

### The Voice of Halling August 2021

So, the first edition of a new magazine for Halling, an exciting prospect! I don't know for how long we've had a village or parish magazine. The oldest I've got is January 1890. It was published by the church, written by the vicar (C F Howes) and printed by G F Gay of Snodland. It was available at the Post Office and Mr Brown's Upper Halling (presumably the shop which was later Baker's general store and then a ship's chandler, maybe a reader will have more information on this). There was a charge of three halfpence (about ½ p) – which is outrageous considering that TVOH is free. Mr Howe's magazine wasn't available online either! As well as a couple of sheets of Halling news, however, you also got a twenty page illustrated national magazine with stories, news and information about Christian matters.

In that January 1893 issue, Mr Howe reported that he didn't think that things had gone backwards in the previous year. As it is impossible to stand still, church life must therefore have gone forward. Certainly, larger numbers were attending the Holy Communion service which they had inaugurated to follow Mattins. They were raising funds for a vestry and an organ chamber. There was to be a band of church workers whose anniversary day would be Ascension Day with Holy Communion at 5.00 am and then Evensong and tea in the evening. Being a Thursday, most of these church workers would have been at their day jobs in the fields, cement factories or paper mills between the two services. There was to be a penny bank to encourage poor people to save against a rainy day. Mr Howe advocated a temperance society to discourage drunkenness and alcoholism. They were also planning a parish mission.

The records showed that in 1889 there had been 78 Baptisms, 10 Marriages and 25 Funerals. I always like to see more christenings than funerals! Two of the weddings were on Christmas Day. One of the funerals is of a woman with the same surname as a widow who has died recently. Very likely, this lady was married to a descendant of the husband of the woman who was buried 9<sup>th</sup> December 1889 as it is an old Halling name.

The headmaster of Halling School, Mr Scholey, had arranged for the children to perform an entertainment at Halling Institute on 7<sup>th</sup> February. The Gardeners' Society had held its show on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Mr T Flint won first prize for a Primula – which I wouldn't have expected to be in flower in January. The other prizes were for eschalots, onions, Savoys and Brussels spouts and went to Messrs C Backhurst and W Sadler. The show is still going strong annually in 2021, but I don't think the gardeners any longer have an annual supper as they did on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1890. In 1890, moreover, the shows were monthly. In those days, gardening societies were very important for encouraging people to grow more of their own food and teaching them how to do so when families were often large, wages low and employment uncertain.

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, the Vestry Meeting (ancestor both of Halling Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council) agreed to the construction of Halling Waterworks which would supply water to Wouldham, Burham, Aylesford and East Malling. They would have to dig down 350' before they reached water. There is now just a pumping station more or less on the site, though the waterworks employed a number of local people when it was in operation.

The February magazine notes that the influenza epidemic had reached Halling and many were down with it. Children were apparently mostly immune. It wasn't, it says, "a very serious ailment to people of careful habits. Hard drinkers find it very dangerous to grapple with." We have been warned. Maybe they weren't too careful about social distancing in the pubs! Or maybe the hard drinkers had already compromised their own health.

According to the March issue, there was a Carnival Season in which the Institute held its annual dinner and the Marionettes performed a long and much appreciated season. The vicar booked the theatre on Saturday afternoon so that all the children from the school could see them. It says that the Institute also arranged a Ladies' Social, but that the reporter couldn't say anything about it because men were rigorously excluded.

The station was complete and the first ticket was sold at 7.00 am on 1<sup>st</sup> March. The station was described as 1 mile 59 chains from Cuxton station and 1 mile 43 chains from Snodland. Dredging up my long division skills from when I was at primary school, there are 88 chains to the mile!

Confirmation candidates were invited to prepare to be confirmed at Snodland on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Well that's the first quarter of 1890. What will the rest of 2021 bring us? For church information, please see <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org> or contact me direct on 717134 or [roger@cuxtonandhalling.org](mailto:roger@cuxtonandhalling.org) Roger Knight. I can put you on my e mailing list for the current church magazine etc. if you ask me.