

Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
Sunday 2 nd September Trinity 13	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 33 vv 13-22 p717 John 3 vv 22-36 p1066
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Proverbs 25 vv 6&7 p660 Hebrews 13 vv 1-16 p1211 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
Sunday 9 th September Trinity 14	11.00 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon vv 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Isaiah 43 v 14 – 44 v5 p728 John 5 vv 30-47 p1069
Sunday 16 th September Trinity 15	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Exodus 32 vv 7-14 p91 1 Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
Sunday 23 rd September Trinity 16	11.00 Holy Communion	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 1 Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
Sunday 7 th October Harvest Festival	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall (Trinity 18)	2 Timothy 1 vv 1-14 p1195 Luke 17 vv 5-10 p1051
	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Deuteronomy 26 vv 1-11 p203 Revelation 14 vv 14-18 p1243 John 6 vv 25-35 p1070
	6.30 Evening Prayer (followed by Harvest Supper)	Joel 2 vv 21-27 p913 Matthew 6 vv 25-33 p971
Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton		
Sunday 2 nd September Trinity 13	9.30 Family Communion	Hebrews 13 vv 1-8 p1211 Hebrews 13 vv 15&16 p1212 Luke 14 vv 1-14 p1047
Sunday 9 th September Trinity 14	9.30 Holy Communion	Deuteronomy 30 vv 15-20 p209 Philemon vv 1-21 p1200 Luke 14 vv 25-33 p1048
Sunday 16 th September Trinity 15	8.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 60 vv 1-22 p746 John 6 vv 51-69 p1071
	9.30 Holy Communion	Exodus 32 vv 7-14 p91 1 Timothy 1 vv 12-17 p1191 Luke 15 vv 1-10 p1048
Sunday 23 rd September Trinity 16	9.30 Holy Communion	Amos 8 vv 4-7 p922 1 Timothy 2 vv 1-7 p1192 Luke 16 vv 1-13 p1050
Saturday 29 th September Michaelmas	6.30 pm Holy Communion (followed by Soirée)	Genesis 28 vv 10-17 p30 Hebrews 1 vv 5-14 p121 Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 John 1 vv 47-51 p1064
Sunday 30 th September Trinity 17	9.30 United Parish Eucharist	Amos 6 vv 1-7 p921 1 Timothy 6 vv 6-19 p1194 Luke 16 vv 19-31 p1050
Sunday 7 th October Harvest Festival	9.30 Family Communion	Philippians 4 vv 4-9 p1181 John 6 vv 25-35 p1070

Copy Date October Magazine 14th September 8.30 am Rectory.

On Thursday afternoons we have a **Mother & Toddler** service at Halling at 2.00 and at Cuxton every Wednesday (from 12th September) also at 2.00 **Sunday School** is at Cuxton Church Hall at 9.30 (not first Sundays or school holidays).
After School Club, Thursdays @ St John's.

Please note new addresses for e mail and parish webpage.

roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk

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



What Does It All Mean?

Looking at the television pictures of the floods, I wondered if there was a special prayer provided for this sort of situation, which I could use as well as the prayers we say in our own words. The one I found in the old Book of Common Prayer (1662) was this.

O Almighty Lord God, who for the sin of man didst once drown all the world, except eight persons, and afterward of thy great mercy didst promise never again to destroy it so again; We humbly beseech thee that, although we for our iniquities have worthily deserved a plague of rain and waters, yet upon our true repentance thou wilt send us such weather, as that we may receive the fruits of the earth in due season: and learn both by thy punishment to amend our lives, and for thy clemency to give thee praise and glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

There would be several difficulties in using this prayer in public worship now. The feminists would object to the use of the word “man” to mean the whole human race. Many people today would find the story of Noah’s Ark hard to believe. (Why do we believe what we believe? Do we really make up our own minds about each issue or do we normally simply believe what everybody else we know seems to believe?) Many people do not believe in a God Who intervenes in the daily working of the world in any case. Most of us also would have problems with the idea that the people in Worcestershire were worse sinners than us in Kent (who escaped the flooding) or that all the flooded out people in Worcestershire must all have been equally deserving of punishment because they were all equally flooded out. A lot of people would see no or little connection between sin and misfortune. They do not believe in a God Who punishes or rewards (at least not in this life).

This prayer is what we call pre-modern. It was written in a culture which saw no problem about the literal truth of the Bible, believed in a God Who controlled everything, a just God Who so ran the world that the righteous were rewarded and the wicked punished, a God Who responded to our prayers, our penitence and our thankfulness. (They also did not worry too much about political correctness.)

Theirs was a world which ultimately made sense. There was a reason for everything and that reason derived from God, Who created everything that is, sustains the Universe and does call all of us to account for the way we live our lives. There was also a world which human beings could influence. Things happened because people obeyed God or because they did not. Things could be changed by prayer or penitence.

So much for the pre-modern world. The modern world also believes that things happen for a reason. Just like our pre-modern ancestors, we think that we could be responsible for what has gone wrong and that maybe we can do something about it. Science is very like religion. It believes that there is an order to the way the world works, an order which human beings can discover. Like religion, science believes that we can so work with the forces which control the universe that we can bring about good ends, or that we can ignore or misuse these forces at our peril. The world essentially makes sense and we have it within our grasp to make the world better or worse according to our comprehension of its underlying principles.

You see what I mean? How quickly we blamed the floods on greedy property developers, permitted by stupid planning officials to build on flood plains, or on avaricious farmers who have efficiently drained the uplands at the expense of potentially drowning the lowlands, or on thoughtless householders who have replaced their lawns with patios and hard standing for cars, so that their gardens no longer soak up excess water. How soon we started blaming the floods on global warming, in turn generally blamed on our avaricious, wasteful, polluting lives. You see, modern man (I mean humanity!) also thinks that there must be a reason for whatever happens and that we could be the cause of, and therefore to blame for, events such as these. We also believe that we can make a difference if we repent of our industrial agriculture, excessive consumption and selfish lifestyles.

Before I go on, I had better say some words in defence of both the pre-modern and the modern. You must understand that the Bible does not make any straightforward connection between human wrong-doing and bad things happening.

There certainly is a connection, but the God of the Bible is not some short-sighted tyrant, smiting people when He is in a bad mood and sometimes smiting the wrong ones, simply because He is heavy handed. God's Law is love. Human sin is our failure to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Failure to love is responsible for a great deal of what goes wrong in the world, but there is no simple equation that says that only the wicked suffer and, the worse your suffering, the worse your sin must be. Neither is there any guarantee that the righteous prosper. Neither are we to think of people getting unjustly smitten as collateral damage. God tells Abraham that He will not destroy Sodom if there are as few as ten good men (people!) there (Genesis 18). Jesus tells His disciples not to imagine that a particular man was born blind because he or his parents were particularly wicked. Jesus says it was so *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*. Instead of asking who was to blame for the man's blindness, people should have seen an opportunity to demonstrate the healing power of love (John 9). On another occasion, they were talking about some Jews caught up in a massacre and some others who had been unlucky enough to be crushed when a tower collapsed (Luke 13). Jesus told them not to think that these victims were any worse sinners than anyone else. On the other hand, He did warn us all to repent in case we likewise perish. There is a connection between human rebellion against God and things going wrong in the world. The Bible is actually very subtle in the way it deals with the question of sin and punishment, of suffering, deserved and undeserved. It finally concludes all human beings to be guilty – except one, Jesus, Who suffers to take away the sins of all the rest of us. Very subtle. You've got to read it for yourself!

The modern response, of course, would be to think that Sodom and Gomorrah were unlucky to be caught up in a volcanic eruption, the blind man needed an operation, Pontius Pilate was guilty of war crimes, when he killed the Galileans, and Jerusalem City Council should have been prosecuted for a health and safety lapse in allowing people to approach too closely to an unsafe tower. Except for the first instance (Sodom and Gomorrah) the pre-modern and the modern approaches are the same. There is a reason for what has happened and we are

responsible for making the right response. The pre-modern and the modern, the religious and the scientific, are not mutually exclusive. They are basically similar approaches to comprehension, but from different angles, and I firmly believe that they complement one another. I look for explanations and solutions both in the realm of Theology and the moral law, and in the realm of Science and physical law.

(Going back to fairness in the modern approach to the problem of the floods, it is not enough to make wild accusations as to responsibility. There has to be proper research into the causes of the floods and the reason why defensive measures failed. We cannot blame farmers, developers, industrialists and government if they are only giving us what we demand in terms of cheap travel, cheap food, consumer goods, our own homes and low taxes. Any examination of what is wrong has to include the contribution every one of us makes to the state the world is in.)

What is intolerable is the notion that things just happen, that our lives are controlled by chance, that ultimately there is no reason and that we have no significance. As far as records go back, human beings have always believed that it is possible to make sense of the world and for us to change the world for good or ill. This has been the basis of our religion and our science and these, in turn, have elevated human beings from the status of cave dwellers to the technological mastery we now enjoy. Our confidence in ourselves, made in the image of a God infinitely greater than ourselves, has put us where we are today.

Now we have overreached ourselves and are drifting into post-modernism – the view that there is no ultimate truth or reason. For all sorts of reasons, we have lost confidence in science and religion. There is, for post-modern man (person!) no absolute truth, only what is meaningful for him (or her). If you think about it, this attitude is bound to erode every academic discipline. Students are no longer seeking the truth but “my truth”. Hence the popularity of “media studies” over pure mathematics. Without ultimate Truth as the goal, every human study is ultimately meaningless and intrinsically self-centred. We make ourselves the evaluators of everything, only to create a world in which there is nothing to

evaluate because the word “value” has no meaning.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Science thought it had more or less worked out how the world worked. Observation and reason could explain everything in terms of cause and effect. This turned out to be naïve. Radioactivity and Quantum Theory and the Theory of Relativity overturned what had seemed to be common sense notions of cause and effect. To take one example, a radioactive element spontaneously turns into something else atom by atom. A gram of such an element (e.g. Radium) contains millions of atoms. Any of those atoms could, at any instant, spontaneously turn into the next substance in the chain (Thorium). Most scientists believe that it is impossible (not merely very difficult, but intrinsically impossible) to predict when any given atom will change. However, we do know that the atoms will change at such a rate that it is possible to predict the half life (the precise time at which half the atoms have made the change) for any sample of Radium and all Radium samples have the same half life.

The individual atoms apparently change at a time determined purely by chance, but we can still predict how a lump consisting of millions of atoms will behave. Quantum uncertainties do not negate scientific laws, but they demonstrate that

cause and effect is a good deal more complex than we might naïvely have supposed.

Radioactivity and Quantum Theory and the Theory of Relativity did not show that the Science of Newton and the other classical scientists, the Science on which the Industrial Revolution and modern medicine were originally based, was wrong, but they showed that reality was much deeper than had previously been apprehended.

I suggest that the same thought may well apply to religion. Questions we ask today may make pre-modern religion appear unsophisticated. This does not necessarily prove the pre-moderns wrong. It is just that reality is much deeper than they supposed or indeed than we can know. Cause and effect, sin, punishment and redemption are ultimately mysterious, much more so than the behaviour of a Radium atom, but our naïve faith, like our Newtonian science, does work so long as eyes are not closed to the infinite depths of mystery in which it exists. And then there is infinitely more for the genuine seeker after Truth, after God.

Before the floods, I had intended to devote this month’s magazine article to the theme *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*. That would be a good start to our contemplation of these wonderful questions. Roger.

Friends of Kent Churches Cycle Ride

This takes place this year on 8th September. Cycle or walk round the churches of Kent. Any sponsorship you can get will be divided equally between FKC, for the benefit of all the churches in the county, and our own parish, where it will help to pay off our £13,000 deficit relative to the Diocese. If you can’t go (and I can’t this year) please sponsor someone who can. Also you can help by manning either of our churches to greet cyclists with a glass of squash and a friendly smile. You can also be sponsored for this. Enquiries to me (Roger).

Poverty and Hope and Harvest Festival

We celebrate Harvest on 7th October this year. As in recent years, we are not collecting fresh produce. It is much more helpful if you can bring tins and packets which can be distributed over a longer period to those who need them.

There will also be envelopes for your contribution to the annual Poverty and Hope Appeal and leaflets explaining this year’s projects. Poverty and Hope invites us to give 1% of our annual income (or whatever we feel moved to afford) to development projects in some of the poorest places in the world, working with local communities and churches as well as international organisations to reach the people that sometimes government and other agencies cannot reach.

Church Hall Draw June: £40 to Thelma Partridge, drawn by Gill Bogg; July : Di Maxwell, drawn by Maureen Holt
St John’s Draw: £5 each to M Burren (55), D Mattingley (66), V Shaw (102), C Dance (128 & 129), drawn by A Heasman.

Abbeyfield Kent

Between the railway line at Cuxton and the River Medway there is the old British Besto and Basket Factory building, in which many local people once worked. It is a good many years since any baskets have been made there, but it is now the headquarters of Abbeyfield Kent. Abbeyfield is a Christian organisation and it is very keen to be part of the local community. So Bishop Michael Gear, the Rector of Cuxton and Halling, the Mayor of Medway and various other local people, as well as dignitaries and supporters, were invited to the official opening on 19th July. The festivities included prayers and blessing, as well as a hog roast, toasts and speeches about the work of the society. I am sure Abbeyfield would welcome your continued prayers and I expect they would be happy to receive visitors, but it is a very busy office. So do make an appointment.

Back in 1956, a guards officer, Richard Carr-Gomm, was struck by the number of sad, lonely elderly people there seemed to be in Bermondsey. He resigned his commission and used his army gratuity to buy a house in Abbeyfield Road, East London. He created bed-sitting rooms for four elderly tenants and he himself was the first cook and housekeeper. Abbeyfield now has homes throughout the UK and in 14 countries overseas. The ethos is Christian, although, of course, people of any faith may become residents and their spiritual needs will be catered for as are those of Christians. The needs of the residents are paramount. The houses and homes are communities. In Kent, there are now 16 homes – 10 offering residential care and 6 providing sheltered accommodation. If you want to know more (including if you or someone you know might be interested in living in an Abbeyfield home) log on to www.abbeyfieldkent.org or call 01634 723007.

Cheer Up!

At least when it's raining, no-one can expect you to be out of doors working. Hence the old rhyme.
More rain, more rest; fine weather ain't always best!

Vandalism & Robbery in the Churchyards

In the same afternoon I had telephone calls about the theft of vases from Cuxton Churchyard and juvenile delinquents climbing on top of the old Bishop's Palace Wall at Halling. One might have expected that conscience would restrain people from stealing from or damaging church property. There ought to be some spirit of reverence and also concern for the feelings of those who will be distressed by such actions. Please don't do these things. Please stop your children if you know they are involved. Please report any incidents such as these to the police. People who do these things are breaking the law and should expect to face the consequences. Roger.



Cuxton WI

We had a much better attendance at our August meeting, and very little business to get through. Unfortunately, the Craft Group did not get placed in the Kent County Show competition for a child's tabard, but at least they took part. The tabard was on show at the meeting. We held the draw for the Bursary, which enables a member to go to Denman College, or an Adult Education course locally. It seems our visitor from New Zealand last month really enjoyed the evening and did not stop talking about it. She thought it was the highlight of her visit to England.

Our speaker, Mr. John Endicott, the curator of the Kent Police Museum: gave us a highly entertaining talk on the history of the police

force. It was most interesting and informative and he showed us some items from the museum, handcuffs chains, truncheons, helmets, whistles and the dreaded "birch". The museum is situated in Chatham Dockyard, and is shortly to be housed in larger premises, well worth a visit.

We were pleased to hear that our Poetry Group leader, Ida Self, has had her operation. which was successful and she is recovering well.

The outing to Downe House and RAF Chapel at Biggin Hill, was enjoyed by all. The weather was fine and we had a superb lunch provided by Westerham WI. Some members went to Lullingstone Castle and saw the "World Garden" designed by Tom Hart-Dyke. They had a tour of the castle and other parts of the garden.

The Walking Group went for another walk around Leeds Castle and Broomfield, a good two hour walk. We started with coffee at The George. We went on the walk and returned to the pub for lunch, which we ate outside in glorious sunshine.

The Garden Party, held in Dorothy Drew's garden, was a great success. The weather was not too bad, and we were sheltered by a huge gazebo in case it rained. Dorothy and her

daughter had made some mouth-watering cakes, and there was a raffle and Bring and Buy stall. We were pleased to make a decent amount of money to swell our funds.

Hopefully, we are all busy working on our entries for the Produce Show next month. The next meeting is on Thursday 6th September at 7.30 pm.

Ann Harris.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

15 th July	Logan Joshua Blenko	Borough Green
29 th July	Michaela Grace Willey	Snodland
29 th July	Callum Francis Willey	Snodland
5 th August	Emma Jane Wilkin	Hillcrest Drive
5 th August	Poppy Charlotte Frost	Chillington Close
9 th August	Claire Louise Chalker	Bush Road

Weddings:

14 th July	Paul Kirkham & Kirsty Macpherson	Halling
23 rd July	Martin McCabe & Susen Mockridge	Halling

Funerals:

25 th July	Gwendoline Elsie Seaton (87)	Kent Road
7 th August	Leonard Parris (90)	Meadow Crescent
8 th August	Sidney George Buss (87)	Vicarage Road

We also sadly record the death of Frederick Albert Jeffery (87), formerly of Sundridge Hill Cuxton and latterly of Wales.

Dates For Your Diaries

29th August: 7.30 Bible Study @ Rectory

26th September: 7.30 Bible Study @ Rectory

*31st August: Cheese & Wine With the Rector
(The Rectory) 7.30 onwards.

29th September: Soirée after Patronal Festival
Eucharist (6.30) at Cuxton.

8th September: Christian Aid Quiz at St Francis,
Strood.

7th October: Harvest Supper at Halling.

27th October: Quiz in Church Hall.

On October 13th Frank Smith will be giving a photograph presentation at St John's illustrating Halling over the last 100 years. Watch this space.

*Events marked with an asterisk are to raise funds for Andrew Daunton-Fear our CMS link mission partner in the Philippines.

It has unfortunately been necessary to cancel the two strawberry teas arranged for September, but we should like to thank Thelma Partridge and all those who supported the event on 28th July, which raised £200 for church funds.

Nature Notes July 2007

July 2007

Frank Topping, a Methodist minister and broadcaster, wrote the following words;

“ Let me find joy
In the beauty of a single flower,
A branch of a tree,
Or the vast embracing sky.”

This, for me, is why I began writing these nature notes, not just to have knowledge but to be aware of the beauty around me. Despite man's achievements over the centuries, he cannot conquer Nature's powers as we have seen in the recent floods. These powers range from a huge mountain range to the smallest blade of grass. This is what I have concentrated on this month.

This month we have experienced blustery west winds, periods of warm sunshine and heavy showers. As I have walked with Murphy along by the river, I have witnessed beautiful cloud formations; billowing clouds of grey, almost black and white have scudded or drifted, according to the strength of the wind, across the sky. From time to time, there have been clear blue skies, particularly in the evenings, then there has been thunder and lightning. The river levels have varied according to the tides. The sun has shed its beams across the water which has gleamed and sparkled and gulls have hovered overhead calling as they flew. When the tide has been low, the mudflats have revealed tiny streamlets meandering across the gleaming mud and gulls have left trails of their tiny footprints. Along the path by the grassy banks adorned with beautiful wild flowers, pied wagtails have strutted ahead of us. They are cheeky little birds. Cormorants have perched on the buoys in the river. Along the nearby pathways, buddleia, filling the air with its heady perfume, has bloomed in profusion. We have walked along the lanes in bright sunshine and I have noticed ripe hips and haws, blackberries and elderberries. Because of the heavy rain, fruit is ripening earlier than usual. Rowan and guelder rose berries have ripened and some horse chestnut leaves have begun to change colour, so very early. As is traditional in July, the birds have mostly ceased their singing and have hidden away to renew their plumage.

July 1994

The longest day has come and gone and the freshness of the leaves has become a dark green with a rather tired appearance. Where the heat of the sun has penetrated, the occasional ripe blackberry is to be seen, while rosebay willow herb bedecks verges, woodland paths and uncultivated fields. Birdsong is less frequent as plumage is renewed and new nests are built; the cuckoo has flown to warmer climes. Hot sunshine creates a silence peculiar to the heat, while bees buzz among the flowers and on the cricket pitch; leather upon willow is to be heard against a background of church bells.

July 1996

The first days of July were cool, summer seeming to have deserted us, but no rain fell except for one afternoon, when there was a heavy downpour accompanied by thunder and lightning. Warmth and sunshine returned in the second week to produce dryness and browning of lawns and grassland, while wheat, corn and barley ripened in the fields. Wild flowers continued to bloom in profusion, the white of May's flowers-cow parsley, hawthorn blossom, stitchwort and woodruff-giving way to reds, pinks, blues and mauves of poppies, field convolvulus, betony, hedge woundwort, mallow, cranesbills, willow herbs, Himalayan balsam, burdock, buddleia, knapweed, thistles, bellflowers and scabious. Birdsong ceased as new nests were built for second broods, while birds moulted then replenished their feathers. The freshness of summer was replaced by golden days of harvest time and when I picked the first blackberries from our sheltered and sun filled garden.

July 1997

July has begun with cloud, fresh temperatures and some rain, later to be accompanied by westerly winds. Wild flowers continue to bloom in profusion. Common centaury is to be found on the banks of lakes, while delicate scented meadow sweet bend their creamy heads in the breeze. The earth, after rain, exudes a fragrance only earth can bring. The second week brings hot sunshine and clear blue skies, while in the darkness of late evening; glow worms are to be found in the garden. Grasshoppers fill the afternoons with their chirpings. The wind then changes to blow from the east dispelling the humidity. Poppies, wild mignonette, mallow and white deadnettle adorn the marsh verges, while skylarks mount into the air to hover and sing their beautiful songs. By the third week, the south westerlies and the humidity return. I pick the first blackberries from the garden while stubble replaces rape plants in the fields and the crops ripen. Hot sun fills the days, birds sing and all is right with the world, then on the last day of the month, heavy rain falls and darkness casts its coat early for the time of year.

July 2007

As I read through my diary entries, I realized that the southeast, while not experiencing the scorching temperatures of 2006, had been pleasantly warm and ideal for walking with Murphy. The final day of the month was beautiful with billowing white clouds adorning a sun filled blue sky.

Elizabeth Summers.

100 Years of Scouting and the 21st World Scout Jamboree

“I’ve heard about it on the news and I’ve seen it in the papers but what’s all the fuss about? I know there’s a local scout group but are they involved in this? What really **IS** going on? Isn’t it dying out?!”

Well, “No” is the answer to the last question and perhaps I can enlighten you about what really is going on and why! Cuxton and Halling does have a scout group made up of seven sections – two Beaver colonies (6-8 years), three Cub Scout Packs (8-11), one Scout troop (11-14) and one Explorer Scout unit (14-18), a membership of just over a hundred and ten. These young people meet regularly either at the Scout Hall in Bush Road (Cuxton) or at the Halling Community Centre, with their volunteer leaders, and next year will celebrate 60 years of scouting in this community.

From the beginning of this year the scouts have been attending events and pursuing activities to celebrate Scouting’s 100 years. Robert Baden-Powell (or ‘B-P’ as he is always acknowledged) a soldier of distinction, organised a trial camp in August 1907 on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour with twenty boys of mixed backgrounds. This, together with a 1908 publication called “Scouting for Boys”, was such a success that boys (and girls too) began to organise themselves into troops of scouts which needed to be structured. Out of this The Boy Scout Association was born and since then, the organisation changed and reformed as the need arose and tastes changed. A movement for girls was created (The Girl Guide Association) although this has been run separately from Scouts. In 1966, the word ‘Boy’ was dropped (as was the cubs’ dyb, dyb, dyb; dob, dob, dob).

At the beginning of January, our troop and explorers camped at Gilwell Park, Chingford, for a weekend of adventurous, and some silly, activities. To say it was cold and muddy is an understatement, but everyone seemed to have fun. The cubs went on the Kent and East Sussex Railway to spend the afternoon at Bodiam Castle, the Beavers had a sleepover and we all had a centenary camp at the newly retrieved’ Buckmore Park (that was very wet, too!). In September we are looking forward to Kent Scouts’ “Big Event” which will be a day of activities and then in November there may be a chance to visit the “Live O7” event at the Dome in Greenwich which will be a major festival of Scouting in the 21st Century!

On Wednesday, 1st August all scouts across the world were to renew their Promise at 8am local time. The Law and Promise is what sets Scouting apart from the other youth movements in the world and gives ethos and spirituality, peace and friendship, adventure and development as the hidden agenda in all that we do as scouts. Our leaders, who receive nothing for the time they willingly give, bring their expertise and personal commitment, many because they were also young people in Scouting. So, on the actual day when Scouting was born as the inspired idea of ‘B-P’, the Beavers and Cubs had an activity day at the scout hall and the Scouts and Explorers met with other scouts and guides on the summer camp-site at Blacklands Farm, near East Grinstead, and all renewed their Promises together with those from other lands across the world. The promise has three strands – a scout promises to do his best to 1) do his duty to God and to the Queen, 2) to help other people, and 3) to keep the Scout Law – and each section has its own appropriate wording.

Scouting provides adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for these young people, over 600,000 in the United Kingdom. It is expected that 40,000 UK scouts will attend the Jamboree either as participants, staff or day visitors. Internationally, we have over 28 million young people enjoying the benefits of Scouting across 216 countries or territories and 169 of those have representative teams at the 21st World scout Jamboree as the climax of our centenary celebrations. Early on, Baden-Powell determined that an international festival could be used to build bridges between nations and act as a driving force for peace. The first one was at London Olympia in 1920.

From the 27th July to 8th August, 2007 some 60,000 scouts camped at Highlands Park Chelmsford in Essex for ten days of activity, adventure and international friendship. A further 60,000 day visitors were expected to join them to experience the excitement and unique atmosphere of the special global community where world Scouting, cultures, issues, faiths, cuisine and performance combined to form the biggest ever World Scout Jamboree. Our scouts and explorers, together with other leaders from Cuxton and Halling travelled to this mammoth event on Thursday, 2nd August, to experience for ourselves this biggest ever youth occasion. The Jamboree's motto is "One World, One Promise" and as well as the camp itself, there were activities, displays and stalls showing World Faiths, World Issues, World Performance, World Cuisine, World Culture and World Scouting. The highlighting theme is that this is One World and emphasises, for example, the special relationship the United Nations, an organisation recognising the strong contribution Scouting makes to communities worldwide and has given the World Organisation of the Scout Movement consultative status on global, economic and social issues related to young people.

The word "Jamboree", by the way, was chosen by BP for the first such event, based on the common Swahili greeting *jambo* meaning 'hello'. Jamboree is now an international term used to describe a large gathering of scouts. We were delighted that three of our group actually took part. Hannah (Scout) was selected as one of Strood District representatives and camped at the Jamboree; Francesca (Explorer) won an audition and took part in the Jamboree Show which highlighted in the arena – she rehearsed in Warwick for six weeks and worked together with a young cast of about 150; and Andy Melia (Leader) who, as a member of the Jamboree staff, ran the activity programme for a sub-camp for the two or so weeks. Hannah raised money for her place at Jamboree, Francesca and Andy gave of their time voluntarily.

Jamboree is all about friendship. Throughout the UK individuals, groups, companies and societies support the World Friendship Appeal which in turn helps hundreds of scouts from around the world attend the 21st World Scout Jamboree. To some, especially from poorer or developing countries, Jamboree is an impossible dream. In their countries it is sometimes a real challenge even to buy a basic uniform and resources let alone fund international travel to get to the UK. By the time the Appeal closed on 30th June, 2007 almost £500,000 was raised allowing many more young people to experience this amazing adventure, despite their financial difficulties. This gift from all those who supported has helped young people from all countries the opportunity to nurture friendship between Scouts of all races, religions and cultures by experiencing twelve days of fun, celebration and activities in the spirit of world peace.

Did we enjoy the experience? Of course we did! We met scouts from all over the world, ate a traditional Finish lunch of meatballs in a tent the size of a house, swapped badges with old and young alike, welcomed people we'd never met before, spoke to some scouts whose country is so poor they have no equipment but had a cheery smile for all of us and shook our hands in greeting, spoke to the organisers of the 22nd Jamboree which will be held in Sweden in 2011 and had fun!!

O God Almighty, who spreads the heavens as a tent to dwell in, graciously care for your sons and daughters who stand at the dawn of another day. Gather out of our camp all things that offend, and unite us in service towards one another, that this and every day may be well spent in friendship, peace and great gladness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

John G Bogg, Assistant Group Scout Leader, 30th Strood (Cuxton & Halling) Scout Group

From Dave & Di Maxwell:

During a recent cruise to Norway, while we were at sea, we shared in a Sunday Service led by the captain. There was something infinitely moving about singing the seafarers' hymn whilst actually

being afloat, nearing the Arctic Circle. During his address, the captain recounted his experience of having delivered the eulogy at the funeral of a very dear friend who had died in tragic circumstances, leaving behind a widow and two young children. He had felt that he had not been able to get across just what a really fine person his friend had been. Some time later, he came across the following poem that he said would have helped him to pay proper tribute to this husband, father and friend. On one of his regular visits to the bereaved family, and drawing on the inspiration offered by this poem, albeit of limited literary merit, he and his friend's widow sat at the kitchen table for hours, jotting down all the remembered traits and actions that had made his friend so special to both of them. It didn't take the pain of loss away, but it helped to celebrate so many positive and often funny or loving actions that had made this man so special. We hope that other people might find the poem helpful too.

The actual poem has had to be removed for copyright reasons.

Church Cleaning at St Michael's

The response to the request for help with the cleaning of St Michael's on the first Wednesday of each month has been encouraging and gratefully received. Thank you to those who have made the effort. On the first Wednesday in September we hope to do a few extras: cleaning the stone work and removing candle wax from carpets. So any EXTRA help would be most welcome. Please join us if you can. The programme for 5th September is 9.30 Holy Communion, 10.00 coffee in the hall, 10.45 CHURCH CLEANING, 12.00 lunch. Join us for as much of this programme as you wish.

Celebrating St Michael

Our Patronal Festival at Cuxton is of course 29th September (the last day you can pick blackberries). This year our Patronal Festival Eucharist will be at 6.30 pm, followed by a Soirée in the Church Hall at 7.30.

Mother & Toddler, Colour and Candle, St Michael's Angels

What ever you call it, our short service for pre-school children and parents/carers at St Michael's will be held weekly every Wednesday at 2.00 pm from 12th September. After the 15 minute service, there will be time for refreshments in play at the Church Hall, finishing in good time to permit picking up of older children from school.

NEW ISP: Most of my e mail address book has vanished into the aether. Please e mail me if you want to be able to receive e mails from me in future. roger@cuxtonandhalling.org.uk Roger.