

Parish of Cuxton and Halling



September 2024

60p

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

Services September 2024

1 st September Trinity 14	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Deuteronomy 4 vv 1-9 p182 James 1 vv 17-27 p1213 Mark 7 vv 1-23	
8 th September Nativity BVM Accession HMK	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Joshua 1 vv 1-9 p216 Revelation 21 v22 -22 v5 p1250 John 19 vv 25-27 p1088	
15 th September Trinity 16	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Isaiah 50 vv 4-9 p737 James 3 vv 1-12 p1214 Mark 8 vv 27-38 p1012	
22 nd September Trinity17	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling	Jeremiah 11 vv 18-20 p770 James 3 v13 – 4 v10 p1215 Mark 9 vv 30-37 p1013	
29 th September S Michael & All Angels	9.30 Holy Communion Cuxton 11.00 Holy Communion Halling 6.30 Songs of Praise Cuxton	Revelation 12 vv 7-12 p1242 Matthew 18 vv 1-10 p985	
Holy Communion Cuxton 9.30 Wednesdays		Holy Communion Halling 9.30 Thursdays	
4 th September	Ezekiel 34 vv 1-11 Matthew 20 vv 1-16	5 th September	Ezekiel 36 vv 23-28 Matthew 22 vv 1-14
11 th September	II Thessalonians 3 vv 6-18 Matthew 23 vv 27-32	12 th September	I Corinthians 1 vv 1-9 Matthew 24 vv 42-51
18 th September	I Corinthians 3 vv 1-9 Luke 4 vv 38-44	19 th September	I Corinthians 3 vv 18-23 Luke 5 vv 1-11
25 th September Ember Day	I Corinthians 7 vv 25-31 Luke 6 vv 20-26	26 th September	I Corinthians 8 vv 1-13 Luke 6 vv 27-38

The 9.30 & 11.00 Services on 6th October will be Harvest Festival Services at which donations to the Foodbank of tinned and packeted goods will be welcome (not baked beans), also monetary donations to the Poverty & Hope Appeal, please. Envelopes will be available in church for cash or else donate online. Please see page 6. [Poverty and Hope Appeal - Diocese of Rochester \(anglican.org\)](http://www.anglican.org)

Copy date October Magazine: 13th September 8.30 am Rectory

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St John's Draw: £5.00 each Mrs S Mitchell (63), Mr G Mitchell (68) & Miss C Mitchell (72)



For Diaries

14th September Friends of Kent Churches Bike Ride

(forms from Rector)

21st August Teddy Bears' Picnic Plus

2.00 Rectory Grounds

31st August Frank & Jean Concert

St Michael's Church 6.30 pm

29th September 6.30 Songs of Praise Cuxton

(Please choose a hymn which means something special to you and let John Bogg or the Rector know your choice at least one week in advance.)



October 6th Harvest Barbecue Church Hall 12.00

19th October Quiz Church Hall 7.30.



From the Rector

A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream~
Fades at the break of day.

As I approach three score years and ten and the prospect of retirement, I have been thinking a lot about the passage of time, this ever-rolling stream which bears all its sons away. The words are from Isaac Watts' Hymn *O God Our Help in Ages Past*, which is based on Psalm 90 – both psalm and hymn being among my favourites.

I was recently sent a copy of the front page of the first ever Cuxton Parish Magazine, published 1st January 1875 by Canon Charles Colson. Among the burials recorded is that of the great Rev'd Canon Robert William Shaw, Charles Colson's predecessor, who had been interred 3rd January the previous year. He died at the age of 69 (the same age as me), having served as Rector of Cuxton for 42 years (against my mere 37). He was also the first Rural Dean of Rochester and the first honorary canon of Rochester Cathedral. Canon Shaw's achievements included the restoration and refurbishment of St Michael's Church (He is largely responsible for its present appearance.), the construction of the old Rectory, which many of you remember, and the establishment of the National School which was situated at the east end of the Church where there are now two houses.

It occurred to me that I have a link to this man, albeit a rather tenuous connection. When I first came here I knew at least one person (Lettie Woolmer) who had been born while Canon Colson was the Rector and was christened by him and who had attended Canon Shaw's old National School as a pupil. In fact, this building survived until 1964 and many older people remember it being used for various social & educational activities. I also knew a lady (Grace Jefferys) from Halling who remembered walking with other pupils from Halling School for lessons at the old Cuxton School (cookery I believe). How very different was life in Cuxton in the mid nineteenth century from what it is today – but it's only four generations away.

When we held a service in which we celebrated Jim Coggers' seventy years singing in the choir at Cuxton, I remember the preacher suggesting that this length of service in one place was perhaps peculiar to his generation. Generations before his didn't live long enough. Subsequent generations tend not to stay in one place for a sufficient length of time to accrue all those years of service. Having said that, however, there are people at both Cuxton & Halling who have put in highly creditable long stints of service to their parish churches.

I can remember myself going to Gillingham Grammar School on a bus like the one in the picture, possibly that very vehicle, which was probably based at Gillingham Depot, though I can't quite make out the fleet number. Many readers will remember buses with conductors which, on most routes, were much more frequent than current services and kept more reliably to the timetable. Concomitantly, there were far fewer cars on the roads, the countryside was quieter, the air was cleaner, walking from place to place was much pleasanter and safer and, in my (not universally shared) opinion, our quality of life was much greater.

I don't remember St Laurence Chapel at Upper Halling which you can see in the background of the picture – roughly where the Jubilee Hall now stands. Many people, however, do have good memories of attending Sunday School there and attending services. There is a plaque in the Jubilee Hall commemorating Hilda Still who taught in Sunday School faithfully for many years. The Church does have the right still to hold

services in the Jubilee Hall, though we have not done so since CoViD.

When I came to Halling, the Halling Institute was in a very poor state and used as a furniture repository. Older people remember it when it was very much a centre for the village with all sorts of sporting and social activities going on. Many of the facilities were of the highest standard. I understand that there was a ball room with a sprung floor. On the other hand, some were more basic. The swimming pool was just a concrete reservoir with no deep or shallow ends.

On the same site, we now have the Halling Community Centre, which provides modern, well-maintained facilities for regular and for one off events. Many of us enjoyed the fireman's pantomimes over several years and the large hall was where we gathered for the King's Coronation, a large screen showing the service on TV.

Having been Rector of Cuxton and Halling all these years, it means a lot for me to christen the children of those I have married and to marry those whom I have christened, to share life's most significant events with more than one generation of the same family. Recently, I christened the child of someone I had both christened and married. Visiting a man in his late eighties lately, it occurred to me that I had known his parents.

I recognise the names on the stones in the churchyards and cemetery, people I have known personally and people whose names I recognise, although they died before I moved here, because their names are still fresh in the minds of those who love them and still speak of them.

I sometimes look around our churches and think of those whom we love but cannot see, *who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light* - members of my own family, friends, neighbours, parishioners. I also think of those many generations of Christians, including my predecessors as Rectors of Cuxton and Vicars of Halling, who lived lives very different from our own, but worshipped where we worship, with whom we are one in the Body of Christ, and in fellowship with whom we shall share the eternal life which is God's free gift to all who believe in Him & repent of their sins.

One of Canon Toone's dogs is buried in my garden with a memorial tablet and two of my dogs in graves unmarked save for a *Pyracantha* on each. "G+M Lacey" is inscribed in the cement surface of the patio, though now nearly worn away. There are still people who remember the model railway which at one time inhabited the cellar of the old Rectory. The new Rectory is Mr Allington-Smith's legacy. Thirty years ago, there were still people in Cuxton who could remember the sad hymns they sang for a while after Canon Toone's wife's death in the 1930s.

[I like the story of the vicarage family whose goldfish dies. The children decide to bury it in the garden. The vicar's wife is amused to hear her oldest son, imitating his father's most solemn voice, intone, *In the Name of the Father & of the Son & into the hole he goes!*]

Loyalty means a lot to me, my being loyal to other people, other people's loyalty to me, our loyalty to the place where we live (both our physical environment and our community), our faithfulness to generations past and our responsibility to generations yet to come – that we should be good stewards of our legacy, that we should be found faithful in our own generation, and, in our turn, pass on a rich inheritance to our successors.

It makes perfect sense to me that Tom Jones should long for *the Green, green grass of home* and that the singer sings of his Kathleen who tried to make a new life in America having left her native Ireland:

The roses all have left your cheek
I watch them fade away and die
Your voice is sad when ere you speak
And tears bedim your lovely eyes.

But is this all just so much romantic twaddle in a fast-moving world, in which people frequently move home, landscapes are radically altered by quarrying, motorway construction, house-building and commercial development, we keep in touch on the internet or the telephone, rather than by popping round next door, or fly across the world to spend time with friends and relatives who live in distant lands? I was astonished when CoViD restrictions brought to my notice just how many people have family in other parts of the world (and missed them sorely when travel was banned as we went through the various lockdowns).

Globalisation has achieved a great deal in promoting economic growth and prosperity for billions of people, albeit at the expense of some loss of community. Most people would rather have their own car and go where they want when they want than a bus every quarter of an hour to Maidstone or Gillingham and the opportunity to walk along empty lanes for the rest of the time. (When I was a child, my mother used to send me to the shop when there wasn't a bus due on the grounds that there wasn't likely to be much other traffic. Now there is no shop in the village where I was brought up, even fewer buses than there were then, the lanes experience a volume of traffic which would once have been inconceivable and no-one would dare let a small child out on his own, and they share a rector with the next village!)

So I was interested in this piece in *The Times* following the participation of the England football team in the European Cup. (Libbie Purves (*The Times* 16/7/24): "But more interesting to me was the emphasis of history in Southgate's ideas about "how we conduct ourselves" in victory and defeat. He drew on the strength individuals can find in the past, telling each player their legacy number, the point where they stand chronologically in a 150-year procession of England players, starting in 1872 with the Victorian goalie Robert Barker. As each man goes out to take a penalty he is told to speak his own name and his number: young Saka went out as 1,253, so looking at the goalmouth he was not alone but had invisible hundreds behind him, expecting and fortifying.")

Apparently, coaches at the highest levels of sport are increasingly adopting this strategy. Encourage today's players to regard themselves in the context of history. Where do they stand in all of this? Where do they belong in the great scheme of things? Remember all those who've gone before. What inheritance will this generation pass on to those who come after? We can seek to follow the good examples of our predecessors. Hopefully, we can learn from their mistakes. We are inspired by our desire not to let them down. We are supported

by our knowledge that they overcame all kinds of setback to achieve what they did. We feel a responsibility to pass on their legacy to those who will come after us.

After all, we ought not to see ourselves as individuals, ploughing a lonely furrow, self-sufficient, ultimately independent of other people, going our own way, looking to our own personal interests. We belong. We belong to our families, our community, our Church, our country, our world. We are members one of another. We belong to God. We have nothing which we did not receive. *Freely, ye have received, freely give.*

Hebrews 12¹: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Our time here is transient, but none of us is insignificant. We each have our own place in God's plan. One day, we'll be other people's memories. One day, most of us will have been forgotten by mortal men. But we shall all have had our part to play in God's purposes. (*We most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in.*) There is an eternal inheritance laid up for us in heaven so long as we put our trust in Him.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

Roger.

My Retirement

Since the passage of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Age Limit) Measure 1975, it has been normal for clergy to retire at the age of 70. The bishop does have discretion to allow clergy to continue past that age and I had hoped that Bishop Jonathan would have exercised that discretion in my case. I gave him a number of reasons why I thought that he should do so, but both the authority & the responsibility are his and, after due & prayerful consideration and consultation with others, Bishop Jonathan has decided that it is in the best interests of the Church and of me personally that I should retire on my next birthday – 30th November. I hope to have the opportunity nearer the time to express my appreciation for all that the parish and its inhabitants have meant to me over the years, as you still do.

From the Registers

Funeral:
26th July

Claire Stephanie Chandler

Pilgrims Way



Poverty & Hope Appeal

Since 1977 Rochester Diocese has, through this annual appeal, helped meet the most basic needs that all of God's children deserve: a safe place to live; food to eat; and a way to something better. We can only make a small contribution in response to a huge worldwide challenge, but we do what we can, working through long-term trusted partners.

Nearly £20,000 was raised in the 2023 Appeal and we are most grateful to every church and individual who contributed. Every penny of this is going to our seven beneficiaries: four international Christian

Charities and three Companion Dioceses in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Over the last five decades, Poverty and Hope has focused on five core themes: Agriculture, Education, Healthcare, Women's Empowerment and Community Advocacy. This year we are adding another one: Peace. War and violence has devastated millions of lives in recent years and we can't just watch helplessly. We are God's hands and feet (and money) on earth, so please donate generously!

PERCY PIGEON'S PERCEPTIONS

Good day to you all. I hope you are all well. We are back in Six Acre Wood now after our holiday at Leybourne Lakes. The weather was not good and as a result the foraging was poor. Once the children started their school holidays there was a little improvement in crusts crisps and popcorn. We came home early, stopping off at St Johns, Halling on the way back. The fishermen at Halling left crumbs of sausage rolls and pasties so we fared a little better. There's no place like home! Back in Six Acre Wood with our usual roost intact and our usual supplies up to their high standard with seeded bread, peanut granules and suet crumbs.

We are still beset with crows and magpies. Crows have the intelligence of a 7 year old human child. They recognize faces, make tools, use currency amongst themselves, understand physics and are self aware. They've been seen doing things like dropping nuts in roads for cars to run over and waiting for the road to empty so they can to pick up the seeds from the street. We pigeons are also intelligent, recognising human faces - especially those who regularly feed us of course. Unlike the crows, we never demand food from humans. We sit and peck patiently. We can tell the time and know when the school runs will be happening, so we gather waiting patiently for your littl'uns to drop pieces of their snacks. They almost always do. We are looking forward to term starting in September.

We overheard a couple talking about Christmas! It appears that Christmas cards are already on sale in Asda and a firm outside Maidstone is selling Christmas trees in containers to be grown on for the festive season! That is wishing the year away. Philippa tells me that the best Christmas cakes are made in August and "fed" regularly until December! Hoorah for suet crumbs!

However, as I write it is 30° which is too hot for avians. We shelter amid densest leaves, or in cool, damp areas. Don't forget to put out water for us throughout the summer months. We drink and bathe too!

Coo coo.

Percy.

Still No Bats!

I still haven't seen any bats this year when sitting peacefully in my garden as the shades of night lengthen and the day draws towards its quiet conclusion. It has been suggested that the diminished numbers of bats may be related to the reason why it is much more comfortable outdoors in the evening than it used to be. There are far fewer mosquitoes about. We might not miss them much, but apparently there is a growing global shortage of insects – possibly due to climate change and the use of pesticides & that is worrying!

Starting Out.

A teenage lad asks his wealthy grandfather where all his money came from. The old man replies. “When I was your age, I got a paper round, saved my wages and bought an old bike for £10. I did it up & sold it for £12.00 and bought another old bike and did that one up and so on. After six months hard graft, I had £25 in my post office account. Then my grandfather died and left me £10,000,000!”

An American psychology lecturer begins his course on emotions by probing the students’ existing understanding. He asks the student from California, “What is the opposite of depression?” “Elation” comes the reply. The student from the Bible Belt is asked, “What is the opposite of misery?” and responds with the phrase “ineffable joy”. Then the lecturer asks the student from Texas, “What is the opposite of woe?” “Giddy up, I guess,” says the student from Texas.

A schoolboy tells his careers teacher that he would like to become a writer. “What sort of thing would you like to write?” enquires the teacher. “Oh!” says the boy, “powerful stuff eliciting by way of response the most fundamental of human emotions – frustration, anger, despair – that sort of thing.” “Well,” said the teacher, “I think you should apply for a job writing error messages for Microsoft.”

The owner of a picture gallery tells a budding artist that he has some good news and some bad news for him. The good news is that a visitor to the gallery admired the artist’s work and when the owner assured him that the value of this artist’s work was sure to increase after the artist’s death, he bought up every one of his pictures. “That’s brilliant news,” says the artist. “What can the bad news be?” he asks. “The bad news,” says the gallery owner, “is that the man who bought all your pictures is your doctor.”

O Tempora O Mores

I’ve always thought that Jerome K Jerome’s *Three Men in a Boat* is one of the funniest books in the English language. I’ve just reread it, this time in the 2022 edition. The blurb on the back cover says, “This comedic masterpiece brings to life memories of a lost era of innocence and its good-natured jokes remain as fresh today as the day they were penned.” I heartily agree.

The publisher’s note at the beginning, however, states, “Throughout the text readers may find that some of the language used and sentiments expressed are offensive and unacceptable by today’s standards. These reflect the attitudes and usage common at the time the book was written. In no way do they reflect the attitude of the publishers.” If you’re willing to risk reading it and making up your own mind, you’ll find it on the church bookstall!

On The Ropes – July 2024

Sadly, the unavailability of several of our small band of regular bell-ringers meant we were only able to support Sunday service ringing on July 6th. A repertoire of ‘Grandsire’, ‘Bob Doubles’, ‘Plain Hunt’ and ‘Reverse Canterbury Pleasure Place’ kept us entertained and (hopefully) anyone else listening as well. On Sunday 25th, both the towers of St. Michael’s and St. John’s were pleased to play host to the Society of Rambling Ringers on the occasion of their 72nd bell-ringing tour. This 20-strong band of very good ringers had gathered together from all over England and also included a couple of ringers from as far afield as Holland. They were spending the week visiting church towers around Kent, ringing at six or seven different towers a day. This involves both considerable organisational skills and also camping, neither of which appeals to me at all - I doff my hat to them! Some of you might have heard the Ramblers also ringing the bells at Wouldham the following Wednesday morning.

The Society was founded by John E ‘Jack’ Cook on 18th August 1951 in the Churchyard at Horbling, Lincolnshire, which was the final tower of the Society’s first tour. Since then, only the pandemic has interrupted their series of annual excursions. I hope the Rambling Ringers enjoyed ringing the bells at the churches of our joint benefice as much as we enjoyed listening to them.

Erin Doublés

You Can see the Works

What's so fascinating about steam engines? Electric and diesel trains are cleaner, faster and safer, but we all love steam. In fact thousands of volunteers put millions of hours of work into maintaining and running preserved steam railways. Hundreds of thousands of visitors enjoy riding on them. They barely make ends meet, and yet enthusiasts keep them running and we'd all be very disappointed if they didn't. They are even building new steam railway locomotives just for what you might call the hobby market.

There seems to be a special connection with vicars. You're always running into them hanging about locomotive sheds. One of my most special birthday presents was a driving lesson on a steam engine on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. The *Titfield Thunderbolt* is one of my favourite films. [When a branch line is scheduled for closure following a dubious deal between officialdom and the proprietor of a bus company, a group of perfectly decent ordinary English people decide to run the trains themselves. The vicar gets to drive the locomotive and so does the bishop.] Also the first time I ever went to the cinema on my own was to see the Great St Trinian's Train Robbery [ticket 1/=, the Plaza, Gillingham] – one of the funniest films ever made.

I think that there are two reasons why steam is so fascinating. One is that the development of the steam engine made possible the Industrial Revolution and therefore the modern world and that Britain was first! The other, more visceral, reason for the appeal of steam is that you can see the works. You can feel the fire. You can hear the hiss of the steam. You can see the pistons and valve gear. You can feel the power. I am the proud possessor of a Mamod stationary steam engine. I've used it sometimes in church to demonstrate what Whitsun means to the children. You fill the boiler with water. Then you light a methylated spirit lamp and put it under the boiler. After a while, it all begins to sizzle and hiss and, via a piston and simple valve gear, the resultant steam turns a flywheel. As a child I used to connect Meccano machines to the flywheel, which it would then power. I even managed to rig it up so that it could move itself. I turned my stationary engine into a locomotive by way of Meccano.

What has all this to do with Whitsun or rather with the Holy Spirit Whose advent we celebrate at this festival seven weeks after Easter? You can't see the energy in the methylated spirit, but it is there. Lighting the spirit lamp releases the energy in the chemical bonds which link the carbon and hydrogen atoms in the alcohol. This energy is emitted as heat, which excites the water molecules in the boiler. When the water molecules are so excited that they turn into a gas (steam) they dramatically expand and create a pressure which moves the piston, which moves the wheel, which moves anything connected to the wheel. An engine is an energy converter. In the same way you cannot see the Holy Spirit. You cannot see the power of God or the grace of God. Nevertheless God's power is working within us. In fact the New Testament uses the Greek word *energeia* [ἐνεργεία], which gives us our word *energy*, for the power of God working within Christian believers. You cannot see the Spirit, but you can see the effects of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit working within us enables us to work the works of God. You can see the works!

Reculver



On 17th July, it was the Mothers' Union outing to Reculver. A group of us – not all MU members – from this parish set out separately in various cars. Unfortunately the M2 had been blocked by an accident and those of us travelling were delayed to different degrees. We finally all made it to Reculver, however, where we received a warm welcome at that excellent hostelry the *King Ethelbert*. The food was good, though we ate rather in relays as a result of our staggered arrivals. After the meal, we had a wander round the seaside and the remains of the old Roman Fort & the Mediaeval Church. We noted that this was where the bouncing bombs for the Dambusters Raid were tested. The Kent coast has always played a major part in the defence of these islands. It was a pleasantly warm day and there were plenty of people about. You could see the course of the Wantsum Channel, which in earlier years made Thanet an island. It was surprisingly (to your correspondent) wide. Some of those who had had their dinner early then called in at a cafe for tea. And so home, slightly delayed by a minor accident on one of the lanes leading back to the Thanet Way

What's In A Name?

Last month I recounted an article from the *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser* dated October 26th 1852, which among other things gave a description of the interior of St. Michael's church prior to its substantial Victorian "restoration" in 1867. The *Journal's* correspondents started their account with a discussion of the etymology of the village name of "Cuxton", quoting a few derivations such as "Cuckoo-stone" and "Cuckold-stone"; which appeared to be made up for their amusement value – a tradition maintained by local journalists even today!

As far as I know, the earliest written mention of the village of Cuxton comes from 880 AD, in the form of a charter reproduced in the *Textus Roffensis*. The *Textus Roffensis* – "Tome of Rochester" - appears to be the work of a single scribe (possibly a monk at St. Andrew's Priory) who had access to Anglo-Saxon records dating back to the time of King Aethelberht (who reigned from 589-616) and painstakingly rendered them into the Latin of the time. (Rochester Cathedral has it in their custody and the whole thing has been placed "on line" on the Cathedral web-site, along with translations and lots of helpful notes if you are interested in that sort of thing.) The 880 charter related to Cuxton records that:

"...Æthelwulf, king of the Saxons, will give for the remedy of my soul land to the church of Saint Andrew the Apostle of Christ and to Swithwulf the bishop some part in that place called Cucolanstan and the Church of Saint Michael the Archangel..."

One theory is that the monks behind the *Textus Roffensis* were attempting to legitimise fraudulent manuscripts. This charter is indeed decidedly dodgy, as Aethelwulf died in 858 and was thus not in a position to give "Swithwulf the bishop" anything. Perhaps it was a sneaky land-grab by said bishop! Nevertheless, the existence of a village by the name of "Cucolanstan" in the See of Rochester at around 880 is unarguable.

Many of you will be familiar with "Cucola's Stone", or least the one that the Scouts set down by Cuxton's Scout hall in 1977. The little plaque on it notes that *"this village was named after Cucola who had a stone here"* and indeed, the accepted derivation of the village name is that an Anglo-Saxon chieftain named Cucola had once set down a marker stone to delineate "his patch". The old English word for stone is *stân*, (pronounced 'Starn') and so it takes no great leap of the imagination to see how 'Cucola's Stân' might have become 'Cuxton'. However, it's worth noting that a lot of place names ending in '- ton' are derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for a fenced enclosure or dwelling – *"tun"*. Anglo-Saxons certainly lived in gated communities, but that was to keep their cattle in and unwanted raiders out, rather than for social cachet.

"Cucola's Tun" doesn't seem unreasonable as a place name, but exactly whereabouts was the mysterious Cucola's 'Tun'? In 1998, an archaeological survey conducted in advance of the CTRL just to the east of Sundridge Hill, unearthed a small Anglo-Saxon cemetery comprising 36 individual graves and two cremation urns. Also found was evidence of an earlier Iron Age enclosure. It seems that Cuxton's Iron Age settlement had carried on being a settlement, right through the Roman occupation and through into Anglo-Saxon times. Many of these burials were associated with "grave goods" comprising jewellery (including two gold pendants), shield bosses, spearheads, knives, buckles, fittings, mounts, shears, chatelaines, keys, rings, glass bead necklaces, coins, pottery vessels and two purses. The finds were dated as being from around AD 580–700. It seems that the site was used for burial by an extended family unit or a small group of families, who were possibly associated with a nearby farm. Compared to similar sites (such as the much larger one at Eccles) there was an unusual percentage of graves with "grave goods", suggesting a wealthy community. And it most probably would have been a Christian community. In the grave of a young woman ("Grave 306") a cylindrical needle case was found, made from a copper alloy and with ornate chains and a lid, bearing the mark of the Cross and a fish design, both Christian symbols.

In 597, Pope Gregory had sent a 40-strong mission, led by Augustine, to England in order to (re-) Christianise Kent. Augustine landed at the Isle of Thanet and was favourably received by the King of England's first Anglo-Saxon Kingdom, the afore-mentioned Aethelberht, whose wife Bertha was already a Christian. The mission was a success, with Augustine becoming Archbishop of Canterbury in around 600 AD. By 604 he had established Bishoprics in both London and Rochester. So given that Rochester had a Catholic Bishop in 604 AD, evidence of Christianity in the outlying community is perhaps not surprising. In Anglo-Saxon times, both churches and cemeteries tended to be on the outskirts of communities, and so Cucola and his family would have lived between the two, possibly on higher ground by Whorne's Place, or at Ranscombe. St. Michael's is certainly built close to or on the site of the original Anglo-Saxon church, which itself was the site of an earlier Roman structure.

The location of the church is interesting. It is in a commanding position overlooking the banks of the river and at the intersection of two ancient pathways that have been used since Neolithic times; the Pilgrims Way and the North Downs Way (before it took a detour through Upper Bush). In his book, *Cuxton – A Kentish Village*, Derek Church theorised that the eponymous stone may have been placed close to the church, which certainly makes sense given its strategic location. And that raises another little etymological possibility. The Old English word for church is 'kirke', itself coming from 'circul', a word for a ring or meeting place – both, phonetically, not so far away from 'Cucola'. Some Romano-British mausoleums, such as the one at Keston Park in Bromley, had a circular structure and were often built on the site earlier pagan structures. Was the Roman structure at St. Michael's a mausoleum? And could Cuxton's village name instead be derived from *kirke stan* or *circul stan* – the church stone? Maybe not. But I think it would be kind of neat if it was...

Keith Hodges.

Tommy's Talking Points

So here we are having lunch at Knole Park. Master had never been there and neither had I. So it was all very interesting.

We met our friends where we had met them once before – at Ightham Mote. On that occasion, there weren't many people about. The weather was quite cold, misty & a bit drizzly. The paths were slick with mud. This time it was pleasantly warm, though a bit drizzly and only briefly as bright as when this picture was taken. There were hundreds of people around – most of them with dogs. In the beautiful Wealden landscapes, this was heaven on earth.



We commenced our perambulation following some of the same route as we did last time. Then we diverged onto different woodland and field tracks. The human contingent felt that the distance prescribed in the guide was as long as they would want to walk – 8½ miles. The concern was that our walk might turn out to be a lot longer than this because they get lost so much. But we didn't. The directions were mostly easy to follow and the electronic wizardry on their 'phones at the end confirmed that we had indeed covered the distance specified. Master had been as sceptical about the accuracy of their smart 'phones as he was about our ability to keep to the right route. He seemed to have been proved wrong about both when we sat in the cafe back at Ightham Mote and our friend's phone flashed up 13.5 km. Doubt was cast, however. when, like the clock which strikes 13, the counter flicked over to 14 km while we were sitting still.



Anyway, be that as it may, it was a marvellous walk. We saw some beautiful pigs, which Master thinks might have been Berkshires. We also saw more common farm animals on the way and we dogs had to be kept on our leads for part of the time. When we got to Knole Park, it was leads all the way. The park is full of fallow deer, mostly spotted, a few white, many of them sporting impressive antlers. The deer were very tame, though we were warned not to approach too closely. They were an amazing sight. The big house at Knole is also impressive, but we didn't go in. The natural world has so much more to offer and, anyway, I don't think we dogs would have been allowed.

In the guide, there were four "steps" from Ightham Mote to Knole Park, but only two coming back, though it was supposed to be the same distance. There were lots of twists and turns and choices to make between different paths necessitating a lot of directions on the way to Knole. Coming back, however, it was mostly one long track and presumably the authors of the guide felt there was little need for further directions. Our humans, however, were not confident that they were on the right pathway and became increasingly despondent as a result of the prolonged absence of confirmatory landmarks or signposts. Master thought this might be the basis of a sermon about persevering in hope even when faith is wavering*. We dogs sensibly enjoyed running up and down and sniffing the terrain without worrying about whether we were going in the right direction or how far it might be. The key word in the guide proved to be *eventually* and eventually the member of the party with eidetic visual memory recognised a pond we had seen on our April expedition and, sure enough, we soon came to the hoppers' cottages where we all remembered resting and eating cake (not the dogs) previously and now sat for some water and a bit of a rest once more. From there it was but a short walk to the Mote, tea and ice cream, back to the cars and home.

Enzo's Observations

I had never seen pigs before, and they were very strange up close. So strange I forgot to bark at them. It was very tempting to nip their tails through the bars of their sty when they came up close. There were very many deer too in Knole park. I have never seen a herd, so many growing antlers. They seemed very confident and gathered together to watch the golfers tee off. It was a surreal view and I had to bark at it. My humans had been to Knole without me, and said the house is very lovely. We admired the courtyards, and the windows and the brick chimneys. They have even read a book about its history by Vita Sackville-West, and said that Virginia Woolf described going to lunch there in her diary 100 years ago. The rabbit and deer smells there are outstanding, and I don't think anyone has written about them properly.



The Humans need words to encourage them that they are not lost. They had a narrow escape when they understood the words to mean that they should cut through the grounds of a private hospital.



I had to bark at lots of people who approach my Humans and disturb their peace and quiet without introducing themselves properly and asking my permission. This is especially a problem in the school holidays and when my Humans stop to have a rest. Tommy and I got on well together, and enjoyed very much mooching in the undergrowth. The cafe at Ightham Mote is very good with cool umbrellas and tables to lie under, water bowls, and dusty places to go to sleep while the Humans drone on about the idea of public service after a long walk.

* John Henry Newman got there first and put it better. "Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see, the distant scene; one step enough for me."