



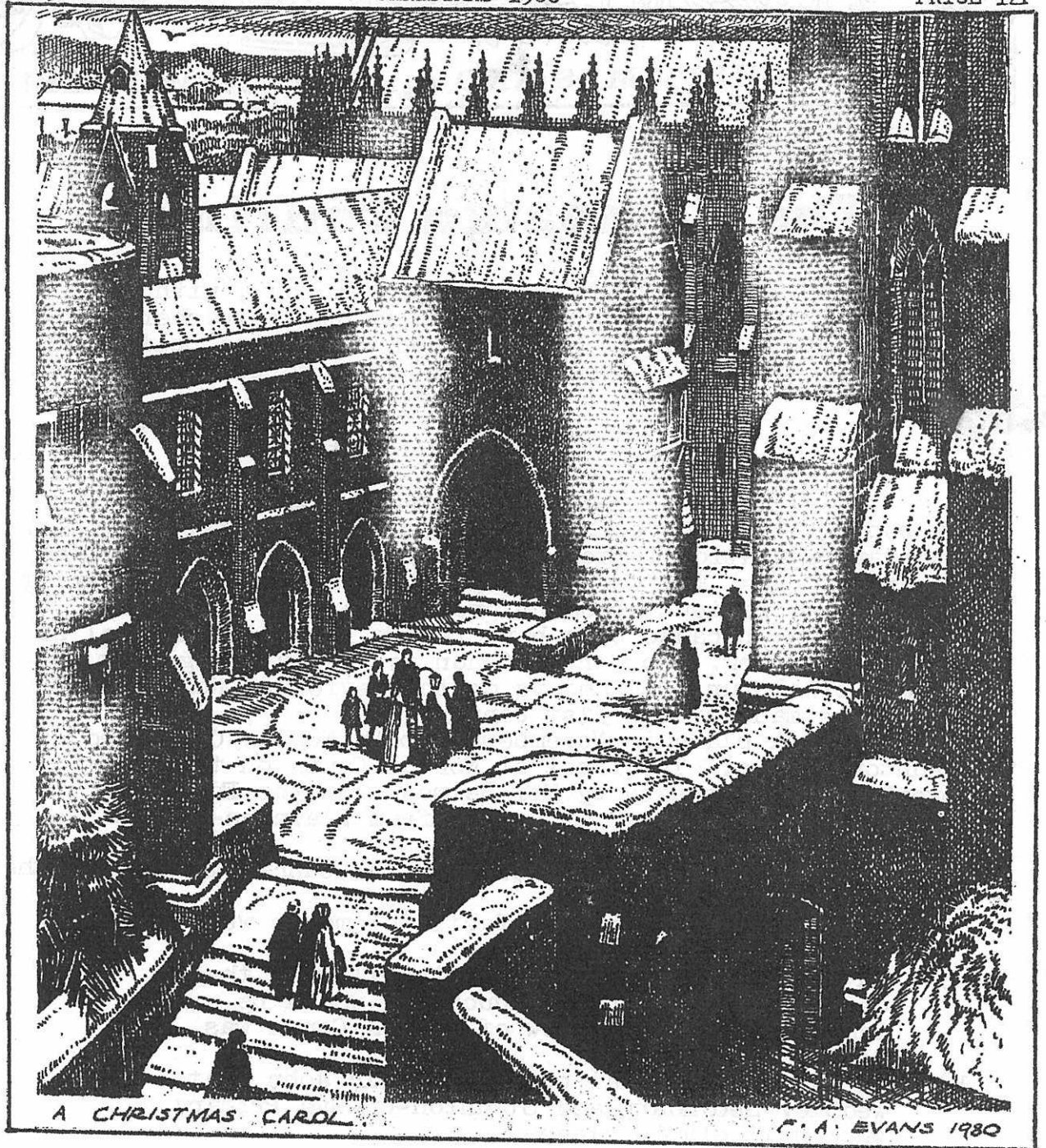
# THE SIGNAL

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

NO. 54

CHRISTMAS 1986

PRICE 12P



A CHRISTMAS CARD

F. A. EVANS 1980

THIS CHRISTMAS ISSUE OF 'SIGNAL' COVERS THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 1986 AND JANUARY 1987. COPY FOR THE FEBRUARY 1987 ISSUE SHOULD REACH TRISANNA, STAUNTON-ON-WYE (PHONE MOCCAS 517) NOT LATER THAN SATURDAY JANUARY 10TH.



**A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## Save Our Schools

### **The Campaign Continues**

The strength of a small village school is that, with the small numbers, there is a relationship between teacher and pupils whereby teachers can teach and not act as policemen, because children do not have to misbehave to gain attention.

Elizabeth Hewitt  
Norton Canon,  
25.11.86.

Not content with suggesting a 200-square-mile desert to secondary educational facilities and the closure of village primary schools, the County Council has insisted on carrying out separate reviews (closure procedures) of Dilwyn and Norton Canon, because both have fallen below the magical 26 pupils attending. So Norton Canon is really up against two threats of closure. Comments on the review of Norton Canon have to be made by the 31st January.

Meetings took place in November in both Norton Canon and Staunton-on-Wye. The first at Norton Canon on the 25th November was addressed by Mr. Salmon from the Education Department and a number of people from Staunton-on-Wye attended.

The second was a Staunton Group Parish Council meeting on the 27th November.

The most salient matters and facts to emerge were:

- a) An assurance by Sir John Cotterell that the decisions on secondary education would be taken before the review of Norton Canon was decided.
- b) It was the personal opinion of Sir John that Weobley Secondary and Staunton-on-Wye Primary were unlikely to close.
- c) The possibility of an amalgamation between Norton Canon and Staunton-on-Wye is unlikely to proceed, not because of any animosity between the villages but practical reasons such as transport arrangements and probable teacher/pupil ratio.

- d) That Leominster District Council were trying to persuade the County Council to suspend review of all rural schools particularly in the Development Area in which we live.
- e) That there was pressure from central government to close all schools with less than three teachers which on guide line pupil/teacher ratios mean 60 pupils.
- f) That whilst there were limitations in small schools the general feeling of teacher and parents was the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.
- g) That likely numbers of pupils in Norton Canon and Staunton-on-Wye would be around the 20 to 25 mark and 25 to 30 respectively for the next few years.
- h) Gloucestershires system of review did not start until numbers were down to 20.
- i) The Diocesan Education Committee which owns Norton Canon School wanted to retain rural schools and had assisted with transport arrangements in other areas.
- j) That the transport of infants was of particular concern.
- k) That it was worth the County Council considering retaining infant classes in existing schools. This had been done successfully in other areas and there was a saving of staff costs.
- l) It was disruptive to a school to be under a continual threat of closure, which under the present system could occur every two years.
- m) The review would be considered by the Education Committee in April, the full council in May and any objection had to be made to the Department of Education and Science by July. Effectively there would not be a closure until December 1987.

'Signal' does support the retention of village schools. It is one of the linchpins of rural family life. It does seem incredibly odd that the children of the Royal Family are educated in small classes, and that all the children of members of the Cabinet all go outside the state provision where generally classes are smaller. Why should there be a different criteria for state education?

R. Kilvert

#### WANTED

St. John the Baptist Church, Letton, is in need of an organist for the monthly family service, which is at 11 am on the second Sunday of the month. The instrument is an electronic organ. If anyone can help in this way, please contact Arthur Cowap, Old Letton Court (phone Moccas 235) or the Rev. Bryn Rees at Staunton rectory (phone Moccas 302)

#### CLASSIFIED ADS

##### CHRISTMAS POULTRY, OVEN-READY

Ducklings - small and medium

Goslings - 10-16 lbs

Chickens - 5-12 lbs

Free delivery in 'Signal' area.

Mrs A.Cole, phone Weobley 318260.

FRESH FISH SUPPLIES available from van outside Weobley Post Office every Thursday between 3 pm and 4 pm. (G.Brookes, phone Leominster 2728).



# The Twelve(?) Days of Christmas



ALTHOUGH Christmas comes but once a year it is noticeable that its arrival, or at least the run-up to its arrival, tends to become steadily earlier as time progresses. In my youth the festival from start to finish lasted for only a few days and its celebration was almost entirely a family affair. But now that it has become largely a commercial exercise aimed at loosening our purse-strings its promoters, in their frantic endeavours to steal a march on their competitors, are finding it necessary to commence operations earlier each successive year.

The first indication that the annual shopping spree is in the offing is the arrival in the shops of next year's calendars. These usually make their appearance around September, but they can arrive still earlier than this on occasions, especially on the continent. (I remember that when I was in Norway in June 1975, 1976 calendars were already on sale in shops in Bergen.) Hard on the heels of the calendars appear the first Christmas cards, and it seems to be customary for the general design of these annual greeting media to change with the British climate. Perhaps because snow very rarely falls at Christmas nowadays but usually arrives just as one is welcoming the advent of spring, snowscapes with attendant robins and holly sprays seem to have lost favour with Christmas card designers and have yielded place to illustrations which, though on occasions quite artistic, have little or nothing of a seasonal nature about them.

The despatching of the cards to relatives and friends, once a task carried out only a few days before the holiday, is now also a job needing attention a long time earlier, particularly in the case of those going overseas. When I returned from Africa on retirement in 1970 it took only two weeks for a card to reach that continent by surface mail from Britain. Nowadays, when we have grown accustomed to paying more and more for less and less, it takes anything up to two months, which means that one has to think about setting the wheels in motion about the beginning of October.

By early November the show is really on the road. The first Christmas decorations appear in the streets, shop windows blossom out in a rash of holly and cotton wool, and the TV commercials ruthlessly plug every possible and impossible suggestion for Christmas gifts. By the beginning of December the ultimate indications that the holiday is at hand manifest themselves in a general rise in price of almost everything in the shops - notably all those goods which are in particular favour at Christmas time. (It is noticeable that the same prices seldom if ever tend to go back to their previous level after the holiday is over.) Turkeys, in particular, rise appreciably in price each successive year and the reason for this is usually given out to be the weather during the previous summer, which has been either too warm, too cold, too wet or too dry.

At last the great day arrives. Presents are opened and spurious delight is expressed with the more than usually unwearable tie sent by Aunt Maud or the undrinkable wine passed on by Uncle

George. Then follows the annual guineafest which leaves everyone with acute dyspepsia and a marked reluctance to embark on the ritual post-prandial walk.

In my young days Christmas Day was distinguished by the fact that it was one of the few days in the year when it was impossible to read a newspaper, and although this is still true we have no respite from the TV and radio news bulletins, which continue throughout the day to churn out their never-failing quota of doom, despair and disaster, so Christmas Day has to a large extent lost its aura of escapism. In fact, the newsreaders seem to take particular pleasure in saving up their most depressing items to coincide with the height of the celebrations. In the years before the last war the holiday was normally a matter of two, or at most three days, and one returned to work with a disordered stomach and a jaundiced air to greet one's friends and colleagues with more than customary cordiality, glad to learn that they had survived the ordeal more or less unscathed. But now that New Year's Day has also become a holiday the interim period between Christmas and New Year has in general practice tended to become an unofficial rest period, with the result that Christmas, in addition to arriving earlier, takes longer to depart. So, from start to finish, the whole show has become a matter of several weeks.

A curious feature of Christmas nowadays is that, although originally a religious festival, it is being observed with increasing enthusiasm in an age when religion is in decline. In fact, it is highly unlikely that any of its most fervent celebrants ever for one moment consider its religious implications. A typical sign of the times.

M.B. Collingwood

P.S. In case I should be looked on as a twentieth-century Scrooge let me add that I shall also be well ensconced on the band waggon living it up with the best of them. I join with 'Signal' in wishing all readers the merriest of Christmases and a bright, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

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### ARROWVALE WINE CLUB

Although we are practically perfect not everything goes to plan. Each October we compete to find out who can produce the best bottle of wine. The scoring system is simple but regrettably on this occasion our arithmetical ability failed to meet the test - and we awarded our salver to the wrong person.

Perhaps in future we should make this mistake deliberately because one of the checkers, Sheila Evans (who came wearing and bearing sackcloth and ashes) and Colin Gorrie (the wrongly-appointed winner) came up with highly hilarious apologies which made the whole occasion worthwhile. George Jones, the real winner, received his salver with aplomb.

Our speaker, John Millis, with his slides depicting 'The Wigmere Year,' allowed for no anticlimax and we were all entranced with his humorous and encyclopaedic knowledge of an area he so obviously loves.

Gareth Evans

Our Annual Dinner at Burghill Village Hall on December 5th was an outstanding success. Some seventy members and guests sat down to a truly Lucullan repast provided by Beacon Caterers in a room which had been seasonally decorated by secretary Pat Shaw and a devoted band of helpers.

The meal was not only up to Cordon Bleu standard but the portions were unstinted, as was proved when one member, a noted trencherman, on being offered the choice of trifle or Christmas pudding, replied 'both' - and got them without argument.

A replete audience gave a warm reception to a programme of music-hall ballads sung by The Victorians, and the evening ended with songs and dances round the piano. Some of the dances appeared to have been improvised, as the steps became noticeably erratic towards the end. Altogether a first-class thrash.

M.B.C.

### ROYAL BRITISH LEGION Eardisley and District Branch

The first meeting of the new year will be on Wednesday January 7th in the New Inn at Eardisley, commencing at 8 pm.

### A TREAT FOR THE OVER SIXTIES

Over sixties in Staunton-on-Wye enjoyed an unexpected Christmas treat when they were guests of Staunton Wives at a Christmas Tea in the village hall on December 6th.

Some seventy of the village's older residents sat down to what was virtually a banquet, and every guest was given V.I.P. treatment, with transport provided in the case of those without their own facilities.

There were Christmas crackers, sherry and cider, and each table was beautifully decorated with bowls of flowers.

The whole thing was a truly generous gesture which was greatly appreciated by everyone present, and our thanks go to the ladies who must have put in a lot of hard work in organising the event.

M.B.C.

### Poets' Corner

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

When I was young and very small  
And Christmas Day was ten feet tall  
I'd lie in bed on Christmas Eve,  
Eyes a-peeping through my sleeve,  
Hoping to see a wondrous sight  
Of Santa with his beard so white.  
I knew he parked up on our roof  
'Cos I'd heard the sound of a reindeer's hoof,  
And down our chimney he would slide  
And in my bedroom toys he'd hide.  
I'd sometimes hear him on the stair,  
No noise I'd make - I would not dare!  
Hark - what was that? I hear some creaks,  
(Is it my bedroom door he seeks?)  
And softly, on the stairs, a tread.  
No, it's Mummy and Daddy going to bed.  
Through the curtains I quickly peep,  
No thoughts I have of going to sleep.  
Stifling back a long, long yawn -  
(It really must be nearly dawn!)  
And then - my eyes are open wide,  
I fling the bedclothes back aside.  
Oh dear, I've missed him yet again,  
As fast asleep in bed I'd lain,  
And there upon my bedroom floor  
Were toys and books and sweets galore.  
Thank you for them, Santa dear -  
I'll try to keep awake next year.

Jill Valentine

# CHRISTMAS IN NORWAY

Here in England most of our excitement is reserved for Christmas Day but in Norway it is December 24th which is the highlight of the season. I have just had a letter from a very old friend who has lived in Norway since the war and her description of the festivities makes one long to join them.....

Sheila Evans

CHRISTMAS EVE begins apparently with business as usual, in that offices and shops are open until about midday. Exhausting for shop assistants but just for show in offices, where they usually have a Christmas party. For church goers there are services at 1 pm and 4 pm - very well attended. Christmas dinner is between 3 pm and 6 pm by which time it is quite dark, and a wealth of candles are lit in every home. All day was a tedious period of waiting when our children were small, but now there are many programmes on TV to keep them amused.

And so to dinner. There are many possibilities, ranging from boiled cod, limered cod (!), capercaillies, smoked lamb, venison, turkey or roast ribs of pork. The latter is the most usual around Oslo and is usually our choice because I prefer to keep my tradition going on Christmas Day with turkey and Christmas pudding. There's no traditional pudding on Christmas Eve but fruit salad, cloudberries and ice cream are usual.

After dinner, which children are usually too excited to eat and cannot wait for the grown-ups to finish, the Christmas tree is lit for the first time. (We had wax candles till two years ago but have succumbed to modernity now).

Now is the time for presents. When they are all opened and the children well occupied the grown-ups have a marathon coffee pause with, traditionally, seven kinds of cakes (cookies really) only made at Christmas time.

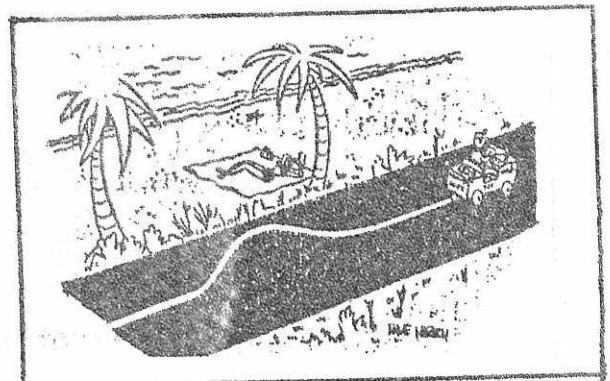
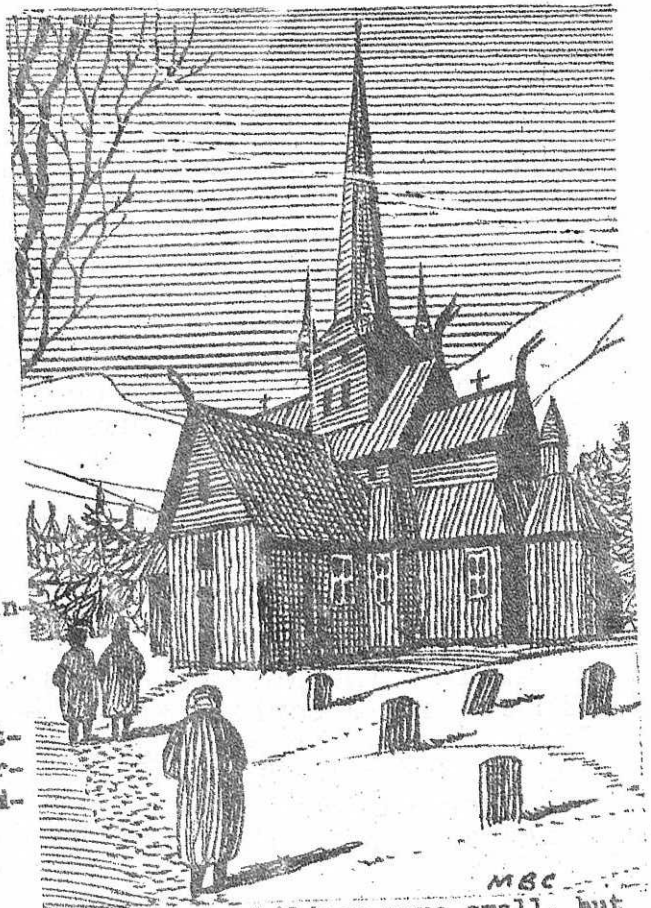
After coffee we all go in a ring round the Christmas tree and sing carols.

Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day are holidays, and on the days in between offices close at 1 pm, giving time for a round of family parties (dinner always at 4 or 5 pm.) Easter is a similar marathon - I must tell you about that sometime.

## DIAMOND WEDDING

Hearty congratulations to Mr and Mrs Albert Winney of Tarron Bungalow, Staunton-on-Wye who celebrate their Diamond Wedding on December 11th.

Mr Winney, aged 84, has lived in Staunton for many years and Mrs Winney, aged 92, was born in Stafford. They were married at St. Pauls, Tupsley, Hereford, on December 11th, 1926.



## Norton Canon Ladies' Social Club

JOHN Worle gave the members a most interesting and informative talk illustrated by slides about the growing of apple trees for cider. This was one of our largest gatherings and members were most grateful for the copious draughts of Bulmer's Special Reserve cider which John had brought with him.

We learned a lot about root stocks, planting, budding, grafting, shaping, pruning and harvesting. We were intrigued by the slides showing different machines, some from America, that have been tried and abandoned or are now used in the harvesting of the apples in the huge acreage owned by Bulmers in Herefordshire. The cost of all this - and some operations are naturally labour intensive, and expensive machines do not always function successfully - must be considerable so that the price of a glass of cider in a pub will seem, after this talk, to be quite cheap and well worth the cost.

December is the month for our Christmas outing. This will be on Monday, 15th (the 3rd Monday in December.) Dinner is to be at the Weobley Salutation, 7.30 for 8 p.m. Anyone who was not counted at the November meeting and would like to come to the dinner should contact Mavis Stevenson (318274) as soon as possible. From January the meetings are to be changed from the second to the third Monday in the month. The Club next year will be organised by Joyce Langmead and her daughter Rita Kilvert. Meetings as usual at 8 p.m. at the Village Hall unless an outing is arranged.

Sheila Evans

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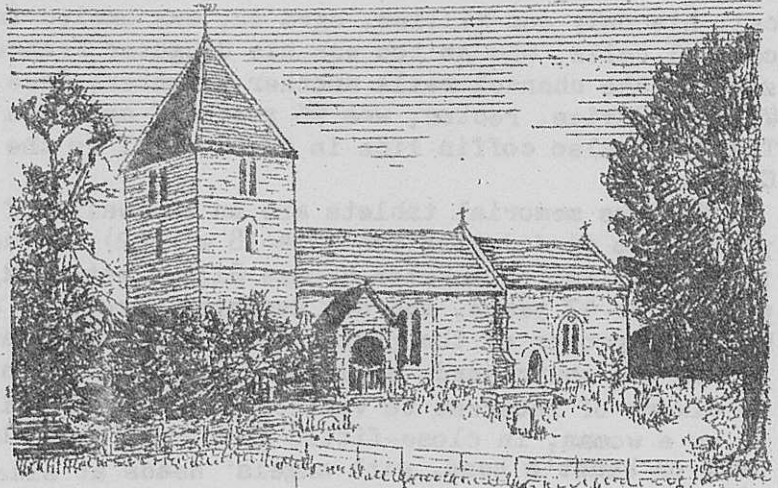
# STAUNTON-ON-WYE

## CHURCH

by

RICHARD PANTALL

Illustration by  
The Rev. A. Lord



The church of St. Mary, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, stands at the east end of the parish at an altitude of 320 feet above sea level. Built in the Norman period, the walls are of local sandstone and the roofs are covered with slate and tiles. The nave was built c.1180-1200 and late in the same period the west tower was added.

Early in the 1300s a north or chantry chapel was built, opening into the nave by the arcade of two bays to be seen in the north wall, and is on record as having been pulled down about 1720 when the chancel was rebuilt. There used to be a small gallery in the nave, above the vestry arch, with an entrance from the belfry. It was removed in 1861-62, the tower opened and the nave re-seated, at a cost of £600.

The organ was erected in the chancel in 1863, and remained there until 1977, when it was taken away for renovation and repair. On return to the church it was re-positioned in the vestry, and in 1982 an electric motor was installed to remove the necessity to use the hand-operated air bellows.

The ceiling of the nave was removed in 1867 and the roof opened to the rafters; also a new arrangement for open seats was completed in 1875, at a cost of £150 paid for by the rector, the Rev.H.W.Phillott. The south porch was added in 1878.

The walls in the vestry, at the base of the tower, are lined with very old oak panelling upon which are carved figurines of men and women in the form of medallions, and other embellishments of finely carved ornaments. It is believed to have come out of the chantry chapel.

The stone font, a round cup-shaped bowl with moulded necking, round stem and mould base, is early 13th century. The communion table, with heavy turned legs, enriched top rails and shaped brackets, is early 17th century. So too are the two lengths of communion rail, but in the belfry tower is a communion rail in stained oak with carved rails and having a gate with heavy blacksmith-made hinges, of much greater age; two identical armchairs in the chancel are made from early 17th century framing and panelling.

In 1921 a faculty was granted authorising removal of the pulpit and reading desk from the arch in the chancel to the nave of the church. Electric lighting was installed in 1953.

### Church plate

In 1552 this consisted of a chalice and paten of silver gilt 21 ozs. and two white cloths. In 1888 it consisted of a silver cup and cover-paten of 1576, the former with a band of engraved ornament. A glass bottle for wine, with a silver cross on the cork, and a strong oak box to hold same. In brass there was an alms dish, and two candlesticks for the communion table. In pewter a flagon, alms dish, paten and plate.

### Tombstones

There are various coffin-lids and floor-slabs in the chancel and nave, some dating back 700 years. During the incumbency of the Rev.Wm.Davies from 1733 till

1790 his wife, Jane, was buried 17th May 1768 under the east window in the chancel; his only son William, aged 22, was buried in 1760 on the south side of the chancel rails, and so too was his daughter Frances in 1753, while on the north side of the chancel rails another daughter, Jane, was buried in 1762. The Rev. William Davies, rector, was 95 years of age when he died on December 5th 1790. There are also coffin lids in the chancel to the Kyrwood family of Old Letton Court.

Various memorial tablets are on the walls of the nave to (1) the men of the parish who died during the 1914-18 war; (2) to the benefactors of the three parish charities; (3) to Peter Broome Giles, esteemed medical practitioner in the parish for 42 years, and his daughter Caroline, and (4) to the Rev. Timothy Markham, rector of the parish 1714-33 and his family.

In the churchyard, about 30 feet south of the chancel, is a tombstone which is always of interest to visitors. It is the white stone effigy of what appears to be a woman, in close-fitted gown and loose cloak, head (detached) on cushion, feet on beast's head, with angels' heads at sides. Now defaced, it is of early 14th century date and probably came out of the chantry chapel.

## LOOKING BACK

CHRISTMAS will soon be here and with it come many memories of the past. The following were inspired by 'Myths and Memories', a fascinating book by Gilbert Adair:-

I remember.....

- Chilprufe vests and liberty bodices.
- 'Friday night's Amami night.'
- Galoshes.
- Coloured bus tickets and cigarette cards.
- Wooden spades and seaside buckets.
- Panama hats with elastic under the chin.
- Workmen's day return tickets.
- London smog and the flares carried in front of the buses.
- Flat irons, clothes horses and kitchen 'airers'.
- Postcard albums.
- Black market clothes coupons at 2/- a coupon.
- Sealing wax, bakelite and steel gramophone needles.
- The crash of the R 101.
- Stained floor boards edging a square carpet.
- The crunch of broken glass underfoot after a London air raid.
- Real candles on a real Christmas tree.
- A large loaf for 4d.
- Lamp lighters
- Smuts in my eye on the train.
- Instant Postum.
- Cinema organists rising in lights from the depths.

Sheila Evans

Editorial note:- We all have different memories of the past, so if anyone would like to send in their own personal collection we should be happy to publish them in a future issue of 'Signal.'

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
Eardisley and District Branch

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday October 29th and the following officers were elected for the year 1986-87:-

President: H.C.Burgoyne  
Chairman: Phil Jenkins  
Vice-Chairman: D.Lavers  
Secretary: G.W.Davies  
Treasurer: R.Babbington  
Standard Bearer: J.Wood  
Deputy: P.Jenkins  
Membership Secretary: G.W.Davies

The annual dinner was held on Friday October 24th in the Recreation Hall, Almeley. 65 members and friends attended, and the music was supplied by the Hereford Music Co.

The Poppy Whist Drive was held on Friday November 7th when 16 tables were in play. The proceeds which were for the Poppy Appeal amounted to £79.

The Christmas Bingo and Grand Draw will take place in the Curzon Herrick Hall, Eardisley, on Saturday December 20th, proceeds for the Poppy Appeal. Eyes down 7.45 pm.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
POPPY APPEAL

House to house collection 1986:-

Norton Canon - £40.90

Sarnesfield - £20.29

Thanks to all who helped and all who gave.

P.G.Miller  
Hon. Organiser

Mr E.Price and the family of the late Mrs M.Price of The Bower, Norton Canon, wish to express their sincere thanks to all her relatives, school friends and neighbours for their messages of sympathy, attendance at the funeral service, floral tributes and donations received in their sad loss.

A special thankyou to all her friends for spending time in comforting her during her illness, also to the Rev Colin Sneyd, the organist Mrs Norman, the bellringers, Mrs Eve Lane, Mrs Fittins, and the ladies who helped at the house- Mrs E.Lane, Mrs J. Griffiths and Mrs D.Powell.

A woman's mind is cleaner than a man's; she changes it more often.

Oliver Herford

WEOBLEY AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOC.

At the first meeting of the winter session in October the chairman, Mr H.Cooper, spoke on the history of the criminal courts, a subject which in the event proved to be of absorbing interest to the large number congregated in the Willow Gallery.

With more than fifty years' experience of working in magistrates' courts the speaker was well qualified to expound and comment upon the involvement of the administration of law and order through the centuries from Roman times down to the present day, and in the process to add some pertinent observations of his own concerning the situation as we see it now.

It was not only an informative evening but one to provoke more than a passing thought on the apparent deterioration of social mores.

The next meeting will take place on November 26th at the Willow Gallery, Weobley, at 7.30 pm, when Mr E.Okarma of Brobury House will speak on Art and the Local Scene.

Obituary

MRS M.PRICE, NORTON CANON

On Thursday November 13th the church of St.Nicholas was filled to overflowing with her family and so many friends who gathered to say and sing their last farewell to Mary Price. The service itself will be remembered by everyone who was there as a very special one for someone who had lived in the village for most of her very full life.

She had been a member of the Mothers' Union and W.I. for many years and more recently of the Arrowvale Wine Club and the Monday Club. The school, too, had always had her support and she had been a governor for several years.

Her health had alas deteriorated during the last four years, but even then her spirit was an example to us all.

'We will remember' Mary with gratefulness for her friendship and her quiet dignity in times of adversity. We also remember her family at this time and extend our sincere sympathy to them all.

E.M.M.

## BIRTH DAYS

### DECEMBER

A VERY HAPPY 18th BIRTHDAY TO  
NICKY MORGAN OF STAUNTON-ON-WYE  
on the 27th December.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:  
Norton Canon

Lyndsey Evans	2nd	Dec
Nicola Cole	2nd	"
Nicola Watson	7th	"
Lucan Raphael	8th	"
Jonathon Absolam	15th	"

### Kinnersley

Ian Lewis	2nd	Dec
Robert Bryan	11th	"
Mark Stephen Thomas	17th	"
Mark Addison	24th	"
Julie Ann Phillips	30th	"

### Monnington-on-Wye

Rhian Cooke	30th	Dec
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### Staunton-on-Wye

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

### JANUARY

### Norton Canon

Gail Davies	11th	Jan
Jaime Loxston	12th	"
Andrew Davies	26th	"
Duncan Hardman	30th	"

### Moorhampton

Matthew Turley	6th	Jan
Andrew Whitney	12th	"

### Sarnesfield

Wendy Evans	5th	Jan
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### Kinnersley

Laura Skyrme	22nd	Jan
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### Staunton-on-Wye

Emma Clare Price	5th	Jan
Christopher Sheers	11th	"
Amy Howard	13th	"
Thomas Arthur	24th	"
Jonathon Sheers	25th	"
Lydia Lewis	27th	"

Politics is perhaps the only pro-  
fession for which no preparation is  
thought necessary.

Robert Louis Stevenson

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## READER'S LETTERS

I was shocked to read in the Hereford Times of the collapse and death of a man caught in the flooding on the main road at Letton.

A neighbour of mine had tried to use the road during the day and found it impassable and with no warning signs of the flooding. This road is notorious for flooding and with the heavy rains of the previous days should have been watched closely by the relevant Authority, either the County Council or the Police and warning signs erected. Whoever was responsible has neglected their duty and now a man has died.

An enquiry should now be held by the relevant Authority into this tragic incident to ensure that in future flood warning signs are erected and this road is closed.

Rita Kilvert

Recently I sat down to count my blessings and give thanks for all that has happened to help make life easier during the past year.

Immediately I thought how lucky we are in Staunton because of our village shop which has become a veritable Aladdin's cave since the advent of Bob and Jill Doody. It is obvious that

they have put in a great deal of thought hard work and imagination into building it up to its present form. Apart from supplying our daily needs in the food line it is a great help not to have to go into Hereford for odd items of hardware, haberdashery, stationery, small toys and gifts.

Sometimes I am tempted to ask for a three-piece suite or a washing machine just to see if I would get the answer, 'I'm sorry we haven't one in stock as we are short of space, but we will try to get one for you when we go to Hereford'.

Well done, Bob and Jill, and thank you. May you have peace and a well-earned rest over Christmas and a happy and prosperous future.

A. Aldhous

I was listening to 'Desert Island Discs' when Parkinson was interviewing two famous chefs and hoteliers, Alberg and Michele Rouse. The talk was all about banquets and the eating habits of the rich and famous. Mouth-watering stuff!

Then he asked them what their own favourite meals were, and without hesitation one said 'egg and chips' and the other said 'stew - the sort Mother made.' That made me laugh, but I feel there is a moral there somewhere.

Barbara Ridge

## NEW BOOKS.....

- (1) MONTY - THE MAKING OF A GENERAL (1887-1942)
  - (2) MONTY - MASTER OF THE BATTLEFIELD (1942-1944)
- by Nigel Hamilton (Penguin, £4.95 each)

Would it be fair to say that most people only read about people they like and admire? If so, I must report that I have now broken with this tradition and have read, with ever-increasing absorption, the developing life-style of a man towards whom, during my service years in the last war, I had nurtured many a malignant thought.

I started the first volume with all my original distaste of the man in full bloom, so you can imagine my growing astonishment when I found myself reading through the 1,500 pages with ever-increasing fascination. Not because I came to like Monty any more - far from it - but because I could now really understand the man and his actions here so brilliantly described and explained. These volumes really do add up to a 'warts and all' picture of a man who - dislike him as you may - can legitimately lay claim to being our greatest military commander.

Nigel Hamilton is to be congratulated on writing a really outstanding biography and I can hardly wait for the final volume - 'The Field Marshal (1944-1976)' - to be published in paperback. Roll on the day.

Gareth Evans

# December in the Garden

I have now received my seed catalogues and am enjoying looking at all the new varieties of seeds which we all plan to plant and nurture through to maturity in 1987. The glossy pictures and explicit instructions seem to suggest that all we have to do is to throw a few seeds into the garden and wait for the resulting harvest. We all know that this is not strictly true and so much depends on preparing the ground correctly and caring for the plants during the whole of their growing cycle. My books tell me that this month I should be ordering my seeds to make sure I have them in time for planting. Do not buy more than you have room to grow. When space is limited I like to concentrate on those vegetables that are usually more expensive in the shops.

Protect rhubarb with straw or hay and cover with a box or bucket to encourage early growth. If your soil is not wet or sticky (as is most of my plot) shallots and artichokes can be planted in December and January. Early summer cabbages and cauliflowers can be sown under glass in January to mature in June. Once germinated grow them on without much heat in order to produce sturdy plants. Onions can also be sown in heat in January. All these vegetables will need pricking out either in boxes or, if you have room, better results can be obtained by using individual pots.

In January topdress overwintering and perennial vegetables in active growth with a nitrogenous fertiliser. Use sulphate of ammonia or nitro-chalk at 100 g to a square metre (3 oz per square yard) for spring cabbages, spinach, beet and rhubarb, half this amount for spring maturing cauliflowers, sprouting broccoli, late leeks and asparagus. Force chicory roots in total darkness in a warm place and continue to blanch endive. Check root crops in store and remove any roots showing decay. Digging is an ongoing occupation but keep off the ground if it is frozen, covered with snow or very wet. Dig in manure or compost where you intend to grow onions, leeks, beans and salad crops. Work out next years cropping plans bearing in mind the need for rotation. Try an early sowing of carrots (Amsterdam variety) forcing under cloches or in the cold frame. Finally clean the mud off your tools and wipe them over with an oil rag before putting them away then you may retire to the peace and comfort of your armchair and slippers and dream of Spring.

Happy gardening.

One Green Finger

## Bygone Days in Pembrige

I have been reading an article, given me by a friend, which is from a Sunday Times magazine dated August 1966. It is called 'The village that's here to stay' and is about Pembrige, making the point that very little had altered there since the beginning of the century, and that time had stood still! (A local had remarked, 'The Sunday Times! We've just had the B.B.C!') This turned out to have been in 1956.) Well, the last twenty years have certainly made a difference!

The article starts by saying 'Time doesn't change much in Pembrige, and custom dies hard. Emrys Vaughan still earns his living as a cobbler in his garden workshop. Graham Evans the undertaker, wears

full Victorian rig for his duties. David Barrer still shoes horses, though much of his time nowadays is spent mending farm machinery.' (There is a wonderful photo of him and his dog in his forge, which reminds me of a Dutch painting.) 'There is mud on the main street, and not one of the three pubs has television.' Of course electricity and main water had only been supplied a few years before, and oil lamps and the parish pumps were still in use.

The population was just over 800, and most of the inhabitants worked locally, mainly on the land. The average wage there was £13 a week. Rents for the black and white timbered cottages were between 5/- and 30/- a week!

The entertainments consisted of the Men's Social Club bingo sessions, on Saturday nights, and the Women's Institute. Some of the youngsters had started a pop group. Darts, quoits and dominoes were played in the pubs. Very few people had a car.

The Parish Council had quite a lot of influence (on a budget of £50 for 1966.) One of the things they had to decide was whether to have a covered dustcart and employ full time dustmen, as Weobley had done.

The vicar does not seem to have been very popular. He said he found the villagers 'too conservative, with resentment of outsiders.' He was leaving to take up a living in Kenya.

Two events stand out in the history of Pembridge. The first was the Civil War. Before it, Pembridge, a market town, with a population of 2,000, was owned by the Devereux family, and was strongly Royalist. It was overrun by Cromwellian troops - many of the houses were pillaged, and some families fled, never to return.

The second event was also the result of a war - the 1914-1918 war. About 90 Pembridge men served in it, and 25 were killed in action. At that time, the squire was a Major-General, and something of a martinet. Apparently, he marched his servants to church on Sundays, and if he visited the school, the boys had to salute him, and the girls had to curtsy. In 1919, he decided the returning soldiers should be welcomed with a party. The villagers, who had not much spare cash, responded well, getting up whist drives etc., and among other things, a lunch was provided. However, the soldiers were in an aggressive mood; they had discovered by then that there were no jobs for them, and resented the fact that those who had stayed at home were working, and appeared indifferent. This was because the majority of the people at home had no idea of the horrors of the front line. Anyway, an argument started which turned into a fight. When the Major-General intervened, he was told 'to shut up' or be thrown in the river! He eventually left Pembridge. The affair caused a lot of bitterness which lasted some time.

Incidentally, later on, owing to a fishing dispute, a farmer was thrown in the river, so visitors to Pembridge beware!

Jean Close

I'm not too keen on politicians. What arrogance and stupidity makes a mere mortal think he is the one chosen to lead others?

Gerald Scarfe

A husband should not insult his wife publicly, at parties. He should insult her in the privacy of the home.

James Thurber

## Church Notices

### SERVICES DURING DECEMBER

#### Sarnesfield

14th 10 am Holy Communion  
25th 8 am Holy Communion

#### Norton Canon

7th 9 am Holy Communion  
14th 9 am Morning Prayer  
21st 9 am Holy Communion  
25th 9 am Holy Communion  
28th 9 am Morning Prayer

#### Staunton-on-Wye

7th 11 am Holy Communion  
14th 11 am Morning Prayer  
21st 11 am Carols  
25th Midnight Holy Communion

#### Byford

7th 9.30 am Holy Communion  
21st 6.30 pm Evening Prayer  
(Carols)  
25th 9.00 am Holy Communion

#### Monnington-on-Wye

14th 9.30 am Holy Communion  
25th 10.00 am Holy Communion

#### Letton

14th 11 am Family Service  
21st 6 pm Carols  
25th 11 am Holy Communion

### OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

13th Jan 10 am Curzon Herrick  
Hall Eardisley.

Rev. Andrew Bowdon Chaplain to  
Cirencester Agricultural College  
speaks on Rural Ministry.  
Clergy, Readers, Church Wardens  
and all engaged in any form of  
ministry in the Church are  
invited (with spouses.)

This is a rare opportunity to  
hear an excellent speaker.

26th Jan 7.45 pm Norton Canon  
PCC - Village Hall.

27th Jan 7.30 pm Staunton-on-Wye  
PCC - Oakchurch

### COMPANY APPRAISAL REPORTS-KEY TO ADJECTIVE RATING CODE

Average	:	Not too bright
Exceptionally well qualified	:	Has committed no major blunders to date
Active socially	:	Drinks heavily
Wife is active socially	:	She drinks too
Character and integrity above reproach	:	Still one step ahead of the law
Zealous attitude	:	Opinionated
Quick thinking	:	Offers plausible excuses for errors
Takes pride in his work	:	Conceited
Tactful in dealing with superiors	:	Knows when to keep his mouth shut
Often spends extra hours on the job	:	Miserable home life
Meticulous attention to detail	:	A nit picker

I remain just one thing, and one thing only - and that is a clown. It places me on a far higher plane than any politician.

Charles Chaplin

'.....and this is a picture of my wife with her mouth closed. We used a highspeed camera.'

His speech was slow but it easily kept pace with his thoughts.

Harold MacMillan on Foster  
Dulles

What were his last words? He didn't have any - his wife was with him to the end.

Anon