

Services August 2022			
August 7 th Trinity 8	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Genesis 15 vv 1-6 p15 Hebrews 11 vv 1-16 p1209 Luke 12 vv 32-40 p1045	
August 14 th Trinity 9	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Jeremiah 23 vv 23-29 p783 Hebrews 11 v29 – 12 v2 p1210 Luke 12 vv 49-59 p1046	
August 21 st Trinity 10	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Isaiah 58 vv 6-14 p745 Hebrews 12 vv 18-29 p1211 Luke 13 vv 10-17 p1046	
August 28 th Trinity 11	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling.	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047	
Holy Communion Wednesdays @ Cuxton @ 9.30		Holy Communion Thursdays @ Halling @9.30	
3 rd August	I Samuel 17 v55 -18 v16 Luke 20 vv 27-40	4 th August	Song of Solomon 3 vv 1-4 John 20 vv 1-18
10 th August	I Samuel 23 vv 1-29 Luke 22 vv 24-34	11 th August	I Samuel 26 vv 1-25 Luke 22 vv 35-46
17 th August	II Samuel 5 vv 1-25 Luke 23 vv 44-56	18 th August	II Samuel 6 vv 1-19 Luke 23 v 56 – 24 v12
24 th August St Bartholomew	Acts 5 vv 12-16 Luke 22 vv 24-30	25 th August	Job 11 vv 1-20 Mark 2 vv 1-12
31 st August	Job 16 v 1 – 17 v2 Mark 4 vv 1-20	1 st September	Job 17 vv 3-16 Mark 4 vv 21-34

Copy Date September Magazine 5th August 8.30 am Rectory
The Rev. Roger Knight, The Rectory, Rochester Road, Cuxton , ME2 1AF, Tel. (01634) 717134 email.

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Laura MacDonald, 97, Pilgrims Road, North Halling, 01634 245926

lauraannmacdonald@btinternet.com

Church Hall Hire: cuxtonchurchhall@gmail.com.

St John's Draw: £5 each Mrs Chidwick (26), Mrs Chidwick (27) & Mrs Mitchell (64).

Church Hall Draw (June): Mr Maxwell 1st, Mrs Booth 2nd, Mr Haselden 3rd.

Church Hall Draw (July): Mr Lofthouse 1st, Mrs Nunn 2nd & Mrs Graves 3rd.

Cleaning our Churches & the Church Hall

One of the things we can be proud of in this parish is the way both our churches and the church hall are kept so beautifully clean and tidy and that the altar linen is laundered and other vital tasks are performed.

However, we could always do with more volunteers to help with these important tasks. The more people who offer to help, the less each one has to do. If you can help, please have a word with the churchwardens.

Graveyards

We're still struggling with keeping Cuxton Churchyard and Halling Cemetery. If you can manage to tend your own family graves and take away any dead flowers, paper, oasis, cellophane, etc., that is a great help. If you can do any more than that, that is wonderful.

This Is Good

The 18th-century Cambridge don Richard Porson once chastised a student who had pointed to three important men riding in one carriage as an illustration of the Trinity. "Nay," Porson said. "Show me *one* important person in *three* carriages and then you shall see the mystery."

So Is This

Archbishop Anthony Bloom: Tradition is the living faith we share with the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of living people.

Humour

How do you organise a space party?

What's special about Switzerland?

Planet

Their flag is a big plus

How to Respond to a Heart Attack

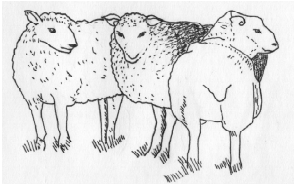
There are now several defibrillators located around the parish, but what should you or I do if someone appears to be having a heart attack or if their heart stops beating? Richard Kerkham, highly qualified first aider, very helpfully spoke to us at Mothers' Union, telling us how we can best help in such a case.

1. Make sure that you are safe – if for example the casualty is lying in the road or in a collapsing building. You can't help others if you are hurt yourself.
2. Try to make sure the patient is safe from further injury, but don't move them except in an extreme emergency situation (such as an unstable landslide).
3. Keep calm and try not to panic.
4. Dial 999. As calmly as you can, tell them where you are. (Use "these three words" if you can. Don't worry if you can't. Just tell them where you are as best you can.) Try to answer any questions the person on the switchboard puts to you.
5. The switchboard will tell you where the nearest defibrillator is and give you the code to open the case. Once the case is open, the defibrillator is fully portable.
6. Do not, however, leave the casualty alone. If the defibrillator is too far away or there is no-one who can get to it without leaving the casualty, tell the ambulance switchboard. They will send a fast response person.
7. Once you open it up, the defibrillator will itself tell you what to do in simple easily understood language. It tells you where to put the pads on the patient's chest and then the defibrillator itself can assess the person's condition and the appropriate response.
8. It might tell you to do CPR (See 10).
9. If the patient needs shocking, all you have to do is to make sure that everyone stands clear (including yourself) and press the button when the machine tells you to.
10. If there is a delay, try to check whether the person is breathing. If they appear not to be, check for blockages in their mouth, but don't put your fingers in. Sometimes there is such a strong bite reflex that first aiders have lost fingers.
11. It's hard to describe in words, but, if you hold the patient (lying on his back) under the chin and pull his head back so that his throat is straight, and place your ear near his mouth and look along his chest, if he is breathing, you should be able to see his chest moving and maybe feel his breath on your ear.
12. Only attempt CPR if the person is definitely not breathing. Again this is hard to describe in words, but basically you need to entwine your fingers with both hands palm side down, place the lower hand about half way down the chest to the left of the breastbone and push down rapidly (about 120 times a minute) hard enough (in adults) to break a rib. If you can, pause every 30 presses to breathe into the patient's mouth twice and then resume pressing on the chest. If you can't do the breathing into the mouth, just keep pumping the chest. Carry on till there are signs of life, you are exhausted or the professionals arrive.

Have You a Copy?

Back in 1964, it was discovered that the tower of St Michael's Church was in urgent need of repair. This was carried out by the local builder Frederick Hayward & Sons and the opportunity was taken to retune and re-hang the original five bells and to add a sixth bell, the treble, to create the present ring. One of the sons, Walter Hayward, was churchwarden when I arrived here in 1987. Walter generously performed many services for St Michael's Church both professionally and voluntarily. He was responsible for the beautiful restoration of the Lady Chapel (home to the organ) in memory of his parents, Fred & Annie, and the Ancient & Modern hymnbooks were donated in memory of his wife Ivy. In order to raise money for the work on the tower, the then Rector, Richard Allington-Smith MA, produced a booklet detailing the history of the Church – *The Church and Village of Cuxton*. It is an extremely good booklet. I think I must have lent out my copies to people who have not returned them. I did use it for my own *Personal Guide to Cuxton Parish Church* which left out some of the more academic material and brought it up to what was then up to date. There are plenty of those around, but I'd really like to get my hands on the original which is much more scholarly and of a higher standard. If you have a copy, would you please be prepared to lend it to me with a view to copying it and storing it on line so as to be available to a wider readership?

Roger.



360th Anniversary

I love the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Version of the Bible. This is not a new passion. I have enjoyed them all my

literate life. Some Christians loathe the old Prayer Book and the Authorised Version of the Bible, which I think is a shame because, over the centuries, they have brought so many blessings to so many millions of people.

Over the centuries? Yes, we have had the English Bible since the time of King Henry VIII (and mediaeval versions too which largely circulated secretly, as well as some biblical material rendered into Anglo-Saxon centuries before the Norman Conquest). King James sought to put an end to sixteenth and seventeenth century disputes about which translation of the English Bible should be used by commissioning the King James Version which was published in 1611 and displaced earlier versions over the next few decades. The Book of Common Prayer was largely the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury 1532 until his martyrdom under Queen Mary in 1556. Most of Cranmer's Prayer Book was published during the reign of King Edward VI and it underwent a number of revisions before being banned under Oliver Cromwell's protectorate. It was again revised and re-issued when King Charles II was restored to the throne and its use was required in all English churches from St Bartholomew's Day (24th August) 1662. So the BCP celebrates its 360th birthday this month. You may remember that we celebrated its 350th anniversary with Holy Communion at Cuxton, sung to the settings of John Merbecke.

I cannot emphasise too strongly how privileged we are that we have the Bible freely available to us in our own language and that we live in a country where we can read it freely in private and in public and share our faith with our fellow citizens without fear. There are still places in the world where the Bible is not available in the local language or people are too poor to own bibles or they are persecuted by the state or their neighbours if they read the Bible in their own homes or attempt to share its contents with other people. The Bible is the Word of God. It ought to be available freely and, in the words of the BCP, it

is true that we should *in such wise hear them* (the words of the Bible), *read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou (God) hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Thousands of ministers were ejected from the Church of England (many forming new congregations) in 1662 rather than conform to the Prayer Book. So why do people loathe the Book of Common Prayer? One reason is that many people dislike the idea of having fixed prayers at all. Why not just say what comes to mind at the time, whether we are praying alone at home or leading worship in church or in a home group? Sometimes what comes to mind when we are praying is prompted by the Holy Spirit. You can of course pray to God in any words or without any words at all. God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what we are thinking before we speak. God knows what's on our minds. Wherever we are, we are in the Presence of God. He knows us. He knows our minds. In order to pray, we only have to remember that God is with us.

The BCP says *we ought, at all times, humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.* We do these things when *we assemble and meet together*, but we can and should acknowledge our sins, give thanks to God for everything He has given us, offer Him our praises and ask from Him everything that we need all day every day, alone or in company, in formal set words, in our own words or just in the silence. Even when we feel we cannot pray or don't know how to pray, Jesus prays for us, the Holy Spirit prays for us.

Of course, repeating set prayers daily or weekly can become just a meaningless ritual which you perform by rote. Someone whose Christian faith I respected very much said to me when I was still a child, "Church of England people say beautiful prayers, but they don't mean them." But it

doesn't have to be like that. Only God knows the heart.

The COVID lockdown played a big part in rekindling my love of the BCP and KJV. When I was ordained in 1980, I decided that I would have to accept that the new services (then the Alternative Service Book) would be the way ahead. So I mainly used the ASB both for major public services and for my personal devotions. My spiritual nourishment was largely our daily Morning & Evening Prayer and daily Eucharists. The fellowship and the Sacrament (fellowship with Christ) made up for the weakness of the texts we were using and the somewhat unsatisfactory programme of daily bible readings and psalms. In the year 2000, Common Worship replaced the ASB. Common Worship is a great improvement on the ASB, but, as people grew older and died, the daily Communion ceased to be possible and all the weight fell on Morning and Evening Prayer and the now even less satisfactory daily readings. CW Morning & Evening Prayer are very hard to follow. So I gradually reverted to the BCP for these daily services. It was like coming home after a prolonged sojourn in the desert – straightforward structure, beautiful words expressing biblical truth, a generous helping of psalms and bible readings which take you through most of the Bible and generally in the right order. Lockdown gave me more time to say my prayers, a greater sense of proportion and the opportunity to reflect more on the world around me, the Church, my personal faith and the people in our congregations.

In parallel to all this, a while ago I was given a year's free subscription to the journals of the Prayer Book Society. They are so encouraging to read in a Church which sometimes seems to be in danger of losing its way. I joined the PBS and continue to receive the literature. The PBS celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

[Back in 1972, powerful figures in the Church of England wanted to ban the BCP altogether and force everyone to adopt the new services. The PBS and others worked hard to prevent this from happening and were listened to. General Synod isn't quite like Oliver Cromwell's protectorate! Now, it is generally recognised at all levels in the Church that the BCP has a continuing place in our

national life, even if we don't all agree what that place should be.]

I've come to feel more and more that in giving up the BCP we have surrendered a very valuable resource for evangelism, pastoral care and spiritual growth. That is why I have felt moved to write this article, not that I have some cunning plan for changing the way we do things at St John's and St Michael's. If you want to know what I think, it's this. I much prefer BCP for Morning and Evening Prayer. I prefer the traditional service for funerals, though I'm happy to add material to the rather sparse 1662 provision and I don't insist on the 1662 psalms and New Testament lesson. I'm more comfortable with the modern services in CW than with the traditional order in the BCP for Baptism, Confirmation & Holy Matrimony – though that might be as much because they are what I'm used to as on account of any merit they may have. I'm equally happy with the BCP (slightly modified) and CW Communion services. I should be sorry if we totally lost BCP HC, but I acknowledge that the CW service is good. It did, as was right and proper, being the service Jesus Himself gave us, receive the most attention from the revisers. I do sometimes wonder, however, whether we would be quite so free in taking the Lord's Name in vain, treating Sunday as though it were an ordinary day, regarding adultery as a relatively minor matter and allowing powerful people and corporations to tell lies if we still read the Ten Commandments at every celebration of Holy Communion every Sunday and other major holy day.

Important as it is to pray constantly, whether in company or on our own, I do come back to *when we assemble and meet together*. Worshipping with other Christians is important. Being prevented from doing so by COVID was a major deprivation. People have faced and still do face terrible persecution rather than abandon the assembling of themselves together. Jesus promises to be especially present with us when we meet together in His Name, even if we're only two or three.

Using set prayers can't be wrong in itself. Otherwise Jesus wouldn't have given us the Lord's Prayer to say.

So why else do people loathe the BCP? Why did those thousands of ministers prefer to leave their livings rather than agree to use the Prayer Book? Because they didn't agree with what the Prayer Book teaches. The Church of England has very little in the way of doctrinal statements. We express our beliefs in the words of our prayers. That is why we are so careful about the forms of service we authorise for use in public worship. Our prayerbooks put into words what we believe and using them in our public and private worship teaches us as individuals what the Church believes. The BCP really is a major resource if you want to know the Christian faith and to take it to heart. *The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she prays.*

I think it is fair to say that the Church of England attempts that very hard task of being ready to compromise but without losing our integrity. We are a Protestant Church which hasn't thrown out what is good in Catholicism. We are a Catholic Church which is also reformed. We try to avoid excluding any Christian from being a member of the Church of England on grounds of conscience, but we are not prepared to surrender our principles in order to accommodate the beliefs of those whom we believe to be mistaken. We aim to be a middle way between the extremes. We certainly don't always succeed. Sometimes we are so anxious to accommodate everybody that we seem to have lost confidence in the faith once delivered to the saints. At other times, we have treated dissenters cruelly. But the BCP (and CW) attempts to express a definite and confident faith which makes sense to reasonable people. Of course, there are those on the Catholic side who think we have given away too much and those on the Protestant side who believe that we are not sufficiently reformed.

John Wesley stated in 1784 "I believe there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England." I agree with him. Common Worship attempts to do the same, but I cannot help but feel that it is less satisfactory. It is too diffuse. There is too much of it – a multiplicity of volumes in place of one small book which you can carry in a jacket pocket. The compilers of CW didn't have the facility with language which was

one of Thomas Cranmer's gifts from God. Moreover, they were working in a culture less confidently Christian than the one in which Cranmer lived and moved and had his being. You can take a CW service in either modern or traditional language which expresses much the same ideas as the BCP. But the CW book is very flexible and you can also take a CW service in such a manner that the hard truths we need to grasp are bypassed or obfuscated.

There are some hard sayings in the Bible and in the Prayer Book. If we read them and wrestle with them, we can grow in faith and understanding. If we put them to one side and don't think about them, we risk closing our minds to what doesn't affirm what we already believe. In reality, we make up our own religion as we go along, rather than listening to the Word of God and responding with obedient hearts. God has caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning and we should attend to all of it. The BCP contains many scriptural ideas which seem uncongenial to us twenty first century westerners, but it would be arrogant to disregard them as if we alone were able to distinguish between truth and falsehood and former generations and people in other cultures were somehow lacking in their capacity to discern God's Word and proclaim it.

Why else do people loathe or love the BCP? For a lot of people, it's the language. Cranmer was a great writer of English prose and he lived in a period when the English language was enjoying tremendous vitality. For a lot of us, the BCP is a great work of literature as well as a resource for worship. For other people, it is an impediment – out of date, hard to understand, English, but not as we know it. You can say much the same about the King James Bible. My feeling is that it is a question of register. As teenagers, we were taught that you write in a different style (a different register) if you are writing a chatty letter to a friend about your holidays from the way you might phrase a job application or an essay in an examination. It's probably even more true today. You don't write a legal submission to a court in text speak. In the same way, it seems to me to be appropriate to use a different register, a different style when addressing God, praying, worshipping, reading Holy Scripture, from the register or style one would use in every day speech. God is

special and we acknowledge His uniqueness in the way we address Him and talk about Him. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

Moreover, as in poetry, the form of the words we use can convey a deeper truth than their literal meaning. Instead of *I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze,* Wordsworth could have written, *Walking alone one day, I saw a lot of yellow flowers blowing about down by the lake.* It would both have meant the same and not meant the same. Expressing sacred truths in sacred language helps us to experience more deeply the truths we are endeavouring to put into words.

Both the Bible and the Prayer Book underwent revision for two different reasons. One reason for revising the Bible was to provide more accurate translations based on what we have learnt since 1611 about ancient manuscripts and the languages in which they were written. Scholarly revisions are not necessarily easier to read than the KJV.

The other motive for bringing out new versions was to make the Bible easier to understand. More easily understood translations in more colloquial English are not necessarily more accurate renderings of the original texts than the KJV.

Hence the multiplicity of English translations of the Bible now available. Good in one way. If we have a choice of translation or can compare translations, we may come to a better understanding of the Scriptures. Bad in another way. We no longer all know the same texts by heart and I'm yet to be convinced that there is a better compromise than the KJV between the need for accuracy in translation and the need for good English which is a pleasure to read.

There were also two reasons for revising the BCP. One was to recover the shape and structure of the ancient liturgies. There was a powerful belief in the twentieth century that the Church was at her best in the first few centuries but went down hill during the Middle Ages and was imperfectly reformed in the fifteenth century. Hence the desire to get back to the way things were 1600

years ago. This is the shape of the liturgy (to coin a phrase from the title of an influential book) you find in Series 1, 2 & 3, the ASB as most churches used it and Order 1 in CW, (the one we normally use). Some evangelicals felt that this was a move towards the Catholic end of the spectrum and that is why many evangelicals resisted changing the BCP.

The other reason for revising the BCP was to put the service in modern language. Many evangelicals supported this and Prebendary John Pearce (with whose wife Angela I was at theological college) proposed that the new prayerbook should include a modern language version of the Communion service in the order found in the BCP. This is Order 2 in CW.

Some people of course were happy to use the structure supposedly universal in the early Church but preferred traditional language. So we can now choose between Order 1 in modern language, Order 1 in traditional language, Order 2 in modern language and Order 2 in traditional language (which is pretty much BCP). And there you have the strength and weakness of Common Worship. It tries to accommodate everybody's hopes but in doing so creates an unwieldy collection of material which can be confusing to use and fails to unify our different congregations in the prayers we say.

Decades of liturgical experiment and the plethora of material in CW have in some places created a sort of anarchy. A leading woman priest complained recently that, when she was a young woman, she sometimes attended a very high Church and sometimes an evangelical Church. The services were conducted very differently, but they used the same words, the words of the BCP. Nowadays, the high Church has adopted the Roman Catholic order of service and the evangelical Church makes up its own services. That unity has been lost by which we could go into any C of E Church and know what to expect and also, when praying alone, reflect that millions of other people throughout the world would be saying the same prayers and that these were the same words which many of the saints in heaven had used when they were on earth.

I'm not sure that more modern language always makes things easier to understand. In the twentieth century, some people objected to the BCP praying that those in authority would *truly and indifferently minister justice* on the grounds that *indifferently* had changed its meaning since Tudor times. In the twenty first century, it appears to be drifting back to that original meaning. Again in C20, self-styled experts objected that *manifold* (as in God's *manifold and great mercies*) would be mistaken for part of a petrol engine. In C21, I guess far fewer people use the word *manifold* for a car part than they do in its original meaning. The days are gone when young men drove old cars or motorbikes which needed gun gum to stop up the holes in the manifold and WD40 to bathe the sparking plugs. I note with some schadenfreude that clergy who pointedly say *brothers and sisters* or *sisters and brothers* in place of *Dearly beloved brethren* now risk being castigated for excluding non-binary people and all the other genders and sexes with which people now identify other than the two traditional ones. At least, no-one can expect you to be *woke* when reading a C16 text. Anyway, surely the point is the *dearly beloved* not the sex or gender of those so addressed. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

The new version of the Lord's Prayer changes *thou* and *thy* to *you* and *your*, but I don't see how that makes the prayer easier to understand. The hard words *hallowed* and *temptation* still remain. Can you think of easier to understand alternatives? I can't. *Sins* has replaced *trespasses*, but I'm not sure that helps comprehension very much. Do we really know what sin is? The original Greek has *debts* where we have *trespasses* or *sins*. What do we owe to God? *My duty towards God, is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to give*

him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life. Anything less than that is sin. If I do my duty to God, it follows that I love my neighbour as myself. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* There are no human words capable of expressing in an easy to understand way the profound truths Jesus is teaching us in the Lord's Prayer. We shall not fully comprehend until we are received into heaven. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

It used to be the case that when people who were not regular churchgoers came on special occasions or for weddings or funerals, they at least knew the Lord's Prayer and other familiar texts. We have lost all that and are unlikely to regain it when there is so much variety to cope with depending on which church you go to and even which services you attend in your parish church. One of the places where I was taught the Lord's Prayer when I was a child was at cubs. Thirty odd years ago, a Cuxton scout leader asked the adult, ordained me which version of the Lord's Prayer she should teach the boys – the one everyone knows or the one we use in church? I didn't know how to answer her and I'm afraid they probably didn't learn either.

I could write a lot more on this subject, but had better not. But these are some of the main reasons why I feel that we have lost a lot as well as gaining something by our liturgical revisions. If you agree with me, where do we go from here? You can always say daily Morning and / or Evening Prayer from the BCP at home or even join me at 5.00 at St Michael's. Roger.

Confirmation 2022?

It's a while since we have hosted a Confirmation Service what with one thing and another and I am not sure when we shall do so again. There are, however, several people I can think of who might now be ready for confirmation and possibly there are others contemplating this step I don't yet know about. If you are considering being confirmed, please let me know. We'll set up a confirmation group in which we shall instruct one another in the faith and explore what it means to be a Christian and I'll arrange to take you to another church or the cathedral in the Autumn.

Surpassing Expectations!

Smith has proved wrong all those people who said he couldn't catch a cold and has had to pull out of the marathon.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

19th June
26th June

Thomas Watson
Albert Thomas Daniel Chubb

Colchester
Thong Lane

Funeral:

7th July

Brenda Wilson

Snodland

More on Birds

Following my remarks about birds observed locally in last month's magazine, I was assured by one reader that the cuckoo I heard did stay around for some weeks and another sent me these traditional verses.

The cuckoo comes in April
She sings her song in May
In June she lays her eggs
And in July she flies away.

She makes her way to Africa
From whence she will not sing
But sits and waits the Winter
through
To come again in Spring.

God bless the lovely cuckoo
For all the joy she brings
When Winter's dark and cold
is gone
And once again she sings.

Teddy Bears' Picnic Wednesday 17th August 2.00 pm Rectory

Just turn up with a parent or other adult carer and a teddy if you have one for games and a picnic in the Rectory grounds on a sunny summer afternoon. All welcome.

The Importance of a Good Education

Fred left school at fifteen and went straight round to the council offices for a job cleaning the public lavatories. When they asked him to fill in the application form, he had to admit that he couldn't read or write. So they said they couldn't take him on.

A mate offered him a job helping out on his market stall. Fred was brilliant at buying and selling and soon had his own stall. The business expanded to cover the whole country, making millions of pounds annually, which he kept in a special hiding place under the floor boards. His mate told him that he should really open a bank account. The manager was really impressed by what Fred had achieved, but when they asked him to fill in the application form, he had to admit that he couldn't read or write. "Well," said the astounded bank manager, "just think what you could have made of your life if you'd learnt to read."

PERCY PIGEON'S PERCEPTIONS

Good day to you all. I am writing this on our hols. It will be briefer as we have much resting and relaxing to do. We do not sunbathe of course and tend to avoid direct sun, preferring shadier areas. We spent our first week in Aylesford but it was disappointingly not a pigeon-friendly area. We are now happily spending two weeks at Leybourne lakes which is a lovely area for all avians. There is plenty of spilled food to forage and tall trees from which we watch human and canine antics. They seem so much less inhibited than in Halling and Cuxton. There are fowl here that we avoid - swans and geese. They are very determined and aggressive when protecting their young and that is the big problem with ground nests of course with so many potential predators around. We leave them well alone. Conversing with Peter, the young pigeon, yesterday was amusing. He said he was happily pecking at Cuxton station and the next thing he knew he was in a train. He

tried not to panic, and hopped off when the train stopped. To his amazement he was in Halling without having to flap a wing!

I heard from the bee-mail that Cuxton's potential Pizza and Kebab shop is appealing against the decision to refuse trading application. We are very partial to pizza crust...especially those fat ones stuffed with cheese, but we would not like all that traffic and noise, so we will oppose it again. We pigeons are a force with which to be reckoned as members of the RAF (Roger's Avian Force) and the CHAT (Cuxton and Halling Avian Territorials).

I hope you are looking forward to your holidays and hope you have a splendid time too. Coo coo



Tommy's Talking Points

Here am I in St Michael's Church in front of the font. We still haven't been anywhere beyond the parish, but we do have plans for August, rail strikes permitting.

Speaking of strikes, a lot of people are talking about a return to the 1970s – high inflation, industrial unrest, hot weather, military tensions with Russia, Kate Bush in the hit parade. By and large, Master has happy memories of the 1970s. He could run faster in those days and cycle farther. *On the Buses* was on television and, on the road, most buses, at least in London, still had half cabs and conductors. That was a commentary on the 'seventies in itself. The new buses intended to replace vehicles designed and built in the 'forties and 'fifties were just so unreliable that their aging ancestors were called upon to provide a few more years of faithful service.

As we've mentioned faithful service, I'll just point out that it was taken for granted in those halcyon days that a man could be accompanied by his best friend in most public open spaces without municipal let or hindrance – not that Master had a dog in the 1970s. He did, however, spend six happy years at college, at the beginning of which beer was only 10p a pint in the medical school bar. Milk was half that price at 5p a pint. Milk is now about ten times as expensive as it was then but beer is around forty times as much – unequal inflation.

Master thinks that his was the freest generation which has ever lived in this country. Conventions, rules and even laws which had been around since Victorian times, some of them hangovers from the Dark and Middle Ages and the reigns of the Tudor monarchs, were challenged, disregarded, repealed. His parents' and grandparents' generations had fought in two bloody world wars which in themselves were a reminder of what really matters in life. Those conflicts, especially the second, had been battles for freedom from tyranny and oppression. The values of Christianity and the Enlightenment still permeated society. It was expected that, given a fair chance in life and a decent education, rational people would behave responsibly. Democracy would ensure *government of the people, by the people, for the people*. Ordinary people, given the chance – the opportunity to work, a decent house or flat, welfare when they were out of luck, healthcare when they were sick, good schools for their children, access to justice, protection from crime, peace and security – would by and large pull together to take care of themselves and their families, their neighbours and the wider community. Good people don't need to be constrained by rules. It is in their nature to behave well. Law, says Master and St Paul, is only necessary to manage the villains and their villainous behaviour.

Disillusion set in for all sorts of reasons. Maybe the post-war generation was too optimistic that original sin – humanity's intrinsic propensity to wickedness – would disappear if we simply slew the giants identified in the Beveridge Report - Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. Since the 'seventies, Master complains, national and local government, reinforced by an increasingly intolerant public opinion mediated by the internet, have taken back control with a vengeance. For our own good? He's not sure, but he does have one remaining ambition – to purchase some excessively curved bananas, weighed out in pounds, from an unlicensed fruiterer, trading from a stall built without planning permission, constructed from the timber of preserved trees and thatched with straw not used traditionally for this purpose in this county! Tommy.