

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling				
7 th July Trinity 3		8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Peter 5 v 5-13 p1220 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048	
		11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 66 vv 10-14 p753 Galatians 6 vv 1-18 p1172 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041	
14 th July Trinity 4		11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 30 vv 9-14 p209 Colossians 1 vv 1-14 p1182 Luke 10 vv 25-37 p1042	
		5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	I Samuel 13 vv 1-15 p282 Matthew 6 v19 – 7 v7 p971	
21 st July Trinity 5		11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Genesis 18 vv 1-10a p17 Colossians 1 vv 15-28 p1182 Luke 10 vv 38-41 p1042	
28 th July Trinity 6		11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 20-33 p18 Colossians 2 vv 6-15 p1183 Luke 11 vv 1-13 p1042	
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton				
7 th July Trinity 3		9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 66 vv 10-14 p753 Galatians 6 vv 1-18 p1172 Luke 10 vv 1-20 p1041	
14 th July Trinity 4		9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 9-14 p209 Colossians 1 vv 1-14 p1182 Luke 10 vv 25-37 p1042	
21 st July Trinity 5		8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Trinity 5	
		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 1-10a p17 Colossians 1 vv 15-28 p1182 Luke 10 vv 38-41 p1042	
28 th July Trinity 6		9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 18 vv 20-33 p18 Colossians 2 vv 6-15 p1183 Luke 11 vv 1-13 p1042	
Holy Communion Wednesdays @ Cuxton 9.30 am			Holy Communion Thursdays @ Halling 9.30 am	
3 rd July	S Thomas to be kept 21 st December	I John 3 vv 13-24 Luke 14 v 16-24	4 th July	Genesis 22 vv 1-19 Matthew 9 vv 1-8
10 th July		Genesis 41 v45 – 42 v38 Matthew 10 vv 1-7	11 th July S Benedict	Genesis 44 v 18 – 45 v5 Matthew 10 vv 7-15
17 th July		Exodus 3 vv 1-12 Matthew 11 vv 25-27	18 th July	Exodus 3 vv 13-20 Matthew 11 vv 28-30
24 th July		Exodus 16 vv 1-15 Matthew 13 vv 1-9	25 th July S James	Acts 11 v27 – 12 v3 Matthew 20 vv 20-28
31 st July		Exodus 34 vv 29-35 Matthew 13 vv 44-46	1 st August Lammas	Exodus 40 vv 16-38 Matthew 13 vv 47-53

A Musical Evening with the Cantium Singers

11 July 2019, 7:30 p.m.
St John the Baptist Church
High Street
Halling

We've enjoyed the Cantium Singers at Cuxton. Now they are coming to Halling - a larger venue and easier parking!



Feeling Smug

A couple of week's ago, Radio 4's *You and Yours* phone in asked people what they were willing to sacrifice for the good of the environment – material goods, travel, heating, whatever.

I was feeling smug. I reckon that, for a man of my age living in a twenty first century western country, I have quite a good record on the environment front. I've always walked, cycled or used public transport in preference to driving. I doubt if I've flown in a plane as many as two dozen times in my life. Visitors to the Rectory in Winter will tell you that I don't waste much on heating and I don't really have a lot of possessions. Years ago, when I suffered a number of burglaries, the thieves didn't find much that they thought was worth stealing – a little money, a radio and my father's gold watch, which last I was really annoyed about.

But did I have any reason to feel smug? I don't make any sacrifices. I live like this because I want to. There really is very little in the way of possessions which I want and don't have, making it very difficult for people who want to buy me presents. I just don't like driving much. I'm more comfortable when I'm cold than when I'm too hot. I'm too mean to spend much money on things and I'm really too lazy to organise things like holidays: finding somebody else to do my job while I'm away, booking, obtaining a passport and possibly a visa to go overseas, getting someone to look after the dog. It's just not worth it! I don't understand why anyone would be willing to suffer the airport experience. Better two weeks in Bognor by train, than two weeks in Benidorm via Gatwick or Heathrow!

I was reminded of a smug comment I made in an online forum when the government was consulting on new rules for cyclists.

I've owned a bike for more than 50 years. For most of that time, apart from walking, cycling has been my principal means of getting about. I therefore have a much smaller carbon footprint than most men my age. I have consumed far less fossil fuel and generated far less pollution - noise as well as noxious gases and particles. I have also caused far less congestion. I have therefore less responsibility for the destruction of our historic towns and countryside caused by the construction of new roads and car parks than

many have. If the health benefits of cycling are as advertised, I may have saved the NHS a lot of money. Despite having cycled many more miles than I have driven, I have never been in a bike accident in which anyone has been badly hurt, but I have been in two motor accidents when driving. In one, a pedestrian was killed. Following the other I myself needed serious hospital treatment. I have also saved the organisation I work for tens of thousands of pounds in travel expenses.

Yet I don't cycle primarily for any of these worthy reasons. I ride my bike because I enjoy the freedom it brings. Why should some interfering busybodies now take away that enjoyment? If I'm risking anyone's life, it's mine, not theirs that I am risking. I don't want to wear a helmet and I don't see that as anybody's business but mine. As for a compulsory high vis jacket, in the Summer I often don't wear a shirt at all, despite nannyish warnings about skin cancer. I'm going to die of something one day. So why not enjoy the time I've got left on earth the way I want to enjoy it?

My only hope, if these oppressive laws come in, is that I shall have qualified for a free bus pass by then, because I shan't want to cycle any more.

So, to be honest, I ride my bike for selfish reasons as much as from any sense of social responsibility and I might give it up if the government or the council or Europe try to restrict my freedom to enjoy cycling the way I want to.

But am I being unfair to myself? One of my favourite sentences in the Communion service begins *It is our duty and our joy*. You can enjoy doing the right thing. It isn't a sacrifice to live a good life. We really are more fulfilled if we do what we should and doing what we shouldn't doesn't, in the long run, bring us happiness. Moreover our failure to do right and our propensity to do wrong harm other people and the whole of creation. Jesus said, *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* You do need to deny yourself, but see what you gain if you do and what you lose if you don't.

So maybe my inclination to live a fairly environment friendly life is linked to my faith. It

is a mistake to think that a fulfilled life depends on owning stuff or even on experiences. Again Jesus says, *Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* So St Paul can say, *having food and raiment let us be therewith content.* He adds, *The love of money is the root of all evil.* The psalmist says, *Their idols are silver and gold : even the work of men's hands... They that make them are like unto them ; and so are all such as put their trust in them.* Do you want to be like an idol?

At infants school, we used to sing *Daisies are our silver, Buttercups our gold: This is all the treasure We can have or hold.* Maybe that was where I learnt to appreciate the wonders of nature as something better than the work of human hands. It would be naive to suggest, however, that nature as we know it is not the result of human intervention, whether cultivation and land management or development and even desecration. Moreover, as I was reminded once before when I complained about traffic spoiling the countryside, if there were no cars, people who can't walk wouldn't have the opportunity to enjoy what God has made.

Let's take Paul's examples of food and raiment. To me, wasting food is just wicked. I'm not sure whether this is because I was brought up by parents who'd lived through wartime rationing and grandparents who could remember hungry children having to go to soup kitchens. My grandfather remembered boys in his school being bought boots by the schoolmaster because they were coming to school barefoot. I remember the anger of my other grandmother at farmers who would plough in a crop if the price was too low even though there were hungry people in the village. It might be being told at Church and through the news media about terrible poverty and starvation in other countries that made me so fanatical about not wasting food. It might just be that singing, *All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above*, taught me to be thankful for God's gifts and not to waste them. Anyway, I can't bear to see food wasted. I can't understand people who will buy food and let it go off or throw it away because they don't fancy it after all. I seldom put more on a plate than I can eat. (Plates aren't that big!). On the rare occasions I

might have any food leftover, there are the dog, the birds and animals in the garden and the compost heap in that order, but never the dustbin. If I invite you to dinner, I might find it difficult to offer you any pudding if you haven't finished your greens!

There are, however, issues about eating meat. There is animal welfare to consider and the facts that farm animals are often fed on grain that could be fed to people and that they generate the greenhouse gas methane. I'm not however intending to become vegetarian or vegan. I do believe that we are allowed by God to use animals for food and other purposes provided that we treat them humanely. Landscapes such as the Downs and the fells of the Lake District only exist because they are grazed by farm animals. They may well be unsuitable for crops. It is also true that we could be healthier eating less meat, especially less processed meat, than we do. I'm afraid I eat a lot of processed meat especially now that there is no longer a butcher in the village. I admit that I don't really worry too much about where my food comes from in respect of animal welfare, etc.. I'm not that righteous. Perhaps I should be.

There are also considerations about imported food. Do the producers in poor countries receive a fair price for their labour? Do they work in decent conditions? Is it right to incur the environmental costs of transport so that we can eat exotic produce or food out of season? Again, I admit that I don't worry too much about eating bananas or oranges. It would be a dull life if we only consumed what grows here, but is there a limit to the environmental price we are prepared to pay so that we can enjoy what we don't need? And what would happen to people in poor countries which produce food for the world market if we stopped buying it?

Raiment. Nobody would accuse me of being obsessed with clothes. So long as clothes are clean and modesty is preserved, I don't worry too much about them. God tells the prophet Samuel, *man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* It's not what we look like that matters. What matters is our character. Granted that God doesn't judge by appearance, neither should we. Yet, not only do people spend

a fortune on clothes, there is tremendous waste. Some people won't be seen in the same garment twice. Very few people mend clothes. Like farmers ploughing in crops they can't sell at a high price, some fashion houses have been caught destroying perfectly good new clothes rather than let them go at lower prices. Some people are glad to pay high prices for clothes because it differentiates them from poor people who can't afford them. Clothes function as a marker of wealth and status. But are we really better than people who can't afford to dress as well as we do or who prefer to spend their money on something else, perhaps less frivolous? S James says, *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?* Actually, it's worth quoting what follows: *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.* Judging people by appearance, despising people poorer than yourself, are just not compatible with being a Christian.

I'm not saying that it is wrong to look good. Beauty is one of the attributes of God. Clothes are also useful in marking out our roles in life – policeman, priest, professional person, mechanic. They say that you can tell the patients from the doctors in an asylum because it's the patients who are dressed decently. People may feel that we

don't respect them if we don't dress appropriately when we meet them. But there has to be a sense of proportion – not judging by appearance, not excessively extravagant. We sing about God, *Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light, nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might.* We are actually called to be like Him. We were, after all, made in His image.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these...But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Finally, I will be smug. Wheels have turned full circle and I feel vindicated. I've always disliked liquid soap. It makes me think of public lavatories. Now people are going back to bars because liquid soap comes in plastic bottles! We don't need straws to drink through – plastic or paper. You don't need to carry water for a short trip out unless you live in the Sahara. It's being realised that unnecessary air fresheners in the home and unnecessary deodorants and cosmetics applied to the body are a source of pollution and a slight risk to health. Do you need to improve on the face God gave you? Do you judge others by what they look like? You don't need to put all your purchases in a bag to bring them home from the shop. We consume too much as a matter of habit or because everybody else does or because we have succumbed to advertising – which is another moral issue because it presses honesty to the limit and seeks to manipulate the way human beings behave.

So, in conclusion, yes I do choose to live in a way which has less impact on the environment than the lives of many of my contemporaries, not as a sacrifice, but because I want to. The fact that I want to is fully congruent with the Christian faith as I see it. I could do better. And there are many nuances which there are not room for in an article like this! Roger.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Voter's Authority.

Among the many issues raised by the turmoil surrounding Brexit has been the question of authority. We thought about authority at our Ascension Day service. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is also the One Who gives up everything in order to serve - humanity and God. He is the One Who sacrifices Himself. And that is why *At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow*. All authority derives from God and all those who exercise authority at any level of society ought to take Jesus as their example. Authority is about serving God and our fellow human beings. Those in authority are called to sacrifice themselves for the good of the people over whom they exercise power.

But whence do human beings acquire authority? Monarchs inherit their position. Members of the House of Lords are appointed nominally by the monarch, in reality acting on the advice of her prime minister. Members of the House of Commons are elected. Judges and police are appointed and warranted to enforce the law. Clergy receive spiritual authority at their ordination. Parents, teachers and many others of us enjoy and exercise power, for which we are answerable to God and to other people. We also hold referendums in which all those to whom the franchise is extended have a vote. We set a very high value on democracy as the system of government least likely to descend into tyranny, but where does the authority of individual voters come from? In elections, we may not know the candidates, what they stand for or how capable they are. In referendums, we may not understand the issues at stake. So what is our authority as individual voters?

I see its basis in Protestant Christianity – the belief that every believer relates directly to God through Jesus without the necessity for any other intermediary or mediator; the belief that each of us possesses the Holy Spirit; the fact that we can all read and interpret the Bible for ourselves. We are not told what to believe by priests or teachers, parents, politicians or powerful people. Neither do we have to run with the herd. We are our own men and women, individuals standing before and ultimately answerable to God alone. I think this ties in with the Enlightenment approach (which goes back at least to Socrates) that we accept nothing on authority, but make up our own minds after a rational consideration of the evidence.

This is not to be arrogant or irresponsible. It would obviously be foolish to disregard what we're told by people who understand things much better than we do. Our wisdom would be to learn from them. Neither would it make sense to assume too quickly that we are right and everybody else is wrong, though just occasionally that might be true. In the end, however, we are responsible as individuals. We each have a conscience. We have the gift of reason. Having considered everything that everybody else has said and all the evidence available to us, we make our own decisions and are responsible for them. Our authority as voters derives from this fact. It follows that, as having the authority to vote, like everybody who has authority, we look to Jesus as our example. We don't use our votes to further our own ends or to feather our own nests. We use our votes in the service of God and the wider community. If necessary, we sacrifice self for the good of others. Voting is a responsibility which we exercise prayerfully – or at least it ought to be!

At the service, the question was raised when the Prayer for Parliament was composed. Apparently, it was written by William Laud (formerly Rector of Cuxton) in 1625.

MOST gracious God, we humbly beseech thee, as for this Kingdom in general, so especially for the High Court of Parliament, under our most religious and gracious Queen at this time assembled: That thou wouldest be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations, to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her Dominions; that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations. These and all other necessities, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen*.

St Michael's Draw (June): £10 Mrs Nunn (28) £5 each Mr Gear (36) & Dr McCabe (12).

St John's Draw (May): £10 each Mrs Gyde (140) & Mrs Smitherman (140) – drawn by Mr Silver.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

26th May
2nd June

Alfred George Kitchener
Poppy Rose Townens-Voss

Vicarage Close
Kent Road

16th May
21st May
24th May
4th June

Priscilla Bourne
Mary Olive Lawry
John James Ward
Christopher Rodney Blamey

Kent Road
Ladywood Road
Mortar House
The Street

ZIMBABWE APPEAL FROM THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

The Right Revd James Langstaff
Pentecost 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we mark the Festival of Pentecost and rejoice in God's gift of the Holy Spirit, it is good to remember that part of the Spirit's work is to draw together the people of God in all their rich diversity. In our Diocese, one way in which this is expressed is through our fellowship with our companion dioceses. We have for many years enjoyed a mutually enriching relationship with the Diocese of Harare, most notably supporting and learning from its people during the period of exile from their church buildings in the Mugabe era. More recently we were the only diocese in the Church of England to send a contingent to witness and celebrate the consecration of the new Bishop of Harare, Farai Mutamiri, in January 2019.

Our national media's understandable preoccupation with the UK's withdrawal from the EU has dominated coverage and meant that many international issues have gone relatively unreported. One of these is the worsening environmental, economic and political situation in Zimbabwe. Of chief concern right now is the imminent failure of a harvest in the middle of an already acute economic and political crisis. In a report published in February 2019, the United Nations said that more than a third of the population (over five million people) need humanitarian aid. Bishop Farai has relayed to us:

"As Harare Diocese we are currently faced with food insecurity for the greater part of our members from Parishes and their surrounding communities who have been affected by erratic rainfall experienced this past farming season. Most farmers were badly affected as the crops did not reach maturity stage due to this drought. Coupled with that is the harsh economic environment which has reduced literally everyone to beggars be it in urban or rural set-up. The cost of living has just gone beyond the reach of many. Prices of basic commodities have been going up on a daily basis as business communities try to stay afloat. The major contributor being the shortage of foreign currency needed to import goods and there seem to be no control whatsoever on what is happening. The worrisome part is that salaries and wages have not been adjusted to suit the prevailing situation. This now cascades to payments of assessments by Parishes which then adversely affect our cash flows and currently we are behind in paying stipends for the Priests".

In response to this dreadful situation, we would ask you to pray for our brothers and sisters in Harare Diocese and to help alleviate the crisis by contributing to a special diocesan appeal. In this way, we follow the example of the early Church when it organised relief for their brothers and sisters in Christ in Judea when a severe famine came to pass (Acts 11: 27-30). Please send cheques to Gill Miller at Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL, payable to Rochester DBF and clearly marked on the back: 'Zimbabwe appeal'. Giving can be done digitally at: <https://jvwww.give.net/harare>. All funds raised will be sent to the Diocese of Harare which has been able to open a special account that preserves the value of money received from sources outside Zimbabwe.

We hope that Bishop Farai will visit us later in the year, and he will then be able to share further news with us. In the meantime we ask you to give generously to help alleviate the need of our brothers and sisters in Harare Diocese. With our prayers and good wishes, James, Bishop of Rochester Simon, Bishop of Tonbridge.

Forthcoming Attractions

11th July 7.30 pm St John's: A musical evening with the Cantium Singers.
27th July 3.00: Rectory Barbecue
21st August 2.00pm: Teddy Bears' Picnic Rectory gardens.
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.
19th October 7.30 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.

Wet Sponsored Walk 2019

Our Christian Aid sponsored walk took place on the 8th June. We had experienced some very warm, dry sunny days at the beginning of the month. However everything changed on the 8th June. As usual, we joined with friends from the North Kent Methodist Circuit and met at All Saints Church in Birling.

The rural village of Birling is situated at the foot of the Birling Hills and is approximately five and a half miles from Cuxton. All Saints church, Birling, is mentioned in the Domesday book and has undergone some transformations including the re-building of the chancel in the 16th century by the well known Neville family. All Saints church became a Grade 1 listed building in 1959.



Our walk began at the car park behind All Saints church. From there, with 9 humans and 6 dogs, we set off east north east across open fields towards Snodland. The sun was shining and everything seemed set for an excellent day of walking. The first fields were clothed with lush vegetation. The footpath led passed some horse

paddocks and stables then over Snodland Road and on towards the North Downs. The well defined footpath emerged at a tiny 900 year old ragstone building in Paddlesworth Road. The building was St Benedict's church, a redundant Anglican church, recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II* building under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. For centuries pilgrims passed this church on their way down to the River Medway. The group stopped briefly to explore the simple church. It was clean, light and airy with wooden chairs and a cross.



After a brief break we crossed the road and followed the path up towards the North Downs. During this up hill walk the rain set in. The dogs seemed unworried and ran around exploring the field and chasing any low flying birds. At the top of this field we re-grouped and sheltered under the trees for a while watching the rain and discussing the low clouds. We turned left and walked along the by-way partially protected by trees. When we reached the intersection with the North Downs Way

we turned left. This started the final section of our walk, a long path downhill back to Birling passing Birling Place Farm en route. There should have been some lovely views of fields stretching down towards the River Medway and across to Burham and Blue Bell Hill. We got a few glimpses of the lovely countryside but rather too many views of clouds or rain!

As was our custom, we had all taken a picnic for lunch. It was far too wet to stop for lunch so we completed our walk and returned to our cars to have lunch under cover in the car park.

Therefore in summary:-

We got wet. The dogs got very wet. Never mind. We did a walk along very pleasant footpaths with good company and hopefully we have raised funds for a good cause. Better luck next year! Holly Croft .



An Englishman was on holiday in Germany and his dog fell in the Rhine. A German jumped in, hauled it out and revived it by giving it the kiss of life. Impressed, the Englishman asked him if he was a vet? "What do think?" said the German, "I've just been swimming in the Rhine!"

Archdeacon's Visit to our Parochial Church Council.

This will take place at the meeting on Friday 20th September at St John's Church at 7.30 pm. Non-members (as at all our meetings) welcome as observers and (in this case) to meet the Archdeacon.

The Seasonal Steps of our Seers - July

This will be the last in this series of the Seasonal Steps of our Seers. In July we find the day of St Thomas Becket (July 7th) who was made a saint in 1173, three years after being murdered by Henry II's men in Canterbury Cathedral. Although a friend of the King, he became his enemy by vigorously defending the rights of the Church against the Crown after he had been made Archbishop of Canterbury. Following his death, Thomas was represented as the defender of the faith and miracles were supposed to occur at his tomb. Henry VIII later tore down Becket's shrine, announcing that St Thomas was no longer a saint. But the cult took a long time to die out, and his feast day is still remembered in some parts of the country, especially in the south-west of England.

July 15th is St Swithun's Day. Swithun was Bishop of Winchester in the 9th century. He became famous for his lack of pomp, his financial administration and a miracle in the town's marketplace when he allegedly made a basket of broken eggs become whole again. After his death his fame spread and grew, and on the 15th July, 971 AD, his bones were moved to a shrine in the newly built cathedral of Winchester. It is believed that the saint protested the move by 'weeping', causing torrential rain to fall continuously for forty days. As the legend states:

*St Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain, for forty days it will remain.
St Swithun's Day, if thou be fair, for forty days 'twill rain no mair.*

The day of St Margaret is July 20th. The daughter of a prince, brought up a shepherdess and a convert to Christianity, she refused the advances of a pagan governor and, as a result, was thrown to a dragon who swallowed her. A cross materialized inside the dragon, splitting open its belly allowing Margaret to step out unscathed. She is thus seen as the patron saint of safe childbirth! She is remembered mostly in Gloucester where puddings containing wild plums or damsons and cooking apples are prepared as a dumpling. It is known as 'Heg Peg Dump' – Heg for hedgerow (wild plums/damsons) – Peg for Margaret? – Dump for Dumpling!

St James was a fisherman, called by Jesus to be a disciple and brother of John with whom he preached. He was martyred in 43 AD. Legend has it that he preached in Spain and was buried at Compostella which became a pilgrimage place, and the scallop shell, his symbol, became the badge of pilgrims who visited his shrine. Before the calendar was changed in 1752, St James' Day was the start of the official oyster season. Although this is now the 5th August, oyster ceremonies still occur on St James' Day itself and in towns such as Whitstable, which still has oyster fishing, an annual service is held to bless the fishing boats, their crews and the sea. In London there is a custom of local lads building small grottoes with oyster shells at the sides of the roads to collect pennies from passers-by with the request of 'Please, sir, remember the grotter'. There is also an old saying that 'He who eats oysters on St James' Day with not want for money during the year', and so this may be a good excuse for a dish of oysters on this day!

*He had often eaten oysters, but had never had enough (W S Gilbert)
Please remember the grotto, it's only once a year.
My father's gone to sea, my mother's gone to fetch him back,
So please remember me! (Street chant – London)*



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In modern times, and modern towns, the seasons melt into each other as one month moves into the next. But the old rhythm of life is still evident and we are still in touch with the changes of the circle of the year. Following the path of our seers – those who came before – can be quite satisfying as we consider the seasons that meant a great deal to them and ordered their very life. In turn, the traditions that they developed form the very foundations of the life we lead today. JGB.

THE ORGAN - WHAT'S NEXT

In my previous articles on the Anatomy of the Organ I have tried to explain to the many people who have expressed an interest in how the instrument developed from the ancient Chinese and how complicated is the mechanical engineering of the working parts. The way the organ is arranged is largely to do with tradition. The Great organ (often called by the German name *Hauptwerk*) was the original instrument and often demanded considerable effort to play. Pedals were a later addition and the pipes associated with them were kept in a separate place. At St Michael's this pipework is along both sides of the instrument using large, square wooden flue pipes. Later still, the Swell organ made an appearance again with a separate space in the instrument, totally closed inside a case with a shuttered front which can be progressively opened or closed to give different volumes of sound, including crescendo and diminuendo effects.

All this will be dismantled. The pedalboard will be removed and overhauled. This will allow the tracking for the pedals to be adjusted, repaired and replacements made as necessary. All the pipework will then be taken out, checked and cleaned. Every pipe will need to be removed from the organ case one at a time, and eventually returned to the correct position. The mathematics is logical - one pipe for every key or pedal times by the number of stops. The trackwork for each note, each pedal and each stop will have to be traced through the instrument and adjustments made where necessary. Any split wooden pipes will have to be carefully overhauled and made air-tight otherwise they will leak wind. The metal pipes that have collapsed (estimated at fourteen) will have to be straightened and if possible repaired. Some of the collapsed pipes have fallen on others and moved them out of position, so these will have to be re-aligned in the rackboard which holds the pipes in place. The swell case with the shuttered front will be removed and the whole organ case and the floor it stands on will be thoroughly cleaned.

The bellows which supply the correct amount of air at any one time to the wind chest will be checked for leaks and patched if needed, and the electric blower will be serviced and the bearing oiled. Each section of the organ will then be reassembled and checked. Once completely restored, the instrument will be tuned and played to establish a good tone and quality of sound. The organ needs to be played as much as possible and in different combinations of stops to allow for the settling in of all the component parts. The organ should give years of service to the church and the parish, but we have to be mindful that an instrument such as this is an expense that we need to prepare for so that it can be maintained for future generations to use and enjoy.

JGB

****Note:** I wrote this article before the overhaul of the instrument was being undertaken. Since then, the builders have worked on it and completed the specification very quickly. We have been very lucky and thankful that so many people have taken an interest in the organ and have been very generous in their giving for this project. Thank you!

Rectory Barbecue: 27th July, 3.00 pm.

Before the Organ – A Coarse History of Church Music

For most of us, the organ is the quintessential church musical instrument - whether accompanying the psalms and hymns or filling the building with its own plangent, sweet, beautiful or majestic tones – but it was not ever thus. Churches like ours have only been likely to have organs since the nineteenth century. Before that, ancient as the organ is, they were mainly confined to cathedrals and great churches.

In Old Testament days, the psalms were sung in the temple at Jerusalem and, no doubt, elsewhere. The bible speaks of horns and trumpets and a variety of stringed instruments, as well as percussion, such as cymbals and timbrels. Music is important. Offering our singing voices and our skills on musical instruments is one way in which we worship God, Whom rightly we seek to worship with the whole of our being. Well chosen music helps to bring out the meaning of the words and greatly affects the way we feel. The Old Testament also speaks of dance as part of public worship. On one occasion, King David stripped to his vest to dance before the LORD. His wife Michal told him he was showing himself up. I'd be inclined to agree with Michal but the bible comes out on David's side. Dancing has been part of the worship in this parish and there are churches today where it is quite the usual thing.

Jesus used the psalms in worship and there are a few passages in the New Testament, which some scholars think began life as Christian hymns. Philippians 2⁶⁻¹¹ is perhaps the best known and most probable. The early Church composed hymns to use in private devotion and public worship. Two examples we still use are the Te Deum Laudamus which we sing at Mattins and the Gloria in Excelsis Deo which we use at Communion – both possibly composed by St Ambrose, C4 Bishop of Milan. The other canticles in the Prayer Book come direct from the bible, with the possible exception of the Benedicite Omnia Opera, which is in the Catholic Bible, but not the Protestant one.

Songs and hymns have always been important for mission. A guy called Arius (also C4) was a popular preacher whose mission was so effective that it is said that he had ploughman singing gospel songs as they went about their daily labour. Unfortunately, like too many powerfully charismatic individuals, he parted company with the rest of the Church and became a notorious heretic (effectively denying the divinity of Christ). More recently, music has been a very effective aspect of the C18 missions of the Wesley brothers who wrote many fine hymns we still sing, Moody and Sankey in C19, Billy Graham in C20 and others today. Band music has been a very important part of the worship and evangelism conducted by the Salvation Army.

The hauntingly beautiful plainsong developed in the monasteries of the Middle Ages is classically unaccompanied and contemporary recordings have brought blessing to people who don't go to Church as well as to those who do. Great composers, such as Mozart and Hayden, have written wonderful settings for the Mass.

When the Church of England first split with Rome in Tudor times, there was some suspicion of church music. Over elaborate settings might obscure the plain meaning of the words. Could a congregation in church become more like an audience at a concert, enjoying the music for its own sake, rather than worshipping God for His own sake? Music was somewhat reluctantly allowed back into Church of England worship over the next couple of centuries – psalms, metrical psalms (which are psalms rewritten as hymns), then “proper hymns”, which were sung by Methodists and Congregationalists long before they were allowed in the Church of England. When most people couldn't read, the clerk sang the responses and also led the hymns one line at a time with the congregation repeating after him.

At the beginning of C19, churches like ours tended to have village bands to accompany the singing. These were not always popular with the clergy, sometimes turning up late or drunk and arguing about the choice of music. Music is so important to us that we argue over it – some wanting what's popular, some demanding what's theologically correct, some advocating the highest classical standards, others determined to keep the music simple and easy to listen to or sing along with. As at Cuxton, the band might be replaced initially with a barrel organ, but such an instrument would have a limited repertoire. A barrel organ still exists in the church at Harty Ferry, but I don't think it is ever played. Where possible, a full pipe organ such as we have at St Michael's was installed. The rector then had a professional musician with whom to work for the enhancement of our services.

In some places, bands are making a reappearance. There is some scope for recorded music, to supplement but never to replace live music, the playing of which is in itself an act of worship. The organ retains its preeminent role and thank you all who have contributed to the refurbishment of ours. Roger.

Tommy's Talking Points

The day dawned when we were to undertake our next coastal adventure. It started off very well. We saw a huge badger first thing in the woods before returning home for breakfast. It's light so early now and Master just can't stay in bed, but has to get up and take me out. Then down to Cuxton Station and onward to Strood, where we were to meet Master's friend on the Ramsgate train. Here's a good tip. Although, they are advertised as terminating at Ramsgate, many of these trains carry on round the coast and finish up by returning to St Pancras via Ashford. So we were able to stay on it to



Sandwich where we finished last time.

It's a good walk down from Sandwich station through the quaint old town to the toll bridge. We saw a beautiful old house with a climbing rose festooned with red flowers covering the whole of the front wall. When we got to the toll bridge, we followed the River Stour down towards the sea. Once or twice, they disagreed with me, but it was I who found the correct route. Just follow the scent of other dogs! We crossed the golf course. I was put on my lead. I don't generally chase balls, but Master wasn't taking any chances. There were now plenty of "To The Sea" signs.

Having arrived at the beach, we turned right and headed towards Deal – off lead again. First we heard a cuckoo, then a skylark. So we heard both the bird calls he can confidently identify. There were many beautifully flowering plants at the top of the shingle beach, where it merges with a rather sandy soil. There were yellow poppies and a few red ones, mauve mallow and lots of flowers – mostly reds and yellows – he doesn't know the name of. In one place, they looked so ordered that we thought they must have been deliberately planted. I was complimented on my friendliness by some regular dog walkers I caught up with. It's all very open and the wind was keen, but the water was calm. Master says that it nearly always is at Deal. It's protected by the Goodwin Sands. In fact, the whole atmosphere of the town is calm and pleasant, a very relaxing place to be. Deal has the last pleasure pier to be constructed in England, one which replaces the pier destroyed in the war.

We got to Sandown Castle. There is almost nothing left of it, but it was one of three castles, with Deal and Walmer, constructed by Henry VIII to protect that part of the coast. The other two are in a much better state of repair, Walmer being the official residence of the Warden of the Cinque Ports. Sandown didn't see much action except in the English Civil War and was badly damaged in a storm in the nineteenth century, after which much of what was left was sold off for building materials.

At Sandown Castle, local people have made and maintain a beautiful flower garden in a hollow protected from the wind off the sea – quite a little sun trap. Master was surprised that dogs were not allowed on the beach and had to be kept on leads on the promenade between Sandown Castle and Deal Castle. There was no one on the beach even on this fine day in Summer and far fewer people on the promenade than on the other side of Deal Castle, where dogs are allowed to run free. I had to remind Master that the ways of local authorities are unaccountable.

When we got to Deal, there was some debate about what they wanted to do. It was earlier than we usually have lunch on these trips, but Master knew just how inviting the Royal is from a previous visit. They decided to compromise and just have a pint there, but the food was so appetising and there was such a pleasant spot in the pub garden, that we settled down for lunch. That could easily have been the end of the walk. It's hard to get Master moving again. But we did carry on and eventually reached Walmer Castle, having seen the lifeboat station and lovely Walmer Green. From the castle, it wasn't too far to the station and home. Next time Dover.

Around here, the predominant colour is white – white elderflowers (no champagne this year), cow parsley and more delicate umbellifers, the white of the bramble flowers presaging lots of blackberries to come in the next few weeks, may blossom still, daisies, mayweed especially around St Michael's, and many more. There are mauve rhododendrons at Holly Hill and in Cobham Woods, where the chalk must be buried deep under more acid soil, just as well as they can become a pernicious weed in lime free areas. There are red clover and purple and white, still plenty of yellow buttercups and also trefoils and purple vetch. There are also mauve pyramid orchids in a field at Upper Halling. There's as much for him to see and smell (There is wild honeysuckle, freshly mown grass in the churchyards and roses in people's gardens.) as there are scents for me to chase up. So we are, as always, having some wonderful walks in the woods and fields around Cuxton and Halling, especially taking advantage of the long midsummer days. Hope to see some of you up the woods as well as in church and around the village. Tommy.