

St Andrew

In the early stages, when they were building St Andrew's Park, a number of us were invited to take a look at the new development, the plans and the proposed facilities. Suitably impressed, we were asked if we had any questions. Among other things, I wondered why it was called St Andrew's Park. Why was a new housing development in Halling named after the brother of the apostle Peter?

I do have a personal interest. My birthday is St Andrew's Day. It (St Andrew's Day, not my birthday) is reckoned as the first major feast in the calendar of saints days. The Sunday nearest St Andrew's Day is Advent Sunday, when we begin to prepare for the Coming of Christ - His coming to be born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem a couple of millennia ago and His return at the end of time as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to judge both the living and the dead and to establish the new Creation in which *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

The helpful young man showing us around wondered whether it might be that St Andrew had once visited Halling. This would not have been impossible even 2,000 years ago. I thought it was unlikely, however, that a fisherman from Israel / Palestine would have made such a journey and that, if he had, the fact wouldn't have been much better known – especially around here. Our guide promised to try to find out a bit more. The explanation seems to be somewhat roundabout. While Rochester Cathedral is now formally known as the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the original Saxon cathedral at Rochester was dedicated to St Andrew, as was the monastery in Rome from which the missionaries who converted Kent had come. This is reflected in the diagonal cross on the diocesan arms. It was apparently this somewhat tenuous link with the apostle which led to the development being called St Andrew's Park.



So, who was Andrew? He was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee and the brother of Simon (whom Jesus surnamed Peter, meaning the Rock). Andrew and Simon were in partnership with another two brothers – James and John, whose father was Zebedee (not the one in the *Magic Roundabout*). They'd already been impressed by the preaching of John the Baptist when Jesus came on the scene. Andrew was the first of the two brothers to meet Jesus. He brought Simon along. Once you know Jesus, you want to share Him with other people.

Later on, Jesus tells Simon and Andrew and James and John to leave their fishing boats, to follow Him, and to catch men instead of fish! He meant that they were to share the Word of God and to bring people home to God, our heavenly Father. Andrew was good at bringing people to Jesus. He was the one who found the boy with the five loaves and the two fishes with which Jesus fed the multitude. When some Greeks wanted to meet Jesus, they asked another disciple called Philip to introduce them and Philip turned to Andrew to accompany them.

Everybody knows that there were twelve apostles. Of those twelve, the top three who were present at the most significant events in Jesus' life were James and John and Simon Peter. Why not Andrew? He seems to have been more of a background kind of a guy, doing what needed doing, but not a celebrity. Probably, more of us are like Andrew than we are like the top three, more English Football League than Premiership, but not the less necessary for all that. There would be no Premiership without the rest of the pyramid right down to schools teams to sustain it. In Christian terms, what matters is that you follow Jesus to the best of your ability and trust God for the outcome of what you do.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, Andrew, with the other apostles and Christians in general, inherited the task of telling the world about Jesus. He preached in the countries we now call Turkey and Greece, dying a martyr's death in a place called Patras. He said that he was unworthy to be crucified on a cross like the one Jesus died on. So he was crucified on a diagonal cross instead. Being tied rather than nailed to the cross, he took several days to die and preached the Gospel to the people who came out to watch or simply passed by.

That's why the cross on our diocesan arms is diagonal and also why the Scottish flag on its own or incorporated into the union flag is the diagonal cross on which Andrew died against the blue of the sea on which he worked as a fisherman. Nobody seems to know why St Patrick has a diagonal red cross on his flag! So we won't go into that.

Because of COVID, we shan't have church parades on Remembrance Sunday. Unless there is another lockdown, however, we'll hold services of Holy Communion at 9.30 at Cuxton and 10.50 at Halling on 14th November including acts of remembrance. Those attending are welcome to wear any uniform or medals to which they are entitled.

Roger Knight, Rector of Cuxton & Halling.

For church information, please see <http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org> or contact me direct on 717134 or roger@cuxtonandhalling.org or at the Rectory, 6, Rochester Road, Cuxton, ME2 1AF.

I can put you on my e-mailing list for the current church magazine etc. if you ask me.