

## THIS AND THAT (429)

A London "Friend of St John's" and seasoned reader of *This and That*, suggests there to be a growing nostalgic and elegiac quality to these weekly articles. He could be right. For in matters comedic, the staple fare at the vicarage is 'Dad's Army', 'Porridge', 'Open All Hours' and 'The Two Ronnies', all of them from yesteryear.

Moreover if, by accident, we're subjected to a snatch of contemporary comedy, such as 'Live at the Apollo', we opt out with alacrity. It is dispiritingly unfunny. Bawdy wit and clever innuendo are fine. Shock-tactic filth is not.

### Pallid, bosomy and archly suggestive

We watched, last week, the actor Sir John Mills and the popular pianist Mrs Mills parodied in a song and dance routine. Ronnie Corbett was a diminutive, moustachioed, impeccably-uniformed and swagger-sticked John Mills, Ronnie Barker a large, pallid, bosomy, mock-coy and archly suggestive Mrs Mills. Their lyrics, superbly sung, were witty, laden with innuendo, and very funny. See for yourself: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6RGWA1NtIE>

The sketch reminded us both of a poem by Louis MacNeice celebrating Florrie Forde, the queen of the "everyone sing along" sort of music-hall act.

Born in Australia in 1876, she made her first London appearance in 1897, popularising songs like 'Hold Your Hand Out, Naughty Boy' and 'Down At The Old Bull And Bush', as well as First World War favourites such as 'Goodbye-ee', 'Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit bag' and 'It's A Long Way To Tipperary'. The troops loved her and she was hugely popular in Music Hall. MacNeice's poem is an acute, affectionate tribute with a perfect ending.

### Death of an Actress

I see from the paper that Florrie Forde is dead -  
Collapsed after singing to wounded soldiers,  
At the age of sixty-five. The American notice  
Says no doubt all that need be said

About this one-time chorus girl; whose role  
For more than forty stifling years was giving  
Sexual, sentimental, or comic entertainment,  
A gaudy posy for the popular soul.

Plush and cigars: she waddled into the lights,  
Old and huge and painted, in velvet and tiara,  
Her voice gone but around her head an aura  
Of all her vanilla-sweet forgotten vaudeville nights.

With an elephantine shimmy and a sugared wink  
She threw a trellis of Dorothy Perkin roses  
Around an audience come from slum and suburb  
And weary of the tea-leaves in the sink;

Who found her songs a rainbow leading west  
To the home they never had, to the chocolate Sunday  
Of boy and girl, to cowslip time, to the never-  
Ending weekend Islands of the Blest.

In the Isle of Man before the war before  
The present one she made a ragtime favourite  
Of 'Tipperary', which became the swan-song  
Of troop-ships on a darkened shore;

And during Munich sang her ancient quiz  
Of *Where's Bill Bailey?* And the chorus answered,  
Muddling through and glad to have no answer:  
Where's Bill Bailey? How do we know where he is!

Now on a late and bandaged April day  
In a military hospital Miss Florrie  
Forde has made her positively last appearance  
And taken her bow and gone correctly away.

Correctly. For she stood  
For an older England, for children toddling  
Hand in hand while the day was bright.

Let the wren and robin

Gently with leaves cover the Babes in the Wood

These weekly articles are at: <http://www.andrewneaum.com/>

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### TODAY: ADVENT TWO 5 December 2021

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Matins & coffee outside

St John's Boldre: 12.15pm Baptism

### For Prayer This Week

**Prayer:** World peace. For wise leadership, international cooperation and a commitment to the welfare of nations less well off than ourselves as well as in matters to do with the environment and global warming. The Church worldwide, for wise leadership and courage in persecution. Jacob Henry William Langton to be baptized today. **Prayer Requests:** Leslie Boyt, Rebecca Coetzee, Joy Erne, Joy Flanders, Jack Gittoes, Barbara Loweth, Tony Partington, Kate, Jonny. Paul.

**Rest in Peace:** Harold Hendey, Audrey Kelly.

### Next Week: ADVENT THREE 12 December 2021

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Eucharist & then coffee outside

St John's Boldre: 4.00pm St Nicholas Singers (booking required)

### Forthcoming Events, Services and Activities

Wed 8 Dec - 10.30am St Nicholas' Chapel, H C, coffee outside  
Wed 8 Dec - Bible Study Ph 07946 865704 for venue or zoom  
Fri 10 Dec - 5.00pm St John's, Wedding rehearsal  
Sat 11 Dec - 2.30pm St John's, Wedding, Daniel & Heather  
Sun 12 Dec - 4.00pm St John's, St Nicholas' Singers Concert  
Thu 16 Dec - 2.00pm St John's, Funeral of Harold Hendey  
Fri 17 Dec - 1.00pm St John's W Gilpin School Service  
Sun 19 Dec - 6.30pm St John's \*\*9 Lessons & Carols \*\*  
Mon 20 Dec - 6.30pm St John's \*\*9 Lessons & Carols \*\*  
Fri 24 Dec - 3.00pm St John's Crib Service, outside-wrap up!!  
Fri 24 Dec - 11.00pm St John's \*\*Midnight Mass \*\*  
Sat 25 Dec - 8.30am St John's Christmas Communion  
Sat 25 Dec - 10.30am St John's \*\*Christmas Communion \*\*  
Sun 2 Jan - Feast of the Epiphany celebrated  
Sun 23 Jan - 10.30am St John's, Australia Day  
Sat 26 Feb - 7.00pm St John's - Concert (*details to come*)  
For some Christmas Services above \*\*Booking Required\*\*  
Email: [andrew.neaum@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.neaum@gmail.com) or phone 01590 718439

### COVID RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDANCE

**Distancing:** Inside church this remain at present. So too the wearing of masks unless reading, interceding or in the choir. Required good ventilation means WRAP UP WARMLY!

**Coffee:** is served outside where no masks are required. It helps if you bring a mug though carboard ones are available if you don't.

### GRAVEYARD CLEAR UP

Many thanks to all who helped with yesterday's graveyard clear up. A great job done with efficiency, hard work and much fun.

### ST JOHN'S CHRISTMAS CARDS 2021

There are now but a few of these fine cards available. In packs of five, at £3.50 they are available at church, or from Hilary Knox (01590 642 786) or from the Vicarage.

### ST JOHN'S CALENDARS

Fine St John's Calendars are for sale at £8.00 each. They feature photos submitted to the competition at the Autumn Fayre and, usefully, the dates of major events at St John's next year. Contact Sally at church or at the Benefice Office or Diana at the Vicarage.

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

For some Christmas services booking is required (see above). This is because we are playing safe and so still masking and distancing. Book early if you wish to attend particular services. No booking is required for the Crib Service at 3.00pm on Christmas Eve and the 8.30am Communion at St John's on Christmas Day.

### DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS

Anyone who would like to decorate this year's Christmas Tree or help erect and decorate with holly and ivy the pew-end candle stands please let Diana or Sally know. It is good fun and worthwhile to beautify our church for the great Christmas festival.