford, hill man, surf, shells, white horses, sun, walls, Hoover, Hoover, Colombia, Columbia, ABC, own, anchor, Kent.

The teacher asked his maths star pupil in front of the whole class, “If I gave you two cats on Monday, two on Tuesday and two on Wednesday, how many cats would you have?” To the teacher’s mortification, the boy replied, “Seven”. So the teacher tried again, “If I gave you two dogs on Monday, two on Tuesday and two on Wednesday, how many dogs would you have?” The boy replied, “Six.” So the teacher tried again, “If I gave you two budgerigars on Monday, two on Tuesday and two on Wednesday, how many budgerigars would you have?” The boy replied, “Six.” So the teacher tried again, “If I gave you two hamsters on Monday, two on Tuesday and two on Wednesday, how many hamsters would you have?” The boy replied, “Six.” Exasperated, the teacher said, “So why, when it’s cats, do you answer ‘Seven’?” “Because, I’ve already got one cat,” said the boy.

St John's Draw: November: £25 to Mrs Terry (125), £10 each to Mr Pratt (97) & Mrs Hesketh (115) – drawn by Mrs Farrow: December: £5 each to Mrs Chidwick (26), Mrs Burren (55), Mrs Mitchell (63) & Mrs Cheeseman (135) – drawn by Miss L Thorne. If you wish to enter the draw, please contact Mrs Head on 240889.

Illegal Money Lenders (loan sharks)

A loan shark is someone who runs a money lending business without permission from the Financial Conduct Authority. Loan Sharks rarely, if ever, give any paperwork and if payments are missed they often use intimidation and violence to get money from their 'clients'.

We can provide help and guidance if you have:

- been offered a cash loan
- been threatened when you couldn't pay
- had your bank card been taken from you as “security”
- a debt which keeps growing even though you're making payments

If you, or anyone you know, is experiencing any of the above or has any knowledge of loan shark activities you can contact us in confidence. We take your privacy **very seriously**.

Contact us

We can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Telephone: 0300 555 2222

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk

SMS text message: send a text to 07860022116, beginning your message with “loan shark”

Website: www.facebook.com/stoploansharksproject

Quotation from Lactantius: The whole point of justice consists precisely in providing through others through humanity what we provide for our family through affection.

From the Registers

Baptism:

8th January

Olivia Mae Lynn

Penenden Heath

Funerals:

25th November

Marjorie Platt (85)

Pilgrims Road

9th December

Sylvia Howland (90)

Woodhurst Close



Tommy's Talking Points

I featured in Master's Midnight Mass sermon. He used me as an example of the joy of freedom, the need for law where there is irresponsibility and the liberation which follows from forgiveness and a fresh start and a new creation. In other words, now I know better, I don't run off anymore and, because he can trust me, he can let me run free and enjoy myself running around the fields, sniffing out who knows what and wagging my tail vigorously. The analogy with human beings isn't exact. (You need to repent!) Just as well, really, because I've caused him second thoughts once or twice. We had an anxious twenty minutes the other day when I thought he was in the churchyard and he thought I was in the woods. I went back to the woods and he went back to the churchyard. Then he went back to the woods and there I was. How could I not know my way home? (We were very pleased to hear that another little dog which had been missing for several days was safely returned home.) Christmas Day, we went to Master's younger niece's new house. There were two other dogs, five adults and four children. So you can imagine just how much fun there was to be had. They have a big garden with strong fences. So we dogs had a lot of time for unsupervised play. The humans couldn't eat everything on the table and we dogs had to help out. Turkey's a lot nicer than dog food. Since then, we've had parish lunch and Epiphany brunch. It's all playing, sleeping and eating and meeting friends, human and canine. No wonder they call it a dog's life! Happy New Year! Tommy.