

☺

Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 1 st November All Saints Please bring shoeboxes for Blythswood Appeal	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 25 vv 6-9 p708 Revelation 21 vv 1-7 p1249 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078
Monday 2 nd November All Souls	7.30 pm Holy Communion	1 Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 6 vv 37-40 p1070
Sunday 8 th November Remembrance Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion & Parade	Jonah 3 vv 1-10 p928 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002
Sunday 15 th November 2 nd Before Advent	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
Sunday 22 nd November Christ the King	9.30 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
Sunday 29 th November Advent Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 1 Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057
Sunday 6 th December Advent 2	9.30 Family Communion & Gift Service	Malachi 3 vv 1-4 p961 Philippians 1 vv 3-11 p1178 Luke 3 vv 1-6 p1029
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall		Upper Halling
Sunday 1st November All Saints Please bring shoeboxes for Blythswood Appeal	8.00 Holy Communion 11.00 Holy Communion	Revelation 21 vv 1-7 p1249 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078 Isaiah 25 vv 6-9 p708 Revelation 21 vv 1-7 p1249 John 11 vv 32-44 p1078
Monday 2nd November All Souls	9.30 am Holy Communion	Romans 5 vv 5-11 p1132 John 5 vv 19-25 p1069
Sunday 8th November Remembrance Sunday	10.50 Holy Communion & Parade 5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Jonah 3 vv 1-10 p928 Hebrews 9 vv 24-28 p1207 Mark 1 vv 14-20 p1002 Isaiah 10 v33 – 11 v9 p696 John 14 vv 23-29 p1082
Sunday 15th November 2nd Before Advent	11.00 Stop! Look! Listen! & Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Daniel 12 vv 1-3 p898 Hebrews 10 vv 11-25 p1208 Mark 13 vv 1-8 p1019
Sunday 22nd November Christ the King	11.00 Holy Communion	Daniel 7 vv 9-14 p892 Revelation 1 vv 4-8 p1233 John 18 vv 33-37 p1087
Sunday 29th November Advent Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 33 vv 14-16 p796 1 Thessalonians 3 vv 9-13 p1187 Luke 21 vv 25-36 p1057
Sunday 6 th December Advent 2	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall 11.00 Holy Communion & Gift Service	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 Luke 1 vv 1-25 p1025 Malachi 3 vv 1-4 p961 Philippians 1 vv 3-11 p1178 Luke 3 vv 1-6 p1029



Please bring shoeboxes for Blythswood Appeal to services on 1st November. Leaflets explaining what to do are available in Church.

On 6th December, we usually bring gifts for families in need. Toys should obviously be in good condition and should not be wrapped. Decent clothing and blankets are also useful.

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

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 December Magazine: 13th November 8.30 am Rectory.

Wednesdays at St Michael's @ 9.30		Thursdays at St John's @ 9.30	
4 th November	Romans 13 vv 8-10 Luke 14 vv 15-24	5 th November	Romans 14 vv 7-12 Luke 15 vv 1-10
11 th November	Titus 3 vv 1-7 Luke 17 vv 11-19	12 th November	Philemon Luke 17 vv 20-25
18 th November	Revelation 4 Luke 19 vv 11-28	19 th November	Revelation 5 vv 1-10 Luke 19 vv 41-44
25 th November	Daniel 5 vv 1-28 Luke 21 vv 12-19	26 th November	Daniel 6 vv 12 – end Luke 21 vv 20-28

Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury: God is first and foremost that depth around all things and beyond all things into which, when I pray, I try to sink. But God is also the activity that comes to me out of that depth, tells me I'm loved, that opens up a future for me, that offers transformations I can't imagine. Very much a mystery but also very much a presence. Very much a person.

Forthcoming Attractions

28th November 7.30: Quiz Church Hall

11th December 7.30: Christmas Music St John's

12th December 10.00: Christmas Coffee Morning Church Hall.

Christingle Services

Two of our most popular services in the year are our Christingle and Crib Services at Halling on December 20th and at Cuxton on Christmas Eve. This year there is a bit of a problem in that we are very short of people this year at Cuxton to make the Christingles. They are quite easy to make and they really need to be made on the day or the day before. (Otherwise the oranges go off!) If anyone could help, please could you let me know? Roger.

Friends of Kent Churches Cycle Ride



This year on 13th September I managed 29 places of worship around the Medway towns. I suppose this was cheating really as three of the churches were redundant, one had been demolished and another burnt down and one was a synagogue. However, it was all good fun and, thanks to your sponsorship, I raised £150. How about more people doing it next year? Roger.

Hello from Lincolnshire

Just to let you know that I still do the sponsored bike ride and this year it was a glorious day. I was accompanied by Tim to 18 churches over about 30 miles. Many churches were unmanned but others were really welcoming. Lincolnshire is flat but after visiting a beautiful Harvest preparation at Toynton St. Peters, the uphill climb to Toynton All Saints was too much for me on my 21 gear bike and I walked it. The Chapel in the village serves wonderful refreshments and it was well worth the visit. The ride on to Spilsby, Hundleby and Raithby were fine, with another climb to Mavis Enderby, and then a fast downhill run to Old Bolingbroke. The final 4 churches were on the flat lands back to our starting point.

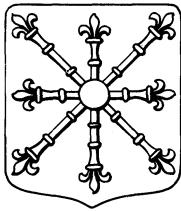
*Summertime cycling
Along the byways,
Following the grid lines,
Of local waterways.
Butterflies touching
The cheek while passing.,*

*A gentle kiss from a fragile
wing.
Birds are singing,
Flitting, flying.
Lilies are blooming,
On quiet water.*

*Ducks are paddling,
Swans are swimming.
The sun is warm
And the bees are humming.
All the peace
Of Lincolnshire cycling.*

The hymns were very appropriate the next day with All things bright and beautiful, Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee, and Give me joy in my heart. The last verse of this hymn being 'Give me oil in my lamp' which seemed a reminder that I'd stopped for an ice-cream to keep me going before the final church and home. Ann Lucas.

Church hall draw: August : £5 to Shirley Houlan, drawn by Julia Wells; September : £5 to Chris Beaney, drawn by Gill Bogg.
St John's Draw: £5 each to Mrs Marler (5), Miss J Thorne (23), Mrs Crow (29), Mrs Hesketh (115) & Miss Crowhurst (158) –drawn by Mrs Smitherman.



Reader Response

I spend a good deal of my time as rector writing articles and speaking in public, but I hardly ever get any serious response. So I was very pleased to receive this extremely thoughtful response to an article I had published in *Town Talk* this Summer. For those of you who don't receive *Town Talk*, I am including the substance of the article here.

Beauty and Holiness

I have just come back from a four day conference in Oxford on *Religious Responses to Darwinism*. Sorry, I haven't got space to write about the conference here. I will do that in the Cuxton and Halling Parish magazine. See the September issue, also available on line at <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>.

What I wanted to write about here was what a beautiful place Oxford is. In fact, that is partly why I chose to go. Where we stayed was close to the wonderful University Parks. On three successive days I enjoyed morning runs beside the Oxford Canal and the Rivers Thames and Cherwell respectively. Of course, Oxford itself is packed with fine buildings, but, more attractive to me, is the fact that there is so much open space and that you are so soon out of the built up area and in meadows where cattle graze.

I occasionally speculate as to whether it is more than a coincidence that some of the finest academic work all over the world is done in beautiful places. Even London University, where I studied, makes the effort to build beautiful or striking edifices where it can, even though its institutions sometimes have to be housed in overcrowded back street buildings, converted from other uses.

I am always grateful that we in the Medway Valley are surrounded by such beautiful countryside. On the one side we have the Downs, with their fields and woods, and, on the other, the River Medway and the farmland beyond. I think it is so important that we cherish what we have. The "environment" is not only valuable because it soaks up carbon and saves us from global warming or because plant and animal species are or might be agriculturally, commercially or pharmaceutically valuable. Nature's beauty is valuable in itself and for itself.

The psalm teaches us to *worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*. Holiness is obviously about moral beauty, about being good people, good like God, Who is love. But am I right in thinking that there is a common theme, that moral and natural beauty are in fact aspects of the same thing? You tell me.

This was the response I received. I'll spare her blushes by publishing it anonymously, but I do know who sent it.

Dear Roger

Having read your article in the September edition of *Town Talk* and attended the service at St John's on the morning of 06/09/09, your words, and thoughts have got me thinking. Moral and natural beauty, are one of the same thing and here is my reason why.

At church, you said that even in a busy town you could see evidence of God's presence by the 'grain of sand' in the wall of a building. This goes even further; the wooden furniture from the trees, the fabric from a simple cotton plant even the plastic made from oil in the ground are all evidence of God's presence and his love for us. To look and appreciate the beautiful gifts of the earth the Lord has given us or to feel the overwhelming amount of love that God offers us are one of the same. God created and gave us the earth and he gave us the ability to love one another. For me, to stop and smell the intoxicating scent of a rose and to admire its beauty and form is the same as helping a fellow man in need or indeed some thing in need. Whether that may be another human being, an insect trapped on the wrong side of a window, to give a stray animal a home, or to replant an uprooted flower. For me to see kindness is to see God's holiness. It is a reflection of the way God would like us to behave; to look after each other, to 'love thy neighbour'. Hebrews 10:24; *and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works*. We cannot appreciate God's gifts of the earth if we do not appreciate each other. It is morally wrong to 'turn a blind eye' to another's suffering, as God teaches us we should accept and love all fellow men whether they be destitute or rich and powerful, as he does.

The dictionary tells us that moral relates to human behaviour with particular regards to 'right or wrong'. There is no beauty in the actions of the 'wrongdoer', it sickens us to our hearts and makes us question as to why they behave in

such a manner, so here is my question for you. Is there evidence of God's love in the wrongdoer or is it evident only in the eye of the beholder who sees the sadness and shame of it all?

Beauty is all around us, we only have to open our hearts and our eyes to bear witness to it. In doing so we are able to offer God's gift of love to one another and can see God's gift of love for us all.

I think my answer to the question in my correspondent's penultimate paragraph must be Romans 5 v8. She tells me that she thought that was what I would say!

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It is good to start a dialogue on these fundamental matters.

The other issue on my mind this month is the fact that this year is the 70th anniversary of the Second World War and, apart from the fact that Vera Lynn is once again top of the pops, it seems to be passing with very little notice. Obviously you have to be nearing your three score years and ten to remember the War now, but it would be quite wrong for younger generations to forget. There are still war veterans to honour. There are still war veterans who (themselves or their families) may need our practical support. We owe a tremendous debt to the generation which won the Second World War and saved the world from the evil of Nazi domination. War is an example of what we were thinking about a moment ago – an extraordinary mixture of beauty and ugliness. Nazi Germany was a hideously ugly regime. Many of the actions the Allies took in defeating Hitler and his European allies, as well as the even uglier Japanese war machine, were in themselves ugly, yet war also brings out the best in people, the virtuous and the beautiful. Courage, steadfastness, loyalty, moral purpose turn out to be latent in ordinary people to an amazing degree. These are moral virtues. They are components of the beauty of holiness – divine characteristics which ought also always to characterise human beings made in His image. War brings out the best and the worst in us. All I can say is that the resolution of good and evil, of vileness and beauty is the Cross of Jesus Christ, where God's Son both suffers with the victims of our immoral ugliness and imparts His beauty to us vicious thugs who acknowledge our need of His purifying love.

So this and every Remembrance Day: honour the fallen; pay enough for your poppy really to support the work of the British Legion for servicemen and their dependents; ask yourself how you measure up to the standards set by your parents and grandparents; commit to the cause of world peace and remember those who are still involved in wars wherever they may be in the world. In the light of what I said about the Cross, can I ask you to consider doing these things in Church, in the context of an act of worship, where Christ is present because people are met together in His Name? I do like to see our churches full, but that is by no means my main reason for inviting you. Worship is what we owe to God and it is only when we worship that we make sense of our lives and the beauty of holiness overwhelms the ugliness of human sin so that we may eternally live in the love of God. We shan't get this world straight till we realign it with God.

Roger.

The Absence of God

Some people say that, when they are praying, they often have no sense of the presence of God. They believe that God is absent from their prayer life. In fact, I have been told, that the problem is usually rather different. The problem is not the absence of God, but the absence of "you". Your body might be in church or in your room where you intend to pray, but your mind is elsewhere. You have so many other things to think about and thoughts come crowding in. That is certainly my experience. Two things might help you to concentrate. First of all, say a quick prayer commanding all the things you are worrying about to God. Trust Him to look after them – if only for the duration of your prayer session! Then try concentrating on and maybe repeating a particular phrase such as *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy*, or a line from a hymn, a biblical verse or a well known prayer. Personally, I find it helpful to meditate on each line of the Lord's Prayer. If we can take time and concentrate sufficiently to open ourselves to God, we may well experience His presence with us and in us and that may be comforting or disconcerting but it is certainly real. Otherwise, to coin a phrase, it is your own time you are wasting. Roger.

CHURCH FLOWERS - HELP.

Sadly at the end of this year we will be losing some of our very loyal band of Church Flower Arrangers and this will cause great problems in making sure that there are fresh flowers in the Church every week. These ladies have done the flowers, without fail, for many, many years and contributed to the pleasure that folk get from them always being beside the altar. We owe them a great debt of gratitude but now the time has come for them to feel that they have to give it up and so we desperately need a few more hands to fill the large gap that they will leave otherwise I feel it will be difficult to keep this tradition going and some weeks we will be unable to have flowers in their rightful place. If you feel you could help us out please ring me. We only need one or two that would be prepared to do them occasionally to fill some of the gaps and you do not have to be of Chelsea Flower standard!!! I do hope that we can keep supplying the flowers as I am sure there are some of you that would be as sorry as I would be if we had to give in and admit defeat.

Do please contact me with any help at all that you feel you could give, my thanks in eager anticipation, Margaret Guest - Tel: 01634 240644.

Dickens' Country Protection Society



The society is changing its meeting place from the Methodist Hall in Shorne, which has been sold and where the society has been meeting for a number of years, to the committee room in Higham Memorial Hall. The committee is still meeting every two weeks so as to be able to keep in touch with all matters relevant to the society's area of benefit. Kay Roots.

Harvest Festival

Thanks once again to the flower arrangers and all who clean and decorate our two churches. They looked splendid, as always, for Harvest Festival. Thanks, too, to the musicians and all who work together to make our worship what it. *To give thanks is to bless is to consecrate.* Discuss.

Michaelmas

I think we had more support for our procession from church members than we did on Ascension Day, but failed to pick up any stragglers *en route* this time. I think all the participants enjoyed an effective act of worship and witness – though it got a bit difficult to read the words in the dark! What do you think about further processions? Next Ascension Day?

Cemetery and Churchyard Grass Cutting

Medway Council still look after Halling churchyard and have had far fewer problems than last year. So everything has been tidy and well maintained. We had some very generous personal donations, especially towards the cost of maintaining Cuxton churchyard. Halling Parish Council also generously helped with Halling Burial Ground. Medway Council also made grants towards the cost of cutting both these areas. I think we can be pleased with they have been kept tidy this year. The only disappointment was that Cuxton Parish Council normally assist at Cuxton, but this year they introduced a new administrative procedure and it appears that we failed to fill in the appropriate form by the required date. So they said they were unable to help us. Life in the Twenty First Century!

Thought Provoking

A meeting of leading churchmen were asked how they would respond if someone at a bus stop asked them to explain the significance of the Resurrection in the two minutes before his bus was due. There were several answers, but the leader said that what they really ought to have said was, "Let the bus go. The Resurrection deserves more than two minutes!" The Archbishop of Canterbury, however, suggested that really the best response would be to get on the bus and to travel with the seeker after God.

From the Registers

Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child:

4th October

Joshua Bowker

Low Meadow

Baptisms:

20th September

Amelia Jade Botten

High Street

20th September

Keira Marie Botten

High Street

20th September

Alyssa Samantha Psaila

Twydall

27th September

Callum Joseph Baffon Palwarth

Sylvestre Close

Weddings: ☺

12th September

David Punyer & Jemma Blackburn

Cuxton

19th September

Terry Cook & Kim Tomlins

Halling

Funerals:

18th September

Timothy Eric Mortley (57)

formerly of Cuxton

1st October

Margaret Cowan (70)

Rochester Rd N Halling

1st October

Barry James Downs (72)

Charles Drive

8th October

Iris Doreen Hutcheon (86)

Woodhurst Close

Tim Mortley RIP

Tim Mortley was for very many years a faithful member of our ringing team at Cuxton. As well as ringing for services, Tim joined ringers on their various outings and ringing holidays. Having come up through the scout group himself, for many years he acted as an adult scout leader and helper. Tim was also one of the hard working team who, year after year, put on the magnificent Wheel of Cuxton Fireworks Display. He will be sorely missed by his friends as well as his family and by all those who benefited by his commitment to village life.

Nature Notes September 2009

The early morning of 1st is grey and cool with blustery west winds which bring some showers. In the afternoon the sun shines brightly and the showers cease. I take Murphy to the river, walk the path where scabious, goats rue, bedstraw and mallow still bloom among the tall straw-coloured grasses and view the wide expanse of glistening mud flats where gulls forage. The water sparkles in the sunlight and wavelets break on the mud. We walk round the ponds which are rippled by the strong winds which drive white billowing clouds across the sky. Later, at home, Murphy is perplexed by a large, bedraggled feather on the patio. He barks at it until I pick it up.

The next day, the lonely collared dove brings a companion to the garden. Strong winds blow keeping rain at bay, but some falls in the evening. During the afternoon of the 3rd I sit in the shelter of the garden drinking in the warm sunshine. The wind races through the trees and clouds scud across the sky. North West winds bring a chill to the air on 4th but the sun shines brightly. In the evening, as the light fades, I watch rooks flying home to roost across a sky of grey and salmon pink clouds. They caw loudly. The following day, while by the river with Murphy, I notice

that trees lining the road are beginning to lose their leaves. On the afternoon of the 6th I walk up to Church Fields and on the way, I see blackberries and elderberries. Ripe hips and haws hang on slender twigs and old man's beard straddles the hawthorns. Spindle berries have become pale pink. Having walked through part of Mays Wood which is silent except for the distant call of a wood pigeon, I make my way down into Dean Valley where hips and haws are in abundance Hazels, hawthorns, elder, dogwood and wild cherry trees are beginning to display autumn colours of red, mauve and yellow. I see clover, lucerne, bristly ox tongue, marjoram and ragwort. Along Tomlins Lane a few scabious bloom and I pick some blackberries. I see a badger's sett in the copse and pick more berries. Along Purty's Shaw I see some ripe hazel nuts. I think many have been hoarded by squirrels. Two pheasants scuttle across Six acre Field where horses graze. Cows in Church Fields flick flies away with their tails. I make my way home having enjoyed the stillness and beauty of the countryside. The 8th is very hot so I walk with Murphy in the late afternoon. The westerly breeze is warm and the river reflects the beautiful blue of the sky. The water, which

is high, laps against the wall and is rippled by the wind. The banks by the path look very tired and the wild flowers are few in number. Scabious, crucifers, viper's bugloss, sweet peas, marjoram, goat's rue and mallow are blooming. The sun lights up the river and its surroundings. Everything looks beautiful. Darkness has fallen by 8pm.

An easterly wind brings cooler temperatures on 10th when we walk round the ponds. Lapwings and gulls forage at the river's edge while on a bank by one of the ponds a pair of cormorants stands so still. Ripe hips and blackberries brighten the bushes which are ever more autumnal. Crucifers, clover and evening primrose flowers gladden the paths while brown headed teasels stand tall. Late in the afternoon of 11th birds flock to the feeders and the pond. I count 3 great tits, and 5 blue tits and then realize that long tailed tits are there too, flying backwards and forwards from the lilac branches to the pond. A squirrel commandeers the nuts and a rat scuttles to seed on the grass. The 12th is a beautiful Indian summer's day.

When I walk across Church Fields the next day I notice that half the wych elm's leaves are yellow and the other half are green. Much needed rain falls on the 15th when I go to the Roman Villa at Lullingstone. The trees are displaying autumn colours while the sky remains grey and rain continues to fall. On 18th I watch two dragonflies dart across the garden and a

small white butterfly hover over the flowers. I sit in the garden in the afternoon and listen to a robin's song. A wood pigeon perched on a branch of a dead elm, dunnocks pecked at seed and blue tits came to the feeders. In the early evening of 19th the garden becomes golden as the sun begins to set, dipping down to the tree line. On 20th I walk across the fields and down to Purty's Shaw where the autumn colours are beautiful. While sitting in the garden on 21st, I notice a large grasshopper perched on the seed tray on the wall. It waves its antennae but is not at all worried by my presence. On 23rd, a rather cloudy day, Murphy and I walk by the river. The water is high and forms channels among the grasses and the reeds. A beautiful comma butterfly perches on the kitchen window ledge on 24th. We experience some beautiful days but the early mornings are decidedly cool. I go to the river with Murphy on 27th. The water is low and gulls congregate on the glistening mud flats. A few viper's bugloss flowers attract the bees and I stand and watch them gathering nectar. Some of the trees along the leisure centre road have lost their leaves while others display their lovely colours. On our way to Larkfield on 28th I am aware of the beautiful colours of the trees along the Halling by-pass. The last day of the month is grey and chilly with north easterly breezes. Darkness has fallen by 7.30pm. I have chosen a poem this month which for me highlights nature's beauty.

Elizabeth Summers.

When music sounds, gone is the earth I know,
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

"Music" by Walter de la Mare

When music sounds, out of the water rise
Naiads whose beauty dims my waking eyes,
Rapt in strange dreams burns each enchanted face,
With solemn echoing stirs their dwelling place.

When music sounds, all that I was I am
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came;
While from Time's woods break into distant song
The swift winged hours, as I hasten along.



Our September meeting was a bit of a disappointment this month for some of our members, me included through no fault of our own. Our speaker, Mrs Mortlock, for personal reasons wanted to speak first, and she insisted that we had asked for Ightham Mote, when we were all looking forward to "Country Houses at Christmas" but we did start with Jerusalem.

Mrs Mortlock's slides and description of the restoration of Ightham Mote were very good, albeit they were quite old, and like so many other National Trust properties, if they are on your door step, so to speak, many of our members hadn't

been there. It was especially interesting for one of our members, Trudy Fenton Scott, as she told us that some of the top class of Halling Primary school had won a competition for something or other and as the prize they had been invited to Ightham Mote for a day, and according to Trudy they all had an exciting time, visiting the gardens and then cooking with the resident chef.

Having a "back to front" meeting throws everybody out of line but Mrs Mortlock did judge our competitions for us. Ann Heaseman won the "flower of the month" with her Bougainvillea,(I think I have spelt it right, a Daisy would have been easier for me).The competition, Make a

shopping bag was won by me. It's amazing what you can whip up out of the rag bag. After our cup of tea we proceeded with the business part of the meeting. The most important bit of correspondence was that our subscription is going up by 50p next year and the National Federation is organizing another quilt making session, something they did many moons ago. All members can embroider a square if they so wish. Yours may even get chosen for the quilt.



Cuxton WI

This was a combined AGM and End of Year meeting so there was a lot of business. There was sad news in that Iris Hutcheon had died and although we had not seen her for quite a while she was remembered fondly by members from her days with the Musical Chimes group. Also good news in that Ann Harris who has been away ill for nearly a year is at last coming home and looking forward to seeing us all again soon. There was lots of correspondence including a "Bee Awareness" day when people are asked to eat only food that has been pollinated by Bees so lots of honey and fruit that day! Also WI members have been invited to help young people aged 6-12 in cookery classes These can be done at home if you can cope with the mess but the reward is a free course at Denman college. We had some really lovely and imaginative home made fabric boxes on display, made by our craft group. How anyone could pick a winner I do not know as they were all so different and well made However Maureen

Events coming up in the near future, craft afternoon at Mrs Buss' house on 13th October and Sonnets and Supper evening at the Devonshire rooms, Ham Hill and Snodland W.I. are the hostesses, Ann Seagar has a saucy sonnet up her sleeve, so I think I had better do a little bit of the Bard. Although our meeting had been a bit haphazard we didn't sing Jerusalem again at the end.

Phyllis.

Viniccombe emerged the winner. All the various clubs had been busy meeting this month We cover a wide range of activities with water and china painting, cookery, all kinds of crafts, drama, home economics, poetry and a walking group who invariably get lost but usually end up at a local pub in time for lunch!

The serious part of the meeting was the AGM where bye-laws are read and often amended as the years go by. Our finances are looked after very well by Maureen who actually made us a small profit this year - we mustn't let her get taken by a bank. Reports for the year were read by secretary and president and it is amazing what we get through in a year. We are lucky that we have enough members who have volunteered their services for next year so that we are able to form a new committee straight away and carry on the good work So many WIs' have trouble with this and have had to close through lack of support. So Cuxton are doing very well and long may it continue.

Sheila {WI Secretary}

Proctors' Scheme Re-launch

Our Cathedral has re-launched the Proctors' Scheme in an endeavour to link parishes in the Diocese more closely with the Cathedral. The first meeting was planned for September 30th and Roger asked if I would go along and perhaps consider becoming the link person. There are 219 parishes in the Diocese and I estimate about 60 people were there. We learned the intention is to have three or four meetings a year. The hope is to raise awareness of what is happening in the Cathedral and disseminate this information to our parishes via the link person. It is intended that it should be a two-way process with feedback taken from our churches to these meetings, so I thought a short piece in the magazine would help to make people aware of the scheme. If you have any comments please let me know and I will take them back to the next meeting.

The first meeting began with a tasty buffet and a welcome from Canon Philip Hesketh, the Canon Pastor. He told us of a new initiative called the Interpretation Project which is being part funded by the Lottery over three years, to encourage visitors into the Cathedral and enable them to understand more about the wonderful building and what it stands for, thus making their visit more fulfilling.

The Project includes the production of new leaflets, the glazing of the West and North Doors and disabled access through the North Door. After the Cathedral is closed, there are to be two candlelit tours a month. There is also a desire to recruit new volunteers from the parishes, to raise awareness of these volunteers and to train more guides.

An important part of the Project is the updated and newly installed audio tours and visual presentations, which we were able to try out.

There is no charge for entry to the Cathedral and it is intended that the hire fee for the handsets (£3 each) will help meet its enormous costs. There are three different tours, a General Tour with Jules Holland guiding, a Children's Tour and a Reflective Tour with music and poetry.

I chose the General tour and found it most worthwhile. It took me round the Cathedral from the West Doors, pausing to describe and give historic detail, supplemented (as optional extras by pressing coloured buttons), with prayer and music. I found the handsets easy to use, the experience to be enjoyable, the amount of information and pace just about right and in due course, will return to try the other two tours.

The date of the next Proctors' meeting will be published in the magazine.

Janice Cheesmer

All Souls Day

On the 2nd November each year, the Church commemorates the Festival of All Souls. It is a day specially set aside to remember the faithful departed. In the words of the Creed, we believe in *the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body*.

In other words, we believe that we can trust God for those whom we love but see no longer. Death is not the end, but a new beginning, a new phase of existence. Our love for them and their love for us continues within the love of God. The things we have done wrong on earth can be forgiven if we ask God in Christ. Our personality, our soul, is not extinguished by death, but finds its fulfilment in God's love. These are the kinds of thoughts to remember when we think about our loved ones who have died.

In this parish, we remember by name on All Souls Day all those whose names are in the Books of Remembrance, those whose funerals we have arranged in the last year and any other individuals we are asked to commemorate.

The All Souls services this year are on Monday 2nd November at 9.30 am at St John the Baptist's Church Halling and at 7.30 pm at St Michael and All Angels' Church Cuxton. At both services we remember all those whose funerals we have taken in this last year and people from the parish we have heard about. If you or other members of your family or friends would like to be present at either service, you would be most welcome. If there are other names you would like remembered, please give them in writing to the Rector.

Quiz Evening for Church Funds.

Do come along to our quiz on the 28th November in the Church Hall Cuxton. Come as a team of 6-8 or as an individual. The admission charge of £6 includes food, but not drink. It should be a lot of fun and we hope to raise a lot of money somewhat to alleviate our always desperate financial plight.

Concert in Halling Church. Friday 11th December at 7.30 p.m.

By special request, the Brook Concert Orchestra returns with some light music for a dark evening. The programme will include "March of the Gladiators", "Cavatina", music, from "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" plus a Christmas item. No tickets required, just come along. There will be a retiring collection towards church funds. The usual refreshments will be provided.

Saturday 12th December

is a date that many of you will already have in your diaries because it is our Christmas Coffee morning. The doors open at 10.00 am and you will find the usual array of goods for sale and seasonal refreshments.

Given Out One Sunday Morning

You will find the preachers for the Sundays when the rector is on holiday pinned to the church notice board.

Cuxton Infant School News

We have returned happily to school after the long summer holiday, and welcomed a large intake of 50 Year R children into Mays and Marina classes. I am extremely pleased with the way the cohort have settled, and feel this is largely down to the many visits the children and their parents have prior to the summer holidays, and also the fact that the playgroups visit the school for events and use of the hall. This year I am pleased to say staff also went to visit a playgroup 'feeding' our school outside of the village. This week the children have stayed for lunch with their parents, and just prior to half term they become full time. By the end of the week they are extremely tired!

The Year 1 and 2 children have also happily settled into their new classes, and have been enjoying their topics for the first part of this term. They have been finding out about themselves, their family trees, their bodies, self portraits, and Christian, Hindu and Jewish baptisms and weddings.

Our Harvest Festival this year has involved us collecting tinned foods, pasta, rice etc for Caring Hands once again - a 'homeless' charity for folk living in the Medway area, who rely on a day centre to provide their lunch. We have also collected shoes for Africa. The children have been donating good quality second hand shoes, including sport and everyday shoes. Some parents have also kindly donated new shoes and trainers. My thanks to all who have given for both these worthwhile causes.

I am pleased to say the ongoing problems with the 'gas re-routing' at school have been addressed. Thank you to parents, visitors and library patrons who coped with the disruption outside of the school. I am deeply embarrassed at how long the work took, and yes they should have been completed in the holiday. However, three companies each organising their own part, seemed unable to liaise.

I was extremely proud last week to receive on behalf of the school, and indeed Mrs Street, our deputy, who collated all the evidence, the Basic Skills Quality Mark award. We were one of about five schools, along with the Junior school, who were rewarded with the BSQM for the fourth time.

We are trying to create links with the Ranscombe Farm Reserve, in the hope that our children can be involved with planting, tree identification etc on our site. We are so fortunate in having such lovely grounds. Watch out for further news!

The FCS, who work tirelessly for our schools, are already planning the Christmas Bazaar to be held at our school on Friday 4th December. Do come and support us! I am sure there will be a special visitor present and a variety of stalls as always.

Well enough news from us for now. Do take care as the dark evenings approach, and a plea to all those young children who ride their bikes around the village, take care and be visible!

Sandra Jones, Headteacher

Always Relevant

The very day this magazine was due to go to press, the Old Testament lesson at Holy Communion was from the Book of Joel. People talk about a *plague of biblical proportions* to the point of cliché and this is surely it. It made me sorry not only for the people affected by such disasters hundreds of years ago, but also for the people who suffer them in so many parts of the world today. Think Zimbabwe and Tanzania (where we have link dioceses) and Somalia and Sudan and many others on the horrific roll call of chronically poor economies. I am sure you share compassion and horror with me and the biblical writer, but where many modern people would part company with the prophet Joel is that they would not regard famine as the result of sin and they would think that insecticides were a better way of dealing with locusts than prayer. More on that shortly. But first the passage from Joel chapter 1 and the first couple of verses of chapter 2.

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

2 Hear this, ye old men; and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3 Tell ye your children of it. and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

4 That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpiller eaten.

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

9 The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD's ministers, mourn.

10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen ; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.

12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

16 Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17 The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

18 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture: yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

1Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong: there hath not been ever the like, nether shall there be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

So are disasters like these linked to human sin? Look at the places where they happen. War destroys crops, drafts the young men, who ought to be working productively, into armies and militias. Refugees are forced to flee their fields. In a state of anarchy, criminal gangs steal stores of food. Dictators crush the human spirit, arrest their political opponents and confiscate their property. In anarchic situations people find they can make more money from crime than from work.

In some places the men are lazy, considering manual work to be beneath them and leaving humdrum daily labour to the women. Where education is not offered, people may be poor because they are ignorant of better ways to support themselves. Where education is offered, parents may prefer to send their children to work rather than school.

Plague and sickness follow when people are malnourished, forced to rely on dirty water and inadequate drains. Infection follows invading armies and mass migrations of defeated peoples. It was no accident that the devastating influenza of 1918/1919 came at the end of the First World War.

Very often, chronically malnourished populations have rich neighbours who do not share. Aren't we all neighbours in the modern world, where no more is more than a few hours flight from anywhere else.

Trading arrangements are often skewed against the poor and politically weak in order to guarantee well-paid jobs and low prices for the already affluent and relatively powerful. This is true within countries and in international trading arrangements.

Poverty is very often the consequence of human sin. We do need to repent and maybe better farming practices, better medicine, better education and fairer trading practices will be the answer to our prayers.

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them;

We beseech thee to hear us good Lord.

That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with grace of thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy holy Word.

We beseech thee to hear us good Lord.

Different Strokes

My thoughts were provoked recently when I read about the adolescent boy who learned to love the Anglican Church through singing the Creed in the choir. It's quite a strain on the brain to think what each line of the Creed means and to decide whether you can believe it and what it means to you personally. But to sing it beautifully all together gives a sense both of the glory of God and of what it means to belong to a community which shares a common faith.

I was impressed with this insight and decided to share it with another long-standing church member. To my surprise, she had never been to a church where they sang the Creed. Do you remember singing the Creed in Cuxton or Halling? I cannot remember ever singing the Nicene Creed at Communion during my time here and I think I can only remember once singing the Apostle's Creed at Evensong. That was when the choir made a special effort for a choral Evensong. I remember the occasion well because I described it as the quintessence of English Church music and someone who didn't know what "quintessence" meant thought I was being rude about them! Always putting my foot in it!

When I was a youngster, we sang the Communion to the melodies of John Merbecke and they included a setting of the Creed. In fact, I think I learned the words faster than I might otherwise have done because the tune carried the words to the brain – though a lot of us got stuck with an incorrect pronunciation of *apostolic* because Merbecke's setting puts the stress on the wrong syllable.

Anyway by friend was more in line with modern thinking. When they revised the prayer book in 1980, the thinking was that people ought to pay close attention to the meaning of the Creed and that singing it distracts our attention from the words. For this reason, most churches dropped singing the Creed when they introduced newer forms of service. The adolescent boy, on this reasoning, ought to think about what each line of the Creed means and decide whether or not he believes it for himself.

I'm not so sure that music detracts from meaning. If it did, why sing psalms, hymns or even songs? They would mean more if we just said them. That is obviously nonsense, though I have to admit it is often easier to say psalms than to sing them.

Neither am I convinced that, in order to belong to the Church, you have to understand and assent to every proposition we believe. That would reduce faith to an intellectual exercise. It also verges on blasphemy. We can comprehend so little of the infinity of God that it is astonishingly presumptuous of us to claim to know very much. We all have faith and hope and love with very little understanding. There is room in the Church for the seeker and the traveller. We are all seekers and travellers. Worshipping, witnessing and working together we do learn something of God and advance on our journey, but you don't keep people off the bus until they have arrived at the destination.

Roger.

Max's Tail Piece



Master didn't find me any space in October and, now I am back, I find I've lost my lines at the top of the next page to make way for another advert. Still, can't complain; the advertisers help to make this magazine profitable and our parish relies heavily on the profits it makes. We hope the advertisers gain a lot of business from appearing in our pages and that the readers find the advertisements useful when they are looking for goods and services. It is good to support local businesses.

I quite like it when I'm taken to the local shops – which would be more often, Master says, if I didn't pull so hard on the lead. He says he can't manage me and armfuls of shopping. But, when I do go, it is always nice to meet friends, human and canine, to find out what's going on in the villages and to encounter new people. I've got some friends whom Master doesn't even know! Community is a good thing and a good community morphs into a communion or fellowship. The values are the same, only more so. (Master says that the Greek word is *κοινωνία*.) That is why there is (or always ought to be) a parish church at the centre of a parish. Humanity's potential for belonging to one another is fulfilled only when we belong to God. Max.