

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling.		
August 3 rd Trinity 11	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Acts 13 vv 1-13 p1107 John 6 vv 24-35 p1070
	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 55 vv 1-5 p742 Romans 9 vv 1-5 p1135 Matthew 14 vv 13-21 p981
August 10 th Trinity 12 St Laurence	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	1 Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Romans 10 vv 5-15 p1137 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Wisdom 4 vv 10-15 NEBorJB 2 Corinthians 9 vv 6-10 p1163
August 17 th Trinity 13	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 56 vv 1-8 p742 Romans 11 vv 1-32 p1137 Matthew 15 vv 21-28 p982
August 24 th St Bartholomew	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 43 vv 8-13 p728 Acts 5 vv 12-16 p1097 1 Corinthians 4 vv 9-15 p1146 Luke 22 vv 24-30 p1058
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
August 3 rd Trinity 11	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 55 vv 1-5 p742 Matthew 14 vv 13-21 p981
August 10 th Trinity 12	9.30 Holy Communion	1 Kings 19 vv 9-18 p361 Romans 10 vv 5-15 p1137 Matthew 14 vv 22-33 p981
August 17 th Trinity 13	8.00 Holy Communion	Acts 16 vv 1-15 p1111 John 6 vv 51-58 p1071
	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 56 vv 1-8 p742 Matthew 15 vv 21-28 p982
August 24 th St Bartholomew	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 43 vv 8-13 p728 Acts 5 vv 12-16 p1097 1 Corinthians 4 vv 9-15 p1146 Luke 22 vv 24-30 p1058
August 31 st Trinity 15	United Parish Eucharist	Jeremiah 15 vv 15-21 p774 Romans 12 vv 9-21 p1139 Matthew 16 vv 21—28 p984

Copy Date September Magazine 15th August 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday also at 2.00. **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays). **After School Club**, Thursdays @ St John's.

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

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In his eighties the great theologian, Karl Barth, author of vast volumes of church dogmatics and Biblical exegesis, visited the United States on a lecture tour which he and his listeners knew would be his last. In due course the time came for his final lecture to be delivered at Princeton University. The hall was packed, with young and old alike, all agog to hear the final message of this punchy, controversial, learned and erudite teacher. He delivered his talk and then peering over his spectacles said:

Ladies and gentlemen, it may not have escaped your notice, that this is the last time I'm likely to pass this way and that these will be my last words to you. After a lifetime of learning study and reflection, I have three things to say:

1. To those of you who find life endlessly perplexing and complex, who agonise over it or worry it like a bone, I want to say that really and ultimately it is all very, very simple.

2. To those of you who think you've found the key, who know where you stand and where you think everyone else should be standing, who know what is right and what is wrong and whose lines are clearly drawn, I want to say that it is all infinitely more complicated than you have ever imagined.

3. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all evermore. Amen.

Bishops, Sex and Secularism

There has been a good deal in the papers lately about the Church and homosexuality. There is a huge controversy between those who believe that homosexual behaviour is a sin, condemned by the Bible and by 2,000 years of Christian theology, and those who believe that God makes homosexual people the way they are and that the Church should celebrate homosexual love. The mass of Anglicans in the middle are desperately trying to find a discipline and a code of practice (or fudge!) which will keep everyone together in one communion, whereas the extremists on both sides keep pushing and seem prepared to see the Anglican Communion break up, rather than compromise on what they believe.¹ There have always been serious differences of opinion within the Church and it is worth asking why a very few of these differences push people to the point of threatening schism (the break up of the Church). Homosexuality is one such issue. The ordination of women is another. What is special about these issues that people feel pushed to extreme positions? I wonder if the answer is that sexuality and gender roles are essential to the way we perceive ourselves and our role in society. They are very powerful emotionally and psychologically. Challenging our established beliefs about human sexuality or the roles of men and women raises insistently the question whether we understand ourselves and the world in terms of the biblical worldview, as proclaimed in the traditional teaching of the Church, or whether we basically derive our self-understanding and our values from the world in which we live and try to relate them to the Bible and traditional Christian teaching as best we can.

300 Anglican bishops, unhappy with the way things are going, met in Jerusalem at what was called the *Global Anglican Future Conference*, in a kind of riposte to the Lambeth Conference to which the Archbishop of Canterbury invites all the bishops of the Anglican Communion every ten years since C19. Our bishop, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali has been outspoken in his opposition to the acceptance of homosexual behaviour, but he told this conference in Jerusalem that the main challenge facing the Church is not homosexuality, but militant secularism. What is secularism? According to my dictionary, secularism is *a doctrine which rejects religion, especially in ethics; the attitude that religion should have no place in civil affairs.*

On these definitions we are living in an increasingly secular society. Religion is rejected and certainly thought to have no place in framing modern Britain. If you are wondering how a predominantly Christian (indeed Anglican) country became a secular society in just a couple of generations, I blame it on those complacent Christians of the last three or four decades, who thought that they could still be Christians without coming to Church or supporting the Church in any other way, who just assumed that Christian values would prevail without speaking up for them, and who saw no need to send their children to Sunday School or in any other way to pass on their faith to the next generation. Such complacent Christians ought not to be surprised to wake up to a shortage of clergy, churches closing, projections that there will soon be more active Moslems in this country than Christians, and a government which only thinks about “faith communities” when it is placating extremists of other religions but is no longer interested in working with the Church to produce a better society, based on Christian values.

Secularism. According to St Paul (in Romans 1) homosexual behaviour becomes commonplace because human society forgets about God. Paul says that we have no excuse for turning our backs on God. The wonderful universe we live in is itself persuasive evidence of the power and love of God. Human love is a mirror of the divine love. God has given us consciences. He has made Himself known and is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. We have no excuse for not knowing God or for failing to worship Him. However, we do reject God. We ignore God. We worship false gods. We spend our lives on the service of things we have made, rather than in serving the One Who made us, Whose service is perfect freedom. We have only ourselves to blame.

Some people would come in here and say that, therefore, widespread homosexual practice is not only ungodly; it is also a symptom of an ungodly society. We ought not, however, to pick out homosexual

¹ The Anglican Communion is that worldwide body of churches who essentially believe what the Church of England believes, worship according to rites that are recognisably derived from our Book of Common Prayer, were mostly founded by C of E missionaries or British expatriates and are in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

activity as uniquely wrong. Paul says that a lot of other things are the result of humanity's rejection of God: *all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* It is not just homosexual misconduct. Every kind of human misconduct can be traced back to our rejection of God and His perfect Law of love.

It works like this. You and I were made to be the children of God. We were made in His image. We can never be satisfied, we cannot find meaning and purpose in our lives, therefore, except in relationship to God. So, rejection of God (original sin) leaves us permanently dissatisfied and without any real sense of purpose or direction. So we look for satisfaction and meaning apart from God. This leads to homosexual behaviour and other sexual adventures and experiments. The truth is that human sexuality finds its true meaning in life-long, heterosexual, monogamous marriage. Anything else is of sin and cannot ultimately satisfy. One may be pure and single or faithfully married, but no other sexual relationship is undefiled by sin or finally satisfactory.

If we are to fulfil our potential as human beings, made in the image of God, our character must conform to His character and He is perfect self-sacrificing love and entirely faithful. Whatever falls short of this is of sin. In fact one definition of sin is falling short of our potential to be the children of God.

We must not, however, condemn homosexual misconduct more than heterosexual misconduct. Neither must we condemn sexual sin and take a more relaxed view of other kinds of sin. There is a God-shaped hole in the life of every unbeliever and too many people try to fill that hole with drink or drugs, which in turn have terrible consequences both for their own health and in terms of the way they treat other people.

Teenagers get into gangs in order to feel that they belong, that their lives have meaning, and enforce "respect" through violence. If only they knew! They belong already to Jesus if they will only accept Him into their lives. They don't need the appearance of respect from people who fear them. They already have the unconditional love of God and the incredible status of being His son. It is all ours for the asking.

Many perfectly respectable people see their lives as progressing when they come into positions of power, grow richer or move up the social scale. The desire for power, position or wealth may tempt us into other sins. We may be tempted to dishonesty or to bully others or to despise people who have less than we have. But there is more to it than that. If God takes second place in our lives to ambition or career or home-building, or hobbies, or community activities, or anything else whatsoever, we are effectively idolaters, who are wasting our lives in pursuit of what can never satisfy and will tempt us ever deeper into sin.

I suspect that the most common idol of all – so commonplace that many of you will probably get angry with me for calling it a sin – is materialism. Millions of people buy so much more than they need – often with money they cannot afford. They are despoiling the environment by their excessive consumption. They may be denying scarce resources to genuinely needy people. They may be exploiting others forced to work for little pay in poor conditions. They are certainly missing the point of life – which is to know God as our loving heavenly Father and Jesus as our Saviour and the Holy Spirit as our constant companion.

An MP (Tom Harding) recently asked why we are all so miserable when really we have never had it so good in material terms. There was a violent public reaction, mainly from people whose idea of hardship seemed to be if they had to cancel one of their holidays in order to pay the mortgage. Both sides of the debate missed the point, however. We cannot be contented by material possessions and the prospect of always owning a bit more. Happiness comes from enjoying what you have got with a thankful heart and blessedness comes from giving away what you've got to someone who needs it more!

We might feel sorry for the homosexual desperately looking for meaning in sexual encounters, rather than in worship. We should feel equally sorry for the crowds milling round *Bluewater* on a Sunday morning, seeking in retail therapy what they can only find in prayer.

As St Augustine says, our hearts are restless till they find their rest in God. If we want to be happy, if we want to be fulfilled as human beings, the only way we can be is by being at one with God. We are all divided from God by our own personal sin and are quite helpless to help ourselves. But God does not leave it at that. He offers us His help. He sends Jesus to die on the Cross. The death of Jesus is a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. All we have to do is to repent and believe. If we do that, our sins are washed away; we are born again. We are baptised into the Body of Christ. We have a new start as the children of God. We are in relationship with God once again. We can know God and to know God is to have eternal life.

What we are not yet is perfect and we shall not be perfect till we die and go to Heaven. Not being perfect, we can still be wrong about things. So Christians will have serious differences of opinion even on important matters of doctrine and conduct. We will still sin ourselves and we are in a very weak position when it comes to judging other people. That is best left to God.

St Paul tells us that to break any of the commandments is to break the whole law. We cannot condemn someone else's adultery or other sexual sin if we do not remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. We can hardly criticise someone else's religious shortcomings if we covet our neighbour's Audi, house, wife or wide screen telly. Indeed the New Testament teaches us that those of us who know better (because we know Jesus) can expect harsher judgment if we sin than those other people who sin in ignorance.

So do we split with Christians we don't agree with? In all humility, they might after all be right. And even if we are virtually certain that we are right, we shall never achieve a perfect church on earth. We may finish up with a much smaller Church, a Church not so much of the righteous as of the self-righteous, if we exclude the people we don't agree with. Coming back to the fact that we aspire to conform ourselves to the character of God, one tremendously significant aspect of God's character is His unity. Jesus prayed that we might be one. It is a terrible thing to create divisions in His Body, splits in the Temple of the Holy Spirit, civil war in the Kingdom of God.

How, then, do we deal with people whose sexual lives conform neither to the ideals of celibacy nor to those of heterosexual, monogamous, life-long marriage? Do we condemn and exclude? Maybe they feel guilty about the way their lives have turned out or deeply disappointed. Maybe they themselves see nothing wrong in adopting life styles which society in general is relaxed about and many Christians believe are OK. Do we condemn and exclude or do we welcome them into the fellowship of the Church as a place in which they can experience the love of God? Do we support them, pray for them and bless them? If so, do we appear to condone the less than ideal? If we do not, do we cut people off from the means of grace they so much need if they are to sort out their lives?

What do we Christians have to offer addicts and members of criminal gangs? Only more surveillance and harsher penalties? Or do we have other resources for sharing with them the love of God?

Living in a secular society, what do we really want people to do if the shop they work for opens on Sundays or if, as employees of local authorities or certain commercial firms, they are expected to tell lies to the public? What do we ask of a soldier in an army which is called to fight in a war he believes to be unjust?

Can we confront materialism – sheer, excessive consumption – without making ourselves unintelligible to a materialistic society and alienating most of the people who naturally belong to our churches?

Finally, what response can we, as Christians, make to the secularisation of the society we live in? I suggest four things.

1. We need to repent of our own failure to love God with all our hearts and our neighbours as ourselves.
2. We need to pray daily - and live like people who are in regular conversation with God Almighty.
3. We need to read the Bible assiduously – and live by its teaching.
4. We need to take part frequently in public worship – especially the service which Jesus Himself gave us, the Holy Communion, by which *our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.*
Amen.

Food For Thought

We were having some work done on the roof of St John's, when the builders were forced to stop work by angry bees defending their nest. The Council charged us £40 to remove the said nest. It struck me that £40 is the sort of sum minor works tend to cost these days. On the other hand, however, we feel that, say, £5 is quite a lot to put in the collection plate. So, put crudely, it takes eight generous worshippers to cover the cost of one bees' nest removal. I wonder how our church treasurer squares the circle?

Another Oddity

It seemed to me a great idea that Christians from all over the Diocese of Rochester should walk to the Cathedral on 19th July for a service in support of the children of Zimbabwe and to try to raise money to help them as part of the process. I was a bit irritated, however, to discover that walkers were expected to register before taking part. On enquiry, I was told that this was for insurance purposes! This struck me as odd since we would presumably have to walk home without the benefit of insurance. And then an even odder thought struck me. Clergy and their parishioners must have been walking from Halling and Cuxton to services at Rochester Cathedral for more than a thousand years without taking out insurance! Have we gone bonkers? Anyway, whether we are bonkers or not, the children of Zimbabwe need our prayers and our money. You can still donate at www.justgiving.com/justchildren or via me. Roger.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mr Head (4), Mrs Crow (29), Mr Mattingly (66), Mrs Wallis (76) & Miss Bourne (109) – drawn by Mrs Swatton.

St Michael's Draw: £5 to Peter Crundwell, drawn by Ray Maisey.

Nature Notes June 2008

It was a rather overcast day but relatively mild. As I walked through the churchyard I was aware of the pungent scent of elderflowers. In the afternoon I watched a jay flying backwards and forwards to the patio wall for the peanuts. At one stage a magpie flew after the jay and both birds disappeared behind the lilac tree. This beautiful bird continued to come for the nuts well into the evening. The following day two starlings came to the garden. Once a familiar sight, this was a rare event. North winds brought dark clouds the next day when in the early evening I watched four chaffinches, two male and two female, feeding on seed from the edge of the patio. On following days Murphy and I walked the river path along the banks of which the wealth of beautiful flowers bloomed and as the days passed more species came into view.

A new edition of Springwatch began on BBC2, a series which I enjoy. On the 4th we were shown a cygnet sitting on its mother's back and it stayed there even when the swan dipped down into the water. I am greeted daily now to the song of a song thrush perched in the bare branches of a dead elm and often a chaffinch joins in. The thrush takes up its position again in the evening. Temperatures improved on the 8th and I enjoyed sitting in the garden watching birds fly to and fro the bird feeders and the patio wall. The 9th was a beautiful day with the highest temperatures of the

year so far. Heavy rain fell during the night of the 11th and into the morning of the next day. A jay came for nuts and at one point a magpie flew after it. A squirrel came frequently followed by a pair of collared doves. Chaffinches, a robin and great tits came to the new bird table. On the 14th, while in the garden, I could hear baby birds calling from behind the lilac. We went to Addington on the 15th and while David was watching cricket, I walked Murphy along the lane where rabbits darted and where elderflower perfume hung on the air. Herb robert, white deadnettle, upright hedge parsley and buttercups bloomed along the verges. Along the way trees arched over the road making it quite dark then it was good to walk back into the sunlight. Easterly winds blew on the 16th when the sun shone brightly from a blue sky where white and grey clouds marched across the heavens. Bedstraws, both white and yellow, and pale blue scabious bloomed in profusion along the grassy banks by the river from where a fresh wind blew. The mud flats glistened in the sunlight. Strong south westerly winds blew on the 18th which was rather grey. Along by the river I was aware of viper's bugloss in colours of mauve, pale blue and white. Bees were gathering nectar from the flowers. Scabious flowers had grown tall so that they stood out from the array of flowers on the bank. We drove to Camer Park on the 20th and as we made our way along Bush valley I drank in the beauty of the red poppies, mallow and

elderflowers. The fields ahead were bright red with poppies, such a lovely scene. In the afternoon a pair of blackbirds came to the garden. I hadn't seen blackbirds there for many weeks. The longest day was certainly not the sunniest for there were just a few glimpses of the sun in the afternoon. The morning brought drizzle and cool temperatures as we drove along the M2. I saw goats rue, yellow crucifers and ox eye daisies along the verges. Mist hung over Bluebell Hill then for a while there was a glimpse of brightness. The rain ceased by mid day and in the afternoon which became humid, there was some sunshine. The following days remained warm and sunny with billowing white and grey clouds. On the 23rd I watched a robin trying to balance on a fat ball. Unlike the great tits it had no success and flew away. The following evening I went on a walk to Ranscombe Nature Reserve. The day had been beautiful but the skies became overcast and it became quite chilly but this did not detract from my enjoyment. I saw a variety of flowers including rock roses which I hadn't seen before. The views across the valley were beautiful and I

heard the alarm calls of blackbirds. As we made our way back to the car park two herons flew overhead. I spent the following days, when the sun shone accompanied by south west winds, walking the river path with Murphy and I saw more species of flowers blooming on the banks. The colours were spectacular. On the 28th, we took Murphy to the Country Park at West Malling. The park looked beautiful with its variety of trees and grassy areas where pink clover and bird's foot trefoil bloomed in profusion. At 6.00am on the 29th, I looked out of the window to see a blue sky and bright sunshine. Magpies were cackling loudly in a sycamore tree on the embankment because a crow was invading their space. Eventually the crow flew away. The last day of the month was glorious. I took a friend with Murphy to the river path. She is a nature lover and very knowledgeable where flowers are concerned so she was delighted with the abundance of the flowers on the banks. The month ended on a glorious note.

Elizabeth Summers

Bewitched W.H. Davies

*Give me a night in June that's
clear and quiet,
That I may stare at Heaven until I
see
Her face all twitching to her
farthest star-
Conscious of one true man's
idolatry.*

*I stare at dewdrops till they close
their eyes,
I stare at grass till all the world is
green;
I stare at rainbows all their
precious life,
Till nothing's left to prove what I
have seen.*

*I stare at Robin Redbreast on his
bough,
Till he comes down with many a
pretty dance:
I stare at my own Self, and walk
the earth
With half my spirit in a wonder
trance.*



Hire the Church Hall for Your Children's Party.

The Church Hall, Rochester Road, Cuxton, is ideal for children's parties with good kitchen and other facilities. Rates are highly competitive and bookings may be made with Malcolm Curnow 01634 719585.

(The hall is not let for teenage parties.)

Looking Ahead

Victorian Tea Party at the Rectory on 9th August.

Cheese & Wine Evening on 29th August at 73, Charles Drive.

Coffee Morning at 15H Foxglove Row, Vicarage Road on 20th August from 10.00.

There will be a **Quiz** for Christian Aid in the Church Hall, Cuxton, on 6th September at 7.30 pm..

From the Registers

Baptisms:

15th June
15th June
6th July

Scarlett Ruby Ray
Logan Keane Ray
Aoife Marie Chivers

Gillingham
Gillingham
Iwade

Michaelmas 2008 (29th September)

Our 6.30 pm Eucharist will be followed at 7.30 pm by a concert by Mantissa Opera – presented by Mr Simon Tatnall. Admission is free, but a collection will be taken for Church funds. Many of you know Simon from his performances at the Jubilee Hall and with Snodland Choral.



Halling WI

At Halling W.I June is our party month and once again it was a great success. Friends and fellow members gathered in the Jubilee Hall. The table flowers, all arranged by our own Evelyn Low, who must have picked every delphinium in her garden. The lovely blue contrasted brilliantly with our terracotta table cloths. We all tucked into ham, salad, quiche and potatoes followed by a choice of gateaux for "afters". We were entertained by our friends from the Rainham Drama and Singing group who, by the way, are putting on "Oliver" in October at the Town Hall Theatre, Chatham. Evelyn had also arranged a lovely raffle to help our funds and I was lucky enough to win a big basket of growing herbs including a little bay tree which Evelyn had grown from seed, but I am sure I will have to transplant it into the garden as it will never make 20ft in the basket. The committee, and especially Betty Head must once again be

given a big thank you from all of us for organizing the great party.

Also this month, three of us attended the National Federation Annual meeting in Liverpool, another great gathering. It is quite an experience chatting up members from far and wide, from Cumbria to the Channel Islands, and many, many places in between. All the members who attended this meeting, all 7000 of them, were given a young oak sapling to take and plant somewhere in their locality. Mrs Head's and mine will be planted somewhere on Court Farm in the Autumn. For my part, Liverpool, City of Culture, needs to be visited again in a couple of years time as they seemed to be pulling down and building up.

What have we to look forward to in the near future? Olive oil is the subject of our July speaker, and then our Ploughman's lunch in Mrs. Vi Head's garden, not forgetting the County Federation's 90th birthday celebration at Great Comp gardens. We never have a dull moment. Phyllis C.

Teddy Bears Picnic



We are holding **two** teddy bears' picnics this year on Wednesday 6th August at Cuxton and Thursday 14th August at Halling. All children with parents and/or carers are welcome. Bring teddy if you can. Some people bring some party food to share, but, don't worry; there's always more than enough. Both picnics are at 2.00. Meet St Michael's Church Cuxton on 6th and St John's Church Halling on 14th. There will be a short children's service before we go outside for the tea and games (or stay inside if it's raining!)

There will be a quiz for Church Funds in October – date & venue to be decided. Watch this space.

CUXTON COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL NEWS.....

Dear Friends of our school,

So much seems to have happened at school since I last wrote, so here goes!

Sports day and Fathers day lunch back in June was a great success. Fortunately we had cool weather on the day and the rain stayed away. Children raced well in their teams joining in with a variety of games, including obstacle courses, football, skipping, bean bags in hoops etc. The fathers then came into lunch with their children and enjoyed a roast lunch with dessert. A busy time for cook, but much appreciated by many Dads. Later that week the FCS worked hard to ensure each child that had brought some money into school took home a gift for their Dad for Fathers Day.

We decided to hold our very own Enterprise week. Alan Sugar would have been very impressed although my staff did say who would be fired at the end if their class did not raise money- 'No such luck' -the response from me!! (at the time we all felt very tired and in need of a rest). The children had a great time during the course of the week, making different items, pricing them and making posters. Valuable discussions took place about what people would be able to afford, the need to make some money and profit made once expenses were taken out. Although very hard for all involved, we had a great time. In total the children raised £428 with Mays class making the most money for their class. Congratulations to all classes.

The children had an interesting day with two ladies from the 'Travelling Museum'. They learned about Seaside holidays in the past and saw artefacts, old clothing, toys, photographs and different types of transport. They were also entertained by Punch and Judy. This day ties in with the seaside project the children are undertaking in school and our trip to St Mary's Bay.

Our thanks to the Friends of Cuxton schools or the FCS for organising and running the Summer Fayre once again this year. There was a great variety of stalls and the rain did not stop play! The raffle went down a treat with a Nintendo Wii as first prize, and congratulations to a very smiley girl who jumped up and down like 'tigger' when she found out she had won! Many adults were keen to win that prize! We think the FCS with your help of course, raised about £1500-1600 which will go to both schools adding funds to rather small budgets. I am extremely grateful to them for all their very hard work and with great sadness but also understanding I am notifying you that the FCS committee are now standing down. They have worked supporting the schools through many events each year for 9/10 years and now their children are soon to be moving to secondary school they feel it is time for a new group of folk to take over. We will miss them greatly.

Our new entrants have now had their second visit into school and they are very confident! I am pleased they are already coming into school happily and feel the regular visits that Mayday and Beehive make into school help this transition.

The junior school entertained us with their production of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dream coat. They quality of the production was good at their rehearsal which we saw and I gather the juniors performed well to their guests. Our children were an excellent audience as some of the play was a little tricky to follow! I hope you and your families enjoy the Summer break, and will write with news of our end of term events in a months time. In the meantime some poems for you to enjoy once again, written by our year 2 children. Sandra Jones, Head teacher Cuxton Community Infant School.

The Wood by Thomas

The wood is quiet,
The wood is dark,
The wood is cold,
But I like it that way.
The wood is creepy,
It gives me the creeps,
But I still like it that way.

Owls by Kyle

I love owls,
They are sweet,
I love owls,
They have lovely spreading
wings.
I love owls,
They are great,
I love owls,
They have a beautiful beak.

Owls by Sian

Owls can be quiet,
Owls can be big,
Owls are confused when they sit
on trees,
Owls don't know,
What to do next.

The River by Reece

The river is sometimes happy,
The river is sometimes sad,
The river is sometimes blocked
up,
It makes the river mad.

The River by Jamie

One morning the river sighed and
groaned,
In the afternoon it cried and
moaned,
But when the sun went down it
never felt better,
Than a cardboard letter.
But when the sun rises,
It felt like it went all different
sizes.

The Pond by Hannah

The pond has lots of ducks on it.
The pond is clear.
The pond is nice for ducks to
swim in.
The pond is full of bread for the
ducks to eat.

Halling Bellringers

Correction: The girls on the moon walk made £400 or more each, not £400 between them. My mistake. Sorry. Also we had a very profitable afternoon with our stall at the Halling Fun Day. Also the outing to Hertfordshire with Cuxton went off very well. A good ring at all five towers. Peter Silver.

Halling Historical Society

August 21st: Mrs Mortlock will speak on the subject of Tonbridge Castle (7.30 pm, Jubilee Hall).

Dickens' Country Protection Society.



The Society is concerned about the proposed **Planning Commission**. This is a quango which the government intends to set up to decide on major planning proposals, effectively short-circuiting the dramatic process so that even members of parliament will have no voice. With the pressure on our area in the past, the Society very much fears the loss of our democratic rights.

A Boot Fair in the Church Hall
Or
Cash in the Attic

Would you like to clear your loft or attic and sell those unwanted articles you once thought might be useful one day? Who knows? Somebody might just be looking for them! So book a stall at the Church Hall Cuxton on Saturday 13th September, 10.00 - 1.30. All we ask is 10% of your takings for church funds. So you can't lose and neither can we. Book a stall with Peter and Shirley on 724997.



Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Cycle Ride

13th September is also the day of the Friends of Kent Churches sponsored cycle ride (or walk). The idea is to visit as many churches as you feel able to, being sponsored for each one or for an overall sum.

Alternatively, we are looking for people to man the churches for the day, marking people's sponsor forms and offering them orange squash and a word of encouragement. You can also be sponsored for this.



Sponsor forms from the Rector 717134.

Joke

The village policeman had failed to reach his target for arrests. So, one day, just as the vicar was hurtling down the hill on his bicycle, the bobby leapt out from behind a bush with his hand raised to halt. The vicar screeched to a stop just in time, exclaiming, "My guardian angel must have been with me!" The policemen straightaway booked him for two on a bike!

August 10th 2008

How much do you know about the history of the place where you live? For example, did you know that there have been two churches dedicated to St Lawrence in Upper Halling?

The first was put up in mediaeval times and the building is still there. The three cottages at the bottom of Chapel Lane were created by partitioning the old chapel and you can still see some ecclesiastical features inside them. Pilgrims on route to Canterbury would worship at St Lawrence Chapel and many would stay at the "Black Boy" inn opposite. This has recently ceased to be a public house, but you can still see the remains of the inn sign.

The other church dedicated to St Lawrence in Upper Halling was more or less where the Jubilee Hall now stands. It was a corrugated metal building and you can see a picture of it in the Jubilee Hall. It was intended to provide a place for worship and a base for pastoral care and mission in Upper Halling, when, for most people, the only way to get to St John's was to walk! Older people remember the thriving Sunday School which continued until the 1960s.

I am not sure why this church was closed. Perhaps the building was too expensive to maintain or maybe it was too difficult to staff. Anyway, this second St Lawrence Church was pulled down and the village erected the Jubilee Hall in its place as a facility for the whole community and in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the accession to the throne of her majesty the Queen. The Church still owns the freehold on the land and we are proud to be a partner in this major community project. We hold services in the Jubilee Hall on two Sundays in the month – Holy Communion at 8.00 am on the 1st Sunday and an Evening Service at 5.30 pm (following tea) on the 2nd.

This year the 2nd Sunday in August falls on St Lawrence's Day (10th August) and it will be a special celebration. This invitation is to everyone who lives (or used to live) in Upper Halling and to all those organisations that use the Jubilee Hall and to anyone else who would like to come, especially friends from St John's and St Michael's. Please join us for tea at 4.30 pm in the Jubilee Hall on Sunday 10th August, which will be followed at 5.30 by a Celebration Evening Service. If you have any pictures or relics either of St Lawrence's Church or of old Upper Halling, please bring them along to show people.

Women Bishops – Three Stances and a Couple of Comments.

1. You may believe that we should be guided by the Bible as it has usually been interpreted in 2,000 years of Christian thinking. If you believe this, it is hard to see how you can agree to women priests or bishops.
2. You may believe that the Bible and the Church's traditional teaching are out of date and that we ought to leave them behind and move on, accepting the norms of contemporary Britain. If you believe that, you will obviously welcome the Church ordaining women as priests and bishops, but, if you really believe that the Bible does not bear witness to the eternal Word of God and that the Church is not guided by the Holy Spirit, what is the point of having a Church at all?
3. You may believe that the Bible does bear witness to the eternal Word of God and that the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, but believe that traditional teaching has to be re-examined in the light of modern knowledge. This might lead you to the conclusion that we may (or even ought) to ordain women as bishops and priests. You have to accept, however, that this process of re-examining traditional teaching in the light of modern knowledge could lead also to changes in the Church's position on homosexuality and other issues where our traditional interpretations differ from those of the modern (or post-modern) world.

Now for my comments. If stance 2 is widely held, I see no future for Christianity. There is just no point in the Christian religion if we do not believe that the Church has been entrusted with God's revelation of Himself, if indeed there is a God. I believe that stances 1 & 3 are completely compatible with faith in Jesus. I incline heavily towards stance 1, but I have a certain amount of sympathy with stance 3. 1&3 people both need to approach their study of scripture humbly and prayerfully and with respect for those who come to different conclusions.

If the newspapers are right, there is a long way to go before the ordination of women as bishops in England. There are several more votes (which could yet be lost) and the earliest likely date is Christmas 2014 (just less than ten years before I retire). It seems to me that it is unlikely that Rochester will be one of the first dioceses to receive a woman bishop. Furthermore, if they keep their promise to respect those of us who hold to stance 1, the ministry of a woman bishop will not be forced on clergy or laity whose consciences are troubled by the ordination of women. So I believe that we stance 1 people need not get too worried yet! Roger.



Some More Molluscology
By Max the Rectory Spaniel.

Last month I told you about my studies into the behaviour and diet of slugs. My hypothesis was that, when they had finished eating the marigolds, they would go on to consume the petunias. I thought I had been proved right when one pot of petunias was reduced to bare stems overnight. However, the rest of the petunias are now flourishing unmolested and there are some beautiful purple blooms.

This could be because slugs can't or don't like to eat bigger petunia plants. Another possible explanation, however, derives from the fact that they stopped eating petunias the moment the strawberries started to turn red. Certainly the strawberries vanish as quickly as they mature and the only ones Master has eaten are the ones he bought in the butchers. But I would have thought that there were enough slugs to devour both the strawberries and the petunias. So what's holding them back? Another mystery. Max.