

St John's and St Katharine's NEW YEAR EXTRA Friday 1st January 2021



Happy Birthday to Beth C and June B this week

Thought for the week

Eds: Many thanks to Kevin, who follows up his reflection from last Sunday

In my piece for Sunday 27th December sent out to you last week, I reflected on the image of the door in the wall. It was a closed door, and I suggested that we should attempt to open it and go through it. But as we start a new year we will be forgiven if we acknowledge that a spirit of fear will accompany this movement of our heart and mind. Beyond the physical suffering that many are experiencing there exists the reality that the media refers to as 'mental health problems'. For religious believers and spiritual seekers there is another phrase that come to mind – 'The dark night of the soul'. These words were coined by St. John of the Cross, a Spanish mystic, poet and spiritual writer who lived in the latter half of the 16th century. In his book *The Spiritual Canticle* he wrote:

However numerous the mysteries and marvels which holy doctors and saintly souls have understood in this earthly life, there is always more to be said and understood. There are great depths to be fathomed in Christ, for he is like a rich mine with many recesses containing treasures, so that however deep you dig, you never reach their end, but rather in each recess you find new veins with new riches everywhere. St. Paul said of Christ: 'In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' But the soul cannot enter these caverns or reach these treasures if it does not first pass over to the divine wisdom through the thicket of exterior and interior suffering.

From the difficulties surrounding his birth to his death on the cross, Jesus did not promise us a life on earth free from suffering. He did promise us the gift of a new dimension of life. We are privileged to have glimpses of that life, 'kingdom' life, amidst the cares and joys of this world. Our journey of faith, over many paths, through many doorways, in the darkness of caverns, in the broad light and heat of the deserts of human foolishness, is a journey which may give no clear vision of the future. But we go forward with the comfort of human and divine love, we are equipped with the grace of hope. We can go forward knowing that there is an ultimate purpose, even though our limitations veil our senses from its details. Even in the dark night the door will open to our knock.

Kevin T

Auld Lang Syne

'Auld Lang Syne' is a Scots-language poem written by Robert Burns in 1788 and set to the tune of a traditional folk song. It is well known in many countries, especially in the English-speaking world, its traditional use being to bid farewell to the old year at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. By extension, it is also sung at funerals, graduations, and as a farewell or ending to other occasions. The international scouting movement in many countries uses it to close jamborees.

'Auld Lang Syne' actually means something like 'long time ago', and it is the 'acquaintances' of long ago that we should not forget. Singing the song on Hogmanay or New Year's Eve very quickly became a Scots custom that soon spread to other parts of the British Isles.

As Scots (and also English, Welsh and Irish people) emigrated around the world, they took the song with them. 'Auld Lang Syne' has been translated into many languages, and the song is widely sung all over the world. The song's pentatonic scale matches scales used in Korea, Japan, India, China and other East Asian countries, which has facilitated its 'nationalisation' in the East.



This year, in place of the usual New Year celebrations, Edinburgh is offering a virtual Hogmanay display featuring 150 lighted drones filmed in the Scottish Highlands and Edinburgh. See it at:

<https://www.edinburghshogmanay.com/whats-on/fare-well>



Auld Lang Syne (standard English version)

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?

Chorus:
For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Chorus
We two have run about the hills,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.

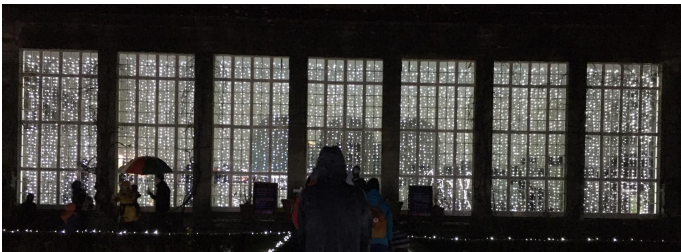
Chorus
We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.

Chorus
And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.

Chorus

FESTIVE LIGHTS

Now that we're in a higher tier, sadly even our travel for day trips is curtailed, but here are some of the seasonal lights from Longleat and Stourhead (taken before Boxing Day!) Our thanks to Ian and Sam, and to Angela –and, of course, to the venues for providing us with some festive cheer ... and we could not let our festive issues go by without a glimpse of the star of many previous Weekly Extras, Rover, Janet's cat – complete with her own festive lights ...



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR IN THAILAND (Part 2)

Eds: Our thanks to Chris for this insight into Christmas and New Year abroad.

Thai New Year, the feast of Songkran, is traditionally celebrated on 13-15 April, which happens to be my birthday. However, a recent trend has been to move some of the celebrations to the western New Year on 1 January. Songkran is rich with symbolic traditions. As a festival of unity, people who have moved away usually return home to their loved ones and elders.

Mornings begin with merit-making: visiting local temples and offering food to the monks: for Songkran, pouring water on Buddha statues and on the young and elderly is a traditional ritual on this holiday. It represents purification and the washing away of one's sins/bad luck. As an elder I get very wet at Songkran and once had water poured over me by about 70 people attending a political rally during Songkran – but it was a hot day! Paying reverence to the elderly and to your ancestors is an important part of the tradition.

The holiday is also known for its water festival: major streets are closed to traffic and are used for water fights: young and old splash water on each other.

Sometimes things get out of hand: in his regular Friday TV address last Songkran the PM scolded people for 'overzealous water fights'. Traditional parades are also held and 'Miss Songkran' is crowned, with contestants in traditional Thai dresses.



Chris L

Places we love to visit Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Eds: Last week, Niagara! This week Toronto! Thank you to Lois for an account of another special day during her trip to Canada in 2017.

Settling down to write this and looking through the itinerary we received from Saga Holidays for our trip, I see that it stated:

Hand sanitiser located inside the bus door – please use it. Cough into your elbow. Push the button of the elevator with your knuckle, not your finger tip. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

This was written in September 2017 – all pre-Covid! What did they know that we did not?



After our day at the Niagara Falls we travelled to Toronto, visiting the Niagara Parks floral working clock on the way. The clock is 40ft wide and made up of over 16,000 plants which are changed twice yearly. The year 2017 marked the 150th anniversary of the uniting of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to create the Canadian Federation, and we saw this depicted in several places we visited.



Toronto has an underground city complete with railway line and shops, built so that during the extreme snowfalls in the winter people can live, work and travel without interruption. It is kept really clean and is absolutely huge, consisting of 30 kilometres of tunnels and over 1,200 shops and services and connecting with 70 buildings. There are



signposts and maps informing you of each area and exits etc, which we needed as we went down one entrance and came up a completely different one!

We had wondered why there was increased security in the city, and it turned out to be due to the Invictus

Games being held there. We were lucky enough to watch a wheelchair tennis match, which was quite amazing – note the empty chairs in the front! As the weather was extremely hot, the contestants were finding it very challenging, and there were several



water stations, each of which consisted of a tanker with a separate taps section from which you could fill your water bottle. As we were leaving on the coach, we had to wait for a group of cars to go by which turned out to be Prince Harry and Meghan – we had just missed them! The press and TV cameras were everywhere, and one of our daughters saw us amongst the crowds on the television news!



We then visited the CN tower, built by the railway company Canadian National (hence CN) as an antenna to solve telecommunication problems. It now has over 2 million visitors a year. It is 553 metres high, with magnificent views across the city, and is one of the world's tallest structures. We went to the top and via the glass floor section we overlooked the Rogers Centre (formally called the Skydome), the first stadium to have a fully retractable roof and home to Toronto Blue Jays baseball team, who were playing a game on the day we were there.



Another very memorable day!

Lois B





Anniversaries in 2020: 31st December Remembering Bonnie Prince Charlie

Three hundred years ago, on 31st December 1720, Charles Edward Stuart, commonly known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, was born in Italy. He was the leader of the unsuccessful Jacobite rebellion of 1745-46 – a turning point in British history. Charles believed the British throne to be his

birthright as the grandson of King James II, a Roman Catholic who had been ousted to make way for the Protestant William of Orange in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Charles intended, with the help of France and the Scots, to remove William's Hanoverian successor George II – in his view a usurper. Although Charles was a Catholic, not all his Jacobite supporters were, but they did believe a Stuart on the throne would give them relief from the austere Presbyterian form of Protestantism imposed on the Church of Scotland by William.

So they supported Charles, but despite big initial successes – the 6000-strong army got as far south as Derby – their cause eventually foundered at the Battle of Culloden, where Charles eschewed the advice of his brilliant general Lord George Murray (a Protestant) and was routed. The backing of the French had waned after a 1744 invasion fleet was scattered by a storm. After hiding in the Highlands, Charles eventually escaped back to the Continent, had many affairs and died in 1788.



The Glenfinnan Monument, at the head of Loch Shiel, was erected in 1815, in tribute to the Jacobite clansmen who fought and died in the cause of Bonnie Prince Charlie

CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS: .1 'Not very far.' 2 Queen Charlotte, wife of George III. 3 'that God was man in Palestine and lives today in Bread and Wine.' 4 Indian Ocean. 5 Isaac Newton. 6 Harry Belafonte, 1956. 7 Stollen. 8 Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen. 9 *The Snowman*. 10 1843. 11 Six Geese a-laying. 12 Flesh, wine, pine logs. 13 Jacob Marley. 14 An orange studded with cloves and usually hung up on a wide red ribbon. 15 Capricorn. 16 Off Sumatra Island, Indonesia. 17 A cocktail of rum, brandy, eggs and powdered sugar, served hot. 18 Spice Girls. 19 St Stephen's. 20 Tom Hanks.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PICTURE PUZZLE

Fit the festive images into the grid. (Answers in the February edition of Inspire)



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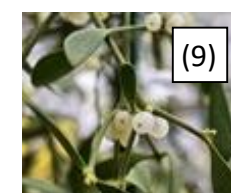
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This week's SUDOKU

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