

Periscope

March 24 Vol. 2

CLOCK GIVEN TO KING LOUIS XIV
AT HIS CORONATION IN 1660



To celebrate our annual challenge to alter the clock back or forth, let us have a look inside the way we measure time as we ask the annual question, 'Is it still required, now that World War One is over, or is it just a bureaucratic wind-up?'



Our modern calendar had its beginnings in the local calendar of the city of Rome. Like other early calendars, the seasons eventually seemed to arrive later and later. In the reign of Julius Caesar the gap had widened to eighty days. A fundamental reform was decided upon by Caesar, who sought the advice of the astronomer Sosigenes of Alexandria. The new calendar was again based on representing the $365\frac{1}{4}$ day solar year as three years of 365 days but followed by one of 366 days and our Leap Year was born.

The Julian calendar remained in force from 45 B.C. until the famous Gregorian reform in A.D. 1582, which resulted from uncertainty about the proper day for the observance of Easter. Because Biblical years were based on the Moon with its month of 28 days, the date of Easter, which derives from the Jewish Passover, is determined by the date of the first full moon after the vernal equinox, which was fixed in A.D. 325 as 21 March in the Julian calendar.

After some 1,250 years, however, the Spring equinox had receded by some ten days, and in consequence the correct date of Easter was uncertain. This further discrepancy arose because the assumption that the solar year is of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days is not quite true by 11 minutes yearly.

By a papal bull of 1582 it was ordained that, instead of having a leap year every fourth year, there should be 97 leap years in 400 years : to eliminate the accumulated error, 5 October 1582 became 15 October 1582. Most continental countries quickly

adopted the reform, but it was many years before Britain and some other non-Catholic states would do so. Britain made the change as late as 1752, Russia not until 1918, and Turkey in 1927.

The establishment of a satisfactory calendar is historically of the first importance. While agriculture was the principal activity of civilized nations, the calendar conferred the great advantage of enabling seasonal work to be planned without reference to the phases of the moon, and its value to the trader, tax-collector, priest, and historian needs no emphasis.

Much less importance was attached to measuring the passage of time merely between dawn and sunset. The first attempts to do so invariably divided daylight into equal periods : as the duration of daylight is a variable quantity, it follows that hours in the modern sense meant nothing to the ancient world. The first daily timekeeper was probably the shadow-clock found in Egypt dating from about 1450 B.C.

LORD NELSON'S CLERICAL BROTHER

Dr. Nelson, a brother of Admiral Lord Nelson, occupied the fifth stall in Canterbury Cathedral from 1803 to 1838. He was short and stout, more like a country squire than a cleric, and wore a long black frock-coat reaching nearly to the ankles, Hessian boots and a large shovel hat. He was given to reading his newspaper in church and being very deaf was seemingly unaware of the scandal he caused by the rustling, of the paper as he turned over the pages.

"For some days," says the Rev. George Gilbert, in his "Reminiscences", "before the Battle of Trafalgar, he went regularly at 8 o'clock in the morning to Bristow's reading-room in the Parade for the earliest news of Lord Nelson and the Fleet. When the sad glad news arrived, Bristow hastened to the cathedral yard to meet Dr. Nelson that he might be prevented from learning of his brother's death in a public newsroom. He was much affected and returned to his house in tears."



Lady (Emma) Hamilton occasionally visited Dr. and Mrs. Nelson while they lived in the Brickwalk but the ladies of Canterbury made scruples about meeting her. Mrs. Bridges, mother of the antiquary, Sir Egerton

Bridges, had less compunction, and one day they went into the cathedral and sang an anthem in the choir when service was over. It was Kent's "My Song Shall be of Mercy and Judgment".

Lady Hamilton had a fine voice and sang well. Dean Powys stood listening near the entrance to the presbytery. "Shall I sing an anthem for the benefit of the County Hospital?" Lady Hamilton called out. The Dean affected deafness and did not reply. Lady Hamilton understood.

SPARROW

By Norman MacCaig

He's no artist:
His taste in clothes is more
dowdy than gaudy.

And his nest — that blackbird, writing
pretty scrolls on the air with the gold nib
of his beak, would call it a slum.

To stalk solitary on lawns,
to sing solitary in midnight trees,
to glide solitary over gray Atlantics
—not for him: he'd rather
a punch-up in a gutter.

He carries what learning he has
lightly — it is, in fact, based only
on the usefulness whose result
is survival. A proletarian bird.
No scholar.



But when winter soft-shoes in
and these other birds
ballet dancers, musicians, architects
die in the snow
and freeze to branches,
watch him happily flying
on the O-levels and A-levels
of the air.

The Scottish poet Norman MacCaig was born in Edinburgh in 1910. He was educated at the Royal High School, Edinburgh, and the University of Edinburgh. In 1985 he was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He was made an OBE in 1979. He died in 1996 in Edinburgh. His poetry has a keen awareness of natural events, which can become a way into a deeper spiritual interpretation through them.



Giving Roses The Nutrients They Need



So what are the key nutrients roses need for optimum growth and blooming? In addition to the mainstays of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (N-P-K), roses also need other important nutrients. Roses also require small doses of calcium, sulphur copper, manganese, and a host of other micro-nutrients. And to have great roses, it's critical to give them all of these when feeding.

How much additional power a rose bush will need depends on the type of rose you are growing. For instance, Grandiflora and miniature roses require more constant feeding. As do tea rose varieties and roses growing in pots or in confined spaces.

However, with more stable climbing and shrub roses, the need for constant feeding is not as vital. These roses still need to be fed, but just not as often. But no matter what type of rose you grow – giving them power in the spring is vital to set them up for a strong blooming season!

There are two main types of fertilizers you can use for roses – slow release granular types, and liquid fertilizers, which deliver their nutrients much more quickly. Both types of fertilizers have their place when powering rose bushes.

In general, you want to use a slow release fertilizing option for early spring. This will allow nutrients to slowly soak into the soil and give roses the energy they need over time as they come out of dormancy. Later, as your roses near blooming, liquid fertilizing is the better option.

Early Spring Fertilizing - Using Slow Release Fertilizers

All roses types need early spring fertilizing. This dose of power helps roses to wake up and not only produce their foliage, but begin to store energy for their blooms later in the season. And for spring fertilizing, it's all about using a slow release option!

There are several great options for slow release early spring fertilizing. The first is to use a commercial granular fertilizer that is geared especially for roses.

These fertilizers not only contain the right ratio of the key ingredients of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium roses need, but also the calcium, soluble potash and magnesium as well.

Late Spring / Summer Fertilizing -

Using Liquid Fertilizers To Fertilize Rose Bushes.

Liquid fertilizing is the perfect complement to slow release fertilizing once plants are ready to bloom. Again, all rose bush types need and will benefit from a slow release granular feeding in the spring. But then it's time to use a liquid option for blooms.

THE RIVER WYE IS SICK!

Nearly nine out of ten samples from the river taken last year by Trevor Hyde of Ross-on-Wye Angling Club showed levels of phosphate above national standards. Mr Hyde has seen contamination levels continue to climb during the four years he has been testing the river water at the canoe launch in the town's Riverside Park and the Salmon Hut at Weirend. On one occasion last November, levels of the pollutant were too high to be accurately measured by testing equipment. Meanwhile in the most recent fishing season, only four salmon were caught and released by members of the club, which says this is mirrored elsewhere on the river.

QUIZ TIME

1. What precious gems are said to be 'A girl's best friend'?
2. But what common element are these gems made of?
3. What was the name of the backing group of the fifties' rock star, Bill Haley?
4. Which country's cars carry the International registration letter 'D'?
5. The mythical creature, the centaur, was half man and half of which other creature?
6. In which country are the holy cities of Mecca and Medina?
7. What word describes both a playing card with one spot and an unreturnable service in tennis?
8. Which Canadian city is famous for its stampede?
9. If you bought a kilo of 'love apples' what soup might you make from them?
10. Which is the highest hand in poker, a full house or a flush?
11. What was Disney's first full-length animated film?
12. What sort of a creature is a Barbel?
13. What is the official language of Egypt?
14. What game is played with 144 tiles featuring winds, seasons and flowers?
15. What form of transport is associated with the Montgolfier Brothers?
16. Bob Hawke was the Prime Minister of which country from 1983-1991?
17. What does a Botanist study?
18. Which cathedral overlooks the Red Square in Moscow?
19. How many full days are there in a lunar month?
20. What is the basic ingredient of the illegal spirit poteen?

From '1066 AND ALL THAT' BY W.C. SELLAR AND R.J. YEATMAN.

The first date in English History is 55 B.C., in which year JULIUS CAESAR (the memorable Roman Emperor) landed, like all other successful invaders of these islands, at Thanet. This was in the olden days when the Romans were top nation on account of their classical education, etc.

JULIUS CAESAR advanced very energetically, throwing his cavalry several thousands of paces over the River Flumen; but the Ancient Britons, though all well over military age, painted themselves true blue, or *woad*, and fought as heroically under their dashing queen, BOADICEA, as they did later in thin red lines under their good queen, VICTORIA.

JULIUS CAESAR was therefore compelled to invade Britain again the following year (54 B.C., not 56, owing to the peculiar Roman method of counting), and having defeated the Ancient Britons by unfair means, such as battering-rams, tortoises, hippocausts, centipedes, axes and bundles, uttered the memorable Latin sentence, '*Veni, Vidi, Vici,*' which the Romans, who were all very well educated, translated correctly.

The Britons, however, who of course still used the old pronunciation, understanding him to have called them 'Weeny, Weedy and Weak,' lost heart and gave up the struggle, thinking that he had already divided them all into three parts and had thus won the war.

The Roman Conquest was, however, a *Good Thing*, since the Britons were only natives at that time.

APRIL BIRTHDAY

by Ted Hughes

When your birthday brings the world under your window
And the song-thrush sings wet-throated in the dew
And aconite and primrose are unsticking the wrappers
Of the package that has come today for you.

Lambs bounce out and stand astonished
Puss willow pushes among bare branches

Sooty hawthorns shiver into emerald
And a new air

Nuzzles the sugary

Buds of the chestnut. A groundswell and a stir

Billows the silvered

Violet silks

Of the south—a tenderness

Lifting through all the

Gently-breasted

Counties of England.

When the swallow snips the string that holds the world in

And the ring-dove claps and nearly loops the loop

You just can't count everything that follows in the tumble

Like a whole circus tumbling through a hoop

Grass in a mesh of all flowers floundering

Sizzling leaves and blossoms bombing

Nestling hissing and groggy-legged insects

And the trees

Stagger, they stronger

Brace their boles and biceps under

The load of gift. And the hills float

Light as bubble glass

On the smoke-blue evening

And rabbits are bobbing everywhere, and a thrush

Rings coolly in a far corner.

A shiver of green

Strokes the darkening slope

as the land

Begins her labour.



Easter reminds us
that we are always
on the edge of a
new life.

Spring reminds us
that we are taking
up where we left
off last time.



TWO POEMS BY JOHN CLARE

SPRING FLOWERS

Bowing adorers of the gale ,
Ye cowslips delicately pale
Upraise your loaded stems,
Unfold your cups in splendour; speak!
Who decked you with that ruddy streak,
And gilt your golden gems?

Violets, sweet tenants of the
shade, In purple's richest pride
arrayed, Your errand here fulfil!
Go, bid the artist's simple stain
Your lustre imitate, in vain,
And match your Maker's skill.

Daisies, ye flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That stud the velvet sod;
Open to spring's refreshing air,
In sweetest smiling bloom declare
Your Maker and my God.

THE GREEN LANE

A little lane—the brook runs close beside,
And spangles in the sunshine,
while the fish glide swiftly by;
And hedges leafing with the green springtide;
From out their greenery the old birds fly,
And chirp and whistle in the morning sun;
The pilewort glitters 'neath the pale blue sky,
The little robin has its nest begun,
And grass-green linnets round the bushes fly.
How mild the spring comes in! the daisy buds
Lift up their golden blossoms to the sky.
How lovely arc the pingles and the woods.
Here a beetle runs—and there a fly
Rests on the arum leaf in bottle-green,
And all the spring in this sweet lane is seen.

The son of a farm labourer, John Clare (1793-1864) became known for his celebrations of the English countryside and sorrows at its disruption. His work underwent major re-evaluation in the late 20th century; he is now often seen as a major 19th-century poet.

PASTWORDS

To Fiddle While Rome Burns

is a phrase often used to describe somebody being occupied by small details while a greater disaster is taking place unnoticed. Roman legend has it that in AD 64 Emperor Nero wanted to see what Troy had looked like as it burned to the ground, so he set light to Rome. It was said that he watched the blaze for six days and seven nights while he played his fiddle and enjoyed himself.



Nero strongly denied the claims and blamed the disaster on the Christians, who were then ruthlessly persecuted. Historians have confirmed Nero was nowhere near Rome when the fire started, supporting his defence. Instead he was probably out enjoying himself at the School of Charm run by Caligula.

To **Go With The Flow** means not to have a strong opinion and thus follow the majority. Often thought to be of American origin, the phrase in fact predates the Yanks by about 1,600 years.

Marcus Aurelius was crowned Emperor of Rome on 7 March 161. His turbulent reign was characterised by war and disaster but also, above all, intellectual thought. Marcus dealt with his turmoil through stoic philosophy and much of this is expressed in his writings *The Meditations*, in which he displays the tension he felt between his position as emperor and his prevailing feeling of overall inadequacy.

Much of Marcus's philosophy is based around the flow of thought and the flow of happiness and he concluded that 'all things flow naturally'. Marcus also expressed the opinion it was better to 'go with the flow' rather than try to change the natural course of events.



"Got any books with nice, big, color pictures in them, suitable for framing?"

Two men were walking through the forest when they spotted a vicious-looking bear. The first man immediately opened his bag, pulled out a pair of canvass shoes and preceded to put them on. The second man, seeing what his friend was doing, said, "You will never out run that bear!" "I don't have to," the first man replied. "I only need to outrun you."

Patient: Every night when I get into bed I think that someone is under the bed. I then get up and look, but there is never anyone there. When I crawl under the bed and lie down, I get the idea that there is someone on top of the bed. I then get up and look and I never find anyone on top of the bed. This goes on all night, up and down, it's driving me out of my mind. Do you think you can help me?

Psychiatrist: I think I can. All you have to do is visit me twice a week for the next 2 years and I think I can cure you. The visits will cost you \$75 per hour.

Patient: That is an awful lot of money for a peasant like me. I will have to talk it over with my wife and let you know. The next week the patient phoned the doctor.

Patient: I won't be coming back, Doctor. My wife solved the problem. She cut the legs off the bed.

QUIZ SOLUTION

1. Diamonds.
2. Carbon.
3. The Comets.
4. Germany.
5. Horse.
6. Saudi Arabia.
7. Ace.
8. Calgary.
9. Tomato soup.
10. Full House.
11. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.
12. Fresh-water fish.
13. Arabic.
14. Mah Jong.
15. Hot air balloons.
16. Australia.
17. Plants.
18. St. Basil's.
19. 28 days.
20. Potatoes.

TAILCORN

From 'Punch' magazine.
(April 11, 1917)

FROM **January's** start to close
It rains or hails or sleets or snows.
For atmospherical vagaries
The palm perhaps is **February's**.
To say **March** exits like a lamb
Is Falsehood's very grandest slam.
April may smile in Patagonia,
But here it always breeds pneumonia.
May, alternating sun and blizzard,
Plays havoc with the stoutest gizzard.
No part of England is immune
From frost and thunder-storms in **June**.
Only simple minds lay by
Their thickest hose throughout **July**.
August, in spite of dog-days' heat,
For floods is very hard to beat.
The equinoctial gales, remember,
Are at their worst in mid-**September**.
Old folk, however hale and sober,
Die very freely in **October**.
November with its clammy fogs
The bronchial region chokes and clogs.
December, with its dearth of sun,
For sheer discomfort takes the bun.



'Ere, Bert, I've got an 'ole in me sole!'



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