



Coldean

Community & Church Magazine

Winter 2020



The Chattri War Memorial on the Downs above Patcham



Parish Contacts

St Mary Magdalen Church

Rev Betsy Gray-Hammond 01273 601 854

Lay Reader

Marian Framroze 01273 686 981

Churchwardens

John Phillips 01273 683 835

Paul Simmons 01273 725 368

Deputy Churchwarden

Jennie Goatley 07947 859 509

Treasurer

John Phillips 01273 683 835

Hall Secretary

Sue Docherty 07526 455 302

CHURCH HALL

The church hall is currently closed for parties and events due to the Coronavirus restriction.

In this edition as we approach Remembrance Sunday

There are stories relating to the First and Second World Wars, starting with the Chattri War Memorial at Patcham.

The buildings used as hospitals in WW1.

Richard H. Bean remembers his time in the Army during WW1.

All Souls Church formerly in Eastern Road, demolished in 1968.

Tales from a Tudor Christmas.

Mark Boase "Gods power through our faith".

Secret WW2 Zero Station at Wakehurst Place.

Air Raid Precautions at Bevendean.

Letter from the Vicarage

Dear Friends,

Is anyone else finding it difficult to remember what it was like this time last year?

Perhaps it is just me?

Everything was taken for granted, we would have been planning for Christmas and whilst doing that would also be looking towards Easter and what the rest of 2020 would bring. Who knew that when we raised our glasses to the New Year our ordinary everyday lives would be turned upside down so quickly.

By Mothering Sunday our churches were closed and for this parish, Holy Week services were all streamed from the vicarage and Easter Sunday dawn service took place with just myself and my daughter after we had dressed the lounge to be the receiving place for that first light of Easter and the installation of the Pascal or Easter Candle.

Through the power of the internet we were not alone and many others joined us for this celebration and at the end of the service we knew that this was a glorious morn and that as Easter people we would always have hope.

And now, we are looking towards Advent; what can we do, what might change, what shall we do if we are locked down again? Big plans need to be backed up so that none of us miss out on this very special birthday season. Especially the children and the elderly who have given up or lost so many opportunities already this year.

I have given thanks for so much this year, especially for the team work of church and wider community and my eyes have been further opened towards the need for good neighbours, friends and family, toward the need for non-judgmental care and for the need to look at how we care for each other and for God's creation.

There have been tears of sadness and frustration but equally there have been words of encouragement, smiles of hope and a return to community values. As a priest, I have never felt so needed or so

blessed, so proud of the village I live in and of the people who all pull together.

The Advent candles will take their place in the sanctuary (the bit where the Altar stands) and on each Sunday of Advent one will be lit, and as they are we will pray for what they symbolize.

Love, Joy, Peace, Hope

And on Christmas morning a fifth candle is lit. The candle is white and it is there to remind us of the Light of Christ in the World, in our World, and he has never been as apparent as he has been during this year.

As our preparations move forward, let us be to others, signs through action, of the meaning of Advent and help us to mirror the light of Christ in Coldean now and always.

Love and prayers to you all,

Revd. Betsy

The Chattri War Memorial

During the First World War injured Indian soldiers were hospitalised in the Royal Pavilion, Dome, Corn Exchange and Kitchener Hospital in Elm Grove. The Royal Pavilion was the first Indian hospital to open in Brighton. The Hindus and Sikhs who died were cremated on the Downs and late in 1920 and early 1921, the Chattri memorial was constructed on the cremation site.

The Chattri, which means 'umbrella' in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, was designed by E. C. Henriques from Mumbai. The dome and its eight pillars are built from white Sicilian marble. Three large granite slabs lie over the original concrete crematory bases, and the design symbolises the protection offered to the memory of the dead.

The Chattri was unveiled by the Prince of Wales on the 21 February 1921 and bears the following inscription, in Urdu, Hindi and English:

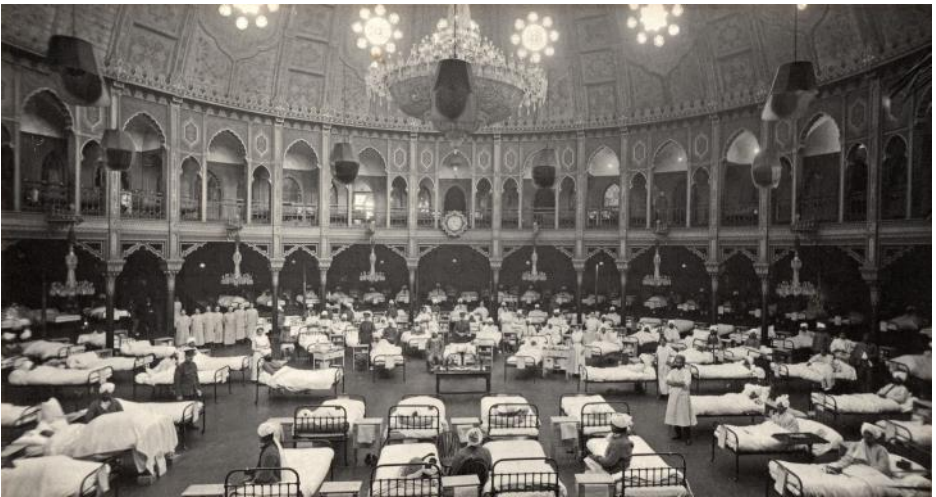
“To the memory of all Indian soldiers who gave their lives for their King-Emperor in the Great War, this monument, erected on the site of the funeral pyre where the Hindus and Sikhs who died in hospital at Brighton passed through the fire, is in grateful admiration and brotherly affection dedicated”.

See the photograph on the front cover.

The Kitchener Indian Hospital

In 1915, army doctors inspected the old workhouse and infirmary buildings at the top of Elm Grove and took them over as the Kitchener hospital for Indian troops. They refused to take over 177 beds made of sacking because they were full of bugs. The operating theatre was described as “not very modern”.

In spite of many difficulties the buildings soon become a vast fully operational military hospital with 1500 beds for Indian soldiers who had been put into the front line in the mud of Flanders, replacing the heavy casualties on the Western Front.



Indian Soldiers in rows of beds inside the Dome during its use as a Military Hospital, 1915. © Brighton & Hove RPML

Colonel Campbell, who administered all the Indian War Hospitals in the Pavilion and Dome, at the Grammar School in Dyke Road, and others in Hove was in command in January 1915.

There were no female staff because the medical officers said that “women as nurses have no place in an Indian Army Unit”.

Within 5 months, due to the large number of battle casualties, an extra 263 beds were needed.

A month later the figures had risen to 2,000.

The facilities were not good. Insane and war stressed victims were housed in the block, where there were 4 padded cells. Most military nurses, doctors, and orderlies were housed in a village of 26 army huts built on the 5 acre field, where there was accommodation for 710.

The patients blocks were numbered with letters, as they are today and cinder paths were laid down by patients and staff.

The casualties arrived in hospital trains from Southampton. In February 1915, some 550 wounded men were admitted from Netley when it ceased to be an Indian Hospital. The Neuve Chappelle battle in France produced another 647 casualties, and there were 430 from the Battle of Loos.

As each convoy arrived patients were taken by waiting stretcher bearers to motor ambulances. Most of them suffered from gunshot wounds. Each had to be X-rayed using outdated equipment.

Some patients and operators received electric shock burns from the primitive apparatus.

If a patient died, as many did, his religious beliefs were scrupulously observed. Muslims went to their cemetery at Woking, and Hindus were taken to the specially built ghat on the Downs at Patcham, on which the Chattri Memorial now stands.

On November 22, 1915 the date of the demobilisation of the Indian medical service, all patients and staff were transferred to other

hospitals, and British casualties were brought in. But the Indians had taken nearly everything away, even the beds.

In 1920 the War Department returned the buildings to the 'guardians', and the hospital again became a Poor Law Institute.

Note: a ghat is a place where Hindus cremate their dead.



A group of wounded Indian soldiers outside of the Kitchener Indian Hospital in Elm Grove, 1915. © Brighton & Hove RPML

Why I am a Christian

By Richard Henry Bean

Growing Up

As a young boy I can remember the Sisters of Mary visiting our home at 20 Lincoln Street, Brighton and leaving a parcel of food. These Sisters were attached to the Annunciation Church, Washington Street where I was baptized; my Godmother was Miss St. John who later taught me in her Sunday School, there is a memorial plaque on the wall near the choir vestry in memory of her.

In this church was happiness for a boy, who was a milk boy who started work at 5am at Chates Farm till school time. Mrs. Chate

always gave me a cup of hot milk in the winter. I'll never forget them.

There was a gymnasium under the church where Dick and his chums had a great deal of fun. I was a teenager then. We had a new Vicar, the Rev. W. Carey, known as the Fighting Parson of Woolwich, a fine man. One evening I was on the trapeze hanging by my feet and swinging up to the ceiling when the Vicar came in and said to me, "Are you ready to meet your Maker, are you confirmed"? I replied, "No sir", then he said to me, "You better be if you carry on doing tricks like that". Well I got confirmed with about a dozen other boys. The Vicar's brother was at that time the Bishop of Gibraltar. The priest who took me through my studies for confirmation was the Rev. Wilfred Shelly, who later became a missionary in Africa. He gave me a bible and I still have it, wherever I went the bible helped me. On the first page are these words, "from his affectionate friend-with hope that his life in the new country will be continued, as it has begun in the Old, in the Grace of God September 24th 1912". Many times have I opened it and read about Our Lords coming, His Life and His Crucifixion by mankind, and the work of the Apostles and it is still being passed on to the people if they would only listen.

I am sure the good Lord has guided me during my life and protected me. At the age of 18 my uncle whose name was St. John sent the fares for my younger brother and myself to go to America. Then we attended the Church at McKeasport, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. and worked at Carnegies Steel Mills. In that first year I was privileged to listen to that great Evangelist "Billy Sunday", a wonderful preacher, who brought tears to hundreds as he illustrated the Crucifixion of our Saviour and pleased all to live better lives, at the end it was wonderful to hit the sawdust trail with hundreds of others, to shake his hand and promise to live better lives for our Saviours sake.

After a year in the U.S.A. we sent for our parents and younger brother George to come to us.

This they did but after another year the family decided to return to England. We landed at Southampton on 24th July, 1914.

World War One

The 1st World war was declared on 4th August, 1914. So at the end of a month's holiday I enlisted as a regular in the Royal Engineers, trained at Chatham, then sent to Scotland, and became in charge of the telephone exchange for the West of Scotland.

Whilst there about six months a Squad of Engineers (Sappers) who had been wounded in France, and were now fit for duty, came into the Fort, and whilst on parade one Sapper collapsed, the officer in charge said "where can we get another Sapper to take his place". I was standing at the door of the telephone exchange so being a Regular I replied "I will, I'm a Regular", and that was how I got to France in August 1915 and joined the 26th Field Company Royal Engineers on the Loo's Front, just 21 years old. After leaving the Rail head a Sapper was coming towards me it was Peter Gurney, what a surprise who had trained with me at Chatham, he was in the 26th Field Company R.E. Peter was a great friend. Most of our work in the Front line was done at night, making machine gun posts and replacing the barbed wire in No Mans land, etc.

Soon after the battle of Loos a squad of us Sappers were given the job of erecting a cross in memory of those who had lost their lives in the Battle of Loos my job was to get the Cross to the site, instructions were given to me how to get there.

On the way a sniper missed me twice - I crawled with the cross on my back, eventually the site was reached, then in the process of putting the barbed wire fence around it the corporal asked for the wire cutters, the sniper tried again as we turned the Corporal said "are you hit" and I said the same to him. So the bullet must have gone between us. The Good Lord was on our side that day.

When on the Somme Front the Padre came to the Company to hold a service, after which those confirmed Members of the Church of England received Holy Communion.

We erected our altar in the clearing of a wood, made a cross and covered the altar with the Union Jack. Whilst the service was in progress we were shelled, the Padre noticing some movement in the ranks, said, "Stay where you are you will not be hurt". The service continued as if nothing was happening and the confirmed members received their Holy Communion after the Company had been dismissed.

On another occasion at Loos, at night, I was standing on a crossroads waiting for a wagon to pick up some pit props, when a voice told me to take a walk, this I did for about 12 paces when a shell seemed to be coming at me. I fell on the road and the shell exploded on the cross roads where I had been standing and in the blast was the face of a girl looking down at me with a smile and seeming to say "It is alright", that girl I married after the war and my good lady and children have been a blessing to me. (I was able to guide the horses and wagons around the shell hole).



Richard Bean and Edith who were married at the Church of the Annunciation in 1919.

After The War

Eventually we settled in Moulsecoomb (North), what a wonderful place. Naturally a great deal of time was spent in clearing the gardens, back and front, of builders rubbish etc., but when this was done I went for a walk towards Brighton, but as the Railway arches were reached I heard a Church bell, towards that sound I went and found a "Tin" Church known as St. Andrew's at the end of Colbourne Avenue. There were two ladies at the Entrance, one took my hand as if to help me up the two steps, guided me to my seat, then gave me a collecting plate as your truly was the only male in the congregation and I've attended St. Andrew's Church (old and new, now 40 years old), ever since.

We must thank always those who contributed to the Sussex Churches Builders, locally and from all part of Sussex. My experience as Secretary and Treasurer of the Printing Trade Union in Brighton and Sussex came in very handy to the first Vicar of the New St. Andrews Church, The Rev. Bransby Jones who found the church very much in debt. It has been a joy and pleasure to have served with the following Vicars:

Rev. L. Barrington - 1934-37 - old church

Rev. B. Jones - 11th Sept. 1937 - 28th Dec 1948

Various Priests (Sequestration) until 12th Feb 1949

Rev. E. L. Phillips - 19th April 1952

Rev. R. W. Newton - 29th Nov. 1952 - 2nd March 1963

Rev. J. H. Richardson assistant 16th March 1963 - June 1st 1963

Rev. J. H. Money - 15th June 1963 - to now (plus many assistant priests)

Finally I love the Church of St. Andrews Moulsecoomb and its priests together with Church Army Captains (past and up to date) as much as I did the Annunciation Church in Washington Street, Brighton St. Andrew's Church is not a Tin Church now, it is a wonderful structure of a ship upside down in memory of our St. Andrew - built

in 1933-4. The hand of friendship given to me by that dear lady on the old tin church steps I will never forget, nor will I forget the Churchwardens who have been my comrades-in-Christ.

P.S.

The two ladies who gave that handshake were Miss Main and Miss Warren. Our Lay Reader Mr. Dave Burchell was a member of the choir and Mr. Barber was our organist and the lady who looked after the distribution of the magazine was Mrs. Holderway.

Further it was good to work with fellow wardens Mr. Witten and Mr. Carter and Secretaries Miss Ball and Miss Coles.

Richard Henry Bean

Editor's Note

Mr Bean was a Churchwarden at St Andrews Church, Moulsecoomb, where in 1957 he celebrated the completion of 21 years as a Churchwarden. From an article in St Andrews Church Magazine written in the 1970s.

All Souls' Church, Eastern Road

All Souls' Church was the first of several churches to be erected for Rev. Henry Wagner, (Vicar of Brighton between 1824 and 1870) who laid the foundation stone on 29 July 1833. The Church served the poor people living in the area of Eastern Road. The cost of the building was £3,082 10s. 8d.

The Church was hemmed in on three sides by houses and had a clock tower over the western entrances while the interior had galleries on three sides supported on thin columns and nearly all the sittings (pew seats) were free.

Revd Henry Wagner was very concerned that there would be enough church accommodation for the poor of his large and rapidly increasing parish, and All Souls' Church was the first of a series of efforts to meet the constantly growing demands.

When the church was first erected it was capable of accommodating about a thousand people; by 1887 it contained 1,300 sittings, and of these only 340 were rented. From the first, the church was crowded, not only with poor people and others living in the neighbourhood, but by many more, who came from a distance, attracted by the esteem in which the Incumbent Rev. Gilbert Henry Langdon was held, and by his reputation as an earnest and practical preacher.

Pew renting was common in Anglican Churches during the nineteenth century, and continued in many churches well into the twentieth century, but was not appropriate for people in the poorer areas of towns like Brighton.

In the year 1858, during Rev. R. S. Smith's ministry, it was found necessary to enlarge All Souls' Church, owing no doubt partly to the increased population in the neighbourhood, but also in part to the popularity of Mr. Smith, Subscriptions were collected for the alteration, improvement and enlargement of the Church, and the work was carried out by a Mr. Winder.



All Souls' Church c1912 towards the altar showing the galleries on either side ©ESRO

After the re-organisation of Brighton parishes, All Souls was remodelled with a new chancel and roof. There were spacious galleries on three sides of All Souls' Church — west, north, and south, capable of holding a large number of people and at the west end there was a large and powerful organ in an oaken case, with gilt metal pipes ornamented with blue.

There were vaults beneath the church which were perfectly dry and well ventilated. They were not really underground at all, but on a level with Paradise Street, from where they could be entered by a door. There were only six or seven interments, the last of which took place about 1860.



All Souls' Church in 1967 shortly before its demolition

All Souls' Church was in one of the worst slum areas in Brighton and the church helped the population as much as possible.

Day Schools were started in 1875, to give accommodation for about 150 boys, 320 girls, and 150 infants. There were four Sunday Schools at the same period in Essex Street, Warwick Street, and Spa Street, with 989 scholars and 95 teachers.

By 1887 there were about 700 children in the Day School.

An Invalid Meat Kitchen provided 1,874 substantial hot dinners during the winter of 1880-1 for the sick and destitute.

A Coal Club, a Blanket Club, to encourage the poor to purchase (not to borrow) blankets, a Children's Clothing and Boot Club were all in a flourishing in 1887.

One of the most important institutions was the Penny Bank, which was established in 1864. This enabled people to deposit small sums and then take money out when necessary. The Penny Bank at All Souls' Church was the first of its kind to be established in Brighton.

All Souls' became a parish church in 1883 and had stained glass added by Charles Kempe in 1903 and 1906. The Church celebrated its centenary over the weekend of Friday 20th April to Sunday 22nd April 1934.

In both 1937 and 1957 faculties were granted for further alterations to the inside the church.

The parish was merged with St Mary and St James in 1967, and the building was demolished in January 1968.

God's Power Through Our Faith

I am not the greatest reader by all means, even though I am married to a lovely lady with a degree in library and information skills. But I do like to read a good book now and then. And over the last few months I have been reading three books about people's faith in God and the works he has done through them. Some unbelievable stories about faith they had in God's power through them.

The first book I read was called 'Chasing the Dragon' by Jackie Pullinger. An Anglican Church attending English lady, that at the age of nineteen years old took the advice of her local priest to get on a

boat and stop wherever she thought God wanted her to be. From a young age, Jackie was always telling her family and friends that she wanted to be a missionary. But if she knew God's intentions for her life, maybe she would have kept quiet as a child. In 1966, Jackie bought a ticket and caught a boat that eventually ended up in Hong Kong. She was lonely, had very little money and was young, but full of faith. I am not going to tell you the whole story as I would like you all to buy a copy and read it yourselves. But Jackie with her faith in God and the power of the Holy Spirit started to transform the lives of the people living in The Walled City. A notorious area in Hong Kong, originally a Chinese fort which became slum buildings some fourteen stories high. Imagine an area about half the size of Coldean, with a population of around 50,000 people, that is full of drug dens, illegal gambling, prostitution, and every evil you can think of. Through her faith in God, Jackie, and her new converted Christian friends changed the life of thousands of Triad drug addicted gang members, from the lowest members to the highest ranked members. Members so highly ranked in their criminal world, that when they said kill, someone got killed. Not really a Coldean I would like to live in. The Walled City was virtually nothing but evil and God wanted it changed. It now no longer exists and was finally pulled down in 1994 by the government. Jackie Pullinger is still alive today and living in Hong Kong. She started the St Stephens Society in Hong Kong which to this day is still helping the poor being homed and helping drug addicts to kick their terrible habit with the help of the Holy Spirit. Please read if possible, it is incredible story!

The second book I read, came by chance while looking for the third book I am now reading and almost finished. This book is not for the faint hearted, as the story has some very disturbing graphic details of what happened. Please do not let this put you off this book, because it glorifies faith in the hardest way you could ever imagine. One thing that shines through the verses is the love Christ has for us all, even the tormentors and how he uses the strongest to show it to them. 'Tortured for Christ' is a book and also a film, which tells the

horrific story of Richard Wurmbrand a Pastor and his wife Sabrina in Romania during the Communist Regime after the second world war. The Communists gained Romania after the war and wanted to rid Romania of all religion, but Richard stood up against them. Literally, at a very large meeting which was also broadcasted live on Romania national radio. The Communists Regime held a meeting with all the religious leaders of Romania to try and deceive all into giving up their faith. Richard, encouraged by his wife and Holy Spirit lead, stood up in the meeting uninvited and told everyone that Communism and Christianity were incompatible. Too the rapturous applause of all religious leaders and dismay of the Communist regime, Richard became the no.1 enemy to the Communist Regime in Romania. Richard was later imprisoned, kidnapped off the street and without trial was sentenced to twenty-five years solitary confinement and hard labour. He ended up doing fourteen years in total, more than enough for any innocent man. Only by the power of faith in God could anyone survive what Richard, Sabrina and their son went through in those terrible times. Richard died on February 17th, 2001 aged 92, long after his release but not before telling the world leaders of what had happened in his country, and how the love of Christ helped him and his family through the hell they endured while imprisoned. Throughout his time imprisoned, Richard Wurmbrand preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, bringing many hundreds, if not thousands to Jesus.

Finally, the third book I am reading is called 'Tramp for the Lord'. A book written by Corrie Ten Boom. Corrie and her family helped Jewish people hide while fleeing the Nazis in Holland through the second world war. They were all imprisoned after a neighbour nastily informed the Nazis about their courageous doings, and sadly Corrie lost her dad, brother and older sister in prisons and concentration camps. There is a very famous book and film dedicated to their lives called 'The Hiding Place.' Tramp for the Lord is about Corrie's life story after the war, and how she spent the rest of her life dedicating it to showing the love of Christ and how

forgiveness is so important to the Christian faith. She travelled the world retelling her story over and over again of the time she spent in Ravensbruck, a notorious concentration camp (just for women) in Germany in the second world war. One of the stories from the book gave me the idea for choosing 'God's power through our faith' for the title of this magazine article. Corrie's faith in God, who sometimes she refers to as 'Her Chief,' is truly amazing. I have cried on a few occasions with joy while reading her words of love for Jesus. The one story I would like to share in the book, happened while Corrie was told by her 'Chief' to fly from Sydney (where she was spreading her message at the time), to Cape Town and then fly onto Tel Aviv. After a good chat about Jesus to the young travel agent assistant in Australia, all flights were booked, until Corrie checked her tickets when she got back to where she was staying later that day. Straight away, Corrie rang the travel agents and stated the flights should be flying to Cape Town first, not Tel Aviv. Only to be told that there was no direct flight to Cape Town because no island off Africa refuelled to Cape Town unless going over land first to Tel Aviv. 'No', replied Corrie. 'I cannot follow that route. I must do what my Chief has told me. I'll just have to pray for an island in the Indian Ocean.' After chatting with the assistant and hanging up she prayed to God. 'Lord, if I have made a mistake in hearing your direction, please show me. But if I have heard correctly, then open the way.' An hour later the girl from the travel agent phoned Corrie back and asked her if she had prayed to God, as Qantas Airlines had just telegraphed her saying Qantas have just begun using the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean as a refuelling station. So, from tomorrow morning direct flights would be flying from Sydney, Australia to Cape Town, South Africa!

Corrie lived to a great old age of 91 and her testimony will be around, like Richard Wurbrand and Jackie Pullinger for present and future Christians to admire and learn from!

Marc Boase

Tales from a Tudor Christmas

The Protestant Reformation, triggered by Martin Luther in 1517, rocked European Christianity to its core - and it wasn't too long before the centuries-old tradition of celebrating Christmas was caught in the crossfire.

In the first half of the 16th century, though, it seemed that Christmas might emerge from these years of upheaval relatively unscathed. Luther permitted his followers to continue celebrating the festival, while in England; King Henry VIII embraced Yuletide enthusiastically.

One popular aspect of modern festivities - Father Christmas - was already in place in the Tudor period. In fact he can be traced back at least as far as the Vikings, who often referred to their god Woden as 'Yule-Father', believing he came down to Earth at Yuletide, leaving gifts and spreading goodwill.

In the latter half of the 16th century, Father Christmas, Old Christmas or Old Man Winter, as he was also known - had become a favourite comic character in plays. While the modern Santa is a warm, avuncular figure bedecked in red, his 16th-century predecessor was far more forbidding. Clad in green, and wearing a grotesque mask and a wig, he would rampage about, shouting and brandishing a great club, exhorting his audience to behave themselves and maintain the old customs of Yuletide.

Another larger-than-life character in Tudor Christmas celebrations was the Lord of Misrule, whose job it was to preside over the 12 days of merrymaking in aristocratic households (everyone from the Lord Mayor of London to Henry VIII himself employed one). The Lord of Misrule - sometimes known as 'Captain Christmas' or 'Prince Christmas' - was tasked with ensuring that everyone toed the line and made merry during the festive period. These helpers certainly took their job seriously, often carrying a mock gibbet so that anyone who disobeyed them could be 'executed'.

Proud peacocks and a pastry Jesus

Feasting was fundamental to the Tudor Christmas - especially if you were lucky enough to occupy the higher rungs of England's social ladder. Kings and nobles kept open house, offering a variety of entertainment throughout the 12 days of Christmas, which ran from Christmas Day until 5 January.

That entertainment was, inevitably, most lavish at the royal court, where there were two or three courses at every feast, each with a wide selection of dishes. None were more extravagant than those served up for Christmas dinner. Following an appetiser of plum porridge, the feasting would really begin with a boar's head, carried in ceremonially "with the blast of trumpets". The second course comprised rich meats. Poultry was often served in its plumage, while "the peacock in his pride" and swan were particularly popular at court.

Turkey first arrived from the New World in 1526, and was an established Christmas dish by the end of Elizabeth I's reign. Stuffing, known as forcemeat, and made with egg, currants, pork and herbs, was served with poultry from at least 1538.

For dessert, diners would often tuck into 'frumenty' - a boiled wheat pottage flavoured with milk and currants - which would later evolve into our Christmas pudding. Mince pies (or Christmas pies, as they were known) were made with shredded meat, suet, sugar and spices - often with a pastry baby Jesus placed on top.

All of it was washed down by large quantities of Christmas ale and beer - sometimes finished off with a glass of mulled wine known as Hippocras, served just before bedtime.

Anyone expecting presents on Christmas morning in Tudor England, would have been disappointed. New Year's Day, not 25 December, was the time for exchanging gifts - and it was a practice that Henry VIII and Elizabeth I embraced wholeheartedly. Both monarchs expected a present from each and every one of their courtiers and servants. Luckily, they weren't above buying gifts themselves -

usually items of gold, silver or silver-gilt plate, such as cups and bowls engraved with the royal cipher, each weighted according to rank. In one year, 1511, Henry VIII spent the equivalent of £400,000 on New Year's presents.

By 1 January, the royal court was eight days into the festive period, yet it seems the appetite for extravagance and over-indulgence was undimmed. The Tudor monarchs went in procession to chapel, wearing their crowns and their royal robes lined with ermine, then presided over a great feast, topped off by (another) night of revelry.

However, New Year's Day was also a time for pondering your conduct over the past year and resolving to turn over a new leaf in the months ahead. The roots of the modern tradition of making New Year's resolutions may lie in this century. Either way, it was certainly established by New Year's Eve 1661, when the famous diarist Samuel Pepys wrote: "I have newly taken a solemn oath about abstaining from plays and wine, which I am resolved to keep according to the letter of the oath which I keep by me." Within three weeks of making this sombre resolution, Pepys had broken it.

Changing Christmas

Christmas took on a different tone during the reign of Henry VIII's son, Edward VI. Following in the footsteps of the reformer John Calvin, Edward sought to reclaim Christ's Nativity, purged of the 'abomination' of the Catholic mass and its obsession with graven images and iconography.

Edward's Act of Uniformity (1552) removed any vestiges of the Catholic faith, while his officials whitewashed medieval wall-paintings, destroyed stained glass and defaced images of saints. Christmas cribs and nativity scenes, began to disappear.

Those attending a Christmas church service - which meant virtually everyone - would now be listening to a service conducted entirely in English (as opposed to the traditional Latin) from the Book of Common Prayer, written by Thomas Cranmer, the reforming archbishop of Canterbury, in 1549.

The reign of Mary I saw a return to Latin liturgy, Christmas cribs and nativity scenes but these practices did not long outlive her. In the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), England again turned Protestant, although a few Catholic traditions remained, particularly in church music.

With so many rituals of the old Roman mass stripped away, it is a wonder that Christmas was celebrated at all in Tudor England. The simple reason for its survival was its popularity at all levels of society.

Wakehurst Zero Station

While walking round Wakehurst Place in February we came across an information board about the top secret communications network designed to transmit intelligence information in the event of a German invasion during World War Two.

The communications station was buried in the grounds in the Pinetum which is some distance away from the house and main gardens. The location of the underground bunker is marked out with white poles.



Site of underground bunker at Wakehurst Place

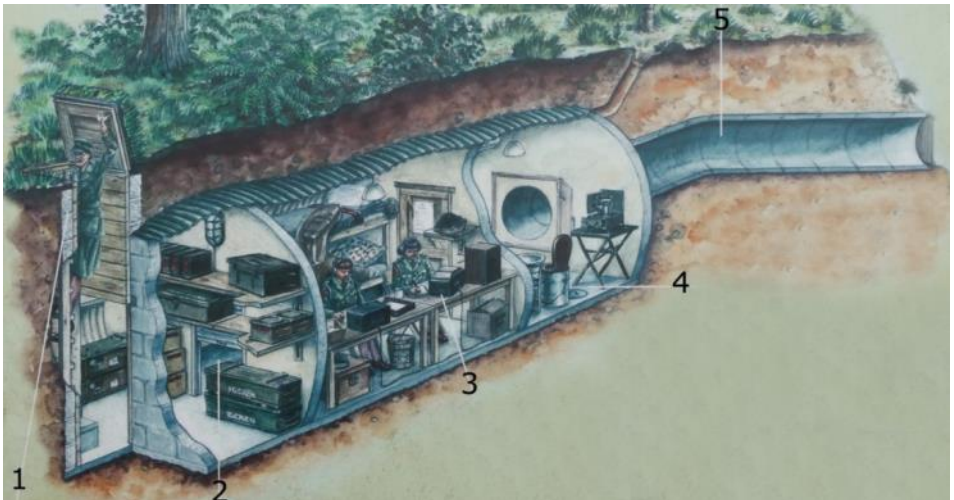
Unlike today, 1940s wireless technology could only transmit messages across short distances, and it is likely that the Wakehurst Zero Station relayed coded messages from 'Out-Stations' near the South Coast to Army H.Q. in Sevenoaks for de-coding.

The radio aerial went up a nearby oak tree, and a close inspection of the trunk shows parts of the wire still embedded in the bark.

Nine women officers from the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) worked here in three shifts in uncomfortable conditions. The work was so secret that the station had no connection with the mansion which had been commandeered by 1 Canadian Corps.

A radio operator along with her equipment was classified as an out-station. The radio's whereabouts had to be kept totally secret. This was achieved by siting most of the radios in underground hideouts. The radio used by the Special Duties Organisation was purpose built to be basic in design and simple to use. The radio sets measured approximately 15 inches long, 6 inches high and 5 inches wide. They worked on the, then rarely used, frequency between 60 and 65 megacycles that was probably not even monitored by the Germans. A six volt car battery was used to power the radio set.

Below is a diagram of the bunker layout.



1. The bunker was entered via a vertical entrance shaft hidden beneath a disguised manhole cover.
2. It is likely that access from the first to the main chamber was by a secret catch in a cantilevered false wall.
3. The main chamber would have contained radio sets, a few pieces of furniture and beds for the operators.
4. A third chamber had a chemical toilet and storage space.
5. An emergency exit constructed from 3 feet diameter pipes and with a dog-leg to slow down pursuers emerged in a former quarry.



Interior of the Wakehurst Place Zero Station in 2009,
it is now unsafe to enter.

The radios needed a 40 feet long aerial to be able to transmit its messages hence the wire up the oak tree. The underground hideouts were known as a 'zero station', so-called because when the station's code-name was used it was always followed by the code suffix 'zero'. There were no transmitting schedules for the out-station operators to keep so the women would have to listen for messages coming in for long stretches of time.

The purpose of a Zero Station was to receive coded information from the many out-stations in the surrounding area, passing on the details via a direct phone line to the Special Duties headquarters at Hannington Hall. Sussex had three underground Zero Stations, one in a wood in Heathfield East Sussex, and two in West Sussex; one in the grounds of Wakehurst Place, near Ardingly, and the other near Shipley, about ten miles west of Haywards Heath.

All three were built to the same plan, the only variant being the length of the emergency exit tunnel. The women operatives of these Zero Stations were members of the ATS with Beatrice Temple as their Senior Commander. Miss Temple would often visit the underground sites around the country to check that the women were all right and generally monitor how the system was working. The Royal Corps of Signals were in charge of checking and maintaining the radio equipment.

Air Raid Precautions at Bevendean

During the closure of the East Sussex Records Office the archivists put articles and stories from their archives onto the Keep website. Here is a photograph of one type of air raid shelter built in the passageway, in the centre of a block of 4 houses in the Avenue.



A photograph showing the entrance to one such passageway this year can be seen at the bottom of the previous page.

Where there was a passageway in the middle of blocks of 4 houses, archway shelters were constructed by building walls of sandbags at either end. They had a very limited life as the sandbags became unstable.

A number of these shelters were built in the Avenue, along the Highway, in Colbourne Avenue and in Hillside. As the war went on Trench Shelters or linked Anderson Shelters were used instead.



The photograph above is titled, "Sandbags at a home in The Avenue, Moulsecoomb, c1940", and comes from The Argus Archive held at The Keep, Falmer.

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