

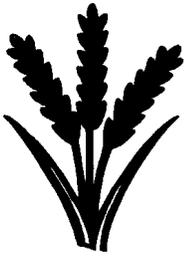
Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
August 1 st Trinity 9	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1&2 p668 Ecclesiastes 1 vv 12-14 p668 Ecclesiastes 2 vv 18-23 p669 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1045
August 8 th Trinity 10	9.30 Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045
August 15 th BVM	8.00 Holy Communion BCP	Collect, Epistle and Gospel Trinity 11 BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 61 vv 10&11 p748 Galatians 4 vv 4-7 p1170 Luke 1 vv 46-55 p1026
August 22 nd Trinity 12	9.30 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 58 vv 9-14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18—29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
August 29 th Trinity 13	9.30 Holy Communion	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
September 5 th Trinity 14	9.30 Family Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
August 1 st Trinity 9	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Genesis 50 vv 4-26 p56 Mark 6 vv 45-52 p1009
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ecclesiastes 1 vv 1&2 p668 Ecclesiastes 1 vv 12-14 p668 Ecclesiastes 2 vv 18-23 p669 Colossians 3 vv 1-11 p1184 Luke 12 vv 13-21 p1045
August 8 th Trinity 10	11.00 Holy Communion	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 11 v10 – 12 v6 p696 II Corinthians 1 vv 1-22 p1158
August 15 th BVM	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Isaiah 61 vv 10&11 p748 Galatians 4 vv 4-7 p1170 Luke 1 vv 46-55 p1026
August 22 nd Trinity 12	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 58 vv 9-14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18—29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046
August 29 th Trinity 13	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
September 5 th Trinity 14	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 43 v14 – 44 v5 p728 John 5 vv 30-47 p1069
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048

Wednesdays at St Michael's 9.30 Holy Communion		Thursdays at St John's 9.30 Holy Communion	
4 th August	Jeremiah 31 vv 1-7 Matthew 15 vv 21-28	5 th August	Jeremiah 31 vv 31-34 Matthew 16 vv 13-23
11 th August	Ezekiel 9 vv 1-22 Matthew 18 vv 15-20	12 th August	Ezekiel 12 vv 1-12 Matthew 18 vv 21 – 19 v1
18 th August	Ezekiel 34 vv 1-11 Matthew 20 vv 1-16	19 th August	Ezekiel 36 vv 23-28 Matthew 22 vv 1-14
25 th August	2 Thessalonians 3 vv 6-18 Matthew 23 vv 27-32	26 th August	I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 Matthew 24 vv 42-51

Friday 6th is the Transfiguration of our Lord and Tuesday 24th is St Bartholomew. Holy Communion @ 7.30 am @ St Michael's.

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

Copy Date September Magazine: 13th August 8.30 am Rectory.



The Glorious Dead and Glorious Life.

Later on in this magazine, you will read Betty Hodkin's account of her visit to her brother's grave in France where he died in May 1940. This year it is seventy years since the evacuation from Dunkirk and the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. These anniversaries make us think. Some of you have personal memories of the events commemorated. Maybe you were there. Maybe you lost someone you loved or maybe you were just thankful that your loved ones came through it all safely. Some of you were children in 1940 and were evacuated to safer parts of the country. The trains carrying the evacuees shared the tracks with those bringing home the men from Dunkirk, most exhausted, too many wounded. It is not something you forget.

Others of us are not old enough to remember the War, but, born soon after, had parents and family members who had lived through the Blitz or fought in the armed services. We may reflect that we would not have been here at all if our parents had not made it, or what life would have been like had the Nazis won.

As younger generations come along I hope they will not forget those who went before and the debt we owe them. It is good to know that the French people still care for the war graves of those who died on their soil.

It is a fearsome thought that the anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on a human population comes on 6th August, the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord. When Jesus was transfigured, it says that *his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow*. Three privileged men were shown something of the glory of heaven. But the light emitted by the bomb over Hiroshima blinded the people who experienced it even through closed eyelids. The electromagnetic radiation from the bomb scorched flesh, killing and searing and dooming many of

those who survived later to die of cancer or to bear deformed children, who would themselves be susceptible to disease.

War is a terrible thing even though it can bring out the best as well as the worst in people – courage, loyalty and endurance, even love, as well as hatred, bitterness and viciousness. It is a paradox that human beings are such a mixture of the good and the bad, made in the image of God, yet mired in original sin. And still it goes on in Afghanistan today, British servicemen and women losing their lives at their country's behest.

In the story of the Transfiguration (Luke 9 vv 28-36), Jesus takes Peter and James and John up a mountain to pray. To their astonishment, Jesus suddenly shines with glorious light, the light of life, the glory of God. They are joined by two great characters from the past, Moses and Elijah, representing the way God has made Himself known to human beings throughout the ages. What they talk about is His coming Death on Calvary, the Cross which will set people free from sin and death. The apostles hear the Voice of God Himself, acknowledging Jesus as His Son and telling people to listen to what Jesus says.

So, what does all this mean? In Jesus, Heaven and earth meet. In this world of sorrow and sin, Jesus shines as the eternal light. There is hope on earth because Jesus is with us here and now. There is hope beyond this passing world because Jesus loves us in all eternity. This transitory life is not all that there is. In Jesus, God becomes human, so that human beings can be transformed by His divinity. As God is love, so our destiny as human beings is to become love. As Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, so we have eternal life in Him if only we believe. To know Jesus is to have a glimpse of Heaven and, if we can see something of heaven on earth, we can live our earthly lives by the heavenly virtues of faith and hope and love. We hear His words of peace. It is not only a bitter irony that the atom bomb was first used on the Feast of the Transfiguration. It is also, paradoxically, a sign of hope. Roger.

From the Registers

Wedding:

12th June

Mark Newman & Hayley Ellen Carwadine

Cuxton

Funerals:

25th June

Joyce Marion Tingle (86)

High Street

5th July

Brenda Joyce Payne (81)

Hillcrest Drive

8th July

Douglas Mattingly (80)

Benedict Close

We Will Remember Them

My brother Gordon Harris was killed in France in May 1940. He was part of the British Expeditionary Force involved in the Dunkirk evacuation. My parents had visited his grave soon after the war, but as the years passed I increasingly felt that I would like to see it too. A letter from the War Graves Commission confirmed where the grave was and at last in September 2009 a family group set out to find my brother's grave.

Gordon had joined the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in July 1939 before war broke out. He had basic training and then embarked for France. Even though the action he was involved in is described as the Dunkirk Campaign, Gordon's grave is nearer to Calais and this is where we left Eurotunnel to head about three quarters of an hour inland to the village of Morbecque which is between St Omer and Hazebrouk on the road to Lille.

This area is undulating chalk farm land dotted with small villages and looked very attractive on a sunny autumn day. About a mile outside Morbecque we found the cemetery, sadly one of several in the area. A brick wall enclosed about a hundred graves from the First World War and a similar number all with May 27th 1940 on them, men presumably killed in the same engagement. Most were from the West Kent Regiment. In one corner were three German graves. We quickly located Gordon's grave near a rowan tree and placed a small wreath on it.

My brother was 21 when he died. Most of the other graves displayed a similar age or even younger. Only a very few of the soldiers were older.

War cemeteries all over the world are administered by the War Graves Commission, but obviously someone locally cares for the graves on a day to day basis. The cemetery at Morbecque was immaculate. It was beautifully mown. Shrubs between the graves were neatly pruned. No one knew that we would be visiting that day. Indeed the visitors' book, kept in a small safe in the entry porch, showed that we were only the second visitors that year. Some sixty years after the end of the Second World War the condition of the cemetery showed that those who died are not forgotten.

My visit to Gordon's grave was emotional but I am very grateful that I was able to do it and see his final peaceful resting place.

Betty Hodkin.

Halling Historical Society

August 19th: Mrs Saddler – The Great Flood of January 1953. Jubilee Hall 7.30

Halling Bell Ringers

On June 12th we and some ringers from Frindsbury joined the Cuxton Outring to Cambridgeshire. We rag at five towers in and around Ely. A good time was had by all. Many thanks to Colin Thomson.

Peter Silver.

Unfortunate Extracts From Church Notices:

Can church ladies please lend the rector their electronic girdles for the pancake breakfast?

The Low Esteem Support Group meets on Thursdays. Please enter by rear door.

The Slimming Group also meets Thursdays. Please enter by the larger double doors on the south side.

Money Matters

Donations continue to come in towards paying off our parish share debt (£22,000). The hope is that every adult in the parish will donate £5 to keep us financially viable. So far we have collected £430. So there is still a long way to go, but thanks to all those who have donated so far. Any further donations please to rector, treasurer or churchwardens. Any cheques should be payable to *Cuxton and Halling PCC*. If you can *Gift Aid* your donation, that adds about 25% to its value.

At our last PCC meeting, the treasurer was very worried that we did not have enough in our account to pay next month's bills. I was able to tell her that fortunately we had earned a bit in fees and it appeared that there would after all be just enough to cover things. It is that close, however. It would make things much easier if you could *Gift Aid* your giving to the Church. Any taxpayer can do this. You sign a form or write a note on the outside of an envelope and the parish can reclaim from the Government the tax you had already paid on that amount of income. It is as easy as that and costs you nothing. Special gift aid envelopes are available in church for one off donations and Marie Hendeby has the forms for more regular donors.

Marie can also give you envelopes for planned giving, your regular weekly or monthly offering.

Someone said that she found it much more convenient to set up a direct debit with the church than to put something in the plate every week. You can do that if you wish. Just ask Val Brown for details. The person who said this to me said that, even with the direct debit, she still felt she ought to put something in the plate, but you really don't have to!

Running a parish and two parish churches costs a lot of money and all these ideas help us to pay our bills, which we have to do if we are to continue to offer the services we offer now.

Finally, Val Brown has announced that she will be standing down as treasurer next year. Do you think that this is a job you could do? It involves banking the money and keeping the accounts. There is no reason why two people should not do the job together. One might not want to handle the cash. The other might be happy to do that, but be doubtful about doing the paper work. Being treasurer is a big job and an important one. It isn't difficult, however. You could do it with primary school level arithmetic. Using a calculator or computer would make it easier still. There is plenty of advice out there if there are things you are not sure of. So how about it? Could you be the person to keep your church's accounts? If you come forward before Val leaves, you can work alongside her for a bit while you get the hang of things. Have a word with Val or the rector or wardens. If nobody comes forward, keeping the books is another responsibility which falls on the churchwardens and that wouldn't be fair.

BBQ at 95, Pilgrims Road North Halling.

3rd August: Barbecue for Church funds at 95, Pilgrims Road from 12.00. All welcome.

Christian Aid



A Division of The British Council of Churches

Quiz in the Church Hall

September 11th (for Christian Aid) at 7.30 pm. Teams 6-8. £6 entry includes food but not drink. Please contact Rector for details and bookings.

The World Cup – Trinity 4 2010

1 Kings 19 vv 15-21 p361, Psalm 16, Galatians 5 vv 1-25 p1171, Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040

Psalm 147 v10: *He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse: neither delighteth he in any man's legs.*

Fifteen million believe proclaimed the posters on the railway stations. *Fifteen million believe* in a red cross on a white background. You have to admire their faith, hope and love.

World Cup fervour seized the nation. Thousands of fans spent thousands of pounds travelling thousands of miles on a pilgrimage to be there in person. Millions more watched on television, wherever possible with groups of fellow believers in homes and pubs and even school assembly halls. You can watch on your own, but supporting a team really has to be a shared experience.

No expense is spared in the desire to participate. World cup barbecues unite groups of friends in a common meal. In bars, rounds of drinks, bought for one another, shared with one another and downed together are both a sign and a seal of belonging to that body of faithful fans who will follow England to the final whistle.

People so much wanted to show their support, to be numbered among the faithful, that all kinds of merchandise with a world cup theme just flew off the shelves.

Money is no object. Older fans might grumble that it costs a lot more to go to football now than it did when they were young, but they know that they have to be realistic. It costs what it costs and, if you think it is worth it, you pay what the clubs demand.

Fans loudly and unashamedly proclaim their identity as England supporters. Flags fly on homes and cars. People pay any price to purchase the strip and wear it on every occasion they can get away with. They even paint their faces with the Cross of St George. The popular tide was so powerful that 10, Downing Street flew the England flag on match days and only a few curmudgeonly councils are left still trying to limit displays of this symbol of the nation's faith.

There is a wonderful fellowship among supporters. Wherever you go as an England supporter, you are guaranteed acceptance and friendship from other supporters anywhere in the world.

Football has priority in supporters' lives. On significant match days, offices, factories and schools close or provide space to watch the game on TV. Even managers and head masters who think football is irrelevant know that it is pointless to resist. Too many believers put the game before work or school for it to be practical to carry on as if nothing of vital significance were going on. Some things matter much more than making money or even than making your way in life.

Ecstasy is an England goal. To win the World Cup would have been the final consummation, a beatific vision. The sharp pain of defeat is almost too much to bear, but it is a shared pain. We are members one of another. The team on the field may disappoint. They may deserve to be booed. But we are still England. We can criticize, bitch and moan, but we won't give up on them. We shan't change and support another team. We're not apostates from the national side and never could be.

And the great thing is that anyone can be an England fan. You don't have to be a particularly good person or even to be good at football. You don't have to deserve to be an England supporter. You only have to believe. Obviously, however, once you become a supporter, you're totally committed. You can't claim to be an England fan if you only support them in the good times. It is meaningless to say you support England if you don't trouble about the score all of the time. Anyone can become an England supporter, but you're not a real supporter unless you remain faithful through thick and thin, unless football really matters in your life.

Many fans are what you might call cradle supporters. Their dads passed on the faith to them. They took them to matches, explained the rules, encouraged them to play themselves. Weekends at home were structured around the match – either going to the game or watching it on TV. Members of the family who were not football supporters knew better than to expect fans to be happy about being asked to give up their football so that they could wall-paper the hall, go shopping at Bluewater or have Mum over for dinner. Fans like these grow up in the faith and often remain loyal till their dying day.

Other fans are converts. They might have grown up in homes where football wasn't important, but they've picked up the faith from their friends. They've watched it on TV with their mates. They've been talked into going along to matches. They've been converted not only by the action on the pitch, which, quite honestly, sometimes seems uninspiring and difficult to understand. What has really converted them has been the experience of belonging to a vast movement, a fellowship of mates, dedicated in a common cause and full of enthusiasm.

A very few supporters are perhaps people who have wondered why football is so important in so many people's lives and have gone along to a game on their own and somehow picked up on the buzz. And, possibly, some fervent fans started their pilgrimage with solitary research into the rules and history of the game – but I doubt it. Faith is a mass movement and is generally caught from other faithful people.

In conclusion, football is a wonderful phenomenon. Fandom is open to all. It gives people the sense of a higher purpose in their lives. It unites communities. It takes its devotees to the highest summits and lowest depths of emotional experience. It provides an escape from the mundane and the humdrum. It demands total commitment, but the paradox is that it is in making that absolute commitment that the true fan experiences utter release from the limitations of his humanity.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.



Halling WI

June has come and gone and with it our forty third birthday party. As usual our gallant committee put on a grand spread. Friends from the other district W.I.'s and our own members had a very enjoyable evening. We were entertained by Mr Martyn Harrison who sang songs to us, told us funny stories and jokes, and we sometimes joined in the actions when we didn't know the words.

What's new to report? Oh yes, six of our brave members, me included, have entered the "lion's den". We have volunteered to help teach seven year olds to KNIT. What an eye opener for me at least, as some thirty odd years ago I taught some of the children's mums and dads to draw and paint and I didn't have to fill in any forms to get into the school, What nonsense! You just cannot teach knitting like you can sums or English grammar. You can't use a black board (sorry, white board); it has to be one to one. The children we have are so far quite keen, asking us very intelligent questions about the origins of the craft. The two boys get a bit distracted but most of the girls realize you have to concentrate and think what you are doing. In two weeks we started off with twenty stitches and, with a little help from us

ladies, all have ended up with twenty stitches. I for one have been quite impressed with the progress and enthusiasm. I wonder who will get fed up first, as there are so many distractions for the children these days.

One little girl asked me how long I have been knitting and she was amazed at my answer. I was five when my mum taught me to knit, I am now eighty but what she couldn't understand was that when I learnt to knit we didn't have electric lights and no television. One drawback to all this which I don't think I can handle, is I've got to talk in metric, whatever that is. Inches are inches, metric is another language. Us W.I ladies, me in particular hope, that some of these children will go on to get as much enjoyment out of knitting as we do. Next to reading it is the best thing I have ever learnt to do. Thank you mum.

Next month's W.I., Mrs Barbara Stevens is coming again to talk to us about "Shopping in Downe village". I wonder if that is "then" or "now". The competition is a wedding corsage, hopefully made with real flowers. Have a go girls. That's not much of a challenge, not quite like teaching seven year olds to knit. Phyllis.

PCC 29th June

When the 29th June was chosen as the date for our PCC meeting, I was delighted to seize the opportunity to begin the meeting with a celebration of Holy Communion for St Peter and St Paul, whose feast day falls then. We don't make enough of these weekday celebrations! Peter and Paul seemed especially appropriate for a PCC meeting. Peter was the rock on whom Christ said He would build His Church. Paul was the wise master builder. Surely the point of Christian leadership, clerical and lay, rector and PCC, is to build God's Church both in stature (making us all better Christians) and number (bringing new people in to share our faith.)

Steve Brown was made vice chairman. Jenny Beaney is our children protection officer. Others remained in the same roles as before. Elsewhere in the magazine you can read about the financial crisis and, on a brighter note, our plans for September!

Roger.

Church Hall Draw: £5 to Mrs Taylor – drawn by Mr Maxwell.

St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Burr (10), Mrs Buss (15), Mrs Head (20), Mrs Murphy (42) & Mrs Rogers (161) – drawn by Mrs Buss.

Spoiling Our Fun

For some years now, we have held an annual barbecue in the Rectory Garden. A modest crowd has enjoyed barbecued food and live music as well as the sheer pleasure of spending a Summer evening in a country garden with friends. We have never done any harm. Guests have included both councillors and council officers in the past. There have never been any complaints.

This year, however, the Monday before the Saturday on which we were looking forward to the barbecue, an officer of Medway Council telephoned me to say that we could not go ahead without a licence and that it was too late to obtain one. This is a consequence of the somewhat ridiculous Licensing Act – the Act which allows bars too stay open all night serving alcohol to binge drinkers, but requires a vicar organising a sing song in an old people's home to obtain a licence from the Local Authority.

I am having to finish this magazine before the barbecue evening. So, by the time you read this, the barbecue might have happened in my garden after all. Or it might have taken place in the church hall. It might have been cancelled altogether. And I might be in Wormwood Scrubs. Whatever! This stupid situation cannot be allowed to continue.

The new coalition government has committed itself to repeal of some of the sillier laws and regulations it has inherited from its predecessor. If you want something done about the killjoy Licensing Act please write to our member of parliament, Mr Mark Reckless MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, or e mail mark.reckless.mp@parliament.uk giving your own name and address as a constituent. You can also log on to Your Freedom and list all the stupid laws you would like to see repealed. Roger.

Can You Please Help?

1) Back in 1985 we held nine days of events to celebrate 800 years (the Octocentenary) of the appointment of the first known Rector of Cuxton – Thomas. The main service was the Holy Communion presided over by Rt Rev'd Dr David Say, then Bishop of Rochester. Over 300 people attended, about half of them in the churchyard listening on loudspeakers. There was a recording of the service probably on ¼" reel to reel tape. If you know what happened to this recording, could you please lend it to Malcolm Curnow so that a CD version can be preserved for the archives?

2) Doris Curnow wrote some beautiful verses for Christmas cards over many years. Unfortunately she did not keep copies, but members of her family – some of them living far away – would like to have them. If anyone has kept Doris' poems, could you please lend them to Malcolm for scanning and collection?

Smash Without Grab!

At the entrance to Cuxton churchyard stands a white post. This was originally a wooden post placed by Len Cogger to stop people driving on to the flower beds. It was later replaced with a metal one. On 12th June this year, a young man drove a car into it as he tried to escape from the police! The post was bent, but not broken, being a steel cylinder filled with concrete. The car stopped dead and the driver escaped on foot, though it is believed that he was later caught. The post has been turned round, waiting to be straightened by the next vehicle to hit it!

The police are to be congratulated on clearing the area so that the wedding scheduled to take place was able to go ahead without trouble.



Mothers' Union

We are having a tea party on Mary Sumner Day (the commemoration of our founder) on August 9th in the Church Hall at 3.00 pm. There is no charge but donations are invited. Funds raised will be used to support our Overseas Fund (supporting MU workers abroad), our Emergency Fund (for aid in the aftermath of natural disasters), our Away From It All Scheme (for families in dire need of a holiday) and our Literacy Project (which helps those who have not learnt to read particularly in the inner cities). So if you would like to help us, please come and have tea with us on August 9th. There will be a Bring and Buy Stall too.

Shirley Crundwell.

The Festival of St. Michael and All Angels

The Patronal Festival of St. Michael and All Angels will be a bumper one this year and will last a whole week! On Saturday 25th September, there will be displays in the Church and the Church Hall, which we would like you to contribute to, with photographs or artefacts. There will be a scarecrow making session for the children, together with dragons and angels and of course St. Michael. On the evening of Sunday 26th there will be a special "Songs of Praise" service in the Church, followed by a social evening in the Church Hall. This is to celebrate the twenty years loyal service which John Bogg has given to the church of playing the organ, running the choir and for the many musical events which he has orchestrated.

On the actual day of St. Michael and All Angels there will be the usual 9.30 a.m. service but with a difference. Everyone is invited to coffee afterwards in the hall and to view the many displays. In the afternoon, at 2.00 p.m., there will be a "Teddy Bears' Picnic" for babies and toddlers.

The week will finish with our Harvest Festival on Sunday, 3rd October. The evening service will be followed by a Harvest Supper in the Church Hall.

The Church of St. Michael and All Angels is your Church and we would like as many families as possible to be represented in the displays. Please submit photographs, together with captions or a relevant service sheet, to the Rector or myself or just put them in the box set aside in the church. (Remember to put in an envelope with your address for returning.)

Thank you.

Jenny Beaney. 241599



Max's Tail Piece

Last month someone commented that there was no room for my contribution to the magazine. This time Master is asking a lot of me. The Nature Notes have had to be delayed till next month and Master is doing the magazine earlier than usual because he is going away to Oxford today. Maybe there is more material still to come. If so, there will be a supplementary page on Saturday.

I can tell you something about the woods and countryside in June and July from a canine point of view. There are lots of interesting smells and nice fresh grass to eat. Master isn't sure whether he should let me eat grass or not. Some people say it is dog medicine, but sometimes it makes me sick. I don't mind being sick, but Master doesn't like clearing up after me if I am sick indoors. I suggest he should just let me do what I want. I may or may not know what is good for me, but I do know what I like.

There is plenty of wildlife about – hundreds of rabbits, quite a few foxes and lots of squirrels. Sometimes we see badgers. We do go out early! Once we saw an owl in the early morning quite close to the ground, but that was a long time ago. We also see bullocks and horses and sheep if we go that way. I've never been allowed to chase anything domestic or wild and now I don't want to. In fact I was rather shocked when I heard the other day about a dog which had been allowed off its lead and chased some farm animals. The owner sounds to me to be very foolish and unkind both to the farm animals and to his dog. Nothing should surely be hurt or frightened.

You will have to wait for an account of the flowers and birds. I don't know their names and Master is so short sighted that he can hardly tell a sparrow close up from an eagle at a distance.

He's going to Oxford to a conference about the relationship between Physics and faith. I hope he comes back with all his remaining teeth. He's very frustrated just now. His computer antivirus program needs updating. He's paid the money and received the activation code, but it just refuses to work and wastes his

time, which is the one thing he never has enough of! Yesterday he received an eight page gas bill. But of all the scores of figures on it nothing was obviously what he needed to know – how much he had spent on gas since the last bill. That took an e mail and a telephone call to a nice lady who told him what he needed to know about the gas supply and explained that the new bill format is to make things easier to understand. Master remembers when a gas bill was just one page with what you had to pay clearly printed in the bottom right hand corner. What, he asks, was wrong with that?

Then what about all this fuss about the Rectory Barbecue this year? Why did the Council suddenly decide we couldn't have it when they've never objected in previous years? The council say that a member of the public objected, but who would have done such a thing?

As the barbecue does not in anyway impinge on neighbours, I think it was probably someone who had a grudge against the church or Master himself. It would also have to be someone who knew that the Licensing Act could be used in this way. So again I guess, but it is probably someone connected with local government, either at the parish or borough level. So if you want to know who stopped our barbecue this year, I suggest you start looking for someone somehow connected to the parish or borough council who has fallen out with the church or the rector some time since the last barbecue.

Anyway, Physics and Faith! What's that all about? I'm not sure I shall ever understand. Master won't understand a good deal of what he hears there and, what he can understand, he'll have difficulty explaining to me and probably to you as well.

I think part of the point is that the more we understood of the Universe God has made, the more we marvel at the Creator. Some people think that Science contradicts or even disproves Religion, but that was a particular kind of mechanistic, nineteenth century Science. The more we discover, the more wonderful everything turns out to be, and the less dogmatic we can be about they way things really are.

He also likes spending time in Oxford. There are some beautiful buildings, some lovely countryside and good places to run or walk. He especially likes the Botanical Gardens. They used to be free, but you now have to pay a modest entrance fee. And they are no good to me, because dogs aren't allowed.

The Thames towpath runs through Oxford and there are enormous docile cattle in the water meadows. They warn you not to attempt the path when the river is in flood. Master is rather pleased to have done that bit of Thames path in Oxfordshire as he has now done all of it in London from Woolwich to Richmond on both sides of the River. Oxfordshire is quieter, but it is surprising how many beautiful open spaces there are in London, as well all the historic buildings.

So, let's hope he gets a nice peaceful few days away. If he doesn't need a break, I expect the parish needs a break from him some times.

And now for a nice story he told me. A man was walking along on an arid plain. He gradually came to the realisation that he was dead and that the beloved dog walking alongside him had been dead for many years. Eventually, they came to a sign saying "Heaven". There were pearly gates. The streets were paved with gold. An impressive looking figure stood at the gate and ushered the man in, offering rich food and drink. (There was music playing too, but don't tell the Council!) So the tired, hungry, overheated traveller eagerly turned in through the pearly gates. "No dogs!" was the harsh response of the gatekeeper.

"In that case," replied the man, "I shan't come in" and continued walking with his faithful companion. A few miles further on, they came to another more modest set of gates. The furnishings were less grandiose. But there was still music. (Don't tell the Council!). The humbly dressed gatekeeper offered the man a cup of tea and the dog a glass of water.

"Is it OK to bring my dog in?" asked the man.

“Of course,” replied the gatekeeper. “Why ever not?” So the man asked the name of the place and was told that this was Heaven.

“But what about that showy looking place up the road,” asked the man, “the place that calls itself Heaven?”

“Oh we’re grateful to them, really,” replied the gatekeeper. “They filter out the people who would be disloyal to their friends.”

Well it’s a better story than Master’s other one about the man and his dog who are run over coming out of the pub. They turn up at the Pearly Gates and the man goes in, but the dog can’t come in because he’s lost his tail in the accident. He’s imperfect. He returns to earth, picks up his tail in his phantom jaws, goes into the pub and asks the barman to fix it back. “Sorry”, replies the barman, “I can’t retail spirits after 11.00!”
Max the Rectory Spaniel.