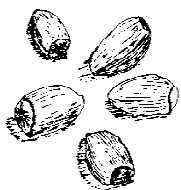


Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton			
1 <sup>st</sup> September Trinity 11		9.30 Family Communion	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
8 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 12 Mary’s Birthday		9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
15 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 13 Battle of Britain Day		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 13
		9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 32 vv 1-14 p90 I Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
22 <sup>nd</sup> September Trinity 14		9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 I Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
29 <sup>th</sup> September Michaelmas		9.30 Holy Communion Rev’d Canon Alan Vousden preaching	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064
6 <sup>th</sup> October Trinity 16, Dedication Festival & Harvest		9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1051
		6.30 Harvest Evening Service	Nehemiah 1 v1 – 2 v9 p485 Luke 7 vv 24-50 p1036
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling			
1 <sup>st</sup> September Trinity 11		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Corinthians 15 vv 1-11 p1155 Luke 18 vv 9-14 p1052
		11.00 Holy Communion	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
8 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 12 Mary’s Birthday		11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	II Kings 2 vv 1-15 p369 Mark 9 vv 2-29 p1012
15 <sup>th</sup> September Trinity 13 Battle of Britain Day		11.00 Holy Communion	Exodus 32 vv 1-14 p90 I Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
22 <sup>nd</sup> September Trinity 14		11.00 Holy Communion	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 I Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
29 <sup>th</sup> September Michaelmas		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064
6 <sup>th</sup> October Trinity 16, Dedication Festival & Harvest		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Ephesians 3 vv 13-21 p1175 Luke 7 vv 11-17 p1035
		11.00 Holy Communion	Habakkuk 1 vv 1-4 p940 Habakkuk 2 vv 1-4 p941 II Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1051
Holy Communion Wednesdays at 9.30 at Cuxton		Holy Communion Thursdays at 9.30 at Halling	
4 <sup>th</sup> September	Colossians 1 vv 1-8 Luke 4 vv 38-44	5 <sup>th</sup> September	Colossians 1 vv 9-14 Luke 5 vv 1-11
11 <sup>th</sup> September	Colossians 3 vv 1-11 Luke 6 vv 20-26	12 <sup>th</sup> September	Colossians 3 vv 12-17 Luke 6 vv 27-38
18 <sup>th</sup> September	I Timothy 3 vv 14-16 Luke 7 vv 31-35	19 <sup>th</sup> September	I Timothy 4 vv 12-16 Luke 7 vv 36-50
25 <sup>th</sup> September	Ezra 9 vv 5-9 Luke 9 vv 1-6	26 <sup>th</sup> September	Haggai 1 vv 1-8 Luke 9 vv 7-9

21<sup>st</sup> September is St Matthew's Day: Holy Communion 8.00 am @ St Michael's

Copy Date October Magazine: 13<sup>th</sup> September 8.30 am Rectory



### *How To Be Good*

*How To Be Good* is a novel by Nick Hornby. Like many of his books, it is a good read, quite funny, an astute commentary on contemporary culture and set in

North London, which Hornby obviously knows well. The main protagonists are a married couple – David and Katie. She is a family doctor. He is a dilettante writer and they have two children of primary school age. They are not a very happy family. David and Katie are somewhat bored with one another. David is not a very nice person. But neither of them is very bad. They don't do terrible things to one another. There is nothing bad enough to justify a break up. Nevertheless, Katie nearly drifts into an affair with someone a good deal more exciting and rather nicer than David and contemplates divorce. David doesn't want a divorce. He's reasonably happy with the way things are and he does love the children and Katie even if he doesn't show it much.

A word on where they live. It's the sort of area in North London in which I lived as a student in the 1970s. At that time, it was quite run down. There was a lot of dirt and litter and far too much traffic. Crime rates were rising. On the other hand, property prices were just about affordable. There was a sense of community with families living in the same area for several generations. There were plenty of ordinary people – builders and plumbers, clerks, bus drivers, shop workers, lower management – as well as, on the one hand, the wealthy dwelling in decaying Victorian villas and, on the other hand, the really poor living in social housing. London thought of itself as made up of hundreds of little villages. By the time David and Katie live there, however, the area has been gentrified. There is still too much traffic, even more in fact, but the houses and flats have been done up and everything seems cleaner – partly as a result of the demise of the coal fire and the small factories and workshops which used to flourish in urban areas, polluting the atmosphere with smoke, fumes and noise, but providing employment where people lived. By and large, however, the children of local people have been priced out of the housing market and rich incomers have taken over. The old communities have largely vanished.

David and Katie might unkindly be described as members of the metropolitan liberal elite. They

are very comfortably off. Katie at least is secure in her reasonably lucrative employment. The children go to a good school and David isn't going to starve even if he gives up his writing. They are where they are at least in part because they had good parents who were themselves in a position to give them a good start in life.

Comfortable as they are, they have all the right attitudes towards people less well off than themselves. They are concerned for the poor and the underprivileged. They believe in world peace. They are great supporters of universal healthcare, the availability of decent education for everybody, shelter for the homeless and a generous benefits system. They give quite a lot to charities and good causes, though nothing like what they spend on themselves or what they could really afford to give if they truly meant what they say. They have earnest dinner party discussions with like-minded people and get involved in campaigns to promote the causes they believe in. The parties and candidates they choose to vote for in elections reflect their beliefs and lifestyle. But...

David has a bad back and goes to a sort of faith healer who cures him. The healer also cures their daughter Molly of eczema. Mum, the GP, is not too impressed, but she does refer one of her patients with chronic rheumatic pain to the same faith healer and she too is cured. The book does not explain how these cures are effected. The healer does not appear to believe in God or to be a member of any recognised religion. Healing is a mysterious process. Our bodies generally speaking heal themselves. That is how God made us and the rest of the living world. When I was a medical student, I remember the Dean of the Medical School telling us that, when we were doctors, we should get our pills in quickly if we wanted the credit when our patients got better, because most things would clear up by themselves anyway, given time. When the wonders of scientific medicine cure us of serious conditions which probably would not clear up on their own, the doctors and nurses are still working with our bodies' natural healing properties. The skills of doctors and nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists, etc., are the gifts of God to us too. I believe that there are also sometimes what we might call miraculous cures, when God acts in extraordinary ways which science cannot understand, perhaps in answer to our prayers.

Then there is mind over matter. More than half of the effectiveness of drugs is the placebo effect. They do us good just because we think they are doing us good. Symptoms of illness are often psychosomatic. We are under some kind of mental stress and it manifests itself in pain or rashes or stomach ache, panic attacks or some other physical discomfort. You might think that I am cynical, but I strongly suspect that the effectiveness of many so-called alternative treatments is really a question of mind over matter. They make us better just because we think they will.

Backache, eczema and rheumatic pain can all have a psychosomatic aspect and maybe that is why the faith healer was able to cure these three people in the book. What he is really interested in, however, is the healing of minds and spirits and curing social ills. He claims to be able to discern harmful thoughts and attitudes and poisonous relationships and to be able to put them right, provided, of course, the patient is willing to be changed.

This faith healer becomes a sort of guru to David and moves in with the family. David becomes a sickeningly good person and Katie finds herself confronting a far worse problem than when she had a husband who was rather nasty. He becomes so solicitous of her and the children. They can no longer enjoy gossiping about people because he never accepts that there is anything bad about anyone or, if there is, there must be a reason why it is not their fault. He doesn't complain or criticize or allow Katie to do so. He takes her to a play which she wants to see even though she knows the theatre bores him and, on the way home, he gives a homeless person nearly all their money so that they have to take the tube rather than getting a cab. It is not money they cannot really afford to give, but it is far more than they would usually give to a beggar, and there is no consideration of whether it is really helping him. Will he spend it on drugs or drink and maybe kill himself? David doesn't think about that. He just gives generously because it makes him feel good to do so.

Katie thinks that she is basically a good person. Don't we all think that we are perfectly decent people? When she has doubts about her essential

goodness, she reminds herself that she is a doctor. Her professional life is about making people better (not just about making enough money to live in a gentrified area of North London). But she still feels a bit guilty. There are some patients she really doesn't like very much. She could give away a lot more of her money to good causes without really missing it. She could get much more involved in volunteering or campaigning. She starts to resent David's superior virtue and to discover a guilty pleasure in her own selfishness. Why shouldn't she put herself and her family before the rest of the world, the poor, the sick, the homeless, the unpopular even?

Trouble first rears its ugly head when the son, Tom, is caught stealing his classmates things in school. It turns out that David has decided that his own children have far too much in the way of material goods. They can share a computer, he decides. They should give the toys they don't play with to a women's refuge where battered wives take their children away from the violent men they live with. The daughter, Molly, goes even further than their father. She says that it doesn't count if they only give these poor children the toys they don't play with any more. They should let them have what it really hurts the donors, Tom and Molly, to give away. Katie thinks that Molly is becoming sanctimonious. Tom doesn't agree that he should be forced to give away his possessions. Hence the stealing to get something back.

Good questions. Should we overindulge our own children when there are so many really poor children in the world? How much is too much? On the other hand, do we have the right to take away what we have already given? Do we expect our children to accept a poorer lifestyle than their classmates, other children from homes similar to their own? If there were a famine in the land, almost all of us would give our own children any bread we could scrounge rather than give it to somebody else's child, but can we really justify buying our children more games, toys, phones, computers and clothes than they could possibly want when there are so many children in the world who lack even the basics? Surely, family comes first. But aren't we all part of the human family? And if we think that our children are overindulged, what about us adults? Do we really

need all the things that we have? Are we impoverished spiritually by too much materialism? Shouldn't we listen to John the Baptist when he says, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise?*

[Come to that (and this came up in a recent TV programme, not so much the book) is it right that, by one means or another, better off people seem to be able to secure places in the best schools for their own children? Granted that other families do this, even if you don't approve of the means (paying for private education, lying about home address or religious affiliation, the way property prices rise in the catchment areas of good schools, extra tutoring for entrance examinations) wouldn't you do the same thing for your own children in order to give them a good start in life? Even if that meant that the already disadvantaged children from poorer homes had to go to less good schools, perpetuating inequality down the generations?]

David and the guru's next project is to persuade people in their street to use their spare rooms to provide accommodation for homeless young people. It is terrible living on the streets – cold, wet, always in danger of violence or abuse, few opportunities to wash, lack of medical and other care, uncertain supply of food and other necessities and a vicious circle of being unable to get a home or a job or even benefits because you haven't got an address. People may be homeless for all sorts of reasons and it can be easier than many of us might think to find yourself on the streets. Blaming the homeless for their plight doesn't help anyone and is very often unfair. One of David's neighbours doesn't agree. He insists that there are still jobs available if people weren't too lazy to take them, but the consciences of most of the residents in that gentrified bastion of the liberal elite are pricked and some of them even agree to take in homeless youngsters off the street. Of course, there is an immediate culture shock. Some of the homeless smoke indoors! They eat meat if they get the chance and don't know what quinoa is. They don't keep the hours their hosts are used to. Some of them do steal or do drugs. Some of them soon move on. They get restless staying in one place! A few do make friends with their hosts and their lives are turned round by being given the chance of access to a warm room,

a shower, three square meals a day and genuine human kindness. So should all of us who have spare rooms be prepared to take in homeless people? What about the risks to ourselves and to our families? What about the inconvenience? I know how much I value my own privacy and solitude, even though I live in a big house.

The final example I shall look at was that David encouraged Tom and Molly to befriend the unpopular kids at school. It turned out that there were reasons why these children were unpopular – not least one little girl who seldom washed, although that was surely more her parents' fault than her own. Tom resented having his friends chosen for him and it really didn't work out. He hit the annoying, needy little boy who had been assigned to him. Molly, on the other hand, took up the role of lady bountiful only too readily, patronising the less fortunate and, in some ways, that felt worse to me than an honest punch. Children can go through hell if they are teased or bullied or even ignored by their classmates. Some have been driven to suicide. But can you, as a teacher or a parent, ask other children to feign friendship? Isn't something deeper required, a change of heart so that we are open to genuine friendship with people we might not at first like or even respect? The answer is "yes", but what is true of the school playground is true also of the adult world. We all of us need to become people who are open to genuine friendship with absolutely anyone.

Katie tries religion. She goes to church but she is not inspired by the dull congregation and their somewhat desperate vicar. Perhaps she is too critical. (They say, if you ever find a perfect Church, don't spoil it by joining it.) Anyway, the book finishes bleakly. Katie sees no hope. Her husband and daughter living up to what she feels in her heart to be good is destroying Katie, her marriage and her family. On the other hand, her liberal conscience will not allow her to dismiss it all and to live selfishly as she believes that her friends mainly do despite their boasted high principles.

It won't surprise you that, as a Christian, I firmly believe that the end is not bleak. There is always hope. Yes we are called to offer our whole lives to Him – the absolute antithesis to self-

centredness – but also His capacity for forgiveness is infinite and we are accepted eternally not because we have achieved goodness for ourselves

but because goodness is His free gift to all who believe in Him. Roger.

### Confirmation

Is there anyone still considering confirmation this year? If so, please let me know as I am intending to prepare candidates for a service November 24<sup>th</sup> at Frindsbury. Candidates will normally be aged 12 or over, but there is no upper age limit. At Confirmation, you affirm your baptismal promises and we pray for the grace of God's Holy Spirit to support you in your Christian life. If you have not been baptized already and are an adult, it is logical to be baptized and confirmed at the same service as the preparation is the same. Roger.

### Holiday Blues?

An elderly couple were going on their first holiday for decades. When they got to the airport, the old man said, "I wish we'd brought the piano!"

"Why ever would we want to take the piano on holiday?" enquired his wife.

"Because, I left the tickets on top of it!" he answered.

### Making the Best of It

The priest was a honest man. So he was somewhat flummoxed when a certain widow asked him to say something nice about her husband at the funeral. So, in his address, he stated honestly that the deceased had broken every one of the Ten Commandments frequently, but, at least compared to his brother, he was an angel!

### One Advantage of Age

You can sing and clean your teeth at the same time.

### Some American Business Notes

"How much are your \$20 shoes?"

"\$10 a foot!"

The bank robbers gag the teller and fill their money bags from the safe. The teller begs them to remove the gag and pleads with them to take the books as well. "I'm \$1,000 out," he says.

"Is this fur coat waterproof?"

"Did you ever see a mink with an umbrella?"

### Tailor's Advertisement

We'll clean for you. We'll press for you. We'll even dye for you.



### Friends of Kent Churches Ride & Stride

This will take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September. The idea is to visit as many churches as possible either by bike or on foot. We should also be grateful for anyone prepared to man either of our two churches to welcome riders and walkers from other places. Those who cycle, walk or sit & wait may be sponsored. The proceeds will be split between our parish and FKC which assist churches all over Kent.

### Christian Aid Deanery Quiz

This will be on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September in the church hall, 7.00 for 7.30. £8.00 per person includes ploughman's. Please bring your own drinks. Book with Roger as individuals or as teams of 6-8.

**Christian Aid**

A Division of The British Council of Churches



### From the Registers

#### Baptisms:

21<sup>st</sup> July

4<sup>th</sup> August

Isobel Hope Bryant  
Charlie Joseph Howard

Vicarage Road  
Kiln Way

#### Weddings:

19<sup>th</sup> July

20<sup>th</sup> July

Benjamin James Murray and Sophia Joan Smith  
Carrick Tanton and Ashleigh Camp

Cuxton  
Cuxton

#### Funeral:

8<sup>th</sup> August

Priscilla Boswell

The Caravan Site

### **Peninsula Big Band**

*An evening of music from the 30's to the 90's*

*Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 7.45pm*

*Cuxton Social Club*

*Tickets £10 (available from Rector or Julia 727424 or Dawn 724496)*

*In aid of the St Michael's Organ Fund*

An advertisement for Cuxton Auto Services. On the left, there is a graphic of a car lift with a car on it, and another car parked below. The text on the right provides details about the services and staff.

**CUXTON AUTO SERVICES**  
Servicing/Repairs/MOT Centre  
  
Yusuf Oomar  
Workshop Manager/MOT Tester  
  
Malcolm Petts  
Service Manager/MOT Tester  
1 Sundridge Hill  
Cuxton  
Rochester ME2 1LH  
01634 717987  
[www.cuxtonautoservices.co.uk](http://www.cuxtonautoservices.co.uk)

#### Forthcoming Attractions

21st September 7.30 pm:  
Christian Aid Quiz in church hall.

29th September Cuxton  
Patronal Festival: 9.30 am  
Eucharist (Preacher Canon Alan Vousden), stalls and activities all day around church, hall & Rectory, buffet lunch from noon.

4th October 7.45 pm: Peninsula  
Big Band concert @ Cuxton  
Social Club in support of organ fund.

13<sup>th</sup> October 11.00 am: Rev'd

Canon Alan Vousden will be the preacher at Halling.

19th October 5.30 pm: Tideway Folk Group concert in church hall in support of organ fund.

9th November 7.30 pm: Quiz in church hall for church funds.

27<sup>th</sup> November: 10.45 am: The Church of My Fathers – talk by James Dickenson. Admission free, but collection will be taken for expenses and church funds. There will also be an opportunity to buy the book.

7<sup>th</sup> December: 10.00 Christmas Fair Scout Hall.

24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (Nativity of St John the Baptist): 11.00 Holy Communion St John's followed by pudding party.

### Tideway Folk Group

The Tideway Folk Group evening in the church hall on 19<sup>th</sup> October starts at 5.30 pm with a bring a share tea. The music will begin at about 7.00. Proceeds to the St Michael's organ fund.

St Michael's Draw: £10 Mrs Sadler (3), £5 each Mr McCabe (8) & Mrs Gear (27)

St John's Draw: £5 each Mr Silver (76), Mrs Hayward (80) & Mr Hills (104) – drawn by Mrs Pitt.

### Charing



A 30 to 40 minute drive from Cuxton is the village of Charing. Today, Charing is a quiet, quaint village situated just off the A20 at the foot of the North Downs in the Ashford District of Kent. In contrast, during medieval times, Charing was a busy stopping place for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. Pilgrims from all sections of society would have travelled along a well trodden route to Charing which was the last stopping point before Canterbury. Wealthy pilgrims would have ridden horses and stayed in the local inns. Bishops and archbishops would have stayed in the more grand establishment of the archbishop's palace whilst the poorer, ordinary people would possibly have travelled in groups and slept under the stars in small hedgerow encampments.



My walk begins at the church of St Peter and St Paul in the centre of Charing. It stands next to the remains of the Archbishop's Palace. The west tower is over 600 years old whilst the remainder of the church was rebuilt in the sixteenth century. From the

church, I walk into and across the High Street to School Road. Along this road is a small, free car park in a tiny lane behind some new cottages, the village primary school, the entrance to a cemetery which has some amazing and ornate memorials and a small emergency services station. At the end of the road is a roundabout where the A20 and A252 meet. Carefully I cross the A252 and walk uphill to find a footpath on the left. This path leads onto the Charing Racecourse. The most recent event held here was the Easter Point to Point in April 2019. I can see evidence of hurdles and some of the racecourse but no equine activity today. The footpath goes diagonally up hill towards hedges and trees. There is a gate at the tree line leading to the Pilgrim's Way. I turn right and walk along this ancient path. The footpath is easy to follow and affords lovely views back over

Charing and surrounding farmland. A fork in the path leads down to the A252 which I cross and turn down the quiet lane, Pilgrim's Way on the right. After nearly a mile there is a byway on my right and I leave Pilgrim's Way. If I were to continue on Pilgrim's Way then the road leads to the village of Westwell which has a claim to fame as being the burial place of Richard Plantagenet, the illegitimate son of Richard III.

The byway is enclosed with a thick canopy of trees and is home to a whole host of birds. At this time of year the birds are busy catching insects for their young and preparing them to fledge. At the end of this byway is Whicken Lane. I turn right and very soon I can see the tower of the church in Charing. Whicken Lane has farmland to the left and to the right there are some lovely homes with beautiful gardens. At a right hand bend there is a



field of pigs. They have two fibreglass homes for the sows and approximately a dozen piglets.

The road follows to a final footpath which leads passed Alderfield Meadow. This meadow is designated as a local wildlife site and is conserved by the Charing Playing Field Committee for the benefit of the wildlife and the local community. My footpath goes on into a popular recreation ground and children's play area before I turn right onto a fenced path and then into the churchyard where I began my walk earlier today. Today's walk was short, only 3.5 to 4 miles, but very scenic and with the addition of a glorious summer day it was a delight. This walk is to be recommended and repeated. Holly Croft



### MU July Talk on Bereavement

Jane Joyce gave the Cuxton and Hailing Mothers' Union a lovely, caring and sympathetic talk on Bereavement. She explained how we all face the loss of a loved one in different ways and illustrated how our grief can cause us to experience a roll-a-coaster of emotions.

Understanding and accepting our grief can help us to overcome sadness, whilst still retaining our love and devotion for our departed one. Jane told us of her counselling work with "CRUSE" and how Cruse Bereavement Care has been helping bereaved people for 60 years. After two World Wars, people were expected to have a "stiff upper lip" approach to grief. At this time women in particular, faced economic hardship in a society which didn't prepare women for the role of breadwinner.

In 1959 Margaret Torrie started a group for widows at her home in Kew near Richmond Upon Thames and was helped by her husband, a psychiatrist and a Quaker. Margaret gave sound advice about facing widowhood on emotional, practical and social levels. She did not like the word "widows" and changed the name to "Cruse". The word "Cruse" comes from a story in the Bible (1 Kings 17). During a famine, a widow shared her last meal with a hungry stranger, the prophet, Elijah. Because of her kindness, from then on, her earthenware jar or "cruse" of oil was miraculously re-filled and remained full until the famine was over.

Although the origin of the story was Christian, with an emphasis on Christian consolation, "Cruse" welcomes people of all faiths and those with none. Cruse is Responsive, Compassionate, Respectful, Supportive and Innovative. Cruse expanded to helping widowers, children and all bereaved people. There is now a large network of volunteers to respond to national disasters and tragedies.

Jane gave various examples of work that she has undertaken as a councillor with "Cruse". We really enjoyed her talk on a topic which is usually rather a difficult one to discuss. Thank you, Jane and may you continue in your good work. Jenny.



### Tommy's Talking Points

Dover was the destination for our last big walk and Master thinks that this picture was taken near where we finished below Dover Castle, but many years before I was born and when Master was still young, back in the Dark Ages. We'd got as far as Walmer on our coastal walk from Gravesend and the plan was to meet Master's friend at Ebbsfleet and travel there on the high speed train. This proved a little complicated. The machine at Cuxton would only issue one kind of ticket to Walmer and back, which didn't specify whether or not we could use the high speed service. Two ticket collectors at Ebbsfleet thought it was probably OK, though the machines wouldn't accept it. The ticket collector on the train from London thought it probably wasn't OK, but couldn't see any way of issuing a ticket that was OK. So he suggested coming back a different route, which we did. The rules are so complicated nowadays and there is always the risk of a penalty fair if you make a mistake!

Anyway, we did make it to Walmer, safely and swiftly. We retraced our steps from last time and reached the sea in front of the castle. Although he says he trusts me, he kept me on my lead through a field full of sheep. We turned right along the coastal path and cycle way. Through Kingsdown, it was all flat and there were plenty of people about and dogs. I really was made a fuss of on this walk, more even than usual, with people on the trains wanting to stroke me and people walking hugging me.

On either side of the path, the beach as well as inland, there was a huge variety of wild flowers of every hue. Master isn't sure whether there are more than there used to be (perhaps because of increased awareness of conservation issues) or whether he is just more observant than he used to be, perhaps because he's walking now instead of running. The sea was a flat calm as it usually is on that coast.

When we had passed through Kingsdown, there were some very steep steps up onto the top of the cliffs. These were no challenge to me, but they made them pause for thought. The walk along the cliff top was great with views of the Channel and of France. Master was reminded of the Cliftonville curate who

preached a sermon about God, using the view of France from Broadstairs as an illustration. Sometimes, you can see France from the cliff tops; sometimes you can't. It depends on the weather, but France is still there, whether you can see it or not. In the same way, sometimes we are very conscious of the Presence of God and sometimes we can't feel Him at all, but He's always with us.



High up on the cliffs, we saw the Dover Patrol Memorial. It is 75' high and was completed and unveiled in 1921 to commemorate those members of the Dover Patrol who lost their lives defending these shores in the First World War. There are two others – one near Calais and one in New York. All these war memorials and the remnants of fortifications along the coast remind us what a great gift it is to live in peace.

After those solemn thoughts, we descended more steps to St Margaret's Bay, where there is an excellent public house, the Coastguard. It makes a point of just how dog friendly it is. The men proved that the food and the beer were of the highest standard, while I had a sleep under the table. They were astonished to discover that they had spent 2½ hours there and the time had gone so quickly. Only, they hadn't. They'd only spent ninety minutes eating and drinking in the garden of the Coastguard. Master's friend's 'phone's clock had switched itself to French time. The blurb regarding the pub says that it is the nearest English pub to France. Master's friend's 'phone thought we were already there. It put itself right, however, when we climbed back up the steep hill to the top of Langdon Cliffs and walked the switchback path to Dover Harbour with fine views of the Castle and of the shipping in the Channel. There were crowds of people about, many of them foreign tourists, some of whom wanted to make friends with me, and there was plenty of space for me to run free and to enjoy myself. It was great, exaltation and exultation, leaping up in the air and being filled with joy. Coming home the non- high speed way, the classic route, was easy, a quick change at Rainham and a very short wait at Strood. So he didn't make us walk that last bit, like he sometimes does! Dinner was waiting.

What about life on the home front? The wasps' nest is still near our back door. He's been stung twice. The first time a wasp got stuck in his hair and stung his hand when he tried to brush it out. So, the next time one of the wasps stuck in his hair, he thought he'd better go upstairs for the comb, but, by the time he'd made it to the bathroom windowsill, the wasp had tunnelled through his tonsure and stung his pate. He is hoping that they will soon grow up and leave home. Still on the subject of insects, we've seen a lot of damsel flies.

The days are getting shorter. It was quite dark when we went out for our morning walk. Master has been enjoying long early walks before Mattins all Summer and wants to carry on as long as possible. A couple of days got too hot even for him. I don't really mind the heat, so long as I get plenty of water to drink. He does like the Summer, however. He enjoys going out wearing his shorts. He likes to feel the sun and the breeze and even the warm, gentle rain on his skin. It is all tied up with his naive belief that Nature is God's gift to us and that we ought to enjoy it and cherish it. I agree and show that I do as I race around exploring the woods and fields with my tail wagging. He's less enthusiastic about Nature and shorts when the paths are overgrown with nettles. Sometimes he takes a stick to them or even carries a garden implement for cutting them back. Some other people do the same and we are all grateful to the Countryside Group for keeping the paths clear throughout the year. He's thinking it might get too cold for shorts as Autumn advances, but, knowing him, it will be very cold before he even notices it. His thermostat is set to freezing and I don't care; I have a nice fur coat to wear all the year round.

I have been to the vet a couple of times. I had an ear infection and a poorly paw. I've needed ear drops and to have my paw bathed in salt water. I don't like the vet looking in my ears or palpating my paws and I don't like Master administering the treatments, but the vet congratulated me on what a good dog I am to keep still and stoically accept what they do to me. You'll be pleased to know that I'm getting better.

There is something going on which you all ought to know about as it could affect the whole parish, but Master isn't allowed to say anything for now and so I'm not either. Maybe next month. Tommy.