

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
5 th May Easter 6 Bishop of Tonbridge presiding and preaching.	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 16 vv 6-15 p1111 John 5 vv 1-9 p1068
Thursday 9 th May Ascension Day	7.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
12 th May Easter 7	9.30 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-34 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
19 th May Pentecost	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle & Gospel BCP Whit Sunday
	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
26 th May Trinity Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084
Services at St John the Baptist Halling and the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
5 th May Easter 6 Bishop of Tonbridge at 11.00 presiding and preaching.	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Daniel 6 vv 1-23 p890 Mark 15 v46 – 16v8 p1023
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 37 vv 1-14 p868 Acts 16 vv 6-15 p1111 John 14 vv 23-29 p1082
Thursday 9 th May Ascension Day	9.30 Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
12 th May Easter 7	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 16 vv 16-34 p1112 Revelation 22 vv 12-21 p1250 John 17 vv 20-26 p1085
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Ephesians 4 vv 7-16 p1175 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
19 th May Pentecost	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion	Genesis 11 vv 1-9 p12 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 14 vv 8-17 p1082
26 th May Trinity Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

There is an **After School Club** at St John's on Thursdays at 3.45. **Saints Alive** (formerly Sunday School) meets in the Church Hall, Cuxton at 9.30 on 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month in term time. There is a parish lunch to which all are invited every first Wednesday at 12.00 in the Church Hall. If you are prepared to *gift aid* your monetary contributions to the Church, please use one of the envelopes provided. Contact Jack Payne to *gift aid* all your donations.

Copy Date June Magazine: 10th May 8.30 am Rectory.

Holy Communion Wednesdays 9.30 am Cuxton		Holy Communion Thursdays 9.30 am Halling	
1 st May St Philip & St James	(Isaiah 30 vv 15-21) Ephesians 1 vv 3-10 John 14 vv 1-14	2 nd May St Athanasius <i>For He became man that we might become divine;</i>	Acts 15 vv 7-21 John 15 vv 9-11
8 th May Rogation Day	Acts 17 vv 15 – 18 v1 John 16 vv 12-15	9 th May Ascension Day	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062
15 th May	Acts 20 vv 28-38 John 17 vv 11-19 (or 1-26)	16 th May	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17 vv 20-26 (or 1-26)
22 nd May	James 1 vv 19-27 Mark 9 vv 38-40	23 rd May	James 2 vv 1-9 Mark 9 vv 41-50
29 th May	James 4 vv 13-17 Mark 10 vv 32-45	30 th May (Corpus Christi)	James 5 vv 1-6 Mark 10 vv 46-52

St Matthias (14th) & The Visitation (31st): HC St Michael's 7.30 am. (MP 7.15, EP 5.00).



How About You?

During World War II the church of St. Ludgeri in Münster in Germany was hit by bombs in the year 1944. The church suffered some damage and the Jesus on the crucifix lost both arms. After the end of the war the church was repaired but the congregation of St. Ludgeri decided to leave the crucifix without the arms. Instead they inscribed on the cross "Ich habe keine anderen Hände als die Eueren": "I have no other hands but yours". (From *Expository Times* April 2013).

Aspiration. "Why," a young man was asked, "did you throw away your chance of a decent education? You mucked about at school, didn't listen, cheeked the teachers and left to go into a dead end job as soon as you could. Why?"

"All right, it was a pretty rotten school you went to, by British standards, but it was infinitely better than so many African schools, where the children work hard and cheerfully, respect their teachers and do the best they can with the little they have. So why did you and your mates throw away the chances you had? You could have done so much more with your life."

Lack of aspiration is the reason given that so many people in Britain fail to thrive. They don't expect to do well for themselves. They don't believe that they can do well for themselves. They don't even try to do well for themselves. That's why aspirational immigrants, from much poorer places than this, come and take jobs in this country while so many English people remain unemployed. It's why you sometimes see gardens full of rubbish, houses dirty and untidy and children living off takeaways and prepared meals, even though it would be great fun to clean up the garden, it wouldn't take long to spring clean the house and it would be cheaper and healthier to cook meals from fresh. It is easy to get demoralised when there is so much pressing in on you, but it is seldom so bad that there is nothing at all you can do to make things better.

Independent schools don't get so much better results than state schools because the children of rich people are brighter than the children of poor people. Admittedly, it is partly because they have more money to spend on resources, but that is far from the whole story. A parent described how her 14 year old at state school was reading comic books, while her junior school age child at private school had been introduced to Jane Austin. I don't suppose the Jane Austin books were more expensive than the comic books! What's wrong in

too many schools is lack of aspiration. It's the same attitude that says that what people my age learned at junior and even infant school in the way of hymns, prayers and bible stories is too difficult for today's young people, even for teenagers.

That attitude is lack of aspiration. People don't think that they can do well and therefore they do not even try, and patronising bureaucrats and politicians (not to mention teachers, clergy and social workers) don't expect much of whole swathes of the population and therefore fail to encourage the people for whom they are responsible to make the most of their lives. Cynics might suggest that it suits those of us in positions of relative power to maintain a dependent class of clients who need us to run their lives for them. Well I certainly don't. I see my roll, as priest, pastor, preacher and teacher of the faith, as being to support you in your being dependent on Christ alone for all the resources you need. I don't believe in unhealthy co-dependencies in which the professional needs to be needed by the patient, pupil, client or parishioner. The good doctor makes you whole. The good teacher educates you in independence. The good social worker assists you to get back on your own two feet. And the good priest accompanies you into the presence of God. He doesn't stand between you and God, any more than the good doctor wants you to remain sick. The good teacher aspires for you to understand the subject better than he does and the good social worker longs to see his former clients contributing to the needs of others, rather than becoming permanently dependent on the bounty of the state.

Aspiration. None of this is to say that we are not dependent on one another. Individuals live as members of society, of the community, of the human race. Neither is it to say that we should not accept the help that we need. We all need help from other people. It is, however, to say that every one of us should make the best of what we have, of who we are: and that is so from infancy to

extreme old age; from the brightest and best, through all the ranks of the ordinary, right down to the tail end; from blooming with health to confined to bed; from Olympic champion to also ran; from Einstein to the person who can't add up a shopping list. Aspiration – to aspire to be the best we can.

The east window at St Michael's depicts the Ascension. The corresponding window at St John's is the Christmas story. The Son of God reveals His greatness by becoming a human baby. Having lived and died, having revealed His greatness in obedience even to death on a cross, having been raised from the dead, Jesus ascends into Heaven, again revealing His greatness. Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, reveals our potential as human beings. Our potential is to be sons and daughters of God. Our potential is to live Christ-like lives of love. Our potential is to suffer and die for love. Our potential is to rise, to ascend into glory. Our potential is to reign as kings and priests in God's Kingdom. You don't believe me? Well it says so in the Bible. Read it for yourself.

Aspiration. Do you aspire to be like Jesus? Do you aspire to do the work God gave Jesus to do on earth? Do you aspire to be where Jesus is? The implication of the story at the head of this article

is that Christ's work on earth is now our responsibility. Do we aspire to fulfil our potential, to bring in the Kingdom of God, to effect the redemption not just of ourselves, or of our friends and families, or even of the whole human race. The whole created order – the entire physical universe plus the realms of angels and archangels – is to be redeemed in Christ. Do you want to be part of it? Do you aspire to a share in the Kingdom of Heaven?

A lot of people no longer aspire to worship. Ascension Day they'll be going to work or school, gardening, doing housework, watching TV, playing with computer games, smartening themselves up for a night out, shopping (ugh!) – just like they do on Sundays. Just like school students who can't imagine themselves doing better than a few GCSEs in the softer subjects, they can't see themselves as citizens of heaven, as kings and priests – singing God's praises on earth, serving the world as Jesus served the world, and at last reigning with Him in glory. But that is something I know you can aspire to. Some of you realistically aren't going to get A* in Maths or beat Usain Bolt in the 100m or pilot a rocket to Mars, though don't let me put you off trying, but every one of you can become a Christian, because Jesus has made it all possible for everyone of us. So why aspire to less? Roger.

Forthcoming Attractions.

COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

Call RPJ computers, no fix no fee.
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27th April: Annual Parochial Church & Vestry Meetings 10.00 at St John's.

5th May: The Bishop of Tonbridge will preside at our 9.30 & 11.00 services.

*8th June: 10.00-4.00 Deanery Quiet Day at Aylesford Priory.

All welcome. No charge, but please indicate if you are coming.

15th June: Fundraising for Church Army. Beetle Drive in Church Hall.

29th June: Bellringers' Outing.

30th June: St Francis Strood 6.30 pm Evening Service & Refreshments: Sister Gillian invites us to join her in celebrating 25 years of ministry as a Church Army Sister.

8th September: Preacher @ 9.30 & 11.00 The Archdeacon of Rochester.

29th September: Confirmation at St Michael's 6.30 pm. Please see Rector if interested in being confirmed this year. Classes will begin early Summer.

6th October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper Jubilee Hall.

* Names to Rector please, ASAP.

Confirmation 2013 St Michael's

Bishop James will be holding a Confirmation at St. Michael's on 29th September at 6.30 pm. Those interested in being confirmed this year, please speak to the Rector. Classes will probably begin next Summer and involve reading one of the four gospels together as we consider what it means to be a Christian in terms of what we believe and how we act. Candidates are normally at least twelve years old but there is no upper limit. 29th September is also Michaelmas and BTCS. So a good opportunity for outreach.



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A Different Story from a Different Local Author

Margaret Haggis has lived in Cuxton since taking early retirement in 1994, but has always kept in close contact with her former colleagues at the Natural Resources Institute at Chatham Maritime. Over the years their work under Greenwich University has changed radically and they threw out a challenge: "You obviously had fun doing your research. We no longer have those opportunities, so if you don't set it down, all that is gone for ever." Fair comment! After much prodding, I took up the challenge and set out to describe the period that, to me, was the highlight of my scientific career. The result came out last year in

TALES OF TRAVELS WITH AND WITHOUT A PORTER

Read it and look for the pun in the title! Don't worry if science is not your 'thing' – the 'science' got published in the appropriate places decades ago. Science comes into the story, of course, to explain why I was where I was in Africa, but this book is about the people I worked with, and the adventures we had on safari and in off-duty hours. True, it wasn't *all* fun, there were many long hours of hard work too, but the satisfaction of getting good results through good, efficient team work made it all worth while, meaningful and successful. At the time I 'took my parents with me' through my letters and photographs and did literally

take them with me on one trip (described here). All that material was kept and now forms the body of this book – there are over 100 colour illustrations, which is why it has been expensive to produce. If you enjoy arm chair travel, TALES OF TRAVELS WITH AND WITHOUT A PORTER will take you around Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia, with a brief peek into Uganda and western Africa too.

To reserve your copy, ring me on 01634 711993. Copies are also available at the Paper Shop. Price £17. Margaret Haggis (international scientific author in **other** publications!)

A Scientific Proof of the Existence of God

Everything that happens in the whole universe is dependent on quantum events. Quantum events remain unresolved unless and until they are observed by a conscious observer (Heisenberg and Schrödinger). Human beings have not always been around. There must therefore be a conscious observer (probably outside time and space) to observe the whole of the universe. Otherwise nothing would happen and nothing would exist. That observer is God.

This reminds me a bit of Anselm's philosophical proof of the existence of God, which goes like this. God is a being greater than anything which can be conceived. If you can conceive of such a God not existing, you can conceive of such a God existing. Since existing is greater than not existing, God must therefore exist, as you will realise if you perfectly understand what God is. It is therefore, says Anselm, quoting Psalm 14, *The fool who hath said in his heart, there is no God.*

You and I probably prefer Thomas Aquinas' common sense five ways to prove the existence of God: everything that moves has to be moved by something; everything is caused by something; everything that exists depends on something; the goodness in things must derive from an ultimate goodness; the cosmos appears to have been designed. Therefore there must a prime mover, ultimate cause, non-contingent being, ultimate goodness and designer of everything – i.e. God.

It is probably misleading to call any of the above arguments proofs of the existence of God. They are not easy to understand and plenty of the people who do seem to understand them don't think they work. My purpose in presenting them here is not to prove that God exists. You can only know God through faith. Knowing that God exists is not the same thing as knowing God and being convinced that God exists by science, philosophy or even common sense is not the same thing as believing in God. To believe is to have

faith. To have faith is to love God, to yield your life to Him. My purpose in sharing these possible proofs with you is to demonstrate that faith is not unreasonable or irrational. There is a very common erroneous view around in society that faith and reason are entirely different things and that you can trust the one and not the other. Science and other “rational” disciplines are therefore, on this view, common to all human beings and our laws and policies (and politics) ought to be based on human reason alone, humanists would argue. Religion or spirituality, this view holds, is an option; you choose whether or not to place your faith in any god or in no god at all.

Actually, if you think about it, reason alone is not enough to decide life’s big questions. Reason alone doesn’t tell you whom to marry or which picture or piece of music to admire most or even what career you should pursue. Reason is just one tool we use to seek the Truth. Faith is another and there are probably others too – our emotional intelligence, for example. Seeking the Truth. Jesus promises, *Seek and ye shall find*. You can approach God by reason and indeed by emotional intelligence, but the key in this particular pursuit of the Truth is faith.

Either God exists or He does not. If God does not exist, all religions and spiritualities are an illusion – just a way of tricking yourself into feeling better about yourself. If God does exist, the fact of God is the most important fact of all, the Fact on which all other facts depend. If God exists, then certain things are true about Him and certain things are not true.

Many people behave as if there were “normal life” to which religion is an optional extra and you can choose your own religion or personal spirituality depending on such factors as personal taste, upbringing, culture or even ethnicity. If that is what you believe about religion you have not understood what religion is about. If God exists, we owe Him everything. If God is as He is revealed in Jesus, any alleged revelation which is inconsistent with what Jesus reveals is false. Truth is both objective and absolute. Truth is ultimate. As rational beings, we seek Truth by every means available to us – faith and reason. Only the Truth can set us free.

You either believe in God or you don’t. There are no neutrals. If you are a Christian, your faith is your life. If you are not a Christian, it isn’t. Simple as that! You really do have to choose whether or not to follow Jesus. There are very good reasons for following Jesus. Emotionally, it makes sense. Faith opens the door on which we are knocking. It answers the questions we ask. Faith is the signpost to what we seek. No neutrals. Your choice.

I can’t resist finishing this piece with Pascal’s disreputable wager. The argument goes like this. If you are a Christian you enjoy a better life than if you are not. You have the solace of prayer, the comfort of belonging and the supreme moral code the Bible provides. You live in the hope of heaven for yourself and your loved ones. If Christianity turns out to be untrue and the atheists were right all along, you’ve lost nothing. You’ve still lived a decent moral life and enjoyed the support which belief in (an albeit non-existent) God gave you and your fear of death has been alleviated by your (misplaced) hope for resurrection. If the atheists are right and you cease to exist when you die, you won’t even know you were wrong. On the other hand, the atheist lives without the consolations of religion in this life and then when he dies, if it turns out that God exists, he still has to face the Judgement on his infidelity. So the Christian gains everything if he is right and loses nothing if he is wrong whereas the atheist gains nothing if he is right and loses everything if he is wrong. So, if, there are any gamblers reading this, Pascal’s tip is to go with the better odds. Such a calculation, however, could hardly count as faith. You’ll have to do better than that! Roger.

Science & Maths Jokes.

I was reading a book on anti-gravity. Couldn’t put it down.

A native American chief had three wives each with her own animal skin to sit on. The wife sitting on the buffalo skin weighed 12 stone and the wife on the bear skin weighed 18 stone, but the wife on the hippopotamus skin weighed 30 stone, proving that the squaw on the hippopotamus is equal to the sum of the squaws on the other two hides.

From the Registers

Baptism:

17 th March	Evelyn Olivia Ram	Borstal
17 th March	Oliver Ram	Borstal
7 th April	Hew David Finnigan	Snodland

Wedding Blessings:

9 th March	Adrian & Emma Rafferty	Halling
16 th March	John & June Mills (60 yrs)	Cuxton
1 st April	Raymond & Joyce Newman (35 yrs)	Cuxton

Funeral:

4 th April	Shirley Mundy (66)	Yalding (formerly of Cuxton)
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Prayer Requests

There is a group of people in our Church which has undertaken to pray for people who have requested prayer for themselves or for someone else. Please contact Buffy Maisey (727126) if you would like to be prayed for. This in addition to the prayers said daily and weekly in Church.

St John's Draw (March): £5 each to Miss Heighes (40), Mr G Mitchell (68), Miss Heighes (88) & Mr Potter (120) – drawn by John Bogg.

St Michael's Draw: £10 each to Mrs Harris, Mr Cosford & the Wilson family, £5 each to Mrs MacDonald & Mrs Harris – drawn by Mrs Saunders.

Nature Notes March 2013

"Written in March" by William Wordsworth

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter.
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping-anon-anon;
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone.

On the first day of the month there is lusty singing from the birds. The skies are grey with an occasional bright period. I walk with Murphy at Bluewater. Grey skies remain through the day. I watch long tailed tits as they feed in the garden. The next day, grey again, I put out fresh food for the birds then watch their comings and goings. A hen blackbird flies off with bread in her beak in one direction while a cock blackbird flies off with his bread in the opposite direction. The skies brighten in the middle of the day, and then there are periods of sunshine. The early morning of the following day is grey with a distinctive chill in the air but by mid morning the sun is shining from a blue sky brushed with wisps of white cloud drifting across from the north east. Birds are singing and I'm very aware of the great tit's call. It is so good

to see lighter evenings. Frost covers the grass on the early morning of 4th before the sun rises over Bluebell Hill. The pale sky is filled with sunlight and the air is vibrant with beautiful birdsong. The 5th is a glorious day of golden sunshine beaming down from clear blue skies and with temperatures in the afternoon reaching 17 degrees C, the warmest day of the year so far. In the late morning, I enjoy a walk with Murphy at Bluewater where the lake ripples in the breeze. I notice new hazel buds; soon they will display their fresh Spring green. As I return to the car. I see a fritillary butterfly settling on blades of grass. In the afternoon I work in the garden. I watch a robin as it sings on the ivy covered trunk of the conifer tree. It is a beautiful sound. Steady fine rain falls on 7th. Birds are singing their Spring songs. A few long tailed tits

come to feed while a lone blackbird perches in the branches of the lilac tree. The 8th, when I drive to Addington, is very wet and the rain becomes even heavier in the afternoon. Rivers of water flow along the pavement outside the bungalow and in the gutters. As I walk along the road, I am splashed with water from passing vehicles. The morning of 11th is grey, with winds driving clouds across the sky from the North East. It feels bitterly cold as I walk Murphy round the lake at Bluewater. During the afternoon there are flurries of snow, then early in the evening, there are blizzard conditions and the snow settles. More snow is forecast during the night. Snow indeed, has fallen overnight and continues into the morning. The wind blows the powdered snow into the air so that it does not settle on shrubs and tree branches. It also blows down from the roof. Eventually the clouds disperse, snowfall ceases and the sun shines brightly melting the snow in the garden and on the drive. When the sun dips in the west in the afternoon, the air becomes so cold and ice re-forms. Plenty of birds came to feed during the day. When we go to Bluewater the next day, the trees show no signs of Spring except for a few hazels where buds have burst. Daffodils nod their pale heads in the breeze and there are ripples on the lake where I see a lone moorhen gliding. There are more snow flurries in the afternoon. The 14th begins with clear blue skies, golden sunshine and a carpet of frost on the grass. The branches of the trees are motionless for there is no breath of wind. Birds are beginning to fill the air with their melodious songs. The sun shines brightly all day. The next morning is grey, damp and cold. I feed the birds then watch them flying from different directions, some from within the holly boughs, others from among the bare lilac branches. Pigeons fly over from across the road. The next three days are cold and wet. The 19th is grey but at least, it is dry as I walk round the lake with Murphy. A pair of Canada geese glides on the water leaving ripples in their wake. I notice a tiny white feather on the grass as we pass the red and gold willow branches and trees, some of which reveal buds ready to burst. Grey clouds drift across the sky. Blossom, possibly early blackthorn, blooms on the steep banks across the road from where we are walking. The 21st is a cloudy day but no rain falls. A south westerly wind blows, driving the clouds across the sky. Later in the morning, I walk up the church

path and across the fields where hawthorn and blackthorn branches are coated with golden lichen. I see a few dandelion flowers. In Mays Wood, fresh bluebell plants and arum lily leaves have emerged through the woodland floor. Elder leaves have unfurled and hawthorn saplings bear fresh green leaves. I continue along the top path of Six-acre Wood until I am rewarded by the sight of golden celandines in the woodland side of the churchyard. The 22nd is grey and damp with bitterly cold North East winds. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Daffodils nod their beautiful heads on the grassy banks and another small hazel has burst into leaf. The Canada geese glide on the lake. A small hedge of hawthorn near the car in the car park has burst into leaf. A song thrush comes to the garden. Rain falls in the evening. There are more snow flurries on 23rd but it does not settle. On 25th I see a scattering of feathers on the grassy path near the lake at Bluewater where I walk Murphy. There is only one Canada goose and I wonder if its mate has been attacked. I listen to the call of a great tit in the early morning of 26th which is grey and bitterly cold. Wood pigeons flock to the garden to peck at the fresh seed. Later in the morning I walk along the road delivering Parish magazines the bitter wind continues to blow from the North East. The afternoon brightens, and there are patches of blue sky and glimpses of the sun. Salmon pink clouds adorn the sky when the sun sets. The 28th is a beautiful day but cold winds prevail. I see the first greenfinch in the garden this year. Golden sunshine beams down from a blue sky brushed with white clouds but the wind from the north east is bitterly cold. I walk to church for the Good Friday service. I would have liked to work in the garden in the afternoon but it is too cold. The evening skies are clear with a frost forecast. On 30th, I walk round the Bluewater lake with Murphy where three coots are gliding. There is some sunshine in a blue sky patched with white and grey clouds. Daffodils brighten the scene and green buds on various trees are waiting to burst. The afternoon is grey and cold. Frost lies on the grass in the morning of 31st. The sun shines brightly, lighting up the countryside but the bitter wind still keeps Spring at bay. I walk to church and through the flower bedecked churchyard. The afternoon remains sunny and birds come to feed. This has been the coldest Easter for many years. Elizabeth Summers .

More Specialist Humour

Useful Measures?

Nanometre (1 millionth of a millimetre): distance on shower dial between scalding & freezing.

Nanosecond (1 billionth of a second): when cooking broccoli the difference between al dente and mush.

Einstein summing up relativity: "When you sit and talk to a nice girl for hours it seems like minutes but if you sit on a hot stove for minutes it seems like hours!!!!"

Odd Dialogues in the Pub.

Bartender: Can I get you anything to go with your drink sir?

René Descartes: I don't think.....

Bartender: Where did he go?

f_x goes into a bar to book a party.

"Sorry," says the barman, "we don't cater for functions."

A neutron goes into a bar and asks for a drink, the bar man serves him and when the neutron goes to take his wallet out, the bar man says "for you, no charge"!!!!



Halling WI

Once again we were without our President, Get well soon Margaret. Betty and Ann coped very well and our meeting started. Minutes were read and signed. This time of the year is slow to get going. The weather doesn't help. Ann Hayward and myself accepted the invite to Ryarsh party in April, and Betty and I are attending the federation A.G.M. at Tunbridge Wells. What a meeting that was! More about that later.

Our speaker was Mrs Pinnell. She was passionate about what must be her hobby, Memories. It seemed like the sequel to our February speaker and she had us all reminiscing, some of us going back to our great grandfathers. I found it so interesting, taking me back to when the highlight of the week was our Sunday walk with our dad. My brother and sisters went to Sunday school, and after dinner, (it wasn't called lunch* in those days) went for a walk either round the land wall, or up the armchairs (That's another story). Who could find the prettiest bird feather or who could pick the most number of wild flowers. When we got home we shared an Aero. At least they haven't changed. I thanked Mrs Pinnell on behalf of all of us. The Flower of the Month was won by Ann Hayward with a perfect little Primula. The competition was something beginning with the letter M. We had Monkeys, Mice, Money and many more but Ann Graves won with a poem entitled March.

As I mentioned earlier, Betty Head and myself went to the A.G.M. at Tunbridge Wells. In all of my 50 yrs of belonging to W.I. it was one of the best meetings I have ever been to. Our National chairman, Ruth Bond, was our first speaker. Ruth told us all about the work at home and abroad that her job entails, especially when she attended the Sandringham W.I. meeting when the Queen, who is a W.I. member attended. She said her Majesty came in and sat where there was a spare seat, just like any of the girls. When it was the question and answer session, what did the Queen want to know? What is the difference between a fairy cake and a cup cake? Don't we all? The cup cake is larger and has more decoration than the fairy cake, and much too much cream. The entertainment for the day was the children from Otford Prep School, all between the ages of 8 to 12 with their band. Their headmaster looked very out of place with his trombone but it was very entertaining. The real highlight of the day was the last speaker, Adam Henson, farmer of Countryfile fame. What a lovely chap. I spoke to him at the end of the meeting it was like talking to my brother. Like me I think all of the ladies at that meeting certainly had their nine pounds worth.

Our April speaker will be from Dr Barnardo's and the competition letter is N. You will Need to put your thinking caps on or you will have to bring Nothing. Not easy this time. There are always Nuts, but Not bolts. Phyllis.

*Dinner is always the correct name for the most substantial meal of the day at whatever time it is eaten.

Phyllis's family was therefore correct in calling their midday meal dinner if it was the biggest meal they had on Sundays. Personally I nearly always have my dinner at lunch time. I am sure it is healthier. (You don't put all the coal on the fire just before you putt the engine away in its shed for the night!) Ed.



Cuxton WI

Sorry about last month but as was explained we cannot get copy in on time if our meeting falls late in the month. I have little to say about March as we too had Mr John Mills for a very interesting talk as Phyllis said in her Halling report. April for us was completely different as the speaker this time was Helen Kendall Tobias who when she last visited got us all designing the most complicated and sophisticated neckwear with our scarves. This time she was talking about Pearls and Princesses. A pearl is just a calcium carbonate deposit within the shell of a mollusc - apparently nearly any mollusc including your common snail. The pearls come in all sorts of soft colours but the best ones are round, highly shiny and very clean. They are very popular within royal circles ever since the days of Cleopatra and until the 1900s ordinary people were not allowed to wear them. Helen showed us photos of royal ladies wearing their pearls and the present Queen always wears her three string necklace and then changes it after 4pm to a two string one for more formal wear in the evening! It is good for pearls to be worn but beware of putting on perfume or smoking as they quickly pick up smells and are susceptible to hairspray. So make sure you do all your dressing etc and put your pearls on last of all. After that fascinating talk it was down to business. Pat gave a report on the Annual Council Meeting held in

Tunbridge Wells. Ruth Bond the National Federation Chairman gave a very interesting talk with the good news about several new WI groups starting up - one with 140 members all of whom had been recruited through Facebook - so the internet is not all bad. This was followed by a lively talk from Adam Henson the farmer on BBC Countryfile. He was a delightful man to listen to and came over as a very kind and caring farmer. We were also entertained by a school brass band, with the headmaster one of the players and with a superb young lad on the drums. Altogether a lovely day and I highly recommend it to you if you get a chance to go.

The Parish Council have given us a most generous grant of £300 which we shall use as a bursary for a member to go on a course of her choosing. There followed the usual Reps reports for the various clubs we enjoy within the WI. The painting group are having an exhibition, the walkers are being shown around the Clink area in London and the Craft group are as usual busy making lovely items for the 95th and other exhibitions. It is all these activities that keep us going during this unending cold winter. So if you are feeling a bit down, come and join us - its always lovely and warm in the church hall! Next meeting Thursday 2nd May - our AGM but there's a glass of wine and some cheese to cheer us on. Sheila.

A Footnote to the Article Beginning on p4

Suppose we were to postulate the existence of such [scientific] laws independent of the physical reality they seek to express. What sort of existence would they have? We know from the experience of science that those who discover such laws often require brilliant intelligence. These laws as human creations exist primarily in the minds of our best physicists, and only secondarily in physics textbooks and research papers. In our experience it is intelligence which produces an intelligibility so profound that it describes the universe. If such laws 'produce' the universe they do so because they are held in a being intelligent enough to grasp the possibilities of such laws and powerful enough to move from the possibility to the reality. At this stage Aquinas might well say, 'and this all people call God'.

If the universe has no source in intelligence (God), then the success of science is incomprehensible. Neil Ormerod in "Theology" May/June 2013.

Hymn Writers 4

John Wesley 1703-1791 and Charles Wesley 1707-1788

Most people would say that John was the preacher and Charles was the hymn writer. Charles was a prolific hymn writer with over six thousand to his name, some unexceptional but, at his best, unsurpassed and these will not be forgotten. Charles was a good preacher too and John did write hymns, so I've put the brothers together for the purpose of this article. Born to Susannah and Samuel Wesley, who held the rectory of Epworth, Lincolnshire, Charles was born prematurely and at birth seemed more dead than alive. He was carefully wrapped in warm wool and on the day he was supposed to have been born, he opened his eyes and cried. When Charles was seventeen months

old, some men in the village upset by his father set fire to the rectory. Charles only survived because a maid courageously carried him out of the burning building in her arms. His elder brother John, who was five years old, was the last in the house to be rescued and his mother prayed that she would be “more specially careful of the soul of this child”, not easy as she had had nineteen children in twenty years – a lot of souls to look after. Susannah was an intelligent woman of deep piety and taught her children to read the Bible as soon as they were able to walk and, as her husband was never out of debt, she took on the responsibility of feeding her children both physically and spiritually. John sought her advice throughout her life. He was widely read although he declared that he was a man of one book, the Bible. She home-tutored both boys and both went to Oxford. Whilst there, they formed a group of students who met for bible study and prayer. Known as “The Holy Club” they taught a system of methods for living a Christian life and were derisively called “Methodists”. Charles didn’t really become a Christian until he came back from a missionary trip to America with brother John in 1738 where he had met a Mrs Bray “a poor, innocent mechanic who knows nothing but Christ” but whilst speaking to her sister, a Mrs Turner, he found the assurances he was seeking and, opening his Bible, he found the words of Psalm 40.v3 – “He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God” - which inspired him in his hymn writing. As a missionary trip it was far from successful but seeds had been planted. The journey back to England was stormy and dangerous and John was particularly impressed by the calm faith of a group of passengers, Moravians from Austria, who sang hymns as the tempest raged. It was contact with the Moravians that opened the teachings of Martin Luther to the Wesleys and Charles was encouraged to pursue his burgeoning faith. He spent a great deal of time at Newgate Prison and his compassion for the inmates, especially those awaiting execution, brought him into contact with the sordidness of the life of London of his day. He was a sensitive and artistic soul who frequently became depressed by what he witnessed but this was the time of his best hymn writing. John was also inspired, beginning to preach about the saving power of Christ by faith which he emphasised throughout his ministry. Although firmly Anglican, he found many churches closed to his message and so he began to hold outdoor meetings which attracted vast crowds. His preaching suffered much persecution and criticism but the great evangelical revival had begun and Methodism spread rapidly throughout England and the United States. He and his brother journeyed to Halle in Germany to learn more about Luther and the Pietists (who carefully studied the meaning of Bible and used it more from the pulpit than from the lectern). They met the Moravian leader Count von Zinzendorf who encouraged them to translate some beautiful German hymns and John Wesley’s masterful translation of Zinzendorf’s original verses comes to us in this hymn expressing faith in simple language –

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
‘midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.*

Once Peter Bohler, one of his Moravian friends said to Charles, “If I had one thousand tongues, I’d praise Christ with them all”. These words went straight to Charles’ heart and, only a year after his conversion, he wrote:

*O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and king, the triumphs of his grace*

Charles Wesley had the gift to express sublime truths simply in hymns that are firm favourites throughout the year: – Jesus, Lover of my Soul; Love Divine, All Love’s Excelling; Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus; Hark, the Herald Angels Sing; Jesus Christ is Risen Today – all easily recognisable but only a minute fraction of his output. Wesley understood the importance of hymn singing in worship just as Martin Luther had two hundred years before, trying to keep the words understandable to sometimes uneducated people to get the message across. John Wesley with George Whitfield, another founding member of the Methodists, led one of the greatest spiritual movements in the history of the Christian Church. Their preaching set the country aflame and the mission of “spiritual holiness” spread throughout the land. Although receiving large sums of money for his various publications, John gave all his money to charity and died without means except that he was one of the greatest Christians of all time. The Methodist hymnody begun by Charles and John Wesley became one of the most powerfully evangelizing influences on England, probably keeping it safe from revolutionary movements that were happening throughout Europe especially in France. John edited, organized and published the endless flow of hymns from Charles, recognising their importance within worship. Yet it was Charles who provided hymns for the spread of Methodism and for the whole body of Christian churches during the following centuries.

JGB

*Rejoice, the Lord is King: Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore:
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

STAMPS - please bring your used (and even unused) stamps into us. We are still collecting them and are about to send off our third consignment to OCD-UK for their use in providing funds to help those suffering.

Thanks to all those of you who have sent in Stamps. They are really appreciated and in a good cause!! JGB

Cuxton and Halling Have Talent

We had a splendid evening in Cuxton Social Club on 23rd March. The hall was ideal for the purpose and Craig Bartley was an excellent compeer who kept us all entertained and the show on the road at a cracking pace. Surprisingly, there were only two entries in the under 12 category. Both girls sang beautifully and it must have been a hard job for the judges to decide which of them should be the winner. Again I thought surprisingly there were far more contestants in the adult category. (Possibly Buffy felt more able to bully us oldies into taking part!) These acts included music, recitation and comedy, but the winner was a unique performance – a poem about the little donkey which starred in the Palm Sunday story, this being the evening before that festival in the Christian year. The prizes were Oscar like statuettes – one of which benefited from the application of some superglue after its unfortunate fall if not from grace from someone's butter fingers.

Buffy and all the organisers are to be congratulated on providing us with an enjoyable night out and thanks to those who donated food and gifts for the dignitaries. Thanks also to Mr Patel for providing sweets for the participants.

This was an event (like the Olymfunpics last year and {in part} the Motor Neurone Disease Association walk) organised by the Fresh Expressions group. Nobody seems to know what this means and our leader keeps trying to think of new and more informative names for it! Fresh Expressions is a movement dedicated to presenting and expressing the Christian Gospel in new ways so that we can all experience what the Church is in formats that are meaningful to us. The FE group in Cuxton is an open group (in the sense that anyone is welcome to join us) made up of members of St Michael's congregation and Cuxton United Reformed Church. We normally meet over a pub lunch in the White Hart. So it is one of the better church meetings to go to, up there with the Social Committee, where we enjoy tea and cake after a short meeting in a member's front room. This meeting too is open to anyone interested. See Buffy for Fresh Expressions or Shirley for the Social Committee. Both need more people for more ideas and for laying on events. If you want to belong to the formal bodies which sit on upright chairs in the church hall or church building and debate such things as finance and administration, you have to stand for election! RIK.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Monday Rectory Grounds and Church Hall



This event once again was tremendous fun and went extremely well. We were delighted to welcome so many children and their families. It was a beautiful bright day, if cold, and the hidden eggs were found quite quickly. Hiding more eggs after the children arrived was not easy because the children naturally watch like hawks those who are doing the hiding. Again, thanks and congratulations to all who worked so hard to make this another great occasion.

Whitsun or Pentecost

The 19th May is Whitsunday or Pentecost, the third great festival in the Christian year and possibly the Cinderella of them all. After all, everybody has heard of Christmas and Easter! What do we do on Whitsunday? In some ways, it is a birthday party, the Church's birthday. On Easter Day Jesus rose from the dead. He then gave the Church its orders. We were to complete the work God had given Jesus to do. We were to tell the world, to proclaim the Good News of Christ to every nation, to teach people everywhere to obey His perfect Law of love and to incorporate by Baptism into His Church all those who were converted and believed in His Name. In Christ the whole created order will be redeemed and Christian people have a key roll in making this happen in accordance with God's Will. Obviously the task is impossible for us to carry out. So, before He ascended into Heaven on the fortieth day of Easter, Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, to make possible the impossible. This promise was fulfilled on the fiftieth day (Pentecost means fifty). And so it all began. The Holy Spirit of God filled

His Church, the hearts and minds of faithful people, and provided us with the resources to complete Christ's work. Whitsun the Church's birthday.

Whit Monday used to be a bank holiday. As it always comes seven weeks after Easter, Whit week was always half term week. This gave our schoolteachers when I was at school an opportunity to tell us what the holiday was really about – God's gift to us of the Holy Spirit. Particularly in the North of England there were all sorts of processions and pageants in Whit week and everybody knew what it was all about.

But the government wanted a bank holiday at the beginning of May to celebrate Labour Day (1st) and to avoid clashes the Whit Monday holiday was therefore replaced by the Late Spring Holiday which always falls on the last Monday in May irrespective of the Christian year. So the link between the holy day and the holiday was lost and, with it, the opportunity to explain to the wider world what it is that we Christians are celebrating. To make it even worse, having found that it plays havoc with the school term to have a variable period between the Easter and half term holidays, it has now become customary to erode the connection between the school Easter holidays and actual Easter. Small steps on the road to the secularisation of Britain, but not insignificant ones.

The Church has possibly made things worse by reverting to the more correct name for the feast, Pentecost, when most people knew it as Whitsun. It's a bit like insisting that people say Baptism instead of Christening or using a modern form of the Lord's Prayer that only regular churchgoers know. We make changes in order to improve things, but sometimes at the expense of unfamiliarity and the alienation of people on the fringes of church life. [For liturgical aficionados it is worth noting that the 1662 prayer book treated Whit week as a seven day festival. (Most major festivals are kept over eight days or an octave, but the eight day from Pentecost is Trinity Sunday!) The Alternative Service Book (1980) emphasised Whit week even more with special bible readings for each day of the week. Common Worship (2000) treats Pentecost as the last day of Easter and makes no provision for Whit week, which is therefore treated as ordinary time (green vestments) but there are special readings provided before Whitsunday to prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit. I haven't yet decided which I think is best!]

Anyway, this year it is suggested that we make more of a splash at Pentecost than we sometimes do. Wear something red to church that day is something we are encouraging. We are also possibly collecting tinned and bottled food for the Medway food bank that day. Listen for announcements!



Max's Tail Piece

We went for a wonderful walk last Saturday (6th April). I expect you'd noticed it had been cold and wet for ages. Every time we went up to the woods I'd come back wet and muddy and when we walked the lanes it was even worse. I still came back wet but even filthier than when we went out in the country. Master says the road dirt is oily. Master doesn't mind walking in the muddy woods and he doesn't mind walking in the woods when it is dark, but he doesn't like it when it's dark and muddy and he can't see what he's falling over! So it's road walking on wet Winter mornings. If we walk up Pilgrims Road to Upper Halling, however, it often means wading through up to 14" of water. Master says the council should employ fewer men with clipboards telling us what we ought to do and more men with shovels to do the jobs the council ought to do! Anyway the weather improved quite a lot at Easter and it was lovely and sunny although it remained very cold. Master said that might have drawn the crowds to the Easter Egg hunt as it was too cold to go to the seaside. I really enjoyed having all those children in my garden, though I only found one egg this year (so far as Master knows). Saturday that week he took me out for what was that perfect walk. The paths had dried up. The sun was shining. It was very fresh, but not painfully cold. Up the woods we walked from the churchyard. I had quite a lot of off lead time which I don't always get now, having frightened him by running off a couple of times. The light was bright and clear. Most of the branches were still bare but some showed the first green shoots of spring. The desiccated grass appeared white in the sunlight. Myriad sprouting bulbs presaged a carpet of bluebells for the end of the month. Up through the woods nearly to Dode and then back down the lanes with views of Luddesdowne and the valley with Cobham church on the hill opposite. Finally, after a couple of hours, home and, still being Master's holiday, Evening Prayer in the garden instead of church. The roses were sprouting red and green. The declining sun was now golden and shining on us down the valley we had just walked. A few flowers blossomed despite the cold. Master says there might be more if only I would stop rolling in the flower beds. It was glorious. Master thought, as he said his prayers, "And heaven will be infinitely more glorious!" Amazing. Max.