

Parish Church of St Peter : Arkley

ARKLEY CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS *Online*



FEBRUARY 2021

HELP US TO HEAT ST PETER'S
(pages 2-3)

Thomas à Becket : The Tomb Traveller : The Other D-Day

www.stpetersarkley.com

arkleyccnews@gmail.com



Video message, 17 January

PARISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021

REVD NICK WHEELER TEAM VICAR

AS we move from winter into early spring, there is much to look forward to, not just in the weather turning warmer and the days getting longer, but with the vaccine to make Covid hopefully less of a threat to each of us and the way we live. As a parish priest, I have two main tasks in what I do. They are to care for and nurture those who are Christians and members of the church in the parish, and the other is to reach out and take the gospel, that is the Good News of Jesus Christ coming into the world, particularly to those who live within the parish of St Peter's, Arkley. I love doing that and unashamedly, but these are difficult and testing times when the church is closed for public worship and we cannot even deliver paper copies of the *Arkley Church and Community News*. We use modern technology with live streamed services on 3, 10 and 31 January on www.barnetparishchurch.org.uk and paperless copies of this magazine on www.stpetersarkley.com, but they have limitations and I miss the people contact.

IN February, let me share with you some important dates and events. On 2 February, the church celebrates the **Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas**. On 17 February it is **Ash Wednesday** (see page 7).

FOR Ash Wednesday, I will use this period, whether or not we are able to have the church open for public worship, to reflect on my own spiritual life and how I can work on my own shortcomings, for example spending more time in prayer and reading scripture, or simply to try and get to know God better. Some practical things that the Covid pandemic has made me much more aware of are the need to care more for our planet, God's creation, with the real challenges about climate change, and protecting the natural world from human destruction.

LAUNCH OF FUNDRAISING FOR ST PETER'S CHURCH HEATING

YES, we are getting closer to installing St Peter's with some new heating. This has trundled on for some time now. So far:

- we have completed the upgrade of electricity to the building;
- our heating consultants have drawn up detailed plans for the installation of the heating;
- we are applying to the diocese for a Faculty (ie legal permission to make alterations to churches). We do not anticipate a problem since we have detailed plans from the heating consultants. >>>

- the heating consultants are seeking quotes for the installation from three separate firms.

WE NOW HAVE TO FUNDRAISE TO PAY FOR THE HEATING

We need to raise £42,000 in total for everything. We have so far:

- £10,000 allocated towards the heating;
- £10,000 pledged from a charity.

That means we have £22,000 left to raise.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Every £1 towards the installation counts. You can offer a donation(s) either by a **cheque** made payable to St Peter's Arkley DCC, writing "Church Heating Fund" on the back of the cheque or by **online banking**. *If you wish to pay online please contact me or one of the churchwardens (see page 31) for the church's bank details.*
- If you are a UK taxpayer, you can **Gift Aid** your donation. St Peter's will receive 20p for every £1 that you donate. We will do all the necessary work. All you need to do is to confirm you are a UK taxpayer and give us your full name and address.
- You can "**pledge**" or "promise" a donation by letting me or one of the churchwardens have your name and contact details.
- We are limited in our face to face fundraising due to Covid restrictions at present.

TIMELINE

- We would like to see this essential heating project finished by Spring of 2021— *this year*.
- We have been working towards this since 2017.
- We will not be embarking on any work until we have all £42,000 for the heating installation either in the bank or pledged/promised.

WE are nearly there. Please think how you can support this so we can continue, in turn, to greatly enrich the worship in church. Please give as generously as you are able. We are determined to finish it this year!

AS I write this letter, let me share with you the Psalm I have read today, **Psalm 145, verses 17-18 & 21:**

¹⁷The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. ¹⁸The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

²¹My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

My prayers for your every blessing

Nick A

THIS MONTH'S CONTENTS: PAGE 5



***Streamed service for Epiphany,
3 January***



ST PETER'S : ARKLEY

**LATE JANUARY &
FEBRUARY 2021**



**ST PETER'S IS CURRENTLY CLOSED FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP, BUT
OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER ON SUNDAYS FROM 11-11.30AM
ARRANGEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY AND ANY CHANGES WILL BE
ANNOUNCED ON OUR WEBSITE AND IN THE WEEKLY NOTICE SHEET**

If you wish to speak to the Vicar, please call 020 8441 9316

ONLINE WORSHIP: CHIPPING BARNET TEAM MINISTRY

@ barnetparishchurch.org.uk or Facebook (Parish of Chipping Barnet)

SUNDAY MORNING: Eucharist or Matins (times vary)

MONDAY to THURSDAY @ 10am: Morning Prayer via Zoom

These are usually live streams with recordings available on Facebook from 11am

DAY	TIME	SERVICE
Sunday 24 January <i>Epiphany 3</i>	11-11.30am	Open for private prayer
Sunday 31 CANDLEMAS SUNDAY <i>(Presentation of Christ in the Temple)</i>	10am 11-11.30am	Service streamed live from St Peter's Open for private prayer
Sunday 7 February		<i>2nd before Lent</i>
Sunday 14		<i>Last before Lent (Quinquagesima) ~ St Valentine</i>
Wednesday 17		ASH WEDNESDAY
Sunday 21		<i>Lent 1 (Quadragesima)</i>
Tuesday 23		Lent Study Group via Zoom 23rd at 7.30pm ~ 24th at 12.30pm <i>(further details to be announced)</i>
Wednesday 24		
Sunday 28		<i>Lent 2</i>
Sunday 14 March		MOTHERING SUNDAY
Sunday 4 April		EASTER DAY
Sunday 11 April		ANNUAL DISTRICT CHURCH MEETING <i>After 10.30am service (provisional)</i>

Revised 19 January: see stpetersarkley.com/services for updates

ARKLEY CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS Online

FEBRUARY 2021



A Happy New Year from your local magazine—though, of course, hedged around with all the caveats that apply at the moment.

As Fr Nick has said, we are continuing with online issues for the time being, but we expect to be back in print when public health conditions improve. As on similar occasions since last May, a small number of copies are being printed for readers who do not have access to the internet. *If you know anyone who would like a copy, please let us know: arkleyccnews@gmail.com*

This month we have made some temporary changes similar to those during last year's first lockdown. In particular, the *What's On in Arkley* section had become more of a "what's off" section. So, while retaining a few regular elements, we are omitting this until there is some return to normality. There is a list of contacts for St Peter's and the wider Team Ministry in Chipping Barnet on *page 31*. If need be, you can find other contacts in recent issues that are still available to read online.

With great regret we suspended public worship at St Peter's on New Year's Day. At the time of writing, the church is open for private prayer on Sunday mornings, and, of course, there are regular services online. There will also be a Lent study group *via* Zoom. But please keep an eye on our website (stpetersarkley.com) for the latest situation.

Nick Dean
Editor A

ST PETER'S CHURCH HALL

There is a kitchen and parking for about 20 vehicles

All enquiries to Iris Auburn 020 8449 0980

Cover: St Peter's, October 2020

The beautiful rosebud heart was from Alex and Amelia
in memory of their grandmother Vicky

IN THIS ISSUE: 6 Words in Season 7 With Cheerful Voice: Forty Days & Forty Nights 8 Six Degrees of Separation: Cædmon 9 Who was Thomas à Becket? 13 Word of the Month: Exponentially; Quinquagesima 14 Arkley in View 15 Future of Whalebones 16-17 Churchwardens' Report 20-1 The Collect: Decimal Coins 22 The New Normal 23 Just Think: Christmas and Covid Chart-toppers 25 Late Winter Garden: Witch Hazels 26 Quiz 28 Old Arkley: Trevor Howard 30 The Arkley Sky: Star of Bethlehem 31 St Peter's Contacts

WORDS IN SEASON



Farewell,
 Crystmas fair
 and free!
 Farewell, Newyears
 Day with thee!
 Farewell, the holy
 Epyphane!

Even on the darkest nights,
 there is hope in the new
 dawn.

HM the QUEEN, Christmas Day 2020

And to Mary now syng we:
Revertere [return], *revertere*,
 The queen of blyss and beaute.

Candlemas carol (15th century)

Now the winter's
 day was set in
 motion and we
 rode through its crystal
 kingdom ... The church
 clock had stopped and
 the weather-cock was
 frozen, so that both time
 and the winds were
 stilled; and nothing, we
 thought, could be more
 exciting than this.

LAURIE LEE
Cider with Rosie (1959)



Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the
 wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And
 when he had fasted forty days and forty nights,
 he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter
 came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God,
 command that these stones be made bread. But he
 answered ... It is written, man shall not live by
 bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out
 of the mouth of God.

St Matthew 4:1-4
 Gospel for the Second Sunday in Lent

Mix a pancake,
 Stir a pancake,
 Pop it in the pan;
 Fry the pancake,
 Toss the pancake -
 Catch it if you can.

CHRISTINA
 ROSSETTI
 (1830-94)



Were I as high as heaven above the
 plain,
 And you, my Love, as humble and
 as low
 As are the deepest bottoms of the
 main,
 Whereso'er you were, with you
 my love should go.
 JOSHUA SYLVESTER (1563-1618)

~ WITH CHEERFUL VOICE 4 ~

Before St Peter's was closed recently for public worship, we enjoyed listening to Gill del Bravo, our organist, playing hymns we would have sung but for precautions against Covid-19. Happily Gill continues to play at online services from St Peter's. For the time being, we are continuing our series of reflections on seasonal hymns.

FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

(Hymns Ancient & Modern Revised 92)

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 17 February. Very few Lenten hymns enjoy wide recognition, but this is perhaps one of the better known. It recalls Christ's forty days and nights in the wilderness prior to his Passion and then, as the final verse reminds us, the triumph of His Resurrection on Easter Day. Originally a poem by the Revd George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870), Rector of Hawksworth, Nottinghamshire, it was published in a magazine, *The Penny Post*, in March 1856, but was subsequently reduced in length from nine to six stanzas by Francis Pott (1832-1909) who adapted it as a hymn to 'fit' the Gospel for the first Sunday in Lent (Matthew 4:1-11) (*Hymns Fitted to the Order of Common Prayer*, 1861). After resigning Hawksworth in 1859, Smyttan seems to have moved to Germany, where, several years later, he died suddenly in Frankfurt am Main. Unknown there and without information about next-of-kin, he was buried in a pauper's grave with the simple inscription, "Smyttan, England".

The music, probably by Martin Herbst (1654-81), is known either as *Aus der Tiefe* ('from the deep'), after words with which it was published in 1676, or *Heinlein*, after Peter Heinlein (1626-86), to whom it has also been attributed. **A**

**Forty days and forty nights
thou was fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights
tempted, and yet undefiled:
sunbeams scorching all the day;
chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
prowling beasts about thy way;
stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.**

[Verse 6 of 6]

**Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
ever constant by thy side;
that with thee we may appear
at the eternal Eastertide.**



SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

46: CÆDMON

(St) CÆDMON (7th century AD)

was the earliest English poet we know by name. His Feast Day is 11 February, although his sainthood is disputed. Cædmon is said to have been a lay brother tending cattle at Whitby Abbey when he dreamt of singing a hymn whose words he was later able to recall. This was judged to have been divinely inspired and consequently he was invited to become a monk by ...

The Venerable BEDE (c673-735),

profoundly influential scholar and historian at the Northumbrian monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, who, among other things, gave currency to 'AD' (*anno Domini*—year of our Lord) dating. He is the main primary source of knowledge relating to ...

St CUTHBERT (c634-87),

who was prior and later Bishop of Lindisfarne (Holy Island) off the Northumbrian coast, but spent much of his life as a hermit. The 8th century illuminated manuscript known as the *Lindisfarne Gospels* was probably commissioned in his honour. His memory was perpetuated also by a *Life* by ...

St HILDA (c614-80),

abbess of Whitby, one of the greatest women of the early English church, who became a patron of Cædmon's poetry and hosted the Synod of Whitby (664) at which the variable timing of Easter was determined. Among those present at the synod was ...

St OSWALD (c604-42)

was killed in battle against King Penda of Mercia at Maserfeld, probably near present day Oswestry, Shropshire. Oswald promoted Christianity in Northumbria and was much venerated in the Middle Ages. In 1827 his head was found in the tomb at Durham Cathedral of ...

OSWIG (c612-70),

King of Northumbria, in whose realm Whitby lay. He succeeded to the throne in 642 after his brother ...

WHO WAS ST THOMAS À BECKET?

THE killing 850 years ago of Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas à Becket (c1118-70) was one of the most infamous events in English history. A man with strong administrative skills and previously a close friend of **King Henry II** (reigned 1154-89), Becket had been Chancellor of England from 1155 until 1162, when he was appointed Primate. Henry (who retains a largely justified reputation as a reforming monarch) had hoped for Becket's support in asserting the Crown's authority over the Church, but the two fell out over clerical privileges. Becket spent six years in exile and a reconciliation was short lived. The King's alleged words, "*Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?*" have rung down the centuries. If posed at all, the question may have been rhetorical, but four knights drew their own conclusions and, perhaps meaning to arrest him, killed Becket in his own cathedral on 29 December 1170. There followed a rift between the King and **Pope Alexander III**, who canonised Becket in 1473, but an understanding was reached and Henry did penance for Becket's death at Canterbury in 1174.

In 1982, when Pope John Paul II visited Britain, he and Archbishop Robert Runcie prayed together on the site of Becket's former shrine at Canterbury. This spot, to where Becket's remains were moved in 1220, the 50th anniversary of his death, became a focus of pilgrimage. By the late 14th century it was attracting 100,000 visitors a year and was famously the destination of the pilgrims in **Geoffrey Chaucer's** *Canterbury Tales* (see 'Six Degrees of Separation', AC&CN 2/16). Destroyed in 1538, when the cult of Becket was suppressed by Henry VIII, the shrine ("probably the most valuable work of art ever created in Britain": *Country Life*, 30 December 2020) has been reconstructed for the 850th anniversary, using computerised imaging, although commemorative events have been postponed until this year due to coronavirus. Today the best known depiction of Becket's demise is *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), a play in verse by **Thomas Stearns (T S) Elliot**, whose main primary source, **Edward Grim**, was a visiting monk who had tried to protect Becket from his assailants. **A**

A PSALTER held in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge has recently been identified confidently as having belonged to Thomas à Becket. About 1,000 years old, though without its original jewelled cover that would have been removed during the Reformation of the 16th century, it matches an inventory made at Canterbury Cathedral in 1321 and is thought to have been taken to an abbey near Calais in 1164 to await Becket's flight into exile. It was bequeathed to Corpus by Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury 1559-75, after whom the library is named. **The Collect**



N Dean

A candle in Canterbury Cathedral marks the location of Becket's shrine. The monument behind is to Nicholas Wooton, Dean of the Cathedral 1541-67

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OUR WORD OF THE MONTH 44: exponentially

“Articles on coronavirus grow exponentially—the numbers doubling, like the virus itself, about every four days.” - TOM WHIPPLE, Times Magazine, 5 December 2020

Exponentially is an adverb we have heard quite often in connection with the coronavirus pandemic, though not always in its precise sense. On BBC TV's *Have I Got News for You* mathematician Dr Hannah Fry declared that careless application of 'exponentially' was one of her bugbears, explaining that "it's something that grows by a fixed fraction in a fixed window of time. So, like, doubles every week." She endorsed a rejoinder by Ian Hislop: "So, you think other people lazily use it to just mean 'ooh, it's getting big'?" (4 December 2020). A similar, almost opposite, example is *decimate*, which, dating from classical times, meant a reduction of a tenth (*decimus* in Latin). In the First World War, when 11.5% of British soldiers were lost on active service, the Army was quite literally decimated. However, today the word is often used in a much more extreme sense, implying something close to complete collapse or annihilation.

From the Latin *exponere* (to set out), 'exponentially' and the corresponding adjective **exponential** and noun **exponent** came into English around the 16th century. Dr Johnson (1755) defined them in purely mathematical terms and offered an example: "Six is the exponent of the ratio which thirty hath to five". More commonly, though, an exponent these days is someone who advocates or is skilled at something; and maybe 'exponentially' is gradually going the way of 'decimate', whose more general usage is recognised in dictionaries: according to *Collins*, "to destroy or kill a large proportion of". **A**

A feature in our Christmas 2015 issue about 'binge-watch', Collins' word of that year, led to our 'Word of the Month' series, which began five years ago, in February 2016

I: Quinquagesima (revised for 2021)

Known also as **Shrove Sunday**, this is the last Sunday before Lent and fifty days (strictly, 49) before Easter. In Latin *quinquagesima* is the feminine form of *quinquagesimus*, meaning 'fiftieth' ('day' being a feminine noun). Determined by the date of Easter, Quinquagesima can fall between 1 February and 7 March. In 2021 it is 14 February, also St Valentine's Day; in 2016 it was 7 February, the day that Fr Tristan Chapman took his final service as Vicar of Arkley. The previous Sunday is **Sexagesima** (meaning sixtieth); the one before that, **Septuagesima** (seventieth), when the pre-Lenten season of Shrovetide begins; and the first Sunday in Lent, **Quadragesima** (fortieth), from which comes *carême*, the French word for Lent. Again, round terms apply to these names! In his poem, *Septuagesima* (1954), Sir John Betjeman wrote: "The Gesimas—Septua, Sexa, Quinc/Means Lent is near which makes you think." The day after Quinquagesima is **Collop Monday**, when *collops* (slices) of meat were consumed before Lent. It is known also as **Shrove** or **Hall Monday** (from *hallow*, meaning 'holy' or 'festival': 'Our Word' 8, 11/16). **A**

ARKLEY IN VIEW



Rowley Green Lane in the early 20th century (Photos: Barnet Museum Archive)

SAY A LITTLE PRAYER

Let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and brotherhood within the Church that Christ came to build, and especially in this kingdom and within all the dominions of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth. Let us pray for this village and parish of Arkley and for all the peoples of Barnet and let us pray for this Diocese of St Albans, for Alan its Bishop, and for God's blessing upon the Church of England.

Service of Nine Lessons & Carols, St Peter's, Arkley, 20 December 2020

LOCAL RADIO

BARNET COMMUNITY RADIO: online @ www.barnetcommunityradio.com
RADIO VERULAM (ST ALBANS/WEST HERTS): 92.6FM ~ www.radioverulam.com
POTTERS BAR RADIO: online @ www.pbradio.co.uk

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FUTURE OF WHALEBONES (IV)



In November we reported that the Borough of Barnet's planning committee had rejected plans to build about 150 houses and flats on the open spaces at Whalebones (*see also AC&CN 4/16 & 3/19*). However, we mentioned that the Mayor of London has the power to review the application and so could reverse the decision. With that in mind, we are advised by our local MP, Theresa Villiers, that, if you wish to register objections to the application, you should email these to

mayor@london.gov.uk,

quoting the following reference:

**GLA Planning Ref: 2019/4918/S2/S2
OBJECTION, Whalebones, Wood Street, Barnet,
EN5 4BZ. A**

Above: The entrance to Whalebones in February 2017 (N Dean)



“In football when one door shuts, another will slam in your face.”

“Players taught to watch the man with the ball [are] totally unprepared for the next move, which is always dictated by a player without the ball.”

[As manager of Chelsea] “Chairman, when I want your advice I'll give it to you.”

[Of Manchester City] “There are three types of Oxo cube. Light brown for chicken stock. Dark brown for beef. And light blue for laughing stock.”

“Cricket is the only game that you can actually put on weight when playing.”

TOMMY DOCHERTY (1928-31 December 2020)

Docherty played for Preston North End, Arsenal, Chelsea and Scotland. He later managed Scotland, Chelsea, Manchester United, Rotherham United and, as he put it himself, “more clubs than Jack Nicklaus”. As a national serviceman 75 years ago, he was on duty at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, when it was bombed in July 1946 with 91 fatalities. During his time at Arsenal and Chelsea, in the early to mid 1960s, Docherty lived in East Barnet. A

**“My dad used to say, when one door closes, another one opens.
Lovely man, but a terrible cabinet maker.”**

Sounds of the 60s (Radio 2), 9 January 2021



Churchwardens' Chat: February

We hope that you have safely enjoyed the Christmas festivities. With the Tier 4 regulations we all had to moderate our normal Christmas gatherings of family and friends; so it was very different for most of us, but nevertheless an enjoyable time.

Even our services were different from those in past years. Our Nine Lessons and Carols is usually an evening service with the Team churches joining us, but this year it took place at 10.30am on 20 December, with just our own congregation and a choir of eight, instead of 18, and the congregation could not join in and sing with the choir and Gill, our organist's, beautiful playing. The nine lessons were all read by the Vicar and sadly we couldn't serve mince pies or mulled wine this year. Unfortunately we felt we had to cancel the Welcome to Christmas service on Christmas Eve afternoon due to concerns over the numbers we could accommodate safely while complying with the Covid-19 restrictions. The Midnight Eucharist was held and was attended by 22 people and we had some people who were new to St Peter's. We hope they will come again.

We would like to thank the St John the Baptist Church "Knit and Stitch group" for the beautiful knitted Nativity collection (see below) which they so generously made for us. >>



Unfortunately due to the risk of spreading the virus, we again are not doing a full print-out of the magazine, but we hope many of you will read this online edition.

As the latest restrictions and regulations are enforced to try to reduce the infection rate, the District Church Council agreed unanimously to suspend services in church for the next few weeks. We took this decision just ahead of the national lockdown announcement. *The church will be open for private prayer on Sundays from 11 to 11.30 am.*

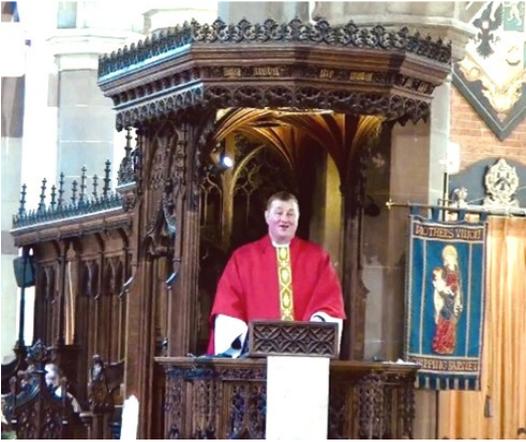
We wish all our readers a happy, healthy and safe 2021 and we pray that the vaccine will soon start to reduce the rate of infection and that we will soon get back to normal life.

Maureen & Sharon A

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER



In spite of a rather bleak winter and the unavoidable trappings of social distancing, St Peter's looked, in many respects, much the same at Christmas as it usually does. There was also an outside tree with lights by the Barnet Road, near the west door. On the following page are more Christmas pictures taken beyond the parish boundary ...



Above left: Acting Rector Fr Tristan Chapman at St John the Baptist during a streamed Patron service for St Stephen on Sunday 27 December

Above right: Former Rector of Barnet, the Rt Revd Hall Speers, Bishop of Mahajanga, after a confirmation service in Madagascar (Photo: Sarah Speers)

Below: The Lady Chapel of St Albans Cathedral on 11 December

On the initiative of Caroline Ellis and Ginny Edwards, over 60 homemade quilts were displayed before being donated to the St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge. Each resident also received a Christmas bag of useful items and goodies. These donations were received by the Mayor of St Albans, who last year chose the refuge as her charity. (With thanks to Caroline Ellis)



Church Notices 20

Thou its light, its joy, its crown,/thou its sin which goes not down¹ ... **An item about the operations director at Ecclesiastical Insurance being called Michael Angell led to [someone] informing me that for years the reinsurance manager at Ecclesiastical was Neville Spires ... Both are outdone, though, by the former surveyor of the fabric of Westminster Abbey: Donald Buttress² ... For sale: A4 rendition of The Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci in Fuzzy Felt. Due to lack of shapes, one of the Disciples is a Tractor³ ... **Reginald Foster, a plumber's son from Wisconsin who became Latin speechwriter to four Popes, died on Christmas Day ... Among the Latin he coined for Vatican dispatches was *bubula hamburgensis cepulis condita* (burger with onions), *tumultuatio* (rock 'n' roll) and *breviloquentia* (Twitter)⁴ ... Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell says he is a fan of a fish restaurant called Bish and Chips, though he wonders why it isn't Archbish and Chips. A clerical error, perhaps. One trusts they seldom serve him a piece of cod that passeth all understanding⁵ ... **She and Gussie had clicked over one of her ambrosial steak and kidney puds, and within the drop of a fork, there had been talk of elopement, talk of America, and talk of special licences from the Archbishop of C.**⁶****

(1) AC&CN 12/20-1/21 ("thou its sun which goes not down": carol, *As with gladness men of old*); (2), (4) & (5) *Times Diary*, 24, 30 & 29 December 2020; (3) Norfolk neighbourhood website: *The Oldie*, January 2021; (6) Ben Schott (2020) *Jeeves & the Leap of Faith*



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44: DECIMAL COINS



1971



1968

d = (old) penny (Latin, *denarius*) ~ **s** = shilling (or “bob”) (Latin, *solidus*)
p = new penny ~ **£** = pound sterling (Latin, *libra*)

Since the pandemic took hold, many of us have largely abandoned coins, hastening a process that had been underway for some time. Things were very different fifty years ago, when, on 15 February 1971 (“D-Day”), decimal currency was introduced in Britain.

THERE were initially six decimal coins: ½p, 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p and 50p. Since the reign of King Offa of Mercia (he of the Dyke) in the 8th century, there had been 20 shillings to a pound and 12 pence to a shilling: hence, 240 pence in a pound. As the value of the pound, still a note in 1971, was unchanged, a **new penny** was worth 2.4 old ones. The new coins originally bore the words, “new penny” or “new pence”, but “new” was discarded in 1982. The ½p, whose value was soon eroded by inflation, was withdrawn in 1984, by when it was worth less in real terms than the farthing (¼d) when it ceased to be legal tender in 1961. Of the other new coins, all but the **1p** (*top right*) and **2p** had direct equivalents in old money. Therefore the **5p** (1s or 1/-) (*top right*) and **10p** (2s) were phased in from 1968, and the **50p**, the world’s first heptagonal (seven-sided) coin, which replaced the old 10s note, from 1969. The shape of the 50p, intended to distinguish it from the 10p, of similar size, aroused some controversy, although it is now widely regarded as a design classic. 50p coins minted in 1973 carried a special design to mark the UK’s joining the then European Community (*fig 1*). In 1968 blue plastic wallets containing newly-minted ½p, 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p coins (*left*) were put on sale, the lower denominations being post-dated 1971, when they became legal tender. These sets can be purchased quite cheaply online. Since 1971 the 5p, 10p and 50p have been reduced in size and weight, and new heraldic designs were added to all the coins in 2008.



AFTER a short period of dual running in 1971, three old coins (½d, 1d, 3d) were phased out. A fourth, the half crown (2/6d), had been already been withdrawn in 1970, but the **sixpence** or “tanner” (2½p) was retained until 1980, even though no decimal equivalent was minted. The heptagonal **20p** (a value discarded in earlier planning) was introduced in

1982. It was followed a year later by a **pound** coin, which, by 1988, had replaced notes in England (though £1 notes are still issued in Scotland). For over 30 years this was round, but it gave way in 2017 to a bi-metallic dodecagonal (12-sided) one (*fig 2*), reminiscent of the brass 3d, introduced in 1937 (*fig 3*). The bi-metallic **£2**



fig 1: 50p (1973): UK accession to European Community; fig 2: 3d (1937); fig 3: new issue £1 (2017); fig 4: florin (2s) (1849); fig 5: 22-page guidance booklet: Decimal Currency Board, 1969 (£7.50 online) (figs 1-4 & page 16: coins not to a common scale)

came into general circulation in 1998, although there had been commemorative £2 issues, the first, in 1986, for the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. Denominations of **Maundy money**, minted for the monarch to distribute on Maundy Thursday, three days before Easter, have remained standard since 1662, but, since 1971, they have been valued in new pence (see *'The Collect'* 38, 4/20).

THE UK was one of the last countries in the world to go decimal. The newly independent United States did so in 1792, as had all other major powers by 1900. There was pressure for change in the reign of Queen Victoria: the 2s piece, or **florin**, introduced in 1849 (fig 4), was intended as a possible first step to decimalisation. Florins were first minted in Florence in 1252 and the name was adopted in several countries. The original 2s design included the words "one tenth of a pound", but omitted the letters "D G" (*Dei Gratia*—"by the Grace of God"). As a result, the coin became known as the "Godless florin". Over 400,000 florins were circulated in 1849. Typically one would be worth about £25 today, but, in extremely fine condition, could fetch £200 (or double that if uncirculated). Although 10p coins were circulated from 1968, the florin, of equivalent value, was legal tender until 1993, rather appropriately the last pre-decimal coin to remain in use.



IN the early 1960s, the Royal Mint invited a number of artists to submit designs for decimal coins. Many of these are in the Mint's museum at Llantrisant, which last September bought at auction for £400 an unused design (1962) by **Edward Bowden** (1903-89) for a 20 pence coin (left).

THE monthly periodical *Coin News* produces an outstandingly useful *Coin Yearbook* (2021 edition, £9.95) which lists and values virtually every coin known to have been minted in the British Isles (including **Ireland** which, having gone decimal in tandem with the UK in 1971, adopted the *euro* in 1999). Few decimal coins to have entered general circulation are worth much more than their face value, but the *Yearbook* does include the value of proof and commemorative coins (the latter mostly £2 or 50p issues). And, of course, errors are often sought after: an uncirculated 2p of 1983 with the word "new" instead of "two" may be worth £850! **A**

~ The Good Old Days ~

“Seldom have fewer regrets been wasted on a dying year than at the passing of 1920. But the turn of the year is ever a signal for optimism, and as the twentieth century enters its coming-of-age year hopes run high. ‘We have’, say the optimists, ‘touched bottom; now things will begin to mend.’”

Church Times, 31 December 1920

“On this particular New Year’s Day the qualities to serve us best ... are candour and courage. Clearly a ‘happy’ New Year, in the accustomed sense, is not likely to be had for the wishing, and its attainment may seem unlikely unless some precarious hopes are fulfilled and many substantial dangers averted.”

The Times, 1 January 1931

MALAC&CNPROP XLIV

“A press release about [Oxford] research on extra terrestrial existence said that ‘it is quite unlikely that intelligent life exists in the University.’”

Times Diary, 11 December 2020



“Well it doesn’t look much like a vaccination centre to me.”

The above illustration, which first appeared in AC&CN in July 2016, is from an advert in *Boy’s Own Paper* in August 1945

THE NEW NORMAL

“We are getting used to Zoomed Mattins and streamed Eucharists, as well as the light relief of clergy setting fire to their surplices or forgetting to disable the app that adds bunny ears to their on-screen image.”

Revd RICHARD COLES
Country Life, 16/23 December 2020

“‘The lockdown is a chance to learn’ was one of 2020’s most repeated phrases ... And yet, everyone I know is exactly who they were before all this started, but with a lot more Amazon cardboard packaging in their recycling bin.”

CAITLIN MORAN
Times Magazine, 19 December 2020

“Very little good came out of 2020, but two positives must be table service in pubs and *Strictly Come Dancing* without loud, manic clapping throughout.”

Sunday Times Culture, ‘You Say’
3 January 2021

“Of all the many surprises that happened in 2020 ... one of the most googled ‘how to’ terms of the year was ‘How to cook eel?’”

Sunday Times Style, 10 January 2021

“We tried to construct a weekly timetable of celebrations ... to help carry us through lockdown and winter [and] fill in a mid-February gap, but the Feast of St Apollonia [9 February], the patron saint of dentists, was decreed desperate and ruled out.”

Country Life, 11 January 2021

“Sophie Ellis-Bextor is to Covid what Vera Lynn was to the Second World War.”

JOE SMALLMAN, Twitter, 4 January 2021

“All the ‘Tier 1 plus’ and ‘new Tier 4’ talk reminds me a bit of when I save documents as ‘final’, ‘definite final’ and ‘FINAL—USE THIS ONE!’”

ALICE LILLY, Twitter, 28 October 2020



JUST THINK ... And, lo, it came to pass that, on New Year's Day, the song *Last Christmas* that Wham! (the late George Michael, *far left*, and Andrew Ridgeley) recorded 36 years ago, reached the top of the UK sales charts. This was bad news for pub quiz setters who were fond of asking “what is the best selling record in the UK

not to have reached number one?”, a distinction held by *Last Christmas* ever since it was kept off the top spot in 1984 by Band Aid's charity single *Do They Know It's Christmas?* (on which, as it happens, Michael and Ridgeley, as well as Ridgeley's long-term partner, Keren Woodward of Bananarama, also sang). Rocketing sales of old Christmas recordings were a feature of the recent semi-festive season, accounting for 26 places in the top 40 on Christmas Day. At 34 was the Ronettes' version of the 1948 standard, *Sleigh Ride*, from a Christmas album produced in 1963 by Phil Spector (*see AC&CN 12/20-1/21*), whose influential “Wall of Sound” was, in the words of his abused ex-wife, the Ronettes' Veronica (Ronnie) Bennett, “really just a reflection of his own personality ... very extravagant” (*Be My Baby*, 1990). On 16 January, Spector, aged 81, died in a prison hospital from the effects of Covid-19, having been convicted of murder in 2009. This avalanche of seasonal hits matched sentimental trends earlier in 2020. Last June we highlighted the recent chart-topping exploits of two centenarians, Dame Vera Lynn, aged 103, who died

two months after the Queen had alluded in a broadcast to *We'll Meet Again*, her best known song from the Second World War (*see AC&CN, 7/20*), and Hon Colonel Sir Tom Moore, 101 this April, who, having walked round his garden to raise money for the NHS, recorded *You'll Never Walk Alone* with Michael Ball.



This song, from Richard Rodgers' and Oscar Hammerstein's musical *Carousel* (1945), was also performed, in September, by South African *soprano* Golda Schultz on the Last Night of last year's Covid-compliant Promenade Concerts. June's ‘*Just Think*’ omitted to mention that, in 1963, *You'll Never Walk Alone* became (and has remained) a Liverpool football anthem after being recorded by the ‘Merseybeat’ group Gerry & the Pacemakers (*above*). Fronted by Gerry Marsden, who re-recorded the song last April and died on 3 January, aged 78, the band was popular at Liverpool's Cavern Club in the early 60s. So too were the Beatles, who continue to occupy an incomparable niche in British social and musical history. However, initially they were outstripped commercially by Marsden and his trio, who, having changed their name from the Mars Bars, remain the only band to have topped the charts with their first three singles. Indeed, some clever counterfactual speculation by Craig Brown in *One Two Three Four: The Beatles in Our Time* (2020) (*‘The Collect’ Lockdown Review, 6/20*) imagined a scenario in which

historians now see the Beatles' decision to turn down the hit song *How Do You Do It?* as their greatest mistake. It had been offered to them by record producer George Martin but instead they insisted on releasing one of their own songs, *Love Me Do*. This left *How Do You Do It?* to be snapped up by Gerry and the Pacemakers and the rest is history ... [Beatles] John Lennon [*in fact, murdered in 1980*] and Paul McCartney toured Britain last year with their ‘Tribute to Gerry and the Pacemakers’, thrilling audiences ... with their exact rendition of *You'll Never Walk Alone* ... **A**



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THE LATE WINTER GARDEN

WITCH HAZELS



WITCH HAZELS (*Hamamelis*) are slow growing shrubs or small trees that usually bloom in January and into February. Due to largely mild and wet conditions towards the end of last year, many were in flower by Christmas. By contrast a summer drought may lead to sparse flowering (Beth Chatto, 1998).

Close up, witch hazels are strange in appearance, with twisted stems and flowers that resemble small ribbons. Before the fall, their leaves turn bright yellow.

The **common witch hazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*), which has yellow flowers (above), can be a cheery sight at a time when there may be little else in bloom. It is unrelated to hazel, but **Vita Sackville-West** (1890-1962) described how early settlers in the American state of Virginia discovered

a shrubby thing that reminded them of the common old hazel they had known in England. They took the forked twigs and used them for dowsing or water-divining, as they had used hazel twigs at home. This was *Hamamelis virginiana*, and they called it the witch hazel, because any twig that would twitch in the hand must necessarily have something to do with a witch or a wizard (*The Observer*, 29 January 1956).

Sackville-West referred to *Hamamelis* as a “strangely neglected treasure”, but was rather uncomplimentary about the common variety: a “very poor thing” compared to certain Far Eastern species, such as the **Chinese witch hazel** (*H mollis*) or *H arborea* from Japan, both of which adorned her winter garden at **Sissinghurst**. **Christopher Lloyd** (1921-2006), who had two 50 year old *H mollis* at **Great Dixter**, observed that, while other species have their own charm, they “are either less effective or lacking in scent or both” (*The Well-Tempered Garden*, revised 2001). Even so, he commended *H japonica* ‘Zuccariniana’ for its pretty lemon flowers and notably twisted petals. **Laetitia Maklouf** recommends witch hazel as a cut flower for its scent and “spooky fire-cracker blossom”: “a branch of blossom is utterly failsafe ... It really is impossible to screw this up” (*The Virgin Gardener*, 2009). However, it will last better in a room that is not too hot. This Christmas the present writer added cuttings to a vase of holly on a kitchen window sill which held up well until Twelfth Night. Both Sackville-West and Lloyd (who nevertheless brought “liberal supplies indoors”) warned that cutting witch hazel may inhibit flowering the following year. Even so, a well established shrub will have so many twisted stems that careful removal is unlikely to ruin the overall appearance.

Witch hazels can be found in garden centres early in the New Year when they look their best, although demand for *H mollis*, which has to be grafted onto *H virginiana*, may outstrip supply. Use in traditional medicine, especially for skin ailments is long established, although opinions differ as to efficacy. **A**

Our Famous QUIZ

Answers at foot of page

1. Which pharmaceutical company has worked with Oxford University to produce a Covid-19 vaccine?
2. Which was the first *Carry On* film in which Dame Barbara Windsor, who died on 10 December, aged 83, appeared?
3. Boal and Verdelho are varieties of which fortified wine?
4. Lake Garda is in which European country?
5. What did St Paul tell the Corinthians that we see through darkly?
6. David Cornwell, a former intelligence officer who died, aged 89, on 12 December, wrote novels under what name?
7. What was the surname of the Swiss watchmaker who, in the late 18th century, developed a process for carbonating mineral water?
8. In which month of 2021 does the Duke of Edinburgh turn 100?
9. In a music hall song, what item of apparel was “a nobby one and just the proper style”?
10. This logo is that of which fashion designer who died on 29 December, aged 98? 
11. Somebody born on 28 February is under which star sign?
12. Who is the current President of the European Commission?
13. Which prefix, placed in front of these words, makes four other words: lute, shy, staff, still?
14. The sculptures from the Acropolis in Athens on display in the British Museum are known as what?
15. What did the female bird call the male bird on St Valentine's Day?

75 YEARS AGO ...

2 February 1946 Trygve Lie, who, in exile in London, had been Foreign Minister of Norway during the Second World War, became the first Secretary-General of the United Nations

5 Actress **Charlotte Rampling** (right) born in Essex

24 **Juan Perón** was elected President of Argentina, taking office on 4 June



AND THE FORECAST ...

All the months in the year
Curse a fair Februeer

To St Valentine [14 February]
the spring is a neighbour

Thunder on Shrove Tuesday
[16 February] foretelleth wind,
store of fruit and plenty.

Richard Inwards, *Weather Lore* (1893)

“The weather’s decided that, under new lockdown restrictions, we are only allowed one dry hour of daylight each day.” - ANNA ISAAC (Politico)
Twitter, 2 November 2020



**For this was on seynt
Volantynys day,
Whan euery bryd
comyth there
to chese his make
[choose his mate]**

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1482)
The Parlement of Foules

ANSWERS: 1. Astrazeneca 2. Carry On Spying (1964) 3. Madeira 4. Italy 5. a glass (1 Corinthians 13) 6. John le Carré 7. (Johann Jacob) Schweppe 8. June (10th) 9. a hat (or 'tillie') ('Where Did You Get That Hat?') 10. Pierre Cardin 11. Pisces 12. Ursula von der Leyen 13. di- 14. Eigin Marbles 15. tweet-heart!

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OLD ARKLEY II

WHILE Covid regulations still permitted last autumn, the Garden of Rest next to St Peter's was visited by Mr Mark Dabbs, a "tomb tourist" from Walsall, in the West Midlands. He even left a calling card in the form of badge. Mr Dabbs came to St Peter's because the ashes of actor and local resident **Trevor Howard** (1913-88) are interred here. Howard's name is carved, with those of several others, on a memorial stone standing against the east wall of the church.



S Wheeler

TREVOR HOWARD (1913-88)

was a leading film actor and Arkley resident, born 105 years ago on 29 September, 1913. His ashes are interred at St Peter's, which has a pair of candlesticks presented in his memory. Among Howard's many films was *The Third Man* (1949), set in post-war Vienna, the screenplay for which was written by Graham Greene.

'Six Degrees of Separation'
29, AC&CN 9/18

Born in Cliftonville, near Margate, in 1913 (the date on the memorial, though *Halliwel's Filmgoer's Companion* and some other sources suggest 1916), Howard moved to Arkley in 1951 with his actress wife **Helen Cherry** (1915-2001), whom he married in 1944. The couple often supported local events: as we noted in our recent 180th anniversary issue, their first was in June 1951 when Miss Cherry opened the Arkley Windmill Fête, proceeds from which helped annually to support St Peter's. After her husband's death, she presented two candlesticks to the church in his memory. 75 years since its release, just after the end of the Second World War, Howard is still best remembered for *Brief Encounter*, one of the most celebrated of all British films, in which he played a GP whose platonic affair with an unfulfilled housewife (Dame Celia Johnson, 1908-1982) (*see below*) ended with a famously frustrating scene filmed at Carnforth railway station in Lancashire (the object today of train and movie tourism). This was one of Howard's earliest films; others, of which there were very many, included *The Third Man* (1949), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962) (as Captain Bligh), *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) and *Gandhi* (1982). Prone to self-deprecation, he once remarked that "I've been number two in films for donkey's years" and, towards the end of his life, evidently declined a CBE offered for services to acting. **A**



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Ephesians 5:1 (Epistle for the Third Sunday in Lent)



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*** thear\$KleY ***

SUNRISE/SUNSET ~ 1 FEBRUARY: 7.39/4.50 ~ 28TH: 6.48/5.39

FULL MOON: SAT 27 FEBRUARY @ 8.17am

*** the\$TAR of BETHLEHEM? ***



Just before Christmas there was a ‘great’ **conjunction** in the early evening sky of the planets **Jupiter** and **Saturn** which, for several days, appeared to be very close together. In fact the distance between them is over 450 million miles, but, on 21 December, the Shortest Day, they were, viewed from Earth, within a tenth of a degree of each other. This was their closest alignment since 1623 and potentially the most clearly visible since 1226. Unfortunately it was overcast in Arkley on 21 December, but a clear sky after sunset on Christmas Eve enabled both planets to be viewed close to each other, though with Saturn, which is usually difficult for a casual observer to spot with the naked eye, almost a dot compared to Jupiter.

Ancient Babylonian records, attested by later calculations, described a similar conjunction in the constellation of Pieces (the zodiacal sign then often associated with Judaea) in 7BC. There has long been speculation, much discussed in December, that this alignment was the “**Star**” of **Bethlehem** which, according to the Gospel of St Matthew (2:1-12), written some 70 years later, guided the **Wise Men** to the infant Jesus (who is generally believed to have been born around 7-4BC). In 2015 BBC TV’s *The Sky at Night* examined this possibility against several others, all of which have their expert supporters: a **supernova** or **nova**, a **comet**, a **meteor** strike, or a ‘**rising**’ **star**. Evidence included contemporaneous Chinese accounts of a spectacular astronomical event in 5BC. No conclusions can really be conclusive, but a supernova, a meteor and a rising star (despite being a “star in the east”: Matthew 2:2) were discounted: the latter for being too commonplace and the other two for want of tangible evidence (supernovae leave nebulae; a meteor would probably have been found). A conjunction was thought to be plausible, but not wholly convincing. In particular, such alignments are not as spectacular as novae or comets, judged the most likely bets (though Halley’s Comet in 12BC was too early); and, although often brighter than those of Jupiter and Saturn (for example, Jupiter and Venus), they are not that rare: “How often do you want the Magi to go to Jerusalem?” (David Hughes, 1979). However, for proponents of the theory, the very subtlety of the conjunction is part of its attraction. Knowledge of the skies was such that the Wise Men (“astrologers” in the *New English Bible*) might have been able to plot it, yet it seems clear from Matthew that neither

King Herod of Judaea (4BC) nor the chief priests and scribes whom he gathered (2:4) had seen it: “Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared” (2:7).

The next great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn is on 4 November 2040. the ar\$KleY

Jupiter & Saturn viewed locally shortly after sunset, 24 December 2020

N Dean



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Mr Nick DEAN (*Editor*) ~ The Vicar ~ Mrs Maureen STEVENS



The Lady Chapel at St Peter's, 23 December 2020

This year is the centenary of the Lady Chapel