



THE SIGNAL

A Community Newsletter for
KINNERSLEY-SARNESFIELD-LETTON-NORTON CANON-BROBURY
STAUNTON-ON-WYE-MONNINGTON-ON-WYE-MOORHAMPTON

NO. 43

CHRISTMAS 1985

PRICE 12p



Christmas Spirits

by

M. B. COLLINGWOOD



CASTING around in my mind for a suitable subject for a Christmas article for 'Signal' I found myself thinking about the tradition of telling ghost stories at Christmas and wondering how it originated. And that led me on to considering ghost stories in general and to recall the many examples I had read of a genre to which I have been an addict for as long as I can remember.

The ghost story seems to be an almost exclusively British branch of literature and one which goes back many years. One of the earliest I can recall is 'The Apparition of one Mrs. Veal,' written by Daniel Defoe, author of 'Robinson Crusoe,' as far back as 1706. It appears to be a report of an actual haunting. Sir Walter Scott also turned out the odd ghost story, notably 'The Tapestry Chamber,' but his somewhat verbose style was not really suited to the medium.

As far as the Christmas connection is concerned it appears that, as usual, Dickens was the likeliest inaugurator. 'A Christmas Carol' is, of course, his best known example of a Christmas ghost story, but several years before this story appeared he had inserted, in the Dingley Dell Christmas episode of 'Pickwick',

THIS CHRISTMAS ISSUE OF 'SIGNAL' COVERS THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 1985 AND JANUARY 1986. COPY FOR THE FEBRUARY 1986 ISSUE SHOULD REACH TRISANNA, STAUNTON-ON-WYE (PHONE MOCCAS 517) NOT LATER THAN FRIDAY, 10th JANUARY, 1986.



A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

a short story of the supernatural entitled 'The Story of the Goblins who stole a Sexton.' It was not long before the Christmas ghost story became a tradition which has persisted to this day. Even on television the BBC usually manage to produce a suitably supernatural film around Christmas Eve - in fact, up till a year or two ago they usually featured adaptations of stories by the writer whom most connoisseurs consider to be the supreme master of the ghost story - M.R. James.

Montague Rhodes James was a formidable classical scholar who was for many years provost of Eton College. His first collection of ghost stories, 'Ghost Stories of an Anti-quary,' appeared in 1904 and almost up till the end of his life he continued to turn out similar tales, written invariably in a faultlessly professorial English which could be very effective in building up the right atmosphere. One of his earliest tales, 'Oh Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,' is one of the most hair-raising of all stories in the medium and his description of the man who sees the bedclothes on the spare bed in his hotel room form themselves into a figure with 'a face, an intensely horrible face, of crumpled linen' is guaranteed to send a shiver down the spine of the most blasé of readers. Another very effective story is 'The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral,' in which an archdeacon, hungry for preferment, arranges to have the elderly incumbent who is blocking his progress killed by tripping over a loose stair rod with fatal results, and pays for his crime accordingly when his victim's avenging spirit comes back to haunt him. Not a few of James's stories are enhanced by their unusual setting - Central Sweden in the case of 'Count Magnus,' in which retribution comes to a tomb disturber, and Denmark in the case of 'Number 13,' which tells of a peculiarly haunted room in a hotel in Viborg. 'Last Hearts,' adapted as a Christmas television play a few years ago, is another classic of its kind.

Close behind M.R. James as a master of the macabre was Algernon Blackwood, who in the course of his long life (1869-1951) travelled to many parts of the world and used places he had visited as settings for his stories. One of the best of them is 'The

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evenings only.

Willows,' in which strange things happen on an island in the Danube east of Vienna, and another is 'The Wendigo,' set in the Canadian backwoods. But perhaps the most successful of all is 'The Listener,' which tells of a sinister apparition in a London boarding house.

Another skilled practitioner of the supernatural was E.F. Benson, an Edwardian writer who was highly proficient in making one's flesh creep. Some of his best stories appeared in a collection published by Panther in a 1974 paperback, and they include such masterpieces as 'The Room in the Tower,' 'The House with the Brick Kiln' and 'Negotium Perambulans,' the latter being a particularly effective tale set in Cornwall.

Lady Cynthia Asquith, a daughter-in-law of the World War I prime minister, was another writer who produced some very good ghost stories, the best of which are probably 'The Lovel' voice,' 'The Follower' and 'God Grant that she Lye Still'.

It is impossible to list all the writers who were masters of the supernatural story, but one may perhaps mention William Hope Hodgson, H.R. Wakefield and Arthur Machen. The latter writer is of particular interest to Herefordshire readers as he was born in Gwent and was a pupil at Hereford Cathedral School for a short time before moving to London. Machen's stories are, strictly speaking, not conventional ghost stories at all but they have a supernatural element and he obtains his effects, not by piling horror upon horror, but by leaving his denouements deliberately vague so that the reader can exercise his imagination to the utmost, a very satisfactory way to heighten the tension.

Most British novelists of note, at least up till the outbreak of World War II, tried their hand at writing a supernatural story at some time or other. H.G. Wells, for instance, produced a very atmospheric one entitled 'The Red Room,' which consists of nothing more than a man trying desperately to relight the candles in a haunted room as they go out one after the other but which builds up to a high pitch of tension. Another writer who wrote at least one supernatural story was, rather surprisingly, John Buchan. His 'The Wind in the Portico' was included in a collection of short stories called 'The Runagates Club' published in 1928. Its setting is Shropshire, in a village 'between Ludlow and the hills,' and the story deals with a country landowner who is absorbed in Roman history and builds a temple on to his house in honour of the god Vaunus. Inevitably, the god's spirit comes to life with fatal consequences.

I mentioned above that the ghost story appears to be a peculiarly British genre, but there is one overseas writer who compares well with British practitioners - the American H.P. Lovecraft. His stories are horror rather than ghost tales and are based almost entirely on his theory that 'the world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practising black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside, ever ready to take possession of this earth again.' He built up this myth into a collection of spine-chilling tales which cannot easily be forgotten by anyone who has read them. Two of the best, perhaps, are 'The Whisperer in Darkness' and 'The Shadow over Innsmouth.'

Finally one should, of course, not neglect to mention one of the most famous supernatural stories of all - Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'

which introduced Victorian readers to vampirism. Adapted, expanded and even periodied in a large number of films and TV plays it nevertheless still reads as dramatically as it ever did when it first appeared in 1897. The opening chapter, in which Jonathan Harker finds himself imprisoned in Dracula's Carpathian castle and at the mercy of the bloodsucking count, is still one of the most terrifying in all the literature of the supernatural.

Ghost stories are by no means easy to write and, as M.R. James points out in the preface to the collected edition of his stories first published in 1931, there is no receipt for success in this form of fiction more than any other. 'The public,' as Dr. Johnson said, 'are the ultimate judges: if they are pleased, it is well, if not, it is no use to tell them why they ought to have been pleased.'

To obtain the maximum effect from a ghost story it should, I feel, be read preferably on a winter's night when one is alone in the house with the wind howling dismally around the walls and the occasional tree branch tapping on the window. When you have finished reading you may well find yourself reluctant to turn out the light and retire to your bed in the menacing darkness which seems to grow ever more intense after the last glimmers have died away.

BRINGING YOU UP-TO-DATE

From time to time it appears necessary to remind everyone that 'Signal' is your community newsletter, produced and distributed by a team of volunteers. We have an elected committee, most of whom have specific tasks.

Kathy Childs of Norton Canon, who has been acting as treasurer since early this year, has unexpectedly moved to Hampton Bishop and we thank her for her help. As a result we now need a new treasurer. If you would like to get involved in that capacity or in any other way please contact me.

We do particularly need people who can turn out at short notice to help produce 'Signal.'

Some changes in policy regarding advertisements were agreed at the last committee meeting, mainly concerning local events and small classified advertisements which will now be inserted free of charge. Full details appear elsewhere in this issue.

Rod Kilvert
(tel Weobley 318306)

ADVERTISEMENTS AND NOTICES

Commercial advertisements in 'Signal' are accepted at the rate of £1 per quarter page, or pro rata for larger entries. Payable in advance for single insertions. Small classified advertisements are free.

Notices of fund-raising events meetings and other events up to a quarter page (other than party political) are free for one insertion per event. Where larger entries are required there will be a charge of £4 per page or pro rata. If payment is made at the time of request for insertion one half of the charge will be rebated.

ALL insertions are at the discretion of the chairman of the Editorial and Production Committee.

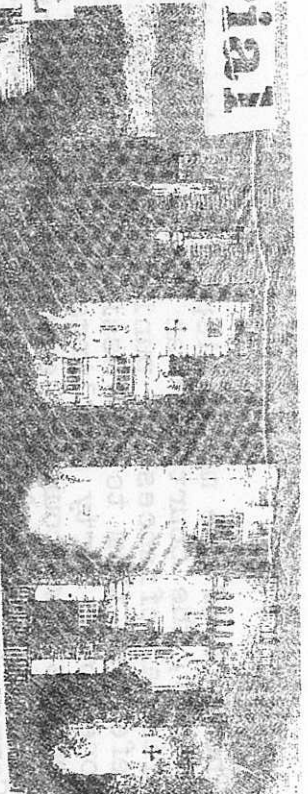
PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WITST DRIVES

6th and 20th December, 7.30 pm
at NORTON CANON VILLAGE HALL.

In aid of the Pat Austen Fund.

The Manorial System

by
RICHARD PANTALL



LORDSHIPS of Manors are the oldest titles in the country. Many of them date from the eighth and ninth centuries. Although Anglo-Saxon England had already established villages whose leaders controlled the day-to-day life of the inhabitants, the Norman Barons, having dispossessed most of the Saxon landholders, created a new military style of leadership within the villages by setting up new manors.

The manors were given out by the King to his supporters as a means of raising money within the area of the lordship covered. An annual fee or money rent was payable to him, and the privileged status of Lord of the Manor, once granted, became perpetual. It was not necessarily the case that it was a 'right' to be granted to the owner of the property, sometimes it was granted to friends of the king, and frequently to royal ladies in dowry for their lifetime.

The Manorial System was the only form of local administration, and of law and order. Not only was it the physical expression of the responsibilities which went with the rights and privileges of lordship, but it was the focal point of village life through the centuries, with the lord as the central figurehead.

One of the main duties of the lord was to ensure the protection of his Manor against aggressors, and this was of particular importance here on the Welsh Border, where men of places like Staunton-on-Wye would have to form the last line of defence for the protection of Hereford City from marauding Welshmen.

In agriculture it operated the open field system, whereby fields were divided into strips, as can still be seen on old maps. The standard unit for a villein's holding was a virgate, about 30 acres land, with small pieces for the humblest families. To begin with the system was unpopular, and there was resistance from the villagers against the lords for evicting or fining those unwilling to yield to his demands, which culminated in the lords Peasants Revolt of the fourteenth century. After that the lords were forced to concede they had to pay better wage rates and give security to their tenants.

The Enclosure Acts of Georgian England enclosed open fields and made farms into more viable units, and as more smaller holders of land were bought out by large landowners, the Manorial System began to die out towards the end of the eighteenth century. The 1922 Law of Property Act abolishing copyhold and converting it into freehold was the end. Today a lordship remains a conveyable property in name only, without its ancient rights and privileges. An exception in the 1922 Act still gives rights to the minerals under manorial land, i.e. sand and gravel. From time to time lordships are advertised for sale by auction, and are keenly sought after by overseas buyers.

COURTS

The lord of the manor dispensed justice through the manorial courts, the Court Leet and Court Baron. The Court Leet heard criminal offences not punishable by Common Law, usually then referring them to the Assizes, and offences involving sums of money over forty shillings in worth. The Court Baron was the tenants' own court to ensure the smooth running of the community. It was empowered to note changes in property ownership, deal with Common Law offences, and minor cases involving sums of money under forty shillings in worth.

AMERCEMENTS

In certain types of cases brought before the Court, common instances of which were for trespass or debt, or failing to appear as a juror when summoned to do so, if the plaintiff failed to pursue his case or if the defendant failed to appear to answer the charge or defend himself, he would be served with an 'Amercement.' To be 'amerced' was to be fined for default in failing to attend the Court.

HERIOTS

Heriot was the term used before the Norman Conquest for the arms and equipment used during his lifetime by a free warrior and returnable on death to the warrior's lord. By the thirteenth century a heriot had become a payment in money or in kind due on tenures at the death of a tenant. The rights and privileges belonging to the lord of the Manor usually demanded that payment of heriots was by 'best beast,' but money or sometimes goods were taken when the deceased was too poor to have a taxable animal. It was the customary form of 'death duty.'

VIEW OF FRANKPLEDGE

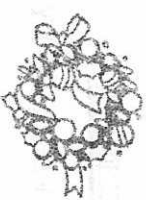
The right to hold a View of Frankpledge was based on a specific Royal Grant, even if the record of the grant had not survived. It was originally a Court held once a year which heard cases or offences of misbehaviour or infringements of any of the Customs of the Manor. The Court or gathering was called a 'Tithing,' and the cases were presented by the Tithingmen, a body of 10-12 local persons responsible for law and order in the area of the Lordship. It was an ancient pre-Conquest obligation on every free over the age of 12 years (titled persons and the religious being excluded) to be enrolled.

Normally the Lord of the Manor or his Steward presided, the Steward probably presiding at more Courts than the Lord, especially when the Lord was a lay or Baskerville, with many Lordships, and away much of his time fighting for the King. The Tithingmen themselves constituted hodge, jury, witness and prosecuting counsel. The types of offences dealt with were assault, breaches controlling the sale of bread or beer, the enclosure of common land, too many animals being put on common land, removing a hedge, having an unenclosed hedge, damaging a bridge, diverting water from its right course, keeping hunting dogs against the law, ploughing up a footpath leading to the Church, poaching game, not ringing pigs, or for keeping an unruly wife.

The penalties imposed usually varied from 2d. to 40d. even for plain assault, reaching a ceiling of 6s. 8d. where blood had been drawn.



Church Notices



Services during December

Sarnesfield

8th 10 am Holy Communion
25th 8 am Christmas Communion

Norton Canon

1st 9 am Holy Communion
8th 9 am Morning Prayer
12th 2 pm School Carol Service
15th 9 am Holy Communion
22nd 9 am Carol Service
25th 9 am Christmas Communion

Staunton

1st 11 am Holy Communion
8th 11 am Morning Prayer
22nd 11 am Carol Service
(*Staunton School*)
25th 11 am Christmas Communion

Byford

1st 9.30am Holy Communion
15th 6.30pm Carol Service
25th 9 am Christmas Communion

Monnington

8th 9.30am Holy Communion
25th 10 am Christmas Communion

Letton

8th 11 am Family Service
24th 11.30pm Midnight Service

There will be a joint service of Holy Communion for the Weobley Group of Parishes in Weobley at 10.30 am on Sunday December 29th

KINNERSLEY

1st 11 am Team Area Eucharist at Bardisley
8th 10 am Mattins
15th 6.30 pm CAROL SERVICE and CHRISTMAS PLAY (by Kinnersley Young People)
22nd 10 am Holy Communion
24th 11.30 pm MIDNIGHT MASS and CAROLS
25th 10 am Holy Communion and Carols
29th 10 am Christmas Family Service

Services during January

Sarnesfield

12th 10 am Holy Communion
26th 10 am Morning Prayer

Norton Canon

5th 9 am Holy Communion
12th 9 am Morning Prayer
19th 9 am Holy Communion
26th 9 am Family Service

Staunton

5th 11 am Holy Communion
12th 11 am Morning Prayer
19th 11 am Holy Communion

Byford

5th 9.30am Holy Communion
19th 3 pm Evening Prayer
26th 10 am Family Service

Monnington

12th 9.30am Holy Communion

Letton

12th 11 am Family Service
26th 6 pm Evening Prayer

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. There will be a special service at the Roman Catholic Church in Weobley on Monday January 20th at 7.15 pm to which all are invited.

Education Sunday, John Chapman, Headmaster of the Bishop's School in Hereford will preach at the 11 am service in Weobley on the 26th.

KINNERSLEY

5th 11 a.m. Team Area Eucharist, Kington
12th 10 a.m. Mattins
19th 10 a.m. Holy Communion
26th 10 a.m. Family Service

We extend a warm welcome to Mr. A. Meredith and family who have come to live at The Old Vicarage, Norton Canon.

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO :

Norton Canon

Kimnersley
Laura Skyrme

22nd Jan

Nichola Cole

Staunton-on-Wye

2nd Dec
2nd " "
7th " "
8th " "
11th " "
15th "

5th Jan
11th " "
13th " "
24th " "
25th " "
27th "

Kimnersley

Ian Lewis 2nd Dec
Mark Stephen Thomas 17th "
Julie Ann Phillips 30th "

Over Letton

Robert Bryan 11th Dec
Mark Addison 24th "

Staunton-on-Wye

Rupert Heaven 13th Dec
Georgina Jelfs 29th "
John Kain 6th "
Daniel Kendall 8th "
Leigh Mason 17th "
Nicky Morgan 27th "

JANUARY

A VERY HAPPY 18th BIRTHDAY TO
CHRISTINE MORGAN AND CAROL
MORGAN ON THE 6th JANUARY AND
KIM MASON ON THE 13th JANUARY
ALL OF STAUNTON-ON-WYE

Norton Canon

Gail Davies 11th Jan
Jaime Loxston 12th "
Stuart Powell 25th "
Andrew Davies 26th "
Duncan Hardmen 30th "

Moorhampton

Matthew Turley 6th Jan
Andrew Whitney 12th "

Sarnesfield

Wendy Evans 5th Jan

OBITUARY

DICK LEWIS

We were all very sad to hear of the death of Dick Lewis. He died on the 1st November, the day after his 69th birthday. There cannot be many of us around today who could bear the illness he so bravely bore. During the past two years the courage with which he bore the pain and suffering he endured in his fight for life was truly remarkable.

Although born in Weobley, Dick spent nearly all his life in Norton Canon - his childhood at Lower Calver Hill farm and later for over thirty years at Slate Cottage. He was in gentlemen's service for a while and also served in the army. For most of his working life he was a relief signaller on the railway, and in addition to his regular railway work he was also of tremendous help on the farm, with no job too much trouble.

His valuable help and friendship to the Cole family and all who knew him will be sadly missed. All commiserations to Mrs. Lewis and we wish her all the best in her new home.

Anne Cole

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Fardisley and District Branch

There will be an extraordinary meeting of the branch at the New Inn, Fardisley, on Wednesday, 4th December commencing at 8 p.m. It is hoped that as many as possible of the past and present members will attend. The main item on the agenda is the future of the branch. It's up to you - please attend.

Poppy Appeal

The house-to-house poppy collection which took place recently realised £503.74, and the church collections were - Almeley £34.58, Whitney £10 and Fardisley £88. To the house-to-house collector and everybody who collected and gave so generously my most grateful thanks. 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.'

The Christmas Bingo and Christmas Draw in aid of the Poppy Appeal will take place at the Curzon Herrick Hall, Fardisley on Saturday, 21st December. Eyes down 7.45 p.m.

Godfrey Davies
Poppy Organiser

Best Wishes for a speedy recovery to Mrs. Alice Morgan and Miss Winney of Staunton-on-Wye who are at the moment in hospital, and to Mr. Stephen Smith of The Beeches after his recent operation.

CHRISTMAS POULTRY

Plump oven-ready ducklings - late and small.
Oven-ready goslings (8-1 lb)
Oven-ready chicken.
Delivered locally.

Phone - Anne Cole, Weobley
318260

In Memoriam

RICHARD SKYRME

Through the recent death of Richard Skyrme we have lost one of the last few farmers of Staunton-on-Wye.

'Richie' had farmed at Hanmore Cross since his father died at the end of World War I. At that time he was not old enough to manage the farm himself, but his mother carried on until he was able to take over.

He was a very able farmer, kind to his animals and his employees, helping everyone not only with advice but sometimes financially. No one was ever refused help.

He had a great store of knowledge of both the history and the inhabitants of Staunton and was always ready with a comical story. He was always interested to hear any news of people who had left the area.

We extend our sympathy to his family and hope that his sons will follow in his footsteps.

Phyllis McCann

J&T CATERING SERVICE

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STAUNTON-ON-WYE PLAYGROUP



Is your child playgroup age? Then why not bring him/her along to our group. We meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9.15 to 12.15 at Staunton-on-Wye School.

There are numerous toys and games plus sand and water play, art and craft and music and rhyme.

Please come along and join in a session and have a chat with Jane and Joy.

Spring Term Monday, 6th January

Fees - 90p per session.

Member of Pre-School Playgroup Association.

FOR SALE

Firewood logs. Cut and split in sizes to suit your stove or open fire. Please state maximum length when ordering.

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HARVEST FESTIVAL - NORTON CANON

The Parochial Church Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all parishioners who contributed so generously to the Harvest Appeal which raised the excellent sum of £202.

We would also like to thank those who by their efforts made the evening so successful with gifts of flowers, fruit and those who provided the cakes and sandwiches for the refreshments after the service.

We are sure that you will all agree that the time of bell-ringers calling us to worship and the Almeley Church Choir who joined in our service all added to our enjoyment and were all very much appreciated.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME

Thanks to all who subscribed to the above through the envelope system back in September.

Norton Canon district raised £46.50, just £4 short of last year's collection, and for the whole Weobley area the total last year was £560. We hope for even better results this year.

The National Children's Home, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Gordon Barritt, O.B.E., M.A., cares for around 7,000 children a year through institutional homes, work centres, advice lines etc. A worthy cause, you will agree.

R. Norman

IN AID OF VILLAGE HALL FUNDS

BUFFET DANCE

FRIDAY 13th DECEMBER 1985

at THE VILLAGE HALL, NORTON CANON.

Music by Calico - 8 - 1 p.m.

Admission £2.50 by ticket only

HELP YOURSELF TO HEALTH

On Wednesday, 6th November, the chiropodist, David Ashley, showed slides and talked to the group Help Yourself to Health in Eardisley Village Hall.

It is common knowledge that ill-fitting shoes cause problems with our feet, but the slides confirmed how important it is to take 'foot care' seriously now, in order to avoid painful problems later in life. It was an interesting evening.

Wednesday, 18th December at 7.30 p.m.
VEGETARIAN CHRISTMAS BUFFET
WITH FOLK MUSIC.
EARDISLEY VILLAGE HALL.
Admission by ticket £2.50 each, available from Helen Jones (tel Hay 820265) or Cathy Moon (Kington 231103)
Food by Roz Fry.

8th JANUARY

A Relaxation Session led by Annie Westoby. Please bring something to lie on e.g. a mat or rug, dress warmly and bring a blanket.

5th FEBRUARY

Health and Beauty. Belinda Carter-Jones uses pure safe herbal cosmetics. She will demonstrate and talk about skin care.

5th MARCH

Any Questions on Health. Our Panel will include a Counsellor, a GP, an acupuncturist and a herbalist.

2nd APRIL

Aromatherapy, Reflexology and Bach Flower Remedies. Valer le Molyneux a qualified practitioner will give a talk.

7th MAY

Your Teeth. James Smith, who is a dentist at Weobley and local school dentist, will show some slides and give a talk about dental care.

4th JUNE

A Healthy Picnic, somewhere nice, weather permitting! Details to follow.

Meetings are open to all, and held in Eardisley Village Hall. Admission is 50p per evening, except for the Xmas meal which is by ticket.

MURPHY'S LAWS

Whichever queue you join in the post office or bank will be the most delayed.

The phone always stops ringing as soon as you step out of the bath.

NORTON CANON LADIES' SOCIAL CLUB

Our last meeting was an entertaining evening of interest to us all, as it was a demonstration of make-up given by Angela Morgan from Madley, who demonstrated the products of 'Le Glow Cosmetics.'

We were told that none of these products were tested on animals and that they were manufactured from natural sources, among which were rue, pansy, birch and coltsfoot, to name but a few.

However, we had to have a real live guinea-pig or which Angela could demonstrate the correct way of applying make-up, and to show what could be done with a little know-how. My Compton nobly volunteered to sit in front of the rest of us and be the model. The result was very attractive, and we wondered if by using 'Le Glow' we would all look equally as good. Perhaps at our next meeting we shall all be transformed and not recognise each other!

The next meeting will be our Christmas dinner at the Unicorn Hotel in Weobley - the date is Tuesday, 3rd December and the time 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. We are all looking forward to a good meal, a little (!!) wine and good company.

STAUNTON-ON-WYE

O lucky us to live in Staunton!
A straggly but a cheerful sort of place.
The main road west goes by to take a jaunt on,
And life goes by as well - at a gentler pace.

O lucky us to live in Staunton!
We have an ancient Church, a Chapel too;
A Football Field, an Inn (a cosy haunt.) On
The Ridge the Romans came to see the view.

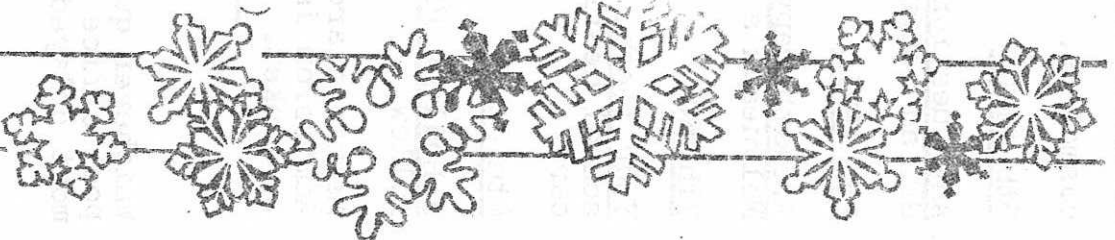
O lucky us to live in Staunton!
Where Jarvis architecture gives us tone.
A Village Hall we have, with stage to flaunt on.
We've got a Kiosk, mainly got a 'phone.

O lucky us to live in Staunton!
We've Orchards, Poultry Farms, P.O. and Shop;
Old Houses and old Folk that age can't daunt.
Amenities we surely come out top. On

O lucky us to live in Staunton!
Where happy children smiling go to School,
And we a kindly Surgery can vaunt. (On
The lane that starts - how right! - at Doctor's Pool.)

Not ev'ryone can live in Staunton.
The kindest and the best are just enough.
And disappointed folk we never taunt on.
Exclusion from our village. It is tough.

H. O. Aldhous



NEW BOOKS.....

CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTIONS OF FRANCES THEODORA (Berrington Press)

This book is a transcription of the tape from a BBC talk given in 1952 by an elderly lady in a Woman's Hour programme. Denys Gerault, a BBC producer who heard the talk, was so interested that he set out to trace the village which the speaker mentioned in her talk but did not name. After considerable research he decided from various references in the talk that the village was Monnington-on-Wye.

Frances Theodora was the daughter of the Rev. W.R. Smith, who was rector of Monnington from 1874 until 1889. She was the niece of the diarist Francis Kilvert as her mother was Kilvert's sister. She was born in 1882.

The book gives a fascinating description of what life was like in a small, isolated country village a hundred years ago. In some respects things seem to have changed very little, whereas in others it is like something from another world. The only diversions to a somewhat uneventful life were what one could provide for oneself, although there were occasional outside interests such as Volunteers camping in an adjacent field or the odd visit to Hereford for shopping. Yet Frances and her brothers and sisters were never dull as 'there was far too much to see and do. All of us were country-lovers to our finger-tips and ours you know was a beautiful countryside.'

There are some vivid descriptions of the Wye and of the village church with, in the churchyard, the flat stone erroneously believed to be the grave of Owain Glyndwr. And there are fascinating accounts of bygone village activities.

The rectory in which Frances Theodora lived is now Chase House, the residence of Lt. Col. and Mrs. E.C. Phillips, phone Moccas 282, from whom copies of the book may be obtained, price £2.

M.B.C.

O YE OF LITTLE FAITH!

A Jew fell over a precipice and was only saved from certain death on the rocks below by hanging on grimly to the branch of a tree growing out from the side of the cliff. In his terror he closed his eyes and prayed 'Dear God. I am in dire distress and pray that Thou wilt come to mine aid.'

Immediately a voice boomed out from the heavens 'My son I have heard thy cry and wilt now come to thine aid. All thou hast to do is to release hold on the branch and, to break thy fall, I will reach down my hand from heaven above and lift you to the sunlit uplands.'

There was a long pause before the Jew closed his eyes and prayed again 'Dear God, is there anyone else up there with you?'

(One of Rabbi Blue's 'Thoughts for the Day' on Radio 4.)

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(Brian Robbins)

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I take a balanced view of the Labour Party - I like it less than last week but more than next.

(Car Sticker)

High heels were invented by a woman who had been kissed on the forehead.

A human being is an ingenious assembly of portable plumbing.

Chris Cocker Morley
American Novelist.

Q. What is a string quartet?

A. A Russian symphony orchestra after a visit to the West.

Q. Why do secret policemen walk about in threes?

A. One can read, one can write, and you need a third to keep an eye on these two intel-lectuals.

Jan Kalina
Czech humorist

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