

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS EDITION

Dear Members,

We are pleased to send you the final Newsletter for 2020 which we hope you will enjoy.

CHRISTMAS WISHES FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

The good news is that 2020 is very nearly over. It has been an exceptional year, but for all the wrong reasons. 2021 promises to be a better year, with the prospect of a return to the outings and social events we were accustomed to until March this year. That now seems a very long time ago, and in the meantime we Zoom from one meeting to another and are reminded of Celebrity Squares as we keep in touch with each other. We have so much to look forward to that we should all remain extra careful so we can enjoy Christmas in whatever shape or form we can this year, and decide how best to make up next year for the challenges of Christmas 2020.

I wish you and all of your loved ones the best possible Christmas and New Year. Until we meet again.

David Graves,
President of the Cripplegate Ward Club

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER:

Dear Members,

I wish you all a very Happy, Safe and Peaceful time at Christmas.
Although it is a very different Christmas this year, I hope you will make the most of it, whichever way you plan to celebrate.
May the New Year bring new beginnings for us all.

Sincere wishes,

Jyotika

CLUB NEWS

Members will be sorry to hear that Past Master Richard Whitford has passed away in his nursing home on Guernsey. Richard joined the club in 2004 and was Master in 2014. A card of condolence has been sent to his wife Paddy on behalf of the club.

Since the last Newsletter we have welcomed two more new members to the club - Geoff Thomas and Mrs. Elaine Clack - and we look forward to meeting them in due course.

WASSAILING

Modern bands of carol singers who go from house to house are the descendants of the old 'wassailers' who also went singing all about the town on Christmas Eve. They presented householders with sprigs of mistletoe or holly and were welcomed in to drink their hosts' health from the wassail-bowl. This was filled with warming 'lamb's wool,' strong beer with nutmeg, sugar and hot roasted apples.

'STAR OF BETHLEHEM'

The fabled Star of Bethlehem which was followed by the Three Wise Men will make a rare re-appearance this Christmas, shining brighter than it has in 800 years. During December Jupiter and Saturn will align to create what astronomers believe inspired the Christmas star in the nativity story.

The effect can be seen between 16th and 25th December and they will appear to nearly collide on 21st December, the date of the Winter Solstice, to create a rare 'double planet' phenomenon in the night sky.

In Britain you should look to the south west where the planets will be very close to the horizon and hope for clear weather.

THE YULE LOG

The Yule Log is a long-established village tradition. A great tree is selected the previous Candlemas (2nd February), chopped down, set on fire and left to burn until sundown. This merely serves to blacken the bark. The log is then left until the following Christmas Eve when, with much singing, shouting and dancing, it is dragged by the villagers to the great hall. It is welcomed with even more celebration, garlanded with ribbons and raised on stones in the centre of the hall. Brands are placed beneath it and lit with a portion of the previous year's log. This portion is said to protect the house from fire.

GARDENING TIPS

At this time of year it is very popular to buy a Brussels Sprout 'stick' instead of loose sprouts. If you intend to do this the following may be helpful:

Snap off the lower sprouts (they can be frozen) to leave at least 6 inches of stem. Re-cut the bottom of the stem diagonally and place in a bucket of cold water which should be left in a cold place such as a garage. Keep an eye on it and if the cut end becomes soft and/or mushy, re-cut it and replace in fresh cold water. Treated in this way the stick should last well into January.

Best wishes from the Cripplegate Scarecrow

MOTHER EVE'S PUDDING

If you want a good pudding, to teach you I'm willing;
Take four pennyworth of eggs, when six for a shilling;
And of the same fruit that Eve had once chosen,
Well pared and well chopped, at least half a dozen;
Six ounces of bread (let your maid eat the crust),
The crumbs must be grated as small as the dust;
Six ounces of currants from the stones you must sort,
Lest they break your teeth and spoil all your sport;
Six ounces of sugar won't make it too sweet;
Some salt and some nutmeg will make it complete;
Three hours let it boil, without hurry or flutter,
And then serve it up, without sugar or butter.

The original 'Christmas Pudding' was savoury instead of fruit and was intended to use up all left-over meat at the end of the year before it went rotten. As time passed the pudding began to resemble our more familiar one containing fruit and spices but only the wealthy could afford it as spices were very expensive. They had to travel along part of the Silk Road, were traded merchant to merchant in souks and markets and crossed deserts by camel to end up on a sailing ship bound for England.

A COLD CHRISTENING

Preached at Clyro in the morning. Very few people in Church, the weather fearful, violent deadly East wind and the hardest frost we have had yet. Went to Bettws in the afternoon wrapped in two waistcoats, two coats, a muffler and a mackintosh, and was not at all too warm. Heard the Chapel bell pealing strongly for the second time since I have been here and when I got to the Chapel my beard, moustaches and whiskers were so stiff

with ice that I could hardly open my mouth and my beard was frozen on to my mackintosh. There was a large Christening party from Llwyn Gwilym. The baby was baptized in ice which was broken and swimming about in the Font.

The Diary of the Revd. Frances Kilvert, 1870

FROSTED CANDLE HOLDER

You may find the following an interesting project if you like home-made decorations.

Obtain a glass jam jar or similar and place inside two teaspoons of salt. Any kind will do although ordinary table salt works well. Add two teaspoons of tap water and mix well. Leave in a warm place such as an airing cupboard and as the liquid evaporates, crystals will form on the inside of the glass creating a sparkling, frosty effect.

To decorate the jar festive greenery can be used to tie around the rim. A tea light or small pillar candle is then placed in the bottom of the jar.

ONE FOR THE ROAD (a really awful Christmas Cracker joke)

Question: What did the cowboy say when he walked into a German car showroom?

Answer: "Audi!"

FINALLY

May we send you warmest Christmas wishes from our President, Alderman David Graves, our Master, Jyoti Shah, and all the committee for a very enjoyable, Christmas and New Year.

Barbara Allan
Hon. Secretary
For and on behalf of the Master, Wardens and Committee
Cripplegate Ward Club
Tel: 01702 201173
Email: bjallan@btinternet.com