

Periscope

Christmas Edition 2024.

A Christmas Magic Plant.

Mistletoe, the Golden Bough of classical legend, was a sacred and wonder-working plant alike for the Celtic Druids, by whom it was ceremonially cut at the Winter and Summer Solstice festivals, and for the pagan Norsemen. It was also the plant of peace in ancient Scandinavia. A bunch hung outside a house denoted a safe welcome within, and if enemies happened to meet under a tree that bore it, they had to lay down their arms and fight no more on that day.

In Britain, it was anciently called All Heal, because it cured many diseases, composed quarrels, and was an antidote to poison. It brought good luck and fertility. For all these reasons it was, and remains, an essential part of Christmas decorations in almost every house, though not in churches.



Its strong pagan associations probably caused it to be banned from churches at Christmas or any other season. This prohibition still prevails in most parishes, and if a sprig or branch is accidentally included in the general greenery, it is usually removed as soon as the clergyman sees it. In one Oxford parish a few years ago, permission was given to hang a bunch in the porch, but not inside the church itself. An exception to this rule in the Middle Ages was at York Minster, where a branch was ceremonially laid on the altar on Christmas Eve and left there throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas. A general pardon and liberty throughout the city was proclaimed for so long as it remained there. In the Black Country also, it seems to have been customary to include it in church decorations at one time, for payments for it appear in the churchwardens' accounts at Bilston in 1672 and at Darlaston in 1801.

In Worcestershire, where it grows very freely, it is said to be unlucky to cut mistletoe at any time but Christmas. Until very recently (and perhaps still in some households), it was usual to keep the Christmas bunch throughout the year for good luck, and then to replace it by a new one on Christmas Eve. In some districts, sprigs from such a bunch were given to the cow that calved first after New Year's Day, to ensure the prosperity of the herd in the following twelve months. In Herefordshire formerly, it was unlucky to bring mistletoe into the house before New Year's morning. It was not included in the Christmas decorations.



Kissing under the mistletoe seems to be a purely English custom, of which no trace has been found in other countries unless Englishmen have settled there at some time. Strange as it may seem to us now, the English were once much given to kissing. Foreign visitors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries frequently remarked with surprise on the way in which men and women exchanged kisses without self-consciousness, even slight acquaintances and newly-introduced strangers being thus pleasantly greeted. The last shadow of this old freedom is now cast by the mistletoe bough at Christmas. If a girl stands under it, she cannot refuse to be kissed by anyone who claims the privilege. At one time, the young men had the right to pluck a

You may be familiar with the sad story of Noah and the Ark project. This account of his troubles was supplied by Keith Waterhouse. Waterhouse was a journalist who wrote novels, plays and scripts for T.V. His novel, 'Billy Liar' was turned into a film and eventually a musical. His credits, many with lifelong friend and collaborator Willis Hall, include satires such as That Was The Week That Was, and The Frost Report during the 1960s.

And the Lord said unto Noah, where is the ark, which I commanded thee to build? And Noah said unto the Lord, Verily, I have had three carpenters off sick. The gopher-wood supplier hath let me down – yea, even though the gopher wood hath been on order for nigh upon twelve months. The damp-course specialist hath not turned up. What can I do, O Lord?

And God said unto Noah, I want that ark finished even after seven days and seven nights. And Noah said, It will be so. And it was not so.

And the Lord said unto Noah, What seemeth to be the trouble this time? And Noah said unto the Lord, Mine subcontractor hath gone bankrupt. The pitch which thou commandest me to put on the outside and on the inside of the ark hath not arrived . . . The glazier departeth on holiday in Majorca – yea, even though I offerest him double time. Shem, my son, who helpeth me on the ark side of the business, hath formed a pop group with his brothers Ham and Japeth. Lord, I am undone.

And God said in his wrath, Noah, do not thou mucketh Me about . . . And Noah said, Lo, the contract will be fulfilled. And Lo, it was not fulfilled.

And Noah said unto the Lord, The gopher wood is definitely in the warehouse. Verily, and the gopher-wood supplier waiteth only upon his servant to find the invoices before he delivereth the gopher wood unto me. And the Lord grew angry and said, Scrubbeth thou round the gopher wood. What about the animals?

. . . And Noah said, the van cometh on Tuesday; yea and yea, it will be so. And the Lord said unto Noah, how about the unicorns? And Noah wrung his hands and wept, saying, Lord, Lord, they are a discontinued line. Thou canst not get unicorns for love nor money.

And God said unto Noah, Thou hast not made an ark of gopher wood, nor hast thou lined it with pitch within and without; and of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort hast thou failed to bring into the ark. What sayest thou, Noah? And Noah kissed the earth and said, Lord, Lord, thou knowest in thy wisdom what it is like with delivery dates.

And the Lord in his wisdom said, Noah, my son, I knowest. Why else dost thou think I have caused a flood?



The novelist and social critic, J.B. Priestley (1894–1984), once commented; “No wonder the men and women who do nuclear research are half out of their minds. They demand to have observation posts in outer space, would like to bring the moon in on their side, inventing more and more monstrous excuses for the most extravagant antics in mankind’s history.

I am not blaming them. If I had lived and worked so long as most of them have in a top-secret, top-priority, top-security, top-nonsense atmosphere, I might be even dafter than they are.”

Sadly, despite Johnny's disparagement of events in his day, it's all happening now! It is often the fate of the prophet to see what he warns against, arrive with a promise of better times for all.

Two of our ancestors were neighbours, tracks show.

Muddy footprints on a Kenyan lakeside suggest two of our early human ancestors were neighbours 1.5 million years ago.

Different species imprinted the tracks "within a matter of hours, or at most days", said palaeontologist Louise Leakey, co-author of the research, which has been published in the journal *Science*. Scientists could distinguish between the two because of the shape of the footprints.

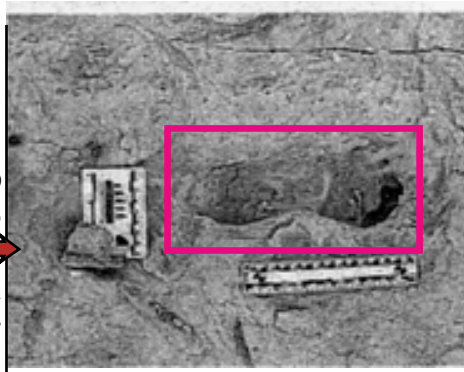
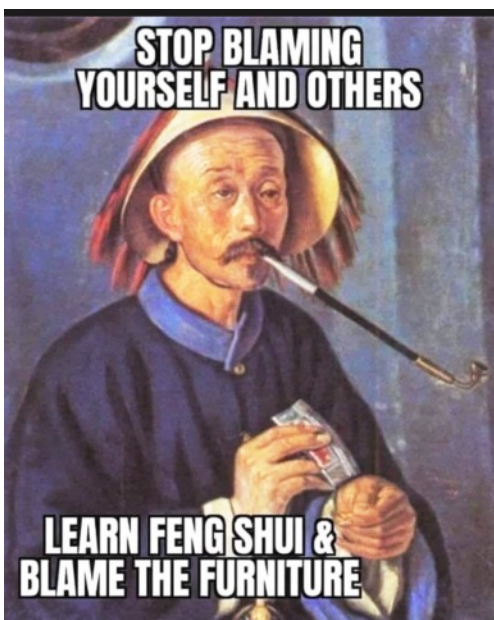
They knew from fossil remains that these two extinct branches of the human evolutionary tree - *Homo erectus* and *Paranthropus boisei* - lived about the same time in the Turkana Basin.

But dating fossils is not exact. "It's plus or minus a few thousand years," said William Harcourt-Smith, a palaeontologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, who was not involved in the study.

Yet with fossil footprints, "there's an actual moment in time -preserved", he said. "It's an amazing discovery." "It's likely the species knew of each other's existence, said study co-author Kevin Hatala.

"They probably saw each other, probably knew each other was there and probably influenced each other in some way," he said. (*Associated Press*)

The Editor comments; footprints of prehistoric animals are not too uncommon. But such evidence from the remote past of our ancestors is less so, because our predecessors were much smaller in number and physically too lightweight to make deep impressions generally.



FOOTPRINTS IN TIME.

The highlighted image was made one afternoon, perhaps, on the way to some event.

Our remote ancestors were nomadic, but perhaps there might have been at least one who wanted to stay where they were and thus begin the process of settling down and creating a new life. Thus I thought this poem by W.H. Davies might suit the owner of the footprint, the 'Sweet stay-at-home' of the poem. Davies(1871-1940) ironically, spent most of his life as a tramp 'Of No Fixed Abode'

SWEET Stay-at-Home, sweet Well-content,
Thou knowest of no strange continent:
Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep
A gentle motion with the deep;
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow
For miles, as far as eyes can go ;
Thou hast not seen a summer's night
When maids could sew by a worm's light;
Nor the North Sea in spring send out
Bright hues that like birds flit about
In solid cages of white ice-
Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Love-one-place.
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick
White cotton when the bloom is thick,
Nor heard black throats in harmony;
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie
Flat on the earth, tho' once did rise
To hide proud kings from common eyes.
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom
Where green things had such little room
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers
Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face;
For thou hast made more homely stuff
Nurture thy gentle self enough;
I love thee for a heart that's kind
Not for the knowledge in thy mind.

*This item came from an American site and I thought it might be of help at a time when very young persons receive a set of coloured pens from **1 Christmas** or perhaps someone unaware of the havoc which could be caused when the artist concerned finds, rather like cave-men/women artists of old, a nice clean wall to express their creativity.*

**Note, I think that what Americans mean by 'regular toothpaste' is without whitening and other additives which might add colouring. However I do not endorse these ideas. Brian*

“The thing to remember about permanent markers is that they’re called “permanent” for a reason! In some cases, you may be able to remove the ink entirely, but some stains may be impossible to fully erase. The following table provides a quick summary of the permanent marker cleaning tips you’ll find throughout the rest of this post. Whether you need to know how to remove permanent marker from metal or how to remove permanent marker from leather, this is a good place to start!

Fabric, clothing, or upholstery. Use surgical spirit or a combination of dish soap, white vinegar, and water

Carpet. Use surgical spirit

Painted walls. Apply surgical spirit or regular toothpaste to a damp cloth or sponge

Wood furniture or floors. Use surgical spirit or toothpaste

Leather upholstery or accessories. Use a cloth dampened with white vinegar

Laminate furniture. Draw over marks with a dry-erase marker then wipe with a paper towel

Whiteboards. Draw over marks with a dry-erase marker then wipe with a wet cloth

Books or paper. Carefully dab the ink using a clean cloth dampened with nail polish remover

Glass. Use surgical spirit, nail polish remover, WD-40, or regular toothpaste

Skin. Use nail polish remover, lotion, oil, or surgical spirit

Computer or phone screen. Wipe gently with a baby wipe or regular toothpaste

Plastic. Wipe with nail polish remover, or surgical spirit

Metal. Use surgical spirit, a dry-erase marker, or regular toothpaste

Ceramic tile. Use regular toothpaste, 'Flash' magic eraser, or aerosol hairspray

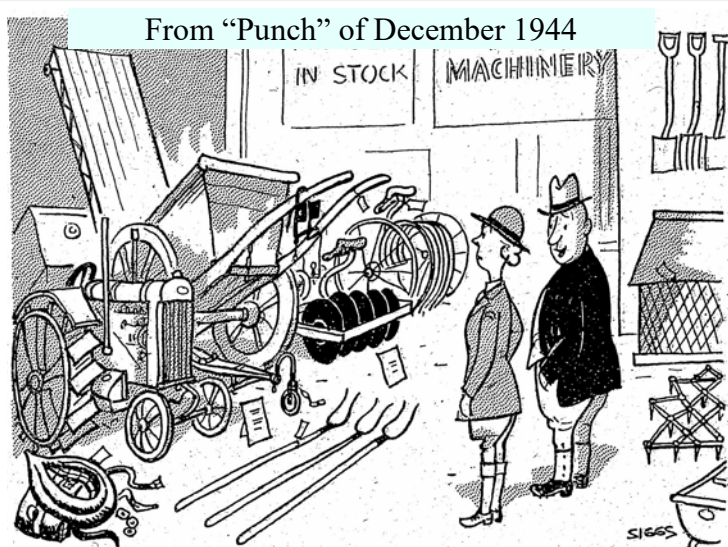
Granite. Use surgical spirit, hydrogen peroxide, or homemade granite cleaner

Laminate floors or countertops. Use surgical spirit, 'Flash' Magic Eraser, or regular toothpaste mixed with baking soda.

Microfibre upholstery. Use a sponge dampened with surgical spirit

Butcher block. Use salt, lemon, and soapy water

Dryer drum. Use “Flash” magic eraser.



From “Punch” of December 1944

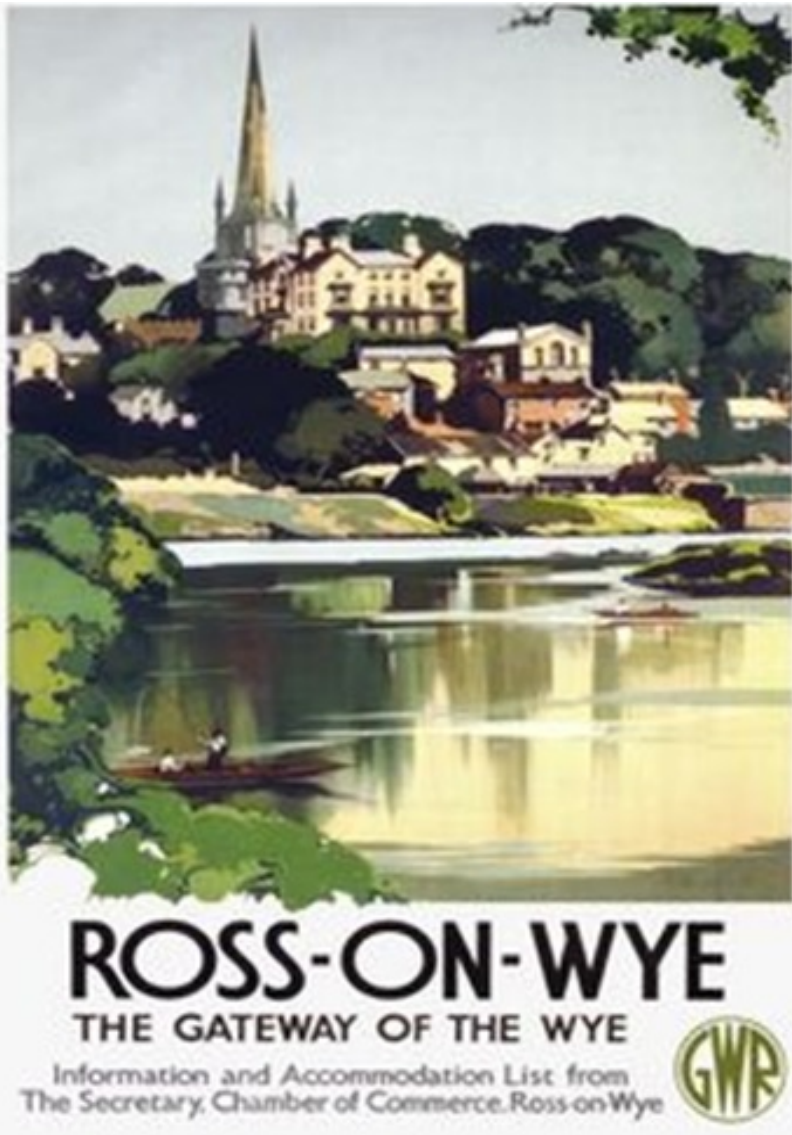
The war was yet to be won, but the mood of the Country was that of a growing optimism that the end was in sight.

But 80 years ago, Farmer Giles still needed his Land Girls and here he is with the first chance to add to his equipment, asking this young woman, because no doubt, she would soon be using it!

THE EDITOR, BRIAN PHILLIPS invites items from readers. There is no charge for ‘Periscope’ and it can be forwarded or quoted freely, for non-commercial and private use. Sources, when not acknowledged, can be obtained from;

pastorprint@gmx.co.uk

“Anything here you’d like for Christmas?”



Valediction for a Branch Railway

The dog-rose in the valley hedge,
 Yew and wild cherry on the flinted down
 Marked the course of packhorse and of pilgrimage
 And the waggoners' tracks to market town,

Dog-rose and yew and cherry too;
 High, windy sheep-wolds; fields of moody grain;
 Farmhouse orchards; yellow water-meads, and blue
 Cabbage acres mark the course of the train.

Steam symbol of an age which meant
 Benefits to be lasting; and which lay,
 Through the counties or the darkest continent,
 A regular solid permanent way.

Join now the legendary charms,
 Recalled by place name or by tavern sign.
 Soon will *Station Road* or *The Platelayers Arms*
 Be the last record of the valley line.

JOHN PUDNEY

The illustration is of Ross, found on a G.W.R. Poster sometime before 1960. All connections from Ross to Hereford and Gloucester were axed by Beeching in November 1964.

John Pudney's poem is a reminder of urban man's misplaced sense of values. What was done with the money the government of the day saved from the destruction of an admittedly unprofitable system of transport, is not known. As long ago as 1913 it was declared that only four railway companies ever made a regular profit.

Shopping for Christmas, Sunday School trips, workers with season tickets, farmers going to market, we all caught the train.

During the century it served the town, nobody seems to have worried about it making a profit, until Dr. Beeching raised his axe to cut deep into our rural way of life.

Kilvert's Diary records his regular trips to London from the station at Hay-on-Wye in the 1870's. He would have to go by 'bus today.



"The Abbot wonders, Brother Timothy, if you ever regret giving up your life as a garage mechanic?"

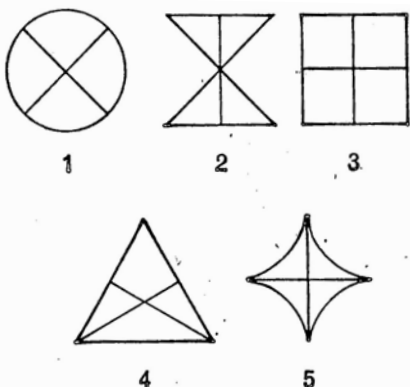
CRACKERS FOR CHRISTMAS!

1. What is always broken before you can use it?
2. "I'm tall when I'm young and short when I'm old. What am I"?
3. What month of the year has 28 days?
4. What is full of holes, but still holds water?
5. What question can you never truthfully answer 'yes' to ?
6. It's always ahead of you, but you can never see it. What is it?
7. I live in a one-story house. The walls, the doors, furniture even, are all painted yellow. What colour are the stairs?
8. What can be broken, even if it is never picked up or touched?
9. What goes wet when drying?
10. The liner was filled with passengers, yet there wasn't a single person on board? How was that possible?

QUIZ QUESTIONS.

1. Which landscape artist's works include *The Haywain* and *The Cornfields*?
2. Who sailed around the world in a ship called '*The Golden Hind*'?
3. What is another name for the sport of Motocross.
4. In which novel by George Orwell did 'Napoleon' feature.
5. Which disease is transmitted to humans by the tsetse fly?
6. In the 'Wizard of Oz' what did the Tin Man want.
7. The surgeon, Christian Barnard, was the first to perform what life-saving operation?
8. What nationality was he?
9. What is a wrestling match called when there are two wrestlers on each side?
10. What national dish is made from sheep's offal, suet, oats and spices?
11. What does the Latin term "Caveat emptor" mean?
12. Jackass, macaroni and emperor are all species of which bird?
13. The musician, James Galway became famous for playing which instrument?
14. Which famous sailor was born in Norfolk?
15. Meg, Beth, Jo and Amy were four sisters created by which novelist?
16. In 1964 Donald Campbell broke the land speed record. What was his car called?
17. What is the sour ingredient in a whisky sour?
18. In litres, how much wine do two magnums hold?
19. Who wrote both 'Paradise Lost' and after his wife's death, 'Paradise Regained'?
20. In which battle did The Charge of the Light Brigade take place?

Which is the odd-man out ?

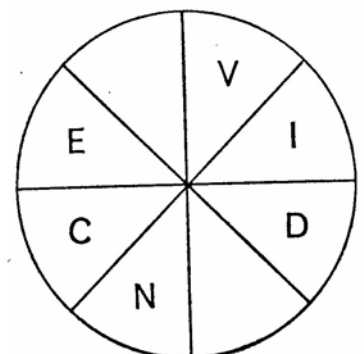


The letters on the left begin words all ending in the same 3 letters. What are they?

TH
SL
P
H
CL
B
D
J
L
R
S

(. . .)

Insert the missing letters to make a complete 8-letter word.



“A West Country Anthology” compiled by S.H. Burton, includes this extract by James Cossins who wrote “Reminiscences of Exeter Fifty Years Since” in 1877.



The choirs of various churches would go around the parishes on Christmas Eve, stopping at the principal houses to sing an appropriate anthem or a Christmas carol; this over, the loudest tenor voice would call out the names of the nearest residents, such as "Good morning, Mr Snugg, good morning, Mrs Snugg, and all the young Snuggs, past three o'clock; a very cold and frosty morning"; or "the snow is falling fast". The young reader must understand, in those days, the winters were much more severe than now; skating almost a certainty, and

snow falling at various times for two or three days, and remaining on the ground for several weeks.

Returning to the perambulation, the choir consisted of singers, accompanied by a fiddle or two, bass viol, a clarinet or flute. The above-named instruments were used in churches that had no organ. On the rounds some parties were waiting the arrival of the choir with a cup of tea, coffee, or soup, which was very acceptable. A good efficient choir would be accompanied by a lot of 'camp followers,' who rendered assistance by carrying chairs, lanterns, &c., also by holding the music in front of the performers. About six o'clock the various rounds were finished; at half past six the Cathedral bell tolled out, the front doors were opened, and then there was a great rush of people, about half filling the nave, many in a state which indicated they were not members of the temperance society, being very noisy, and smoking.

This conduct not meeting the approval of the Dean and Chapter they ceased to have the nave opened some years since. At seven o'clock the organist played the Old Hundredth Psalm on the 'Great Organ', the chorister boys singing from the 'Minstrels' Gallery', which was lit up with candles. The morning and afternoon services were thinly attended, but a great many outsiders went to hear the anthem. The parish churches were well attended in the morning, afternoon scarcely any one present, evening three or four churches open, and these very thinly attended. So universal was the social and family gathering, that the High street in the evening had the appearance of a deserted town, with respect to people moving about.

Now for family meetings on Christmas days. 'Grandfather' would, if possible, invite the whole of his family descendants, including grandchildren, to partake of what the festive table produced, which generally speaking, consisted of a goose, beef, and a large smoked ham, &c., followed by a huge fig pudding, covered with white sugar to correspond with the snow clad roofs. Beer was not forgotten, good home-brewed October twelve months was tapped by the landlords for their customers. Dinner over, chairs were placed in a semicircle around the blazing fire, children sitting in front or on the knee, and the topic of conversation would be old family times, absent friends, and passing events, until about five o'clock, when the old ladies' delight, a good cup of tea with a little bit of green in it, was announced.

After this ceremony, which occupied about an hour, cards were introduced; the family game, twopence halfpenny loo was played until supper-time, nine o'clock. After supper, again sitting round the ashen faggot fire, healths and toasts were proposed, and good old seasonable and patriotic songs sung until about midnight. Then came the trying time of departure, with respect to children, some sleepy, others crying.

Before leaving, a hint was given that the ham would be nice and solid about eleven the following day. Grandfather would say "Oh yes, I understand, you are all welcome. Now mind I shall expect you." This led to another family day's enjoyment.

In the Borderlands.

By Jim Denning.

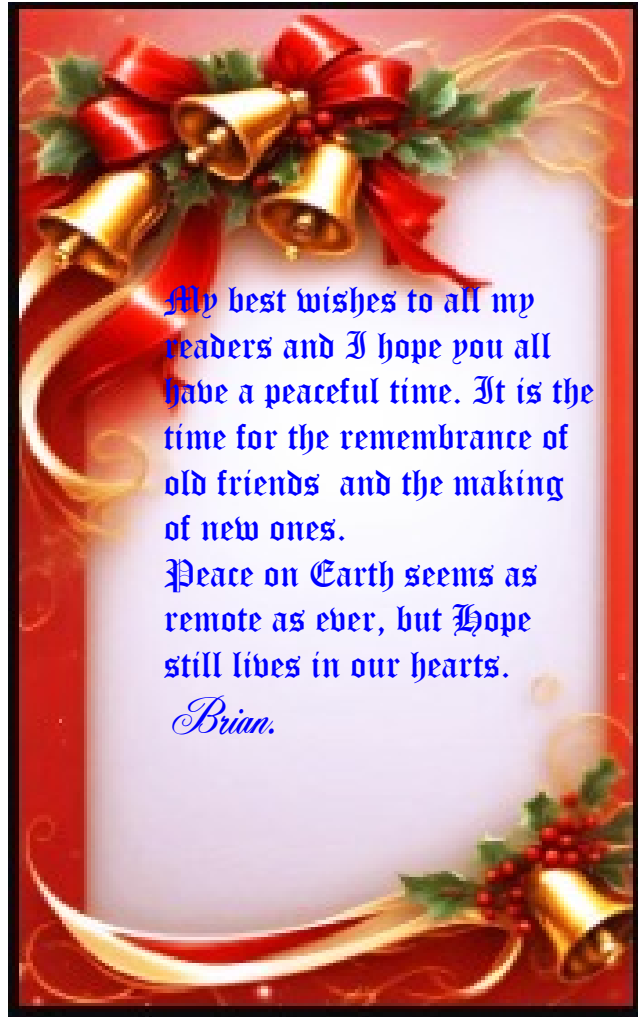
Beside old roads you see them,
the ditch and bank of other times,
the deer park of an ancient hundred,
the tribal boundary,
a claim of sovereignty
intended to contain and to exclude;
the struggling sweating men long dead,
their sharp defences overgrown,
their falling earthworks fading in the mist,
the echoes of their voices all but gone.

came a voice along the bar:
– I had another sheepdog once, see?
he ran off on Offa's Dyke one day,
in a place where rustling aspen grow
so thick you're not sure where you are.
I heard him in the bushes growl and bark,
the wind was blowing strong and sharp
and turning over every silver leaf;



up flew the birds, all you saw of them
was rooks far-flung around the sky.
I heard the bark turn into a whimper
and my old dog came limping back
his leg all bloody and fur a-clotted,
I could tell from looking in his eye
he'd seen a thing invisible to me;
with the wind increasing all the time
I seemed to hear men's voices shouting
and footsteps running and the clash of iron;
with the aspen lashing all the time.

A whirring in the air, a flying branch
or something heavy whacked me to the ground,
my shoulder took a vicious twinge;
I thought it high time to be out of there
and back here for a pint and living company.
My old dog was always quiet after that,
he'd look at me sidelong and anxious-like.



*My best wishes to all my
readers and I hope you all
have a peaceful time. It is the
time for the remembrance of
old friends and the making
of new ones.*

*Peace on Earth seems as
remote as ever, but Hope
still lives in our hearts.*

Brian.

More extracts from 'A West Country Anthology.'

A German Tree

My sister writes to my grandmother, 29 January
1851,

"Brother Henry and I went to a party on Tuesday
evening. We danced and saw a magic lantern, and
there was a German tree, and many nice things to
eat. We enjoyed it all very much, and did not get
ill after it." At that date a Christmas tree was still
a novelty, and was called a German tree, as the
fashion came from Germany.

I am Victorian enough myself to think it rather
vulgar to call an omnibus a 'bus, but never had
qualms in saying 'van for caravan or 'wig for peri-
wig, that is, peruke. People habitually say 'You for
Ye', yet snigger at our saying 'Us for We'. What
they call 'a chapter of accidents' is 'a proper old
pedigree' here. Down here we soften 'immodest'
into 'vulgar' and 'immoral' into 'rough'; and a
stranger may give great offence, when only
meaning 'rough' and 'vulgar' in the usual sense.



The Christmas Pudding

So it's Christmas again.
 In a cupboard I've lain
 In the dark, on a shelf, in a basin.
 To insure I won't spoil,
 I've been wrapped up in foil
 And a cloth that there isn't much space in.

I'm the star of this meal,
 with my spices and peel,
 And the charms on my inside, all murky.
 But they just fail to see all the wonder of me:
 I've taken second place to the turkey.



'm supposed to be festive.
 But I will be blessed if
 I'm going along with the masses.
 The first course is over, and nobody's sober.
 They're busy refilling their glasses.

Oh, I'm dull and I'm glum
 and I'm no sugarplum.
 I'm rotund and morose and I'm heavy.
 As I lie on this dish, how I hanker and wish
 That they'd quicken the pace with that bevy!

The end must come soon
 oh, they're lifting their spoons,
 And my future before me is yawning.
 But the last word is mine:
 with some help from that wine
 I'll have my revenge in the morning!

Gillian Drake



Homely War-time Dishes.

The item comes from the Women's Institute Magazine in 1942. I don't know if any reader would care to give them a try. (*Editor*)

The recent arrival of tinned foods from America has placed in the housewife's hands materials of good value which can be converted into many appetizing homely dishes for the mid-day dinner, for supper and breakfast. Here is a form of **Cornish Pie**, baked on a tin or an enamel plate, which is a satisfying dish for a family when served with gravy and vegetables.

Allow half a pound of the tinned pork shoulder meat, one onion, a pound of potatoes, pepper and salt, 7 ozs. of flour, 3 ozs. of fine oatmeal, 4 ozs. of cooking fat, a saltspoonful of baking powder, and water for mixing. Make a piece of pastry with the flour, oatmeal, baking powder, cooking fat and cold water to form a smooth, rather' stiff paste. Roll out and cut it in halves. With one half line an enamel plate or a sandwich tin. Fill in with the pork cut into small pieces, the potatoes peeled and cut into dice and the grated or chopped onion. Sprinkle this with salt and pepper and a spoonful of water and cover with the remaining piece of pastry. Bake for about an hour in a moderate oven.

Mince Dumplings. These are excellent for supper served hot and, being equally good eaten cold, any that remain pack well in the lunch basket of the war worker. First of all make a piece of plain short crust pastry: roll it out and cut into rounds. For the filling take a cupful of any kind of cold meat—preferably with a little fat—chopped finely, a cupful of bread pieces that have soaked until soft in cold water, then squeezed dry and beaten free from lumps, two cupfuls of mashed potatoes and carrots—or other mixture of cooked vegetables available—salt, pepper, half a teaspoonful of mixed herbs and sauce for binding these ingredients, made by cooking a dessertspoonful of cornflour in three tablespoonfuls of milk until thick.

Mix all the ingredients, moistening them with the sauce and make into dumplings, using a little flour to prevent sticking. Place a dumpling on each round of pastry: secure the edges, as with apple dumplings, and bake in a brisk oven for about twenty-five minutes.

It is a positive reminder of how the housewife was made to feel that she was deeply involved in the positive way which would leave to victory one day, coupled with a firm conviction that things would improve in the end. I have found it an inspiration to see how such an effort was made to keep things going to the best of their ability, whatever their pre-war background had been.



Puzzles Solutions

RIDDLES

1. An egg.
2. A burning candle.
3. Every month has 28 days!
4. A sponge.
5. "Are you asleep yet?"
6. The future.
7. If it is a 1-story house, there aren't any stairs.
8. A promise.
9. A towel.
10. They were all married.

QUIZ QUESTIONS.

1. John Constable.
2. Francis Drake.
3. Scrambling.
4. Animal Farm.
5. Sleeping Sickness.
6. A heart.
7. A human heart transplant.
8. South African.
9. Tag wrestling.
10. The haggis.
11. 'Buyer beware!'
12. Penguins.
13. The flute.
14. Nelson.
15. Louisa May Alcott.
16. Bluebird.
17. Lemon.
18. 3 litres.
19. John Milton.
20. Battle of Balaclava.

ODD MAN OUT; **No.4.** The rest will be the same shape if you turn them upside-down.

WORD-ENDINGS; **UMP.** (Thump, Slump, etc.)

MISSING LETTERS; Both of them are **'E'** so 'EVIDENCE'

ARTIST'S CHRISTMAS TREES



Botticelli



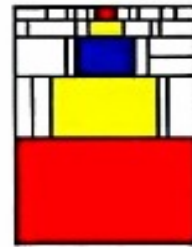
Dali



Matisse



Michelangelo



Mondrian



Monet



O'Keeffe



Picasso



Scurat



Van Gogh



Vermeer



Warhol

January 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		