

In Touch

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● OUR PARISH MAGAZINE ●



EASTER VIGIL

Father Isidore
Baptising
Thomas Howey

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CHRISTMAS IN ROME

Bernice Anning and Patricia Donald
escape the Christmas rush.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A family portrait by Linda Newton

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A Rabbi explains.

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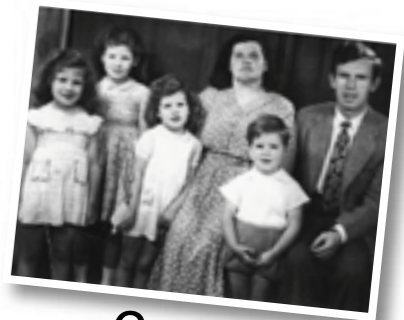
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Christmas in Rome

By Bernice Anning and Patricia Donald

Feeling the desire for a change from the usual British Christmas with the inevitable overeating, turkey whether you like it or not, and endless television, two of us decided to go with Pax Travel to Rome for the festive period. We found ourselves with a party of thirty or so in two very comfortable hotels near St Peter's. We were a mixed Roman Catholic and Anglican group, including two canons of the Church of England (one male and one female). Our tour guide, Ann, was also Anglican but very familiar with Rome and as cognizant of the workings of Italian transport, restaurants and Vatican administration as anyone could be expected to be. We wondered in advance what we could expect from the weather. Fortunately, we took warm clothes and dressed for winter, since despite a warm sun for some of the time, the temperatures were quite low, and on Christmas day it rained, hard.

We took the opportunity of seeing and again being impressed by the sites of ancient Rome, the Colosseum, the Forum and the Pantheon. Interspersed were visits to various churches such as, on our first day, the Church of Sts Cosmas and Damian with its beautiful sixth century mosaic. The names of these saints are familiar to those of us who remember the Latin Mass, and they remain in the optional list of saints in the first Eucharistic prayer of our present day Mass. After walking to the Capitoline

Hill, we visited the Church of Sta Maria d'Aracoeli, a fascinating church but memorable at Christmas time especially for the Santo Bambino, which the children love and apparently send letters to, rather like Santa Claus. We saw Santa himself that afternoon in the Christmas market of the Piazza Navona, and many Befanas – ugly little witches on broomsticks who bring children gifts on the vigil of Epiphany, from which the name derives. That evening after dinner, some of us took a taxi across Rome to enjoy a concert of opera excerpts in the Anglican church of All Saints.

Christmas Eve was also a very full day starting in the Pincio Gardens, and walking down to the Piazza del Popolo, the Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain. We went into a number of churches such as St Charles Borromeo on the Corso, St Andrea della Valle (the one in which the first act of Tosca is set) and Cardinal Cormac's titular church of Sta Maria sopra Minerva. In all the churches and basilicas (and for that matter in every hotel and restaurant) there was a Crib scene, all very charming and varied, depicting a number of different scenarios in addition to the central theme.

We had rather expected to be able to attend the Pope's celebration of Midnight Mass, but (we were told) the Vatican had been so inundated with requests for tickets this year that it had stopped issuing them. This meant a long queue and probably an unseemly scrum to get into St Peter's, so we opted for the nearest church to our hotel to celebrate our Saviour's birth. It was very satisfactory with a small music group not unlike ours at St Thomas' to support the singing. We did go to St Peter's on Christmas Day to attend a Mass celebrated by cardinals. Afterwards we waited in the piazza, along with a sea of umbrellas, for the Urbi et Orbi blessing from the Pope. Immediately afterwards we had to make our way to the restaurant booked for the main celebra-

tory Christmas meal. As any kind of transport was very difficult on Christmas day, the two of us elected to walk it despite the rain, and consequently arrived well ahead of everybody else at the restaurant L'Eau Vive. It is run by a Belgian missionary Order, and we were informed, is a favourite place for Cardinals to entertain their friends. We were certainly well entertained, in addition to the beautiful meal (which surprisingly was turkey, not a roast but in a white wine sauce), with carol singing and a tableau of the Nativity.

The following day included a welcome coach trip out of Rome, along the Appian Way, through the Alban Hills to the Pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo and the little town of Frascati, with another splendid meal and plenty of wine. On our free day, we took the opportunity to visit the Sistine Chapel (after a very long queue) and then went into St Peter's again to pay our respects to the tombs of Pope John Paul II in the crypt and Pope John XXIII. On our last day, we had tickets for the regular Wednesday Papal Audience which took place in the Piazza. It was preceded by the rendering of the psalm from the Vespers of that day, Psalm 139, "Lord, you have searched me and know me", then Pope Benedict arrived and did a tour in the pope-mobile, looking, as was reported in the press, not altogether unlike Santa Claus in his bright red cloak and ermine-trimmed cap.

We returned that same Wednesday to snow in Britain. Alas, our attempts to get away from turkey and excessive eating had not succeeded. We had however seen a variety of crib-scenes instead of endless repeats on TV, and we had enjoyed an Italian Christmas which on reflection was no doubt just as much a mixture of the religious and secular as our English celebrations. It was a very enjoyable and refreshing experience, however, and heartily to be recommended if you feel the need to do something a little different for Christmas.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbours came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well; she died. So many people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness. So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember – when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

YOU ARE A VITAL THREAD IN ANOTHER PERSON'S TAPESTRY; OUR LIVES ARE WOVEN TOGETHER EACH THREAD INTERDEPENDANT ON THE OTHER.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



This issue occurs during Paschaltide, therefore, we have devoted considerable space to the sacrament of baptism, the initiation of all to the Christian life. The Paschal candle prominent on the altar from its first lighting on the night of the Easter Vigil to Pentecost will

be brought out again and again for baptisms throughout the year as a constant reminder that we are initiated into the baptism of the New Fire that sends us forth into the world to ignite all around us with the fire of God's love.

Review of the last quarter

Baptism is not just an initiation ceremony; it is a commissioning that requires from us pro-active participation in the world to further God's Kingdom. This so often means standing out from the crowd, demanding not only our own rights but also and more importantly, the same rights for others. We, in the past quarter, have been at the forefront of this latter necessity. Through our involvement with TELCO, a successful campaign in Docklands saw a major firm of accountants surrender to TELCO's demands for a living wage for its poorest paid workers, mainly migrants or immigrants. Over 200 parishioners gathered at a meeting to extract promises from those standing in the local elections of May 4th and St Thomas' was also present at a massive celebration on May 1st in Westminster Cathedral dedicated to making migrant workers feel at home in the Catholic Church of the UK.

A further campaign to see that every voting member of the House of Lords receives 100 letters encouraging them to vote against the Joffe Bill when it is debated on the 12th May was also mounted. There will be more on this in the next issue of 'In Touch' after the result of the debate is known, but in the meantime perhaps all those who had objections to the campaign might put their views in writing to the editor. If all who objected by email, phone call or in simply refusing a leaflet at the back of the church were to write, we would be able to fill the next issue with their letters alone. I threw out a similar challenge in the last issue and was delighted to have a letter giving another point of view on same sex couples having the same adoption rights as married couples. Those who have the courage to put their views in writing are to be admired for not only do they throw themselves open to challenge but they encourage others to do likewise.

Looking Forward

In a few days after writing this, the nation goes to vote in local elections. There is a real threat that the BNP has by subtle means and not a few downright lies increased its popularity. Christian leaders of all denominations are urging their congregations not to vote for this racist, right wing organisation.

In the January issue I suggested we bombard heaven with prayers calling for a solution to the increasing threat from Iran. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continues his anti-Israeli rhetoric and Israel has launched the most sophisticated spy satellite ever to spy on Iran's nuclear development. Watch this dangerous space!

LEON MENZIES Acting Editor

Mouse Wisdom with a message for you How true is this?

Amouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. "What food might this contain?" The mouse wondered – he was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning. "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do

about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow and said "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house – like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey.

The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

"I am rich," she answered immediately. "I have four healthy children and when work is good for your father, what else could I ask for?"

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

By Linda Newton



When my dad died on Christmas Day last year, I felt I had lost my anchor in life and the feeling of emptiness was over-

whelming. No-one can describe the yearning that overtakes you when that key person in your life has gone. Dad was always the rock I could lean on, someone who listened to my problems and reassured me when I was struggling to find the right path. We had already had the heartache of losing my mother, and two years before that, my brother Stephen, who died from a blood clot on the lung, at the age of twenty six. They had both left a huge gap in our lives, but Dad and I were always there for each other. I was the eldest daughter, the one he relied on to fill his emptiness and organise his life.

I was brought up in Greenwich, the eldest of four children. My childhood memories were of days out in Greenwich Park, feeding the ducks and squirrels and sometimes, if Mum and Dad could afford it, we would hire a rowing boat on the lake. Life wasn't easy financially – Dad was working in the building trade and work wasn't always available – but we were enriched by the love surrounding us. My mother was well-respected and loved in our local community. She may have been quiet and reserved, a very private lady but, when she spoke, everyone took notice. I remember Father Murphy saying, after she died: "Wherever you saw Mary, you children were following her, like four little ducks trailing after her." As a young girl, the



Linda second from left with her parents brother and sisters.

one thing that stuck in my head was on a visit to the baker's. A lady who knew my mum came out from the back, bubbling with bad news.

"Have you heard about Mrs. Mallion's daughter? Fifteen years old and she's expecting a baby!"

My mother's comment was: "God help her. She's going to need all the love and support she can get." She said to the woman: "Nell, I can't afford to judge anyone's child. I have four children of my own. None of us know what is in store for us."

She had a special affinity with children. Every Sunday, after eight am Mass at Our Lady Star of the Sea, she would come home and bake apple pies, scones and bread and give them to the children of the poorer families in the block of flats where we lived. A young lad who used to come to her with his washing

came to the door after she died. He held a red rose wrapped in silver foil. He said: "This is for a special lady." Despite all the obstacles in his way, that boy has done really well. My mum always believed in him.

Her family was her life, and she made sure all of us had a good education. Our life revolved around church, school and Greenwich Park and we had a very happy and privileged childhood, for which I will always be grateful to my parents.

Dad came from an extrovert, musical family from Youghal, Co. Cork. He was one of fourteen and they were all very close. Mum was also Irish, one of seven, from Co. Mayo, and she met Dad when she came to England to work as a nanny. "She was such a positive woman," he said, after she died. "She was the making of me." I remember going home one day after

I was married and finding the two of them watching "Play Your Cards Right" on the television. On the table between them was a plate with a sliced apple and orange. Mum said to me happily: "This is luxury!"

When I was seventeen, Dad got a job at the bank and life was much easier. Later, when I started work in the bank, you would think, in their eyes, I had been elected as MP for Greenwich. I remember going to Mass with Mum just before I started my job. As she knelt to receive the host, I saw what looked like a piece of paper hanging out of her shoe. When Mass was over, I asked her what it was. She said: "I put a piece of paper in there because I thought they were beginning to leak." I remembered how much money she had just spent on me to kit me out for the bank, because she thought my appearance was important, and I felt very humbled.

"Don't you wish you were rich, Mum?" I blurted out.

"I am rich," she answered immediately. "I have four healthy children and when work is good for your father, what else could I ask for?" That comment has always stayed with me.

In our family there have been good and bad times, joy and happiness, but probably the most important thing I have learnt from my mum and dad is the paramount importance of knowing how to forgive. Both my parents taught me that in this life there will be disappointment and happiness, feelings of rejection and betrayal. It can be hard to forgive wrongdoings, but keeping the resentment inside you can be a destruction button and can overtake your life; an energy wasted.

Both my parents gave me firm foundations for my values in life which I have tried to follow since

(though there have been a few slips on the way!). Now that they have both gone, my foundations are still solid, but I feel I have lost my base. My parents' home was always 'home'

"All I can give you is my love and words in your time of need. Time is the only healer in this sadistic steeplechase we are all running blind. In time there will be an answer and I firmly believe that we shall one day be with our fathers as one. All my prayers and heartfelt sympathy to one who has never given up on me. All my love, Jamie."

even when we had all flown the nest. The feeling of emptiness comes over me in waves when I think of my loss. Knowing my parents, I can hear them saying: "Be strong. Look after each other and focus on the wonderful times we had together as a family." I have never felt so protected, like an egg in the shell, with the love, prayers and kindness shown

to me by my friends and my community at St. Thomas'. The cards meant so much to me; in particular, a special handmade card that came through my letter box the day before Dad's funeral. It was from a young man whom I think the world of and whom my father felt he knew as one of his own, although he had never met him. Jamie has been fighting a losing battle against drug addiction for a long time and now has lost his arm. Despite this disability, he had drawn a beautiful picture on the front of the card. Inside were written these words that I felt I had to read out at my Dad's funeral:

"All I can give you is my love and words in your time of need. Time is the only healer; in this sadistic steeplechase we are all running blind. In time there will be an answer and I firmly believe that we shall one day be with our fathers as one. All my prayers and heartfelt sympathy to one who has never given up on me. All my love, Jamie."

In death, something very positive can happen – through the sadness and emptiness, God will give us something else to think about, someone else carrying his cross. It teaches us that we can have everything one day but the next day it can be stripped away from us. None of us, as parents and adults, can afford to judge others by outward appearance. We must learn to dig deeper, to give everyone a chance. God made room for each and every one of us and we all have our own qualities and roles to play in this huge tapestry of life.

I would like to thank my friends and family, Fr. Isidore and all the community of St. Thomas of Canterbury. A Mass will be offered up in thanks.
Linda Newton and family

From Trinidad to England and Back

By Henry Walters

Part two Arrival in England.



A smiling Henry now fully Anglicised.

We stopped two days also in Jamaica and there I saw in the street a man, sitting begging, stark naked. Then I realised that for all the poverty we had in Trinidad we never had anybody so destitute as to be so exposed to the elements as this. I thought then that perhaps we were not poor in Trinidad. We went out together and collected fruits that grew plentifully around. Your brothers would occasionally drop off meat from your father's butchering business; I suppose that was what made your family rich with many houses and expanses of land, motor cars and fine mansions. Then we always seemed to have chickens on special occasions; they ran around freely and fell prey to our wiles, ending up in the big black cooking pot over the pitch oil stove that had to be vigorously pumped up several times during the cooking process. We were surrounded on every side by sugar cane which belonged to the factory owners, but playing hide-and-seek in the six or seven-foot-tall canes had an ulterior motive; we would steal the most succulent canes and chew their sweet juices, killing any appetite we might have had for the mainly vegetarian diet that kept our bellies full. We children were expert at discerning, just by looking, which of the many varieties of sugar cane would taste the best. As children we knew far more about different sugar canes than children in England knew about the different varieties of apples.

“I wondered then if, when we arrived in England, there would be only white people and we would be stared at like this and for how long would they stare before they got accustomed to the sight of us.”

ferent varieties of apples.

My first sight of a crowd of white faces was when the ship docked at Vigo in Spain. The ship had predominantly black people on board but here as we looked over the rails we saw a sea of white faces and they seemed to peer up at all of us black children as if they had never seen black children before. I wondered then if, when we arrived in England, there would be only white people and we would be stared at like this and for how long would they stare before they got accustomed to the sight of us. By the time we made our last stop at Tenerife there was a noticeable change in the climate and from there on to Southampton there were less and less passengers swimming in the ship's pool. Just a week out of Southampton in mid winter I found myself swimming alone in the cold water that did not cause me any more concern than the cold mountain streams we swam in back here in Trinidad.

“How come you have so many factories here?” I asked Angela. Her response shocked me to the core and shattered all my dreams of mansions and trim cut lawns. ‘Factories?’ she said. ‘These are houses.’”

When we saw the English coastline, my expectation of what was to come ran wild. I visualised the great mansions that we would be living in like those I had seen on television on those special occasions when the wife of the foreman of the sugar cane factory invited all the local children to watch their tiny black-and-white TV. Long winding avenues leading up to stone steps and pillared front doors; all I knew about white people and how they lived was what I had seen there. Snow at Christmas now fast approaching. How would snow feel? I would make a snowman and throw snowballs. I would live in a house with beautiful furniture, statues, pictures on the walls, telephones and televisions, and beautifully laid out lawns on which to play cricket. I would wear fine clothes and ride in big cars. Surely for all this it was worth leaving paradise.

At eleven years of age that was the last time I allowed myself to be excited about what was or may be round the corner. Never again would I expect anything more than I knew back in Trinidad. For the reality of living in England soon taught me the values of what we had back here sitting on our wall with the still burning candle between us, the peace, the calm, the cock crowing at the break of dawn.

As we came down the gangway my only sister, Angela, whom I had never seen in the flesh, came and put a beautiful fur coat over my shoulders. I felt the softness of the fur with my hand by rubbing it over my forearm. It was a new tactile experience for me and seemed to confirm all my expectations of luxurious living as we walked to the car. It was not the big, chrome-emblazoned limousine that I had expected.

Whilst I was a little closer to my father after the voyage I still felt vulnerable. I only knew my sister, now a grown woman married with her own family, through photographs. I snuggled into the fur coat in the back of the car for comfort and gazing out of the window, saw what I thought was row upon row of smoking factory chimneys. ‘How come you have so many factories here?’ I asked Angela. Her response shocked me to the core and shattered all my dreams of mansions and trim cut lawns. ‘Factories?’ she said. ‘These are houses.’

On the way to Angela's house, she asked what I would like to eat; the choice was chicken and chips or fish and chips. When I saw the greasy chicken and soggy chips, fish that was no better and I restrained myself from openly comparing it with our lovely fresh fish and home cooked chicken in Trinidad. The very sight of it was enough to sate my appetite.

After a brief stop at Angela's we went to my father's house. He did not do as we would do in Trinidad, push the door in and announce his presence. He rang the doorbell, strange I thought, is it not his house? Through the opaque glass panels of the door I saw a shadowy figure, my father's wife; she opened the door. This was my first glimpse, for glimpse it was, of the stepmother that Angela had written about and the ill treatment she had received at her hands. She turned immediately on her heel without saying a word and went back inside.

Dad and I slept in a long narrow room at the rear of the house whilst relationships with his wife remained frosty. It was many months before Dad was invited back into her bedroom and I had that long room to myself. Her relationship with me remained neither warm nor too cold. I was tolerated, as a presence too old and grown up to be manipulated; in any case I was Dad's responsibility, not hers.

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Very soon after arrival in Leyton, I wakened to find the garden covered in white with a flock of sparrows pecking furtively at the ground. I thought I was looking at snow and rushed out, scattering the grazing birds, so that I could feel the snow. But again I was quickly disappointed when I found there was nothing to pick up; it was only frost. I returned indoors hoping the birds, a new phenomenon for me, would return.

Mostly, any long-distance travel was done on the back of my dad's motorbike. Otherwise I walked everywhere but initially I got a few shocks when I ventured outdoors alone. I had taken an interest in the Beano and the

Beezer comics and it was to buy these and a couple of apples that I never knew here in Trinidad that coaxed me out on the first occasion. Returning home, I found it impossible to recognise my dad's house. I had not noted the number and all the houses in Dawlish Road looked the same. Here in Trinidad that would never happen because each of the houses, though primitive, is at least distinctive. I wandered up and down the road several times before I plucked up the courage to start knocking on doors.

I then memorised the number of the house; 27, not too difficult to do. Then on another occasion I was caught out with yet another strange European custom. Returning home from one of my escapades, I found the door locked. I doubt it would be possible to buy a lock here in Trinidad, at least not for the house of a commoner. But there I was, perched on the low wall outside number 27 Dawlish Road, awaiting the return of my stepmother. Sitting there on the low wall at the front of the house in Leyton I found myself thinking how much more interesting are the comings and goings that can be seen from our wall here. Shortly thereafter I was provided with a key to the front door, not so much as recognition of my coming of age but more as a convenience, due to the fact that both my father and stepmother were working. I was the original latch key kid.

Nothing made me more aware of the cultural differences between Trinidad and England than my first experience of English schooling in Norlington Road, Leyton. To me, England seemed culturally decadent by comparison if I was to judge by schooling alone. I had been at a Catholic school from the age of five to the age of eleven. There was assembly every morning, which meant in addition to morning prayers, mass, both morning and afternoon and an inspection of uniform and hands.

We had to stand with our hands out palms facing downwards until the teacher came along when we turned the palms upwards to show clean finger nails and palms. Compulsory confession every Saturday; the whole school went. I was very anxious to become an altar boy and although I couldn't sing a note, I was an enthusiastic chorister. Every boy had to wear a leather belt; it was part of the uniform. At the early morning inspection the teacher would look for the boy with the thickest belt. That was the belt the teacher borrowed for the day with which he would freely administer corporal punishment. But there was no point in whimpering off home to report to you, mother, that I had been at the receiving end of the belt because as with all the other parents, your attitude was always, 'You must have done something to deserve it' and that would be followed by another clip round the ear for good measure. Listening to the older generation in England it seems to me that

“She walked in wearing a short skirt, perched herself on the edge of the table with her legs dangling over the side in a pose more suited to the front cover of a girly magazine; such a contrast to the respectably dressed teachers here who either sat upright behind a desk or stood.”

the traditions in our schools here were derived from the English traditions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. We retained these traditions but the English allowed them to slip away under the guise of political correctness, freedom of speech and respect for the individual. There is no end to the justifications given for the lack of respect, breakdown of discipline and lowering of moral standards that shocked me when I first was confronted with the English school system. It is from my schooling here that I learned discipline and morals and it is because of that that I sent my own children to Catholic schools in England.

On my first day at school in Norlington Road there seemed to be no formal beginning to the day. A gaggle of youth gathered in the classroom, highly active, throwing missiles of all sorts at each other along with insults and foul language; the noise was horrendous, desks pushed around the floor, whistling and shouting. When the teacher walked in it didn't seem to make much difference and no wonder. She walked in wearing a short skirt, perched herself on the edge of the table with her legs dangling over the side in a pose more suited to the front cover of a girly magazine; such a contrast to the respectably dressed teachers here who either sat upright behind a desk or stood. The moment a teacher walked in to the room there was silence and every pupil appreciated the opportunity to be at school instead of behaving as if they were there under duress.

It was the early hours of the morning before the cock crowed when I left the candle there on the wall and went off to bed; all the other candles had already melted away but that special candle sitting on our wall where you had sat with me last night and so often before, burned well into the next day.

Trinidad will always be very special to me. Although I have lived the greatest part of my life in England I always feel the weight of the world fall from my shoulders the moment I set foot on Trinidadian soil and it would be unthinkable for my children to spread my ashes anywhere else but here in Paradise.

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HUMOUR By Jo King

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services

● Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

● The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals."

● Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

● Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

● Molly remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Father Jack's sermons.

● The Parish Priest will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."

● Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a perfect friendship that began in their school days.

● A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow. At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

● Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

● Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

● Please place your donation in the envelope a long with the deceased person you want remembered.

● Attend and you will hear an excellent speaker and heave a healthy lunch.

● The ladies of the CWL have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

● This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

● The Parish Priest would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

● Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

● The Sixth Form will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

● Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

● For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a crèche downstairs.



● The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

● Our youth football team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM at the school pitch. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

● Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

● The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

● Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

● Next Thursday there will be auditions for the choir. They need all the help they can get.



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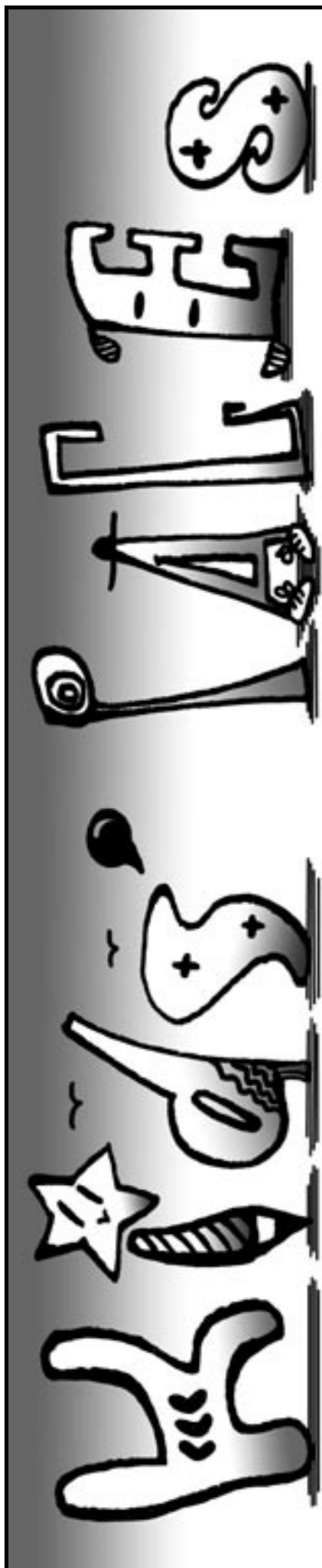
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Build a real Working Volcano...

Ever wanted to make an actual working volcano? With this simple guide, you can make a volcano of your own, that really does spew out lava! (I think it's best to do this experiment outside.)

Ingredients... Salt dough (made using 6 cups flour, 2 cups salt, 4 tablespoons cooking oil and 2 cups of water), plastic coke/lemonade bottle, baking pan, red food colouring, washing liquid, two tablespoons baking soda, vinegar, large bowl, a clean space!

- 1 To make the salt dough, first mix 6 cups flour, 2 cups salt, 4 tablespoons cooking oil, and 2 cups of water in a large bowl. Work the ingredients with your hands until smooth and firm. If needed, you can add more water to the mixture.
- 2 Stand the soda bottle in the baking pan. Mold the salt dough around the bottle making sure you don't cover up the bottle mouth or drop any dough into the bottle. Take your time on this step and build your volcano with as much detail as you like.
- 3 Fill the bottle most of the way with warm water mixed with a little of the red food colouring.
- 4 Put 6 drops of the washing liquid into the bottle.
- 5 Add 2 tablespoons of baking soda.
- 6 Slowly pour vinegar into the bottle and jump back quick!

The red 'lava' is caused by a chemical reaction, which is created by the baking soda and vinegar. Carbon dioxide gas is formed, making gas bubbles which build in the bottle, forcing out the 'lava.' And, guess what? Carbon dioxide is the same gas that is used in a real volcano! See, you did make a real volcano!

“It is time to elect a new world leader, and only your vote counts. Here are the facts about the three leading candidates...”

Candidate A -

He associates with crooked politicians, and consults with astrologists. He's had two wives. He also chain smokes and drinks 8 to 10 martinis a day.

Candidate B -

He was kicked out of office twice, sleeps until noon, used opium in college and drinks a quart of whiskey every evening.

Candidate C -

He is a decorated war hero. He's a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, drinks an occasional beer and never cheated on his wife.

Which of these candidates would be your choice? Decide, and then look at the candidate names...



By
Rory Howes

Candidate A: is Franklin D. Roosevelt
Candidate B: is Winston Churchill
Candidate C: is Adolph Hitler.

Surprised..?

Q ♦ A man walks into a bar and asks for a drink. The bartender pulls out a gun and points it at him. The man says, "Thank you," and walks out. Why?

A The man has hiccupps: the bartender scares them away by pulling a gun.

Doctor Who...

With the impending release of the new Doctor Who series, I have decided to make a small Doctor Who test. Are you the brilliant Doctor, a needy companion or an evil Dalek?

1. You have found a strange planet in the Delta Quadrant, uninhabited but surrounded by fire. Do you:

- A- Fly down there immediately to get a tan?
- B- Realise something isn't right and cautiously approach the planet, sonic screwdriver in hand?
- C- Fly the TARDIS down to the planet to conquer it?

2. Suddenly, when you land on the planet, huge evil aliens come running out of an invisible temple. Do you:

- A- Assume a fighting position and attempt to punch your way out?
- B- Declare peace while defending your companions?
- C- Switch sides and ask if you can help the monsters?

3. The aliens drag you into the temple and tie you to a pole above

Results...

Mostly A: You are **Rose!** Your quick thinking can get you out of some sticky situations, but you always need someone to travel with, for companionship and a bit of help...

Mostly B: You are the **Doctor!** You can do anything, and you always have a plan at the ready. But be sure to take care of yourself as much as your companions...

Mostly C: You are a **Dalek!** You have some seriously evil thoughts in your head. Try to think of others as much as you think of yourself, and try to obey the law occasionally...

A.MARR

Solution to the Coded Catastrophe in the last issue... OBJECT 1...the camera, OBJECT 2...the disguise, OBJECT 3...the lockpick, OBJECT 4...the file, OBJECT 5...the Internet, OBJECT 6...an address, OBJECT 7...a plane, OBJECT 8...a fake passport, OBJECT 9...the airport.

Hmmmmmmmm...

If Noah took two of every creature onto his wooden Ark, where did he keep the termites and the woodpeckers?

How do "Do not walk on the grass" signs get there?

364 days of the year, parents tell their kids not to take sweets from strangers, yet on Halloween, it is encouraged. Why is that?

Why is Charlie short for Charles if they are both the same number of letters, and Charlie has more syllables?

If I melt dry ice, can I take a bath without getting wet?

Think about it...

a pit of fire. The pole is lowered further and further until you can feel the flames on the soles of your feet. Do you:

- A- Scream for help and attempt to struggle out of the ropes?
- B- Calmly use the sonic screwdriver to destroy the cooling tanks above the fire pit, releasing water and extinguishing the flames?
- C- Agree to do anything to avoid being burnt?

4. An even bigger monster with fangs the size of elephants and purple fur calls for you to be released. You thank him but it turns out that he is very hungry and he only saved you because he wants to eat you! Do you:

- A- Try to run away and hope for the best?
- B- Devise an ingenious strategy to escape from captivity?
- C- Say that you would rather eat your companions than be eaten?

5. You manage to escape from the monsters and you realise that you have to get to the control room and stop the monster's ships from leaving the planet and invading Earth. When you

reach the control room, you find a button labelled SELF-DESTRUCT. Do you:

- A- Wait for your most intelligent companion to examine it?
- B- Poke around inside the controls to find out what it will destroy?
- C- Push it on an impulse, because you like explosions?

6. You realise that it will destroy the planet and all its inhabitants but will save the Earth from invasion. Suddenly, the entire monster army run into the control room, guns raised. Do you:

- A- Sacrifice yourself to destroy everything and everyone?
- B- Call the TARDIS, push the button and fly away before it's too late?
- C- Threaten to push the button, then run away?

7. The TARDIS arrives just in time and you and your companions fly away to safety. You have a choice of which planet to visit next. Do you choose:

- A- Earth? (to visit your family)
- B- Wherever there is a lot of action?
- C- Back in time to visit the planet you just destroyed? It was fun there!



Gateways to Life

Our guest author in this issue is Henry Goldstein, Rabbi Emeritus of the South West Essex and Settlement Synagogue, which is in Newbury Park but its membership, includes many Jews from the Woodford area. He was ordained as a Rabbi in 1967 and before he came to the local area in 1973, served a synagogue in Finchley. He was chairman of the Reform Rabbinic Assembly during the 1970s, an occasional prison chaplain for over 20 years and did three years as a hospital chaplain. He has written several booklets on various topics and has been engaged throughout his career in inter-faith work, as well as Jewish educational and charitable activities. He retired in 2001 and now regards himself as strictly an amateur Rabbi. However, his many years studying Judaism and Christianity as a professional scholar are reflected in this piece and it is for this that he is highly regarded in the area of Jewish Christian dialogue.

by Rabbi Emeritus
Henry Goldstein

Christian Baptism has its origin in the Biblical and particularly in the later Jewish tradition, though its Christian meaning and use are different from its now limited use in Modern Judaism. Jews never use the word Baptism – of Greek origin – when describing their own use of lustration because it is so much associated with the Christian practice. Instead we use the plain English translation of the Hebrew, Immersion.

Immersion was used mainly for ritual purification. In the time of Jesus there was much emphasis by groups such as the Pharisees and the Essenes on ritual purity and Immersion was a symbolic, psychological way of passing from a state of ritual impurity into ritual cleanliness. With the destruction of the Temple most laws of ritual purity fell into disuse. As a result I, a male Jew, have never had to undergo any rite of Immersion. It is now somewhat difficult for Jews to empathise with the mindset of ancient times and its stress on ritual cleanliness.

Perhaps the supreme example of the obsession in ancient times is that of the High Priest who would immerse five times on the Day of Atonement to avoid any suggestion of ritual impurity when he performed his vital duties on that Day of Days. There are a few traditional Jews who

will still carry out a similar ritual process before the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement so as to be in a proper state for the special occasion, but this is extreme pious behaviour. There is, however, one use of ritual immersion for persons that generally persisted, its use by Orthodox Jewish women who immerse themselves after menstruation which the Bible and later Jewish tradition considered as causing a state of uncleanness. This immersion with appropriate prayers is normally carried out in a dedicated plunge pool within a special bathhouse.

Whatever its meaning and purpose, immersion/baptism is a passing from one state of existence to another and is of psychological importance. In the case of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, with their emphasis on the imminence of the Kingdom of God and urgent need to be ready to enter it, the adoption of immersion/baptism as a symbolic point of entrance to that Kingdom resulted in a crucial observance. It marked a new and life-changing departure for those who were immersed – a gateway to a new life. The other use of immersion in modern Judaism does have in a general sense some similarity; it forms part of the rite of passage of those joining the Jewish religion. This is the nearest in the Jewish community

to 'baptism' in the Christian sense. Adult and female proselytes have to undergo immersion, with appropriate prayers, as a symbol of their passing into a different existence on becoming members of the House of Israel. It is important to realise that for the vast majority of Jews, defined as Jews by being born of Jewish mothers, no such immersion is necessary.

I have read a description of baptism as a "gateway to the life of the spirit, freed from sin and reborn as sons of God." The Bible does speak in a few places of being washed clean from sin, but these are almost certainly a metaphoric use by Prophet and Poet drawn from the ritual use of washing. Just as ritual immersion had nothing to do with bathing for cleanliness sake, so it had no efficacy for 'cleansing' from sin. From what I can tell, there is some indication that John the Baptist did regard immersion as a cleansing from sin and a sign of repentance but he also seems to have called for an evident repentance which is in line with Judaism.

Judaism is a religion which does not have a doctrine of original sin; it even traditionally states that we begin with 'pure souls, and is concerned with the sins committed during one's lifetime. The antidote for lifetime sins is 'Repentance' but more literally and effectively; return. Return to God and

to the human beings offended by one's wrong doing. It is a whole process involving recognition of sin and confession, atonement and forgiveness with re-commitment to the right path of behaviour. It is an everyday process, though for the community together there is a grand Season of Repentance, which culminates on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Many Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, fast and/or attend synagogue services on this High Holy Day.

According to an early rabbinic tradition Repentance was created before the Universe. Which means it is rather like the repair kit that comes with the bicycle. Repentance repairs the relationships that are necessary for proper living and makes them whole again. It is a healing process, and also one can say it is a cleansing process. It is a gateway in its own right because it brings us back to the 'path' of righteousness and the observance of God's commandments.

Salvation is another word that Jews tend to avoid uttering because of its Christian use and meaning, though the concept is of Jewish origin, but the path to personal salvation in Judaism is the perceived path of right, just living. It is a Jewish belief that all human beings can achieve this salvation through observing at least what are called the seven commandments of Noah – a subject in themselves – mostly of a moral nature. Throughout life we repeatedly fail to fulfil God's demands and therefore, we need that repair kit repeatedly or so to speak 'repeated cleansing'.

I have dwelt on the 'repair kit' of Return to God (Teshuvah) because it has a resemblance to immersion, sprinkling or other kinds of cleansing. Unlike them it has to be resorted to very often, we being what we are, but it is also a passing from one state to another, a new beginning, a kind of rebirth – and in fact we need many such new beginnings. It is of psychological and of spiritual importance and is also a Gateway to Life, an existence that is truly related to God.

Fr Isadore with all of those baptised, received and confirmed at the Easter Vigil



The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

by Leon Menzies

"Rejoice O Mother Church! For Christ has ransomed us with His blood. This is the night when Christians everywhere, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness."

from the Easter Proclamation, the exultet

And this is the night that marks the end of a long journey and opens the door to a new journey for seven adults, three of whom were baptised at the Easter Vigil three others were received into the Church and one was confirmed. Few if any of these adults will, this year, have been aware of the great beauty of the Exultet since the blood rushing to their heads and their pulses drumming in their ears at the sheer excitement of what is to happen to them now that their long period of preparation is over tends to overcome all their sensory perceptions.

Year after year those who have been received into the Church at the Easter Vigil return to relive that

life changing experience and to hear properly for the first time free of emotion and excitement "Rejoice heavenly powers! Sing, Choirs of angels! Jesus Christ our King is risen!" That long and beautifully poetic text this year was proclaimed by Fr Isadore his deep bass voice resonating in our empty fasted stomachs. How fortunate we are to hear it sung, for few and far between are those that can quell the fear and overcome the excitement and self-doubt to handle this trickiest moment of the entire Paschal Triduum. The one who sings it accepts the noblest of tasks, an honour for the singer whose faith, skill, and spirituality can only burst forth in this great song of Easter joy.

There are always tears in the eyes of those who return for this most beautiful of all liturgies. Tears that flow from

the memory of the ups and downs of that Journey of Faith lasting anything from two to five years. Memories of the first tentative steps to enquire into the Church, memories of what brought them to enquire in the first place. This is the pre-catechumenate period when the enquirers talk and the catechists listen. Enquiry often follows a traumatic experience and the enquirer often relates the sudden rushing in of the Holy Spirit into the painful void the trauma leaves. Those who come to the Journey of Faith are already, for the most part, filled with the Holy Spirit. They do not come to get faith, but bring with them a faith, that nurtures the whole group and particularly the Catechists. At first the Spirit is barely recognisable but nevertheless it is the Spirit that gives them the courage to join a group in which they feel comfortable enough to talk of their lives, their joys and sorrows and the event or events that brought them here. It is now that the enquirers begin to look deeper into themselves and differently at the world around them.

No longer is acceptance into the Church the inevitable conclusion to a number of comfortable tête-à-têtes on a one-to-one with a priest. Although this process has been used for some high profile converts in recent years it is now not strictly permitted. Now the only way into the Church is via this special rite that mirrors as closely as is possible in this modern world the initiation process that the first Christians underwent when they risked life and limb to be followers of Christ. It begins with a period of enquiry. Then the first glimpse the community gets of the enquirers is on that occasion when the choir jumps out of their skins at the hammering on the church door. This is the rite of acceptance when the nervous enquirers appearing on the altar for the first time show themselves to the assembled community and seek their acceptance. The nervousness felt by the enquirers on this occasion is not to be underestimated.

Having been accepted by the community, signified usually with a round of applause, the enquirers



Thomas Howey with Bishop Thomas at Brentwood Cathedral the Rite of Sending

now become Catechumens. The Catechumenate is the longest period within the rite and is the part that is closest to the early churches' tradition of sharing traditions, customs, practices, exploring prayer, the scripture, worship and learning about the apostolic life. All this is done as a build up to the mysteries that will not be fully revealed until after baptism. The Catechumenate is a long process and can take several years during which there will inevitably be some enquirers that give up for a variety of reasons some being that they may not be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to join our community. Nobody passes through this season of learning in less than two years and very few passes through without feeling a little pain and discomfort. The cradle Catholics should be aware of their good fortune to be born into the faith for them there are no qualifying conditions.

Lent is the period of purification by this time those who have passed through all the loops and jumped all the hurdles are prepared to sign in the book of the elect that they wish to be received and the community send the elect, for so they are now termed, to the Bishop. It is the community that does the sending. The Rite of election in this diocese is usually celebrated at the Cathedral on the first Sunday of Lent. This Rite accepts them as candidates for the Sacraments by the Bishop, representing the fact that this decision is not theirs alone.

It is a pity that only the elect and their godparents or sponsors attend the packed out Cathedral for this

beautiful liturgy. Few who attend are not in awe at the sheer numbers, over 300 each year, who wish to be in full communion with the Catholic Church. Each one of the elect has a story to tell. A moving story of how Christ knocked on their door and they opened it to Him. How sad that the whole community cannot hear the stories told to the small number of Catechists for it is through the new blood entering the community through the work of the Spirit, by their own effort and in faith that the faith of the older members of the community is re-ignited. What makes so many people want to be Catholic? How many of us old hands can say in all honesty it is the example we show? More likely it is the example of these elect that makes us more ardent in our worship and proud to be known as Catholics.

It is because of this two-way spiritual benefit that we have the Scrutinies during this period of purification. The community prays for the elect and obliquely for themselves, that they may be strengthened in grace and virtue and purified from all past evil and from any bonds which hinder them from experiencing the love of God.

Then the great Easter Triduum. The readers of the Passion on Palm Sunday and on Good Friday have among them many who are to be received at Easter, and many who have been received at previous Easter vigils. The organiser of the readers is indeed one of them. So it is that through such ministries the new Catholics give witness to us all, and through their witness we may all see ourselves in the light of the newly baptised, purified afresh and commanded to 'rejoice, you newly baptised, chosen members of the Kingdom. Buried with Christ in death, you are reborn in him by faith.'

Now the newly baptised, the neophyte or novice enters the period of Mystagogy. They return to the Journey of Faith to explore more deeply the mysteries of the church. This is a sort of adult education, which should be for everyone. It is what we all need throughout the whole of our lives and it is forever and ever.



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GEORGE Bring me a Sandwich!

Paul Dobson recalls a lunch of long ago.



In my late teens, I was very lucky to have a regular week-end and holiday job working as a waiter at the Cliff Hotel, a smart hotel on the sea front at Dovercourt, the sleepy Essex town of my birth. Dovercourt and Harwich are two parts of what is really just one town occupying a small peninsular trapped between the River Stour and the North Sea. I hope the present inhabitants will excuse me when I say that, despite its ferry links to the Continent, it was in my youth and probably is still a rather parochial place. In July and August, families from various parts of England used to come for their Summer holidays. For the rest of the year the Cliff Hotel, being the only decent hotel in the town, had sufficient custom to keep it turning over but generally got furiously busy only at Christmas/New Year and at Easter. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were of course served daily. The weekly routine included a Rotary Club lunch and a dinner/dance on a Saturday night. If extra staff

were required for a wedding reception on the Saturday as well, the spending power of the young waiter was correspondingly increased for the following week. Just occasionally, foreign, and therefore exotic, people would stay. Perhaps it would be a Dutchman like the one who always had lager with his breakfast, or it might be some wealthy Scandinavians or Swiss staying a night or two before taking an expensive cruise on the Stella Polaris. There was also the American who seemed to live at the hotel most of the time. He had a liking, bordering on an obsession, for broad beans, which he persisted in calling "black eye peas". Thanks to him, they were almost always on the menu. The years of my childhood and youth were exceedingly happy ones, and my experiences at the Cliff Hotel were no small part of that.

Just recently I was reminded of one experience at the hotel, which was less pleasant. It occurred shortly after Easter in 1962 when I was 16 going on 17. The permanent staff were taking their holiday during the slack period after Easter. This particular lunchtime I was

the only waiter on duty. The weather, was warm and that was partly responsible for the fact that at one o'clock the tables, were now all hosts to hungry customers, mainly day trippers. An American couple, whom I had not previously seen and have never seen since, sat at a table in the window, at the furthest point from the doors through which, as the waiter, I made my way to and from the kitchen. I was both well trained and practised and I enjoyed the work especially at busy times, for time could drag at slack periods. I took the orders for each table strictly in the order in which the customers had arrived and I assured all that they would be served in a timely fashion. For each succeeding course I served the tables in more or less the same sequence as I had taken the orders.

Throughout the session, the man of the American couple in the window kept demanding my attention, increasingly, as it seemed to me, perversely and certainly not politely. I cannot now recall exactly what his requests were but it might have been that, whilst I was serving at another table, he asked for the English mustard which I then took to his table, apparently satisfying his request, only to find that he waited for a few minutes before interrupting me serving at another table with a demand for French mustard. His requests were unreasonable, not only in their number and sometimes in the content, but especially in the manner of their making. I can remember the detail in only one particular. It was that he always sought my attention by calling out the same name – and it was not mine. We quite soon reached the stage where I knew – and so of course did the other diners – that, each time I entered from the kitchen and whichever table was my intended destination, the ears of all in the room would be assaulted by him seeking my attention with "George!", followed by some further request. It was as if he resented my giving any attention at all to the other tables. Shortly, the time arrived where all the diners were either eating their puddings or, like the Americans, had already moved on to coffee. I entered the room bearing coffee for another table and was met with yet another loud "George!". Having served the coffee to its intended customers, I did not on this occasion attend to the Americans. Instead I went to the door leading into the kitchen, held it open and shouted through it towards the kitchen,

"George, I don't know if you heard but there is a chap out here who wants your attention."

I then went through the door calling,

"George, George."

I still find it curious that upon my return the American paid his bill without demur and that the couple left without any further comment.

'America Then and Now'?

It was purely by chance that I was recently reminded of that experience of over 40 years ago. It was in February this year that I turned on the car radio and found myself

listening to a programme inspired by the life, and occasioned by the recent death, of Rosa Parks, the black American who in 1955 famously defied the law when she refused to give up her seat on a bus in favour of a white person. In a half an hour, through music and the spoken word, the programme traced the history, from the end of the American Civil War to the modern day, of black dignity in the face of discrimination. It included an interview with Jimmy, a black gentleman, now in his eighties, who spoke of the days of the Pullman cars on the American trains of the early and mid-twentieth century. George Pullman, who invented those most comfortable of carriages, had a policy of employing only black men (in Jimmy's words, "the blacker the better") to serve those who travelled in Pullman luxury. He figured that if he employed the sons and grandsons of former slaves they would always deal politely with his affluent and white clientele. As you might say, no longer slaves, but still servile. In a hangover from earlier days, they were regarded as being something akin to his property and were known as "George's" or, more commonly, "George". There were some 10,000 black men so employed. In 1937, Pullman was forced to recognise and deal with their union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Nevertheless, as we know from the history of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, by the time the 2nd World War ended and for many years afterwards, attitudes still had not changed that much. On the Radio 4 programme Jimmy recounted an experience of his of about 60 years ago (which thus dates it to about 1946). He worked on Pullman trains out of Grand Central Station in Washington DC. On this occasion a lady passenger travelling some distance in the carriage in which Jimmy was serving, repeatedly called him "George":

"George, bring me a scotch and soda."

"George, bring me a sandwich."

"George, ..." this.

"George, ..." that.

Later, as Jimmy and other staff were leaving the carriage to make their way to their own cabins and bunks for the night, Jimmy's immediate superior, another waiter, Mr Hale, spoke to him in earshot of the whole carriage:

"Jimmy, I did not know that your name was George."

Jimmy boldly replied:

"Mr Hale, even though we live in America, the best place in the world, where a liberal education is available, there are still so many people so endowed with dire traits that they allow ignorance to supersede intelligence."

He could not have spoken like that to the lady, a paying customer, and get away with it. He did, however, get away with thus replying to his fellow waiter in front of her and the other customers and was rewarded with a round of applause from the other waiters.

Now nearly forty years on since I worked there, I feel the need coming on for a nostalgic lunch at the Cliff Hotel. I don't think I will ask the waiter if his name is George.

God Bless the Salvation Army



It appears to work every time! I allude to the Season of Lent and as soon as I hear the word 'alms' I recall an incident in my life that occurred some years ago.

By Claire Gray

My father, a not terribly zealous Irish Catholic had a high regard for the Salvation Army, which I believe somewhat exasperated my mother. This regard sprang from his childhood experience. His family moved from County Cork to the East End of London when he was four years of age. He was the youngest of a large, impoverished brood.

He related to us how he was very often hungry in those years (insert dates) and owed his very survival to the generosity of the 'Sally Ally'. They ran a daily soup kitchen where, in my father's words, 'I got a rich pea soup midday and hot cocoa in the late afternoon'. Privately my mother was of the opinion that his family might not have been so badly off had his father not worn out the elbows of his jacket leaning on the bar.

My father, who never knew any illness in his life, not even a cold, passed his good health on to my brothers and sisters and credited that to the generosity of the Salvation Army. On the other hand he was not slow to criticize my mother's family, a wealthier brood in no need of the Sally Ally, who were forever unwell with some malady or another and all due to 'mollycoddling at home'.

Dad was a man of very strong convictions - his eccentricities were shown in the way he passed his own convictions on to his children. For example, each of us in turn at a very tender age were all made to

take a solemn oath to be generous throughout our whole lives to the Salvation Army whenever they were spotted with their collecting tins. Far from crossing to the other side of the road to avoid them, our oath required us to promise to cross to the other side of the road in case we missed them.

The virtues of the Salvation Army were ingrained in our young minds as thoroughly as the words of the Lord's Prayer, not that my father uttered the latter quite as often as he uttered his credo; 'I believe in the

He related to us how he was very often hungry in those years and owed his very survival to the generosity of the 'Sally Ally'.

Salvation Army'.

Some years ago, quite some time after my father had passed away, I was out shopping. As usual I had purchased much more than I could reasonably carry and probably much more than any reasonable person could need. Stumbling onto the wind swept pavement, struggling with my acquisitions, still not yet cooled off from the overheated department store, I spied within a few yards of

the exit, standing bravely in the cold of a winter's day, the familiar bonnet of a lady Salvationist with the all-too-familiar collecting tin.

With a furtive glance upwards to where I hoped my father resided in the bosom of Our Lord, I sought exemption from contributing on the grounds that I was too heavily laden and in a hurry to get home. 'After all Dad, I was only six years old when I made my pledge'. But the only consolation that came to me as I struggled with my conscience was the not too comforting voice of my father saying, 'You can get your tongue lashing now or if you prefer later when you get here, if you ever do get here.' He did not say where here was and I was too overcome with guilt to enquire.

I stopped in my tracks and one by one stacked the bags against the wall of the department store from which I had just emerged. Frantically I searched for my purse, first in this bag then in that. After going through all the bags I started all over again and there it was, in the bottom of the first bag I had inadequately searched. 'OK, OK Dad, you don't have to rub it in.' Now I looked dishevelled and flustered as if I had been searching for a life saving potion. Too exhausted to walk the few yards to the lady with the collection tin, I beckoned to her to come to me. As she proffered the tin, I emptied into it the total contents of my purse.

The lady seemed a little surprised

and smiling sweetly she said, 'I have been watching you.' You too, I thought thinking of Dad glowering down at me. 'You appeared to be arguing with yourself. Are you all right?' Recalling childhood gibes of 'the little mad Irish woman' the blood rushed to my cheeks that had not known a blush since... well forget I said that. 'I appreciate all the trouble you went to in order to make your donation - it was very kind of you', she said.

Dare I smile sweetly, blurt out a 'God bless you' and leave immediately? Or should I confess that it was not out of the goodness of my heart but as a result of Dad's credo and his indoctrination of his children. I had to confess. It seemed to me that any blessings I may get as a result of my offering would most certainly be nullified if not exchanged for curses if I walked off leaving her to think I was a mad but generous woman who argued with some imaginary person inside my head.

So it was that I told her the whole story about which she was amused and hesitatingly enquired, 'You are not a Christian then?' Somewhat miffed I replied, 'I am indeed. I am a Roman Catholic'. Somewhat uncharitably I thought for a moment she might not know Roman Catholics are Christians. But I need not have feared for she replied without hesitation, 'Good, that's lovely, I am so pleased. When I was watching you I thought she must be a Christian to go to so much trouble. Surely it is our love of Jesus that binds us all together. Isn't it dear?'

As she gently kissed me on the cheek a tear came to my eye and I felt a lump in my throat. Words cannot explain the warm glow that pervaded my whole body. I learned so many lessons in that brief encounter, not least one of ecumenism. But did I merit that gratification or was it really Dad that was due the credit? God bless the Salvation Army.

BOOK REVIEW

BRIAN BEVERIDGE

The Pope's Children by David McWilliams
Gill & Macmillan Ltd 281pp

David McWilliams, the Irish economist, lecturer and now broadcaster extraordinaire, chairs RTE's very popular breakfast programme, "The Big Bite", which explores present-day problems of Ireland. Sometimes described as the educated person's Kilroy, his wide knowledge, erudition and clarity have become a byword, and in this book he surveys Ireland's new generation, born around the time of Pope John Paul's visit to Ireland during September 1979, and now in their mid-20's.

All have benefited not only from free secondary education, but also from easy access to higher education. In this they differ from previous generations in modern Ireland, and their rise has coincided with very rapid economic growth. Described also as "the Wonderbra Generation" (squeezed into the middle and uplifted by the Celtic Tiger) they enjoy money and opportunities undreamed of by their parents.

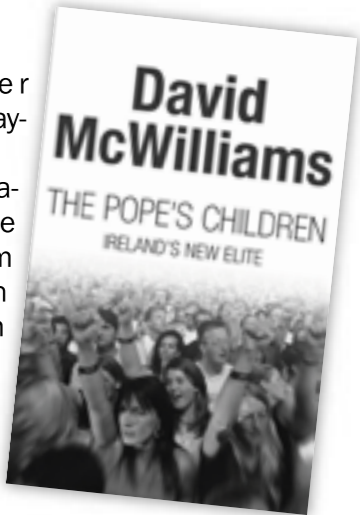
The impact of change on traditional communities has been a popular theme of recent Irish writing; notably the late John McGahern's *That They May Face the Rising Sun* (2002). In contrast to that wistful view of the experience of a rural community, McWilliams takes us on a rollicking trip through modern Ireland, which belies much careful underlying research. He summarises features of the Celtic Tiger, including the unexpected flood of cheap credit after Ireland's entry to the Eurozone, and the housing boom that followed. This latter is running the classic course of similar booms elsewhere, and may yet end in tears. Along the way, the reader meets various characters: slim "Low GI Jane", the new "Kells Angels" and "Dulchies" who inhabit former small towns now engulfed in suburban sprawl, their spoilt yet neglected offspring "Destiny's Children" and the world they inhabit, where golf courses now

outnumber children's playgrounds.

Good features of the credit boom have been the freedom it has given many to plan their future, the highest productivity in Europe and rapid social mobility, but there have been both winners and losers; both the political system and until very recently the Church among the latter. The proportion of middle class is now the highest in Europe, and he divides today's yuppies roughly into the acquisitive "Decklanders" (so called because of their gardens) and the less materialistic Hibernian/Cosmopolitans "HiCo's", separated more by mind-set than by income.

There are subgroups, too, within the new economy, such as the world of the immigrant workers, whose agendas are completely different from those of the Irish, and the business of "Communismomics"; a whole grey sub-economy linked to flamboyantly excessive celebration of first communions, which also reflects some confusion about values. One of the paradoxes is that 90 years after the Easter Rising of 1916, purchasing habits and retail development are identical to those in the UK, and if anything the Irish people are more British now than they were then - so much for Irish independence.

McWilliams rounds off with a series of deft, tongue-in-cheek swipes at the affectations and foibles of the HiCo intelligentsia. It is all an amusing read, and Dubliners especially, who will quickly identify many of his stereotypes, should find it lipsmacking!



Chronicle of Parish Events

By PA Nache



It saddens me that I have to start this page with an apology for a gross error made in the last issue of this illustrious journal. The front cover showed a picture of the charming Sharon Cameron not Anderson. Some confusion crept in due to the fact that the chief whip of the Christmas Fayre team was Dolly Anderson. Not such a bad slip really considering the similarities (both good Scots names that end with on!) and the fact that I had to provide all the information myself. Thankfully, more people have taken heed of my warning to exclude all functions for which a participant in the function has not written to me. This has resulted in far more functions reported on these pages and I can be exonerated if there are any mistakes made by the brave reporters as I am only the collator of the snippets.

Your Support is Needed

Usually this page reports on events that have happened but here is something that will be happening as we go to print and it will continue to happen right up to August. No doubt the Autumn or Christmas issue of In Touch will carry the post event report.

Thirty seven of our young people out of 61 of last year's confirmandees have to raise £700 each in order to go with that intrepid Franciscan priest, Fr Danny, in the footsteps of St Francis through the natural and wild beauty of the Rieti Valley to the various shrines where St. Francis loved to spend time in contemplation and prayer. Then on to Assisi and Rome with the final few days on the beach which will indeed be welcome since the group have chosen August, the hottest month of the year, to make their pilgrimage. There are still three months left for the funds to be raised so if you are approached with the offer of help to do an odd job or two, remember the heat is on for these brave young adventurers as they build up to what will be the most memorable event of their young lives.

The Becket Centre Social Group and St George's day party.

We now have the Becket Centre Social Group, which is not a com-

mittee. Committees, so the group members tell me and are restricted to a fixed number of elected members. 'What we want is a group of voluntary hard workers, the more the merrier, anyboby can join'.

The first event of this amazing, highly organised group was the St George's night bash on Saturday 22nd April. There was Pie and Mash, jellied eels, lots of painted faces mainly with red crosses, myriads of children mostly belonging to the adults present but it was difficult to distinguish who belonged to whom. The children all behaved admirably, eventually taking over one half of the Becket Centre whilst the adults sat around tables into the night at the other end.

Some very tired children were carried off still sound asleep, which is more than can be said for the poor Friars trying to sleep above the hulloaloo. The evening was heralded as a great success. The hard working Social Group want suggestions as to the sort of event that parishioners might want. You can use the letters page of 'In Touch' to comment on the St George's night event and to make your suggestions for future social gatherings.

Our Guides and Rangers try Euro Disney for Fun and Spills

At 6.30 a.m. on a surprisingly warm winter's morning, 20th January

2006, 39 half awake Girl Guides, Rangers and eleven of their leaders assembled outside the church awaiting the coach that was to take them to Euro Disney. They presented a colourful crowd, all in uniform and carrying pink drawstrings specially inscribed with 15th Woodford Girl Guides that served as a much needed eyecatcher to help spot 'our lot' among the throngs expected to be present in the park.

This was the culmination of many months of hard work to raise the extra money needed over and above the £160 that each Guide and leader had to pay for the trip. We are grateful to parishioners for the help with the raffle that raised £400 and the generous grant from the Parish Discretionary Fund that helped toward the cost of badges designed by the rangers, and the trip into Paris.

Half-asleep they may have been but not for long. The coach arrived at 7 a.m along with Kevin its extrovert and very cheerful driver. 'Are you all ready for this?' he asked, then requested a show of hands. 'Who has been before to Euro Disney?' The fact that we had come with specific videos to play on the journey and the coach had only a DVD player didn't seem to matter because Kevin was already equipped with DVDs. Very soon the coach was filled with a constant hum of excited chatter which continued throughout the whole of the eight-hour journey through the Kent countryside to catch an earlier shuttle than we had expected, and then racing down the motorway to arrive at The Davey Crocket Ranch Hotel in the park by 3 p.m.

The chatter never ceased, the atmosphere electric with excitement as we ate dinner on the first night, each having pre-selected from a menu back home, and then a mad dash for a welcome release from the stagnation of the coach trip into the hotel pool. Did I spot some of the lead-

ers on the water-shoots too? The chatter had now been replaced with squeals of delight.

Breakfast on the Saturday morning was probably the only bit of French cuisine that we had on the whole trip; croissants or croissants!

Then to the park:

Rangers went off in one direction, Guides in another, not to meet up until 5.15 p.m. for dinner at Planet Hollywood. Breathless, excited and with dishevelled hair, all compared notes. Rangers stuck together and went for the fast rides. Guides were more dispersed. Thanks to the pink bags and the watchful eyes of the leaders, nobody got lost. But it wasn't all over; no sooner was the sumptuous dinner consumed than they all rushed back for their last chance to try out those rides they had missed. Nobody had any problem sleeping that night.

Sunday 22nd - All assembled, still jabbering and comparing notes. Kevin our driver took us on a sight-seeing tour of Paris, a first for many of our girls. We finished on the first floor of the Eiffel Tower and then went on to Mass at the famous church La Madeleine where, not surprisingly, the service was in French, but the priest spoke to us in perfect English and invited one of our number to make a Bidding prayer, which she did, also in perfect English. How proud we would have been if that prayer had been said in perfect French, but hey, we are English and naturally expect the French to understand English; why not? No matter what language, the familiar liturgy was a comforting reminder of the universality of the Church.

La Madeleine is a beautiful church built on the model of the Pantheon



with Corinthian columns over twenty metres high all round. But it almost became a monument to commemorate Napoleon's army and victories. Instead The Arc de Triumph was built for that purpose. Then there was the possibility that it might become a railway station. After suffering the vagaries of all the French monarchs from its commissioner Louis XIV in 1764 right through to Louis Phillippe in 1842, a period which included that of the revolutionary government, finally it was Louis Phillippe who decided it would be a church after all. The facade is deliberately in perfect harmony with the Palais Bourbon or National Assembly directly opposite on the other side of the Seine. All we were told by Kevin was that it had no windows. But possibly this was in an effort to maintain the beautiful contours and external wholeness of the structure so that the inside is an almost exact opposite of the exterior.

To begin the long drive home we made a short trip and an early stop for lunch at a service station. There the chatter expressed the extent of the girl's enjoyment of the whole experience. Back at Woodford the only memorable question was: 'When shall we do it again?' Although the trip was educational, the prime objective was fun and we certainly all had a fair share of that!

A Freudian slip is when you say one thing but mean your mother.

When you dream in color, it's a pigment of your imagination.

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two-tired.

What's the definition of a will? (Come on, it's a dead giveaway!)

A backwards poet writes inverse.

In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism, your count votes.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

If you don't pay your exorcist, you get repossessed.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft, and I'll show you a flat minor.

When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

Local Area Network in Australia: The LAN down under.

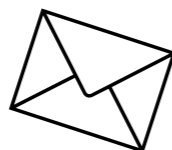
He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A lot of money is tainted. It t'aint yours and it t'aint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

LETTERS



Please send your letters to The Editor, Idvies, 72 Malvern Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 0JP or email leon@racionzer.net

THE OTHER POINT OF VIEW ON SINGLE SEX UNIONS AND ADOPTION FROM KAY FISHER.



Dear Editor,

You asked for comments on Civil Partnership and adoption – I would like to share these thoughts.

Colin and Peter have always been a joy to know. But right now their own happiness is especially evident because on 8th April they were formally recognised as next of kin when their Civil Partnership Ceremony took place.

It is difficult to overestimate what it will mean to them at last to be free of the worries that have plagued them and thousands of other long-term, faithful, settled gay partnerships. Those three little words “next of kin” cover a huge area of law – and include financial security, protection of rights over ones home and the acceptance of the prime position held in respect of ones nearest and dearest.

And to address the question of adoption.....

Colin made British history in 1981 when he became the first single man to adopt a child to whom he was not related. It was an uphill struggle that took more than 3 years, huge amounts of determination, legal costs and setbacks. But if he had been living with a gay partner at the time then the adoption would have been unthinkable. Colin could see how important security and continuity of care were to his son, and how difficult that is to achieve without a partner. Instead he had to develop a network of carers for the after school hours when he was at work.

Some years later Colin had the good fortune to meet Peter and set up the kind of relationship that successful family life is all about. Together they have provided security and support that have enabled the now adult Ashton to grow and mature and know the happiness of a family of his own - and make Colin a grandfather thrice over.

We all want love, security and acceptance, whatever our sexual orientation. The Civil Partnership legislation recognises formal commitment and is a heartfelt need across the spectrum of relationships. And this commitment opens up the possibility of more permanent loving homes for the many children whose biological parents have, for one reason or another been unable or unwilling to raise them.

real blessing.

All my life, my faith as a Catholic has grown and been nurtured through my associations with all the other faiths and also with the many who subscribe to no faith at all but in whom one meets Christ. Jesus came to redeem a sinful world and the angels sang ‘Peace to those of good will.’ And I say Amen to that!

IN PRAISE OF IN TOUCH FROM MARY LYNCH

Dear Editor,

This letter is sent to congratulate all involved in producing the In Touch magazine. Thank you. It is educational, entertaining and informative.

For me, the article “All Mankind is Redeemed Through Christ not the Catholic Church” is excellent and a

FROM TERRY CUNNINGHAM

Dear Ed.,

I always enjoy reading In Touch, but on several occasions I've been unable to get a copy of my own and have had to borrow from somebody else which inevitably means I can't enjoy taking my time to read it. It may be that I don't always go to the same Mass. I would be more than happy, however, to pay for a year's subscription, with postage included, ensuring that I always get a copy, or why not set-up a standing order system for an annual subscription?

The editor would like to hear from anybody who supports this suggestion. If there is a sufficient call for it we will certainly set up a mailing system.

ADVERTISING IN 'IN TOUCH' FROM RICHARD BARNES

Dear Editor,

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on taking over the editorship from Brian Howes and wish you every success for the future.

As a regular advertiser in your magazine I would like to say how pleased I am with the response I have received from readers to my advertisement.

Thank you for your continued attention.

Views expressed in this page are those of the writers. The editor may cut long letters; letters sent anonymously will not be published. If your letter does not appear in this issue it may appear in a subsequent issue.

Comments on universal current affairs, the contents of this magazine or on matters within the parish upon which you have a view are particularly welcome. When writing please submit a photograph or mention a convenient time for our photographer to call on you.

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Hello Sailor!

by Coleen Carlile



I've been in the doldrums lately as I noticed I was definitely a bit broad in the beam since Christmas festivities.

I was taken aback when I read the scales because by and large I know the ropes when it comes to trimming one's sails, but one tends to push the boat out at Christmas and all good intentions go up the pole. Now I've decided to shake a leg, get back on the right tack and stop swinging the lead as I intend to pass this test with flying colours.

You may be surprised to learn that there are no fewer than twelve expressions of a nautical nature in the above paragraph. There is a wealth of naval and military terms in our vocabulary (not all of them printable!) and it is fascinating to discover how they came into everyday usage.

For instance, being 'in the doldrums' (to be low in spirits, depressed) is thought to come from the Old English word 'dol' meaning 'dull'. The word was adopted by sailors to describe the area close to the Equator where the north-east and south-east trade winds met, causing calms which delayed their journeys for many days, leaving the sailors frustrated and depressed. The area itself is now known as The Doldrums.

The old wooden sailing ships had large wooden beams spanning the width of the boat, preventing the sides from collapsing inwards. 'Broad in the beam' referred to a very wide ship, and subsequently became an expression to describe a lady with large hips! You have to remember that was a desirable asset many years ago. I can still remember my grandfather speaking with awe of a wonderful woman who had 'hips like a rhinoceros'!

'Aback' is well known in nautical language as meaning a sudden change

of wind, where the sails are driven backwards. 'Taken aback' soon took on a wider meaning, describing anyone being suddenly surprised. 'By and large', which means 'generally speaking', is a combination of two old sailing terms. 'Sailing by' means steering the ship close to the wind, where the wind is before the beam, while 'sailing large' is to have the wind on the quarter, abaft the beam. A combination of the expressions suggests an average of both.

I always thought 'knowing the ropes' referred to campanology, the art of bell ringing, since it always looked such a difficult procedure but, yet again, it emanates from the navy. The rigging on a nineteenth century ship was so complicated that every sailor had to know the ropes to be able to handle it successfully. To 'show someone the ropes' has the same origin.

In attempting to define 'trimming one's sails' I kept choosing other sayings, such as 'pulling in one's horns' or 'cutting one's coat according to one's cloth'. It's surprising how hard it is to find a suitable, straightforward explanation, since our language is riddled with idioms. However, the best I can do is 'living within one's means'. Oh dear, that's another one! The full phrase was 'trimming one's sails before the wind' and referred to setting the sails according to the strength of the wind – pulling them in when the wind was strong and letting them out when it dropped – in other words, having the sense to choose the right thing for the right circumstances.

To 'push the boat out' or indulge in an extravagant celebration takes its meaning from the huge parties enjoyed before a ship set out on a long voyage. No expense was spared and the parties were hugely popular. That was the good part – once on the voyage, if one was 'up the pole' it was a very scary place to be, namely,

perched on the rigging above the mast, probably the most dangerous place on the ship, and only a madman would do it, proving himself out of his mind. If something goes 'up the pole' it goes badly wrong, prompting yet another phrase: 'going pear-shaped' (sorry, not nautical, so I can't go into that one!)

'Shake a leg' has already been covered in another issue, but for those who don't read the magazine regularly (shame on you!) it has a very interesting origin. Rarely used in modern parlance, it means to get on with a task, to hurry up. When sailors were roused from sleep with this cry, they had to get themselves moving. If they had a lady companion, the lady had to show or shake a leg out of the bunk to prevent being ousted from the bed and losing their modesty, such that it was after being in a sailors' dormitory!

After that diversion, I need to get back on the right tack; that is, go in the right direction. When a sailing ship headed into the wind, in order to make headway, it had to steer a zigzag course. This was known as being on the right tack, going forward. 'Swinging the lead' was far less positive, since it meant avoiding one's duties while pretending to do them. The job of a leadsman on a ship was to drop a lead weight into the sea to calculate the depth of water round the coastline. The job was usually given to an infirm sailor and many pretended to be ill in order to secure this 'cushy' position.

I hope you have all been paying attention as I am about to test you on all these sayings. I trust you will pass the test with flying colours. A sure sign of victory; this term refers to the English Navy, who called the flag 'colours' and hoisted the battle flags high on the mast on their return home from war to show everyone what they had achieved.

Outside it is raining cats and dogs, and it is cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey, so I am going to cut and run and leave you high and dry until the next issue, when I will reveal more of nautical terms. Watch this space!



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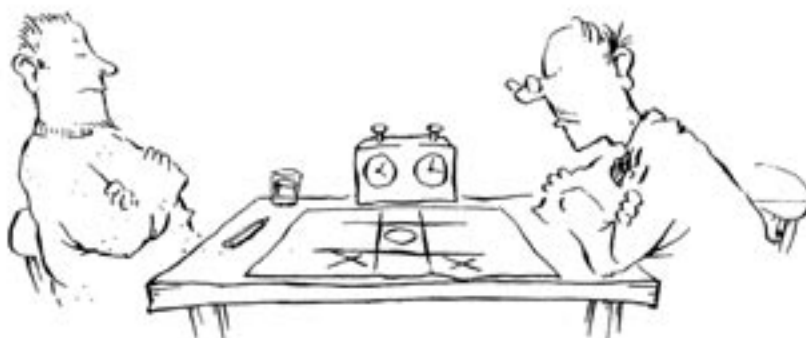
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