

June Services			
5 <sup>th</sup> June Whitsun / Pentecost	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 John 14 vv 8-31 p1082	
12 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Proverbs 8 vv 1-31 p641 Romans 5 vv 1-5 p1132 John 16 vv 12-15 p1084	
19 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 1	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 65 vv 1-10 p751 Galatians 3 vv 23-29 p1170 Luke 8 vv 26-39 p1038	
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> June Nativity of St John the Baptist	9.30 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 Luke 1 vv 57-80 p1027	
26 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 2	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	I Kings 19 vv 1-21 p361 Galatians 5 vv 1-26 p1171 Luke 9 vv 51-62 p1040	
Holy Communion 9.30 am Wednesdays at Cuxton		Holy Communion 9.30 am Thursdays at Halling	
1 <sup>st</sup> June	Numbers 22 v36 – 23 v12 Luke 7 vv 11-23	2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Numbers 23 vv 13-30 Luke 7 vv 24-35
Whitsun			
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Micah 3 vv 1-8 Matthew 11 vv 25-30	9 <sup>th</sup> June	Exodus 35 v30 – 36 v1 Matthew 12-32
Trinity			
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Joshua 3 vv 1-17 Luke 8 vv 40-56	16 <sup>th</sup> June Corpus Christi	Joshua 4 v1 – 5v1 Luke 9 vv 1-9
22 <sup>nd</sup> June Ember Day	Joshua 9 vv 1-27 Luke 9 vv 51-62	23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Joshua 24 vv 1-28 Luke 10 vv 1-6
29 <sup>th</sup> June S Peter	Acts 12 vv 1-11 Matthew 16 vv 13-19	30 <sup>th</sup> June	Judges 9 vv 1-21 Luke 11vv 29-36

There will be a Summer Family Morning on 18<sup>th</sup> June at St John's, commencing at 10.30.

Copy Date July Magazine 10<sup>th</sup> June 8.30 am Rectory

The Rev. Roger Knight, The Rectory, Rochester Road, Cuxton, ME2 1AF, Tel. (01634) 717134 email.  
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Church Hall Hire: [cuxtonchurchhall@gmail.com](mailto:cuxtonchurchhall@gmail.com).

Church Hall Draw (April): 1st prize - Dennis Hills, 2nd prize - Malcolm Curnow, 3rd prize - Jane Joyce  
Church Hall Draw (May): 1<sup>st</sup> prize – Julia Streets, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize – David Haselden, 3<sup>rd</sup> prize – Ann Saunders  
ST John's Draw April): £5 each to Mrs Burr (12), Mrs Winter (14) & Mrs Chidwick (26).

### Easter Triumph, Easter Joy

Easter Day this year dawned sunny and bright. After breakfast and Morning Prayer, Tommy and I enjoyed a happy hour or so running around in the woods and fields: – soft green buds burgeoning on branches; may blossom bedecking the hedgerows; lambs skipping in the fields; wild violets bejewelling the grass, purple and mauve and white; star-like anemones, yellow celandine and bluebells illuminating the dark spaces beneath the trees. Then it was time for Church. The bells were ringing at St Michael's. St George's flag with the diocesan arms in the top left hand quadrant flew against the cerulean background of a perfectly blue sky. There were, as always, garden and wild flowers in the churchyard and ornamental plum blossom as white as snow. The Church was beautifully decorated, the air redolent with the scent of lilies. Friends and family gathered together to celebrate Christ's Resurrection in the Sacrament which He commanded us to do, united in prayer and worship, dividing the Word, hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving, our thoughts silent or uttered in the words of the liturgy and sung in the deservedly loved Easter hymns. Then off on the bike to do it all again in our other beautiful ancient Church at Halling, where, as at Cuxton, Easter has been celebrated for more than a millennium and a half. I thought, "Nothing on earth could be better than this!" Thanks to everybody at Cuxton and Halling who makes all this possible by your hard work and devotion. Then, on Easter Monday, we held our annual Easter Egg Hunt for the first time since COVID. The weather

remained superb and there was a good turnout for the hunt in my garden and for the crafts and refreshments in the hall. Another very enjoyable occasion. Thanks to everybody who did so much to make it possible.  
Roger.

#### Of Local Interest

The biggest monument in Cuxton Churchyard is to Canon Charles Colson, Rector 1874-1901. He was, among many other things, a leading light in establishing the Cottage Gardeners Society. He said, "Few things add more to the temporal comforts and well being of a labouring man's family than his taking pride in his garden. It may help to lead him to better things – certainly keep him from worse." I am sure the good canon was right! He also encouraged parents to send their children to school! Poorer parents were inclined to keep them off school so that they could earn money and do jobs around the home. He accepted the damage to the environment brought about by the growing cement industry because of the employment it provided and the need for the product. I seem to remember reading what he wrote about the Vicar of Halling's trip to Spain. We'd all look forward to hearing about the wonders he would encounter, but the Rector of Cuxton was sure that his account would only confirm that there is no place better than England for our sojourn here on earth nor anywhere better to prepare for the next life. I share his sentiments on that point too!

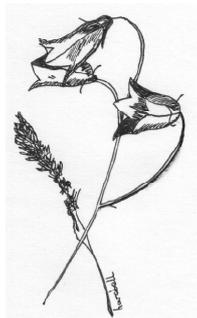
What I have just learnt is that Canon Colson's son was a doctor who practised at St Helier in Jersey in the Channel Islands and also served as a surgeon-major in the army. His oldest son (of five) was Major Edward Colson who served in the 41<sup>st</sup> Dogras and died in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) where he is buried of wounds received in January 1916, having been mentioned in despatches the year before. He had previously served in India, China, France and Egypt in the course of a long military career.

#### Platinum Jubilee Concert

Much loved songs and music from 1952 to the present day provided by a small orchestra and soloist in celebration of her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A family event, suitable for all ages. Children especially welcome. Light refreshments provided. Admission free, but by ticket only. Apply to rector for tickets.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June 4.00 pm St John's Church  
Supported by Halling Parish Council.

#### Time Like An Ever-Rolling Stream



Some years ago, a company organising holiday treks in Africa hit the headlines when it announced that it would not be taking people over 40. The reason wasn't that the over 40s weren't resilient enough to do the trekking. They are often fitter than younger people. The objection to the oldies was that they were so boring around the campfire or at the lodge at the end of the day. The over 40s were no fun because their tastes in music, fashion and culture generally were all out of date. Ironically, the firm concerned was called Exodus – ironic, because in the biblical Book of Exodus, Moses was eighty years old when he commenced his trek from Africa into West Asia, a journey

which, because of the Israelites' cowardice and faithlessness, took forty years and may well have seemed longer to their much put upon leader!

At least since the mechanisation of the music industry, music has come to define each generation. Once everybody had bought the sheet music for *After the Ball is Over* (reputedly the first pop song), music publishers needed to popularise new songs, new trends, as often as possible so that the public would keep on buying their product. The same was true for Edison's wax cylinders, pianola rolls, gramophone records, cassette tapes and CDs and the survival of popular music still depends on popularising new trends. Composers and performers have to come up fairly frequently with new ideas which hopefully turn into a trend and are then themselves, in due course, replaced

with something even fresher. You can often judge someone's age by his favourite music.

I don't want to be entirely cynical. It's not all about money, though a lot of it is. There are real artists out there who compose and perform because they love their art and because they really enjoy engaging with their fan base. There is a difference between classical (or serious) music and pop, but the boundary between them is poorly defined. Handel's *Messiah* is certainly serious music, but it has been very popular for hundreds of years. Some of the best output of singers and bands who have been part of the pop or rock scene in the last sixty or so years are in danger of becoming classics.

It is true that "young people today" seem to be much more relaxed about enjoying the music of their parents' generation than their parents were in admitting that they liked what their grandparents had liked before them. People in their teens and twenties seem to be open to the popular music of 60 years ago (eg the Beatles), much more so than those who were kids in the 1960s were prepared to dance to the songs of the era before the Great War.

Some songs have survived down the generations and we'll come back to that, but there has also been a good deal of thoughtless, patronising stereotyping. My mother was horrified at the thought of one day having to sit in an old people's home singing *Daisy, Daisy*, which was until very recently standard fare in such establishments. Another lady I once visited in such a home told me how glad she was that I had come to see her. I had saved her from being made to play bingo! I once attended an entertainment in Cuxton intended for older people. The compeer promised a programme of songs from the Second World War and then suggested that they might also have some from the First War. "How old does she think we are?" I heard one member of the audience complain.

I often feel that I have gone back in time when I go shopping in the Co-op at Cuxton. The background music seems to consist mainly of what was played in youth clubs when I was a youth or at least a young adult helper. Some of it is politically incorrect, which I quite enjoy. I've

always opposed censorship and supported freedom of speech.

[Given the fuel price crisis and the suggestion that we might exercise to keep warm, I can't resist telling this anecdote about when I occasionally helped my mother to run a youth disco in an old school building at Rainham. It was a Victorian building and there was no heating. When we arrived in the Winter, it was often so cold inside that you could see your breath. Very soon, it would be packed with teenagers and, after a couple of hours of frenzied dancing, the atmosphere was reminiscent of a tropical rain forest and the walls ran with water. Moral of the story, if you can't afford British Gas, open a discotheque in your front room.]

One thing I did notice in the Co-op was how mournful many of the songs are. They mostly seem to be about disappointed hopes or unrequited love. I did ask once if we could have something more cheerful. The person behind the counter asked me what I would suggest. I said, "Well, how about something from Hymns Ancient & Modern"? To many people this would seem counterintuitive, but, by and large, hymns are full of praise, joy, thanksgiving and hope, whereas many popular songs simply seem to express in words and music the gloomier side of life. Perhaps it is therapeutic!

There's a great deal in the papers and on the radio about what we can do in order to improve our mental well-being. Suggestions include: mindfulness and meditation; singing, especially singing with other people; cultivating a sense of thankfulness and gratitude; joining a group, especially a mutually supportive and friendly group; practising altruism; having a purpose in life. It strikes me that these are just the things we do in Church. We take time for what matters. We pray. We are positive about life because we have faith. We have hope. We are thankful for everything which God has given to us. We sing and make music. We care for one another. We seek to serve the wider community. We have a goal – to do some good on earth and to spend eternity in the Presence of the God Who is love. The only two secular nostrums we apparently miss out on are exercise and healthy eating. Well, there's nothing stopping you walking or cycling to

church if you're reasonably fit. As for healthy eating, consider what Jesus said to the crowds after He had fed 5,000 men plus their wives and children with five loaves and two fishes. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* I puzzled over that one a bit during lockdown when we were allowed to go the Co-op but not to Church. What is really essential?

If, then, Church offers nearly all the things which mental health pundits tell us we all need for our personal well-being, why aren't the churches packed every Sunday? Three thoughts.

1. If we go to Church for what we expect to get out of it personally, we are missing the point.
2. Too many people (including some who do go to Church) don't really accept the all encompassing truth of the Gospel, the all sufficiency of Christ in our lives.
3. If we respond whole-heartedly to everything which God has done for us, then we yield up our lives wholeheartedly to Him and many of us are just not yet ready to do that. We hold back and perhaps we are uneasily aware that that just won't do. With God, it is all or nothing. *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

So, back to music. There are iconic songs which seem to last forever. Maybe *Greensleeves* is one, *Rule Britannia* another, *Hearts of Oak* another. Thinking about the twentieth and twenty first centuries, in every era there are a few songs which continue to be sung and played. Actually *Daisy*

*Bell* (written 1892) is probably one of them, Ragtime across the Atlantic in the same era. *Tipperary* and *Run Rabbit Run* survive from the First World War, as does *Pack Up Your Troubles* even if most people don't know what a lucifer is; Jazz and the Blues, maybe, from the twenties; *In the Mood* and other Glenn Miller hits from the thirties, George Formby; *Over the Rainbow*; Vera Lynn in the Second World War; *Rock Around the Clock* and anything by Elvis in the fifties, *How Much Is that Doggy in the Window* (one of Margaret Thatcher's favourites); *Yellow Submarine*, *Whiter Shade of Pale*, *Streets of London*, *Doing the Locomotion* from the sixties – Sandy Shore winning Eurovision and Cliff Richard not quite making it, *Hi Ho Silver Lining*; Punk Rock, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, Ian Drury and the Blockheads, *Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree*, *Madness and Wuthering Heights* from the seventies; *Waterloo* and the Abba corpus in the eighties. It was about then that our youth club closed and my experience of popular music became limited to Co-op Radio. However, for many of you, there will be unforgettable songs from the nineties and the first three decades of our present century. I'm thinking of songs which everybody recognises, that bring a warm glow of nostalgia to the people who were young when they first came out and younger people grin and bear, the sort of music played at weddings and family birthday parties. Most of us know this kind of music. It speaks to us. It's part of our culture. All ages can enjoy it, though particular numbers mean most to different age groups. These are the kind of songs we'll be tapping our feet to at the Platinum Jubilee concert on 4<sup>th</sup> June at 4.00 pm at St John's. Entry is by ticket. Tickets are free. Apply to me for free tickets. There will be music for everyone from those who are contemporary with the Queen to those who have barely yet learned to walk, let alone dance. Roger.

### Jokes

Why go to a stadium on a hot day?

Where do swimmers eat?

Don't walk behind a car.

What do you call a country where people only drive pink cars?

What starts and ends with e and only contains one letter?

Why didn't the piglets listen to their teacher?

Why did the drinks can crusher quit his job?

How do you arrange a space party?

It's likely to be full of fans.

At a pool table (right on cue)

You'll get exhausted

A pink carnation

An envelope

He was a boar

It was soda pressing

Planet

## From the Registers

### Baptisms:

23<sup>rd</sup> April  
1<sup>st</sup> May

Callum Robert Ely  
William Leonard Howard

May Street  
Kiln Way

### Funeral:

6<sup>th</sup> May

Adrian John York

Vicarage Close

### Platinum Jubilee

We congratulate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on attaining her Platinum Jubilee. On her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday she promised, “I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.” She has kept that promise, sustained by her own personal Christian faith. Her father, the Duke of York, she would probably never have come to the throne had it not been for the abdication of her uncle, King Edward VIII. It was because of this event that her father reluctantly but unwaveringly dutifully became King George VI and his elder daughter heir apparent. The Princesses Elizabeth and Mary served their country during the Second World War. Only thirteen at the commencement of the conflict, with her younger sister our future Queen was evacuated out of London where her parents felt it to be their duty to remain. She made a radio broadcast to other children separated from their families to encourage them. Later, she was photographed working on the royal allotments as part of the *Dig for Victory* campaign. At 18, Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS and trained as a mechanic. On VE day, the two sisters joined the celebrating crowds in the Mall incognito, Elizabeth wearing her ATS uniform. In 1947, Princess Elizabeth married Prince Philip in Westminster Abbey. It was the untimely death of her father King George VI while she was in Kenya with Prince Philip that led to her accession on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952 which was the beginning of her long reign. She has been served by prime ministers from Winston Churchill to Boris Johnson and has seen tremendous changes in this country, in the commonwealth and empire, and in the world in general, many of which would have been unimaginable in 1952. Through them all Queen Elizabeth II has been a rock and an inspiration to us all. We thank God for her long life and her long reign and pray that she may continue to enjoy His blessing.

Gracious God, we give you thanks  
for the reign of your servant Elizabeth our  
Queen,  
and for the example of loving and faithful  
service  
which she has shown among us.  
Help us to follow her example of dedication  
and to commit our lives to you and to one  
another,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

O Lord, the Way, the Truth, and the Life,

we give you thanks for your servant  
Elizabeth our Queen.  
May she ever be provided with all she may  
need  
for her ministry among us,  
strengthened to meet every demand  
which her office may make,  
and in all things nourished by your word  
and example,  
who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live  
and reign,  
world without end.

**Amen.**

### Percy Pigeon's Perception

Good day to you all. It is early summer already! The squabs are fledged and the crazy ash tree has a few leaves. Phillipa and I enjoy swinging on its branches. There seems to be little of great import in the villages at the moment, which is unusual, but pleasant. We love all the colourful crocheting appearing around Cuxton.



Having given you my family tree last month, I thought perhaps you would like to see me - ? Here I am! This is to remind you please to put water out for all avians. We will reward you with our water antics. So, should you see me around, smile and say hello .....and perhaps a few crumbs?

We were pleased to watch the Easter Egg Hunt in the rectory garden, wondering if Tommy would snaffle any. We hoped not as chocolate is poisonous for dogs. It holds no delight for avians, so perhaps the local badgers truffled out any otherwise unclaimed. We also enjoyed the antics on the bouncy castle outside Halling Social Club over Easter - watching all your littl'uns trying to fly like us..... only without success.

Now we were delighted to welcome a summer nightingale to Six Acre Wood recently. Such a lovely song! And has any of you heard the peacock trying to out-shout the local cockerel? We are not sure where he lives - although we do keep looking out for him. The nightingale also keeps a low profile. We knew that Florence Nightingale selected Fort Pitt for a training hospital lots of years ago. We wondered if that had anything to do with recent Nightingale hospitals which cost so much money to put up, were hardly used and then taken down. Somehow we doubt it. Our visiting nightingale may find the weather rather disappointing after a glorious Easter.

Gardens are still full of colourful flowers. The woods are carpeted with bluebells and there are masses of yellow buttercups in the fields. Even nature with all its blues and yellows is supporting Ukraine. There are also lots of those dandy lions. Dandelion', their common name, has been derived from the French phrase 'dents de lion', which means lion tooth. The shape of this plant's leaves resembles a lion's tooth. Dandelion is the only plant representing three celestial bodies during different phases of its life cycle - sun, moon, stars. The yellow flower of the plant resembles the sun, the dispersing seeds of the plant resemble stars, and the puff ball of dandelion plant resembles the moon. I hope you can all get out and enjoy it. Coo coo

#### Who Was Jesus?

I was given a special Christmas edition of the Sunday Times magazine 1988 which asked this question. My first thought was that they've got the title wrong. They should be asking *Who is Jesus?* The piece is put together by Anthony Burgess who first gives us his own thoughts on Christ and Christianity and then explores the way other people see Jesus in eight works of art and in eight short articles by scholars. He also considers some of the films which have been made purporting to depict the life of Jesus.

I'm not really the person to comment on the artworks or the films. Obviously nobody knows what Jesus or the other characters mentioned in the bible story looked like. So none of these depictions is a likeness. The picture which in my opinion comes closest to painting Jesus as He really was hangs in St Matthew's Church Wigmore. The artist represents Jesus as a middle-Eastern man of the first century, which He certainly was. All the pictures, statues, films, etc. are Jesus as seen by the artist. The artist may have some understanding of Who Jesus is and may successfully convey what he comprehends of Jesus in his artwork. He may of course have little or no idea of the truth about Jesus and, if so, his attempt at an icon will be entirely false. No artist, no human being, can fully comprehend Jesus. He is infinitely greater than we can imagine. We might be wiser not to attempt to make an image of Jesus. Jesus is the image of God and we are forbidden to make images of Him. Icon painters carry out their work prayerfully and humbly.

To me, Burgess himself comes over as confused. I get the feeling that he finds traditional Christianity unbelievable and, to some extent contemptible, but that he also feels that its absence in contemporary western culture and in the hearts of so many people leaves a great big hole which is not filled by the *milk and water* substitute religion which so many of the established churches now seem to offer. Traditional beliefs are hard to maintain in the face of sceptical secularism and traditional Christian moral values conflict with the mores of modern society - at least in western Europe and North America. The result is a division between churches with traditional and conservative beliefs and practices, which may form strong fellowships and be growing in numbers but are increasingly isolated from mainstream society (and tempted

to self-righteousness and dogmatism) and what we might call liberal churches which fit more or less comfortably in with the modern world, but have little to offer in the way of challenge to secular values or eschatological hope – the belief that in the end God is in charge and everything will ultimately turn out right.

So we come to the scholars. What we make of them depends on our attitude to the Bible. Reading Burgess, I did wonder whether he had read it properly. There is very little evidence with regard to Jesus apart from what there is in the Bible and what we can deduce from the life and work of the Church from earliest times until the present day. If you regard the Church with some suspicion (as you would be justified in doing) and regard the Bible simply as a collection of ancient writings to be studied in just the same way as scholars study other ancient writings, there is very little you can say for certain. In effect you get to make of Jesus what you will. You then have a picture of Him which you are free to reject or believe in. If, however, you look at the Bible as what it is, the Word of God, you don't judge the Bible; you allow the Bible to judge you. You don't affirm the parts which you agree with, reject what you find incredible or distasteful, and ignore the bits you think are boring or incomprehensible. You read the Bible. You wrestle with it. You acknowledge the validity of all of it. You strive to make sense of it and to see how it applies to you as you live out the years here on earth which God has given to you. It's not easy. You have to work at it. You must read the Bible prayerfully and ideally you read it every day. You read the Old Testament in the Light of the New Testament and the New Testament in the Light of the Old. You read the whole of the Bible in the Light of Christ and you discover that it bears witness of Him – the Word made flesh and the Word written, each revealing the Truth about the other. The historical Jesus is the Christ of faith. In computing, they used to talk about GIGO – garbage in, garbage out. When a perfectly sound computer program produces ridiculous results (like a million pound gas bill) it is because some idiot has fed garbage into it at the beginning of the calculation. In the same way, if you approach the Bible arrogantly as one who presumes to judge its contents, you'll only get out of it a reflection of your own ideas. If, however, you approach the Bible humbly as what it is, the Word of God, you will find in it the words of eternal life. What Jesus was, Jesus is and evermore shall be.

Parent to Teenager: Don't be so smug when I have to ask you how to work my tablet. I taught you to use a spoon.

## **“Pop Up Café” - Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

**Inside the Halling Jubilee Hall**

**You are invited to join us from 10.00 am – 1.00 pm**

**At 12.00 noon we will celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

**Memorabilia will be on show to remember the Halling Jubilee Hall's beginning  
in 1977**

### Tommy's Talking Points

We've not been anywhere farther than we can walk from the Rectory since I last wrote. We have, however, had Lolly to stay for a couple of weeks while her family went on holiday to Mexico. Master loves having Lolly. Two dogs are no more trouble than one to take out or to feed (so long as he ensures that I am fed first). Lolly does have a different diet and Master sometimes gets mixed up about which of us is to have what, but it all goes down the same way and neither of us looks as though we are starving. When Lolly nearly caught a squirrel, Master made her let it go. I don't even try. It's not worth it! Lolly is keener to play with him than I am and more demonstratively affectionate. He does get fed up with throwing things for Lolly. She never gives up on bringing him sticks and toys. She's too big to be picked up or to sit on his lap.



I have slightly more mixed feelings than Master has about Lolly staying. I can be jealous. People do make invidious comparisons with regard to our behaviour. Lolly is more sedate and obedient and shows no inclination to jump up on the furniture or visitors. We are both very loving and lovable, which is the main thing. And it is nice to have company when Master has to go out without me, as it is also good for all three of us to be together when he is around. He did tell me to mind my white privilege because I am easier to see than Lolly in the dark.



Because we are not yet quite back to normal, services are still a little bit shorter than they used to be and Master has time to take me (and Lolly when she is around) to the Cuxton services. You see me here in St Michael's. I do love to see all the people. The children make a lot of fuss of me. People are coming back to Church after COVID and we have some new members too. Please join us at Cuxton (9.30 Sundays & Wednesdays) or Halling (11.00 Sundays, 9.30 Thursdays). You will be very welcome.

Now it is not quite so cold, Master does not close the internal doors of an evening. This means that I can enjoy one of my favourite games. I sit on the upstairs landing, keeping watch over the garden. As the evening wears on, especially when it starts to get dark, the foxes come out to play and forage. That gives me the opportunity to commence a frenzy of barking which I think is fantastic, though Master is not always so pleased if he is watching television or on the telephone. I want him to let me out to chase the foxes away, but he very seldom does. He says he doesn't want me getting into a fight or chasing them off outside the garden or off into the woods where Max once got trapped in the old man's beard.

Master mentioned worship and the outdoors in his letter. If it's not raining and it isn't absolutely freezing, we now say Morning Prayer in the garden. **O COME**, let us sing unto the Lord : let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving : and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods. In his hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down: and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Praise the Creator while lapping up His Creation. A family of blackbirds come for the crumbs he throws out each day. The song birds sing. Pigeons and squirrels go about their business high in the trees. Magpies and other corvids are frequent visitors as are seagulls. There is a flock of white doves in a neighbouring garden. Lately, we've seen a majestic heron fly over just after 7.00 most mornings – not such good news if you have goldfish pond!

We were given a picture of a bird on a shopping bag by Percy Pigeon. Owing to it's bright colours, Master thought it was a parrot. It is, in fact, a pigeon. Pigeons are much more colourful in New Zealand where the bag had its origins than they are here.

There really hasn't been very much rain and far larger creatures than birds are resorting for water to the birdbath, turning over the surrounding flower pots in the process. I do like to see a fox drinking. Then I can have a good bark at him through the window. Despite the drought, the nettles are growing fine and Master may well be taking a stick, a sickle or even a scythe on our country walks in the near future.

If you think the magazine is a little thin this month, it's because he paid attention to people who advised against including something he had enjoyed writing. How about some contributions from readers? Tommy.

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# THE HALLING SINFONIA SUMMER PROM CONCERT

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PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Saturday 4th June - 4pm

Church of Saint John the Baptist  
Halling, Rochester - ME2 1BT



Soprano  
JOANNE WHALLEY



Musical Director  
STEPH GODWIN

Mozart - MARRIAGE OF FIGARO OVERTURE  
Bizet - CARMEN  
ARIAS by Puccini / Mozart / Sondheim

Film Music from  
DOWNTON ABBEY  
THE GREATEST SHOWMAN  
WEST SIDE STORY  
HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

SEA SONGS, JERUSALEM  
and other PROMS FAVOURITES

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FREE ENTRY but limited numbers  
Please pre-book by emailing  
[roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk)