

Walbury  
Beacon  
Benefice

# THE BEACON

You are the light  
of the world.  
(Matthew 5.14)

**December**  
**2020**

## Connecting with the Coptic Church

Last Thursday I got back from Egypt having spent a week with the Coptic Church in Heliopolis, and in particular the Anaphora Academy which is an adult education website teaching to BA standard in Theology.

I had been asked to make twelve videos *in situ* about the Cappadocian Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century whose teaching they wanted to include in their course. I had published a book in 2015 on them called *Three Wise Men from the East: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Struggle for Orthodoxy* (Sacristy Press 2015). So firmly with an “education” hat on, as reason for travel, I sallied forth for Egypt on Wednesday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. I had a Covid test in London on the Monday before I left, as it must be within 72 hrs of travel. But when I got to Heathrow, I discovered the BA flight I was travelling on had been cancelled. I went back the following day and flew EgyptAir, just within the 72 hours! *Pheeew!*

I arrived on Thursday night, had a quiet Friday (their weekend) and stayed in an apartment in Heliopolis near the office, self-catered and took my bearings exploring the area. On Saturday I made touch with the Coptic Church in the person of the local outstanding Coptic leader Father Daoud with whom I had an interview in his office next to the Church. I had visited St Marks Cleopatra Street in the afternoon before my meeting. You could not help noticing the security fence around the church precincts, two police with guns, a detector through which you must pass to enter the church and a kindly steward who asks “Are you Christian?”.

In recent years the Coptic church has suffered persecution: bombings, executions of members by ISIL and other extremist assaults. The Church was founded by St Mark in Alexandria in c42AD and predates Islam by some 600 years. Their language Coptic, a mixture of Greek and Egyptian letters, is still older. In fact, they are one of the oldest churches in existence. Their great church leaders include Athanasius who wrote powerfully on the *Incarnation* and the divinity of Christ in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. They remain about 10% of the population which is 100 million (Cairo numbers 20 million!). On Sunday I attended their service, normally there would be around 400, with Covid restrictions there were about 180. The liturgy was about 2 1/2 hrs long, in Coptic, but very engaging nonetheless. Men sat on one side (left), women on the other. Without knowing, I sat on the right side which is the left!

On Monday I was driven out to a beautiful monastery towards Alexandria, more like a Retreat Centre with lovely buildings and a large organic farm where we made the videos: twelve back to back all about 12 mins long. Six before lunch, six after! They will be uploaded, and hopefully will be useful.

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On Tuesday I went to the region north of Cairo to the Nile Delta region, seeing the mighty river, to a temple site near to the place where the Children of Israel settled and where the Holy Family sought refuge and, contrastingly, to a battlefield at Tel El Kebir, near Suez, where two of my ancestors fought in 1882 during the British occupation of Egypt (that is another story!). Wednesday was a quiet day writing and reading and visiting a nearby church café. And then I came back to the UK, and glorious isolation!!

Patrick Whitworth (If you want further fuller Reflections email [pwhitworth@metronet.co.uk](mailto:pwhitworth@metronet.co.uk))

*(Thank you Patrick, a fascinating study-perhaps we might hear the other story?)*

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## THOUGHTS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS FROM REV'D TIM

As I write, the rain is sweeping across and both the ground and the sheep are very soggy indeed!!

It hardly seems possible that in just 2 weeks and indeed when you read this, December will be upon us and we will enter the season of Advent. Just what are we to make of it all this year? The time of waiting, and indeed preparing, takes on a whole additional layer as we also wait on announcements from the Government which will shape our Christmas time.

Covid cannot stop Christmas, with its message of the birth of Jesus, in the manger, at Bethlehem. It will seek to make it different in any number of ways, from dealing with illness or mourning the loss of someone you love, right at one end of the scale, to letters already being written to Father Christmas at Reindeerland right at the other end. Christmas means different things to different people, at different points in their lives and actually, it will be just so this year too.

The arrival of dark evenings, with which lockdown 2 simultaneously arrived, has encouraged people to seek brightness and light through Christmas decorations and preparation. Many have started decorating their home early. As you read this, you may have already opened the first windows on your Advent calendar, as days toward Christmas, count their way down.

It may feel somehow harder than usual to reflect on the God of Advent. Puzzling, mysterious, awesome, beyond our comprehension. God who is healer, deliverer. God who is as ever, love, in this seasonal time, where words such as expectancy, hope wonder and mystery form part of our thinking, reading and prayer.

There has been many an Advent, many a Christmas when thoughts have been mixed, I do not need to list them here, and you will know very well the type of human action which can make it so. The Churches were there in those times and they remain here for us today.

With God's blessing, we will have the opportunity to share, to hear God's message to us this Christmas time. Things will be different in our Churches; we may celebrate Christmas with a

service outside, limited numbers wearing masks inside. But whatever happens, the message will be the same today as it has always been whether in times of difficulty or not.

As we travel through December and beyond, the opportunity will be there to journey with the shepherds, to share in their joy of the Christ child lying in the manger, Christ the light of the world was born, right there, right then.

We cannot know what lies ahead, like the wise men who followed the star, we do not know where we will end up, or how things may look when we get there. But God does know, and wherever our path may lead there will be the opportunity to serve God, Church and certainly equally important, one another along the way.

As the unfolding events of Advent lead us ever closer to Christmas, I hope and pray that however we may celebrate this year, that we may catch a glimpse of that first Christmas and that the words 'O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel', will dwell in our hearts over this season and into the New Year beyond.

**I wish you and your families a peaceful and much blessed Christmas and New Year.**  
**Rev'd Tim**

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## **ADVENT IN THE BENEFICE**

Here is a taster from '**The Little Book of Advent: Daily Wisdom From the World's Greatest Spiritual Teachers**' compiled by Canon Arthur Howells.

The first day's contribution is from Sister Maria Boulding, a contemplative Benedictine nun from Stanbrook Abbey:

*"[Advent] . . . is a poetic, mysterious and very beautiful time, during which the prayers and longings of the prophets and psalmists and anonymous poor people of the Old Testament come into their own. We are invited to identify with the people who waited for Christ during that long night watch . . ."*

Her chosen reading is from ISAIAH 55:6–11: *"Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."* and the prayer for the day begins: *"Come to us now and make your home within us . . . in the people we meet . . . in the beauty of the world . . . in our joys and in our sorrows . . ."*

Each day offers a standalone resource for prayer and reflection: read with us every day – or whenever you can – during Advent; share your thoughts in an open email virtual reading group (contact Jenny – [jennyveasey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jennyveasey@hotmail.co.uk)); light a candle in your window every Sunday at 6:00pm. The book is readily available online at under a fiver.

**"Come Lord Jesus!"**

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## Diocesan Notice: Advent Activity Calendar from the Church of England

There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.

This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep'. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place – but also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able – or emotionally ready – to do so. We hope that **Comfort and Joy** will enable us to build a campaign that both enables us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God's consoling love in the present.

### What are the key elements of Comfort and Joy?

As in previous years, the national Church will work with dioceses and churches to make a range of digital and print content available, branded with the Comfort and Joy theme:

Explore the comfort and joy booklet:

**Read a preview of the booklet.**

**Order printed copies from Church House Publishing**

There will be weekly reflections published on social media and available by email and app for each Sunday of Advent. We have partnered with a number of public figures to produce short reflections.

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## PICTURE FROM MY WINDOW

*(in second lockdown)*



*First with a shade of green though winter-dashed –  
There, full as soon, bumbarrels make a nest  
Of mosses grey with cobwebs closely tied  
And warm and rich as feather-bed within,  
With little hole on its contrary side*

John Clare

*‘Bumbarrels’ is the colloquial name for long-tailed tits*

**This is in tribute to Mrs Anstace Gladstone much respected and committed member of St Mary's church Kintbury, supporter of wildlife, always interested in and with a great knowledge of birdlife.**

**Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble.**

*Roger Tory Peterson*



## **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

Just a few days before Remembrance Sunday, our Churches closed for lockdown 2 and any act of remembrance we were told, needed to be small, outside and with an awareness of risk to the vulnerable among us. With these things in our mind, we prepared and then gathered around the Benefice, at Hamstead Park, Kintbury war memorial, West Woodhay memorial garden, Inkpen, and Combe. In each place we remembered both those who had given their lives from our own communities and also those not known to us. Although different from other years, each was a special occasion and appreciated by all. Gerald reflected as follows after Remembrance at Inkpen:

*"We were particularly grateful that the weather held off - just. Like all other churches we had to remember the fallen outside which for us was strange anyway - strange because our memorial is inside the church, which is where we normally are.*

*So we were a trifle concerned. New to us all, Government telling people to stay away, dodgy weather forecast. Would it be a damp flop? But there were three things going for us: a faithful group who we knew would be there, Colonel Nick Freeman leading the Service as he has done before in his utterly empathetic, knowledgeable and truly devotional manner, and the excellent sound system which could set the scene with Nimrod and then lead the singing of Jerusalem and The National Anthem.*

*We needn't have worried. It was as always a very moving service and tribute to the 29 Inkpen men and the vast number of others whose lives were taken so that we might be free. Over 60 of us came to remember and the collection enabled us to give a cheque for £630 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Fund. The unexpected side effect of it was that it made us think that if we can't have our normal Carol Service in the Church this year we might have an alternative by torchlight outside. Cold, wind, rain, frost, perhaps snow - a high risk. But a high pay off too with lots of fun. We'll see."*

My thanks go to all who helped to organise and lead our services of Remembrance.  
Rev'd Tim

### **Remembrance at Kintbury**



## Kintbury's Next Generation Remembers

**1<sup>st</sup> Kintbury Brownies and 1<sup>st</sup> Kintbury Guides** held a joint Zoom meeting for Remembrance and decorated stones with Remembrance images and messages, while listening to stories of men and women who fought in WWII or served our country in other ways. Some girls who weren't able to join us for our Zoom meeting decorated stones another time. Some, who were able to, given lockdown restrictions, individually took their stones to lay them on the steps of the memorial at St Mary's Church.



**Kintbury St Mary's School** pupils, staff and some governors observed the 2-minutes' silence on Remembrance Day itself, gathered around a large poppy painted on the playground. Kendra played the Last Post, we joined in with "We will remember them" and a representative from each class placed a cross and poppy into the School Memorial Garden.

Watching the service to commemorate the Unknown Warrior brought back a very vivid memory of the significance of this. In the late 80s I accompanied an old lady into church for the Remembrance Day Service. As we walked up the path she said, 'It's been very lonely all these years'. Her husband was killed in WW1. He had been training to be a priest but considered it his duty to enlist. After being informed of his death she wrote to his Commanding Officer to ask where his grave might be so that she might visit after the end of the war. He had to tell her that there wasn't a grave. 'You see dear', she said, 'a shell fell on his trench and there was nothing to bury.' For her and for many widows the Unknown Soldier represented her husband. (ed.)

## Remembrance at Enborne

For about a century Enborne has observed Remembrance Sunday. In most years the ceremonies have been similar but this year they were unique. With worship in church forbidden the normal Service and the Act of Remembrance around the War Memorial

could not take place for the first time since the War Memorial was installed. Some years ago now the Memorial to the Screaming Eagles was located in Hampstead Park, and ever since Enborne's Remembrance Sunday had begun there with a brief Service to honour the men of the 501st Regiment. Throughout 1944 men of the Screaming Eagles had camped in the Park before leaving to fight in Normandy and Holland. Indeed during the build up to D day our part of Southern England had almost become part of the USA. Generally the American troops had behaved impeccably but occasionally there were ugly episodes like the battle of Kingsclere. The men in the Park did not have it easy, many participated in the most brutal fighting of D day only to survive, return to Hamstead, only to fight again in Operation Market Garden in Holland a few weeks later. This year Enborne's Remembrance celebration was combined with that to the Screaming Eagles. At 9.15 in the Park Jenny and Richard led a Service around the impressive Memorial. We were introduced to the opening words of the first Commander, the Last Post was sounded and Stuart and Claire read out the names of Enborne's fallen. All were agreed it was a most successful occasion with over 30 people present including representatives of the Services. In lovely autumn weather many stayed afterwards to meet and greet each other.

### **The Enborne Congregation and The Lockdown**

We soldier on despite everything. We do miss the regular Services, we miss too meeting each other and we are grateful for the work of the Ministry team. We have come to rely on the telephone. It enables us to keep in touch and to ensure that we are all keeping well.

*John King*

## **DECEMBER COMMEMORATIONS**

(Two English Commemorations)

**4th December: Nicholas Ferrar (1593 – 1637)**

**(Local Connection: Nicholas attended school at Enborne)**

As a young man, Nicholas Ferrar was a successful merchant, academic and an MP, but he gave up his diverse careers to found a religious community of prayer. A century after the dissolution of the monasteries, he had become the guiding light of a remarkable practice in Anglican spirituality.

After studying medicine in Europe, Ferrar returned to England and was elected (1624) to Parliament. He soon tired of controversy, however, and turned to a religious vocation; he was ordained a deacon in the Church of England in 1626. Declaring a desire to serve God, he then moved with various members of his family to the remote manor



house of Little Gidding, where a school was established for his household of some 30 persons and for neighbouring children. The community mastered assorted crafts, including needlework and bookbinding. He was a friend of George Herbert and brought his poetry to public attention.

The community, which lasted twenty years, attracted a great deal of attention. King Charles I visited them several times. After Nicholas' death in 1637, the King came again in 1642 with the Prince of Wales and Prince Rupert, and donated to the community five pounds which he had won from the princes at cards the previous night. When the community prayed God to bless and defend him he exclaimed, 'Pray, pray for my safe and speedy return.' He returned May 1646, fleeing from defeat at Naseby. John Ferrar, loyal and discreet, hid him nearby at Coppingford for two days.

### **17th December: Eglantyne Jebb (1895–1898)**

Eglantyne Jebb rose to international fame as the founder (along with her sister) of Save the Children. She was an outspoken critic of class divides, and railed against poverty in all its forms: she was known as the "White Flame" due to her burning conviction and passion. Following a trip to Macedonia in 1913, where she worked with refugees of the Balkan War, she became interested in foreign aid and the plight of refugees and those caught in famines. When the First World War ended, Britain kept up a blockade that left children in cities like Berlin and Vienna starving. Malnutrition was common and rickets were rife. An eyewitness reported that "in the hospitals there was nothing but paper bandages".

Eglantyne and Dorothy were part of the Fight the Famine movement, spreading information about what was happening in Europe. In 1919, Eglantyne was arrested for distributing leaflets in Trafalgar Square. They bore shocking images of children affected by famine in Europe, and the headline: 'Our Blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death'. She was tried for her protest and found guilty. But the prosecuting counsel was so impressed with her that he offered to pay the £5 fine himself. The sisters decided direct action was needed. In May 1919, the Save the Children Fund was set up at a packed public meeting in London's Royal Albert Hall. Many felt that a fund raising money for the children of their recent enemies wouldn't be successful, but after a public launch on the 19th May in the Royal Albert Hall, money started to come in, with early support from the Miners' Trade Union. This was boosted after she persuaded the Pope to support the fund on Innocents' Day, 28th December 1919.

## A TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS?

We hear a lot about this in commercial advertising and one thing is certain, this Christmas will not be quite like any we have celebrated in the past. But at least we can celebrate. In 1657, when Christmas was forbidden, armed guards pointed guns at communicants and arrested them.

What, however, is traditional? Take Father Christmas or Santa Claus. The first is Scandinavian and English, the second purely American. Dutch settlers took their tradition of St. Nicholas to America when they emigrated. In December 1773, during the American Revolution, the name Santa Claus was first used based on the St. Nicholas tradition. America is also responsible, thanks to Dr. Moore, for the addition of reindeer and stockings. The difference between Father Christmas and Santa Claus is in the clothing - one wears a hood, the other a hat.

The Advent Calendar is a German tradition and based on an ancient Roman decoration but 'Christianised'. Kissing under the mistletoe came about after the Reformation stemming from the custom of the priest visiting each home and giving the 'kiss of peace' to the householder at the door which was festooned with mistletoe, holly, etc. The Nine Lessons and Carols format used today began in 1918. Of course, I must include the fact that the first crib was set up by St. Francis in 1223. Sadly Mummers' Plays have mainly disappeared, although my own home village performed the play in 2015. Longparish Mummers were well known and my grandfather one of the pre-war mummers.

ANY VOLUNTEERS TO START A WALBURY BEACON MUMMERS PLAY?





# **CAROLS ON THE DOORSTEP**

**\* SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER  
5:30PM**

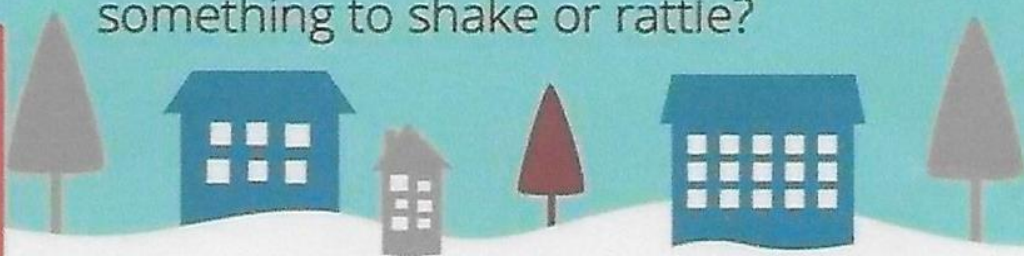
**Join us for a National carol sing on your  
doorstep with your neighbours.**

**It's so easy to join in....**

**\*Download and print the Carol Sheet and invitation from  
www.premierchristianradio.com. or  
www.newcastlemethodistdistrict.org**

**\*Pop them through your neighbours' doors inviting them  
to join you**

**\*5:30pm on 20th December tune your radio to Premier  
Radio or Freeview 725 or download the Premier Radio app  
on your phone, then sing along to the Carols played. Why  
not wear your festive jumpers too and even bring out  
something to shake or rattle?**



<https://www.facebook.com/CarolsOnTheDoorstep>

**CAN THE BENEFICE RAISE ITS VOICE IN FESTIVE SONG?**

## NOTICES

### ***Proposed services in December - subject to prevailing circumstances***

Sunday 6th December	8.30am	Inkpen	Holy Communion
	10.30am	Kintbury	Benefice Service (zoom)
Sunday 13th December	11.15am	West Woodhay	Holy Communion
	4.30pm	Inkpen	Crib Service
	6.00pm	Kintbury	Christmas Evening (zoom)
Sunday 20th December	8.00am	Kintbury	Holy Communion
	9.45am	Kintbury	Morning Prayer
	9.45am	Enborne	Holy Communion
	3.00pm	Combe	Christmas Event
	6.30pm	Inkpen	Christmas Evening
	6.00pm	West Woodhay	Carol Service: Memorial Garden
Christmas Eve	11.30pm	Kintbury	Holy Communion
	8.00am	Avington	Holy Communion
Christmas Day	9.45am	Combe	Holy Communion
	9.45am	Inkpen	Family Communion
	9.45am	Kintbury	Family Service: Churchyard (non-Eucharistic)
	11.15am	West Woodhay	Holy Communion

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### **Kennet Valley Filling Station will be hosting a Christmas Special online meeting. Christmas Unwrapped featuring:**

- Talk by national evangelist Revd Canon J. John
- A Bible reading by Sir David Suchet
- What Christmas means to me by Sir Cliff Richard
- A special Christmas song from Matt Redman
- Traditional Christmas carols to sing along to.

**Join us live for this festive event on YouTube, Wed 9th December 2020 at 7:30PM**

Or watch the recorded version any time after. **Search on YouTube for “Kennet Valley - The Filling Station”** Or contact [kennetvalley@thefillingstation.org.uk](mailto:kennetvalley@thefillingstation.org.uk) for more info.

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## CONTACTS

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Benefice Office: 01635 226064 E.Mail: [wbboffice@gmail.com](mailto:wbboffice@gmail.com)

Benefice Website: [www.walburybeaconbenefice.org.uk](http://www.walburybeaconbenefice.org.uk)

Benefice information can also be found on 'A Church Near You'.

**Items please to:** Penny at [ian\\_fletcher43@btinternet](mailto:ian_fletcher43@btinternet); or Phil at [philireland@waitrose.com](mailto:philireland@waitrose.com).



# A CHRISTMAS QUIZ

(With many thanks to Nigel and Judy Wilson)

## *Creatures great and small*

- 1 A religious predatory insect. 7,6
- 2 Sounds as if this large cat is a rule breaker. 7
- 3 Poisonous reptile attached to a baby's toy. 11
- 4 A spotted insect, not to be confused with a female avian. 8
- 5 This lizard can change colour and blend in. 9
- 6 Does this seabird come from a Dependency in the Irish Sea? 4,10
- 7 Sounds it could be a potato eating member of a religious order. 8
- 8 This Finch is angry with William. 9
- 9 A large aquatic bird following a loud cry of excitement. 7,4
- 10 Convert the plane into a Pachyderm. 8

## *Cathedrals*

- 11 The first Christian martyr is buried here. 2,6
- 12 The Imp, the City symbol, resides here. 7
- 13 It boasts the tallest spire and a clock with no face. 9
- 14 The premier Primate was murdered here. 10
- 15 Were Sutherland, Epstein and Piper sent here? 8
- 16 You will find the ancient Map Of The World here. 8
- 17 Where Canute, Jane Austen, and Izak Walton lie. 10
- 18 Included in a trip on the River Ure, in Yorkshire. 5
- 19 Famed for its Royal Porcelain and sauce, King John was buried here. 9
- 20 What a swell West country place this is. 4

## *Capital Cities*

- 21 This European capital is the same as the country. 10
- 22 Trojan prince who was destined to cause the downfall of Troy. 5
- 23 A red peppery place. 7
- 24 Where the brown envelope originated? 6
- 25 Sort mail here. 4
- 26 Sounds as if this alpine place could go up in flames. 5
- 27 Drink a sweet desert wine here. 6
- 28 Home to (Good) King Wenceslas' statue. 6
- 29 The most successful F1 champion ever. 8
- 30 Sounds like where one could find festive hats and mottoes. 7

## *Famous People whose surnames begin with C*

- 31 This Greek soprano sounds hard and unfeeling. 5,6
- 32 He announced “Consequently this country is at war with Germany”. 7,11
- 33 From Knights to Parsons in his 14th century Tales. 8,7
- 34 US frontiersman who met his end at the Alamo. 4,8
- 35 He took the Beagle surveying in the Southern Hemisphere. 6,5,4
- 36 “The Queen of Crime”. 4,6,8
- 37 Suffolk painter who, despite his name, wasn’t a law officer. 4,9
- 38 Using his penname he went adventuring in Wonderland. 5,7..
- 39 He circumnavigated the globe in Gipsy Moth IV. 3,7,10
- 40 The Lord Protector who banned Christmas. 6,8

## *And finally, with connections to Christmas*

- 41 As seen through Cockney eyes. 5,4
- 42 What to expect beneath Viscum album. 1, 4,5,3,9
- 43 When pulled, they should go off with a snappy bang. 9,8
- 44 Christina Rossetti wrote the words to this chilly carol. 2,3,5,9
- 45 Traditional gratuity or Sarcococca. 9,3
- 46 What is ‘Adeste Fideles’ better known as? 1,4,3,2,9.....
- 47 You can turn surplus Sorbets into a veg for Christmas dinner. 7,7
- 48 In which carol will ‘Joyful all ye Nations rise’? 4,3,6,6,4
- 49 What marks the end of the twelve days of Christmas? 3,5,2,8

**THE ANSWERS WILL BE IN THE NEXT BEACON EDITION**

**And is it true? And is it true,  
This most tremendous tale of all,  
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,  
A Baby in an ox's stall?  
The Maker of the stars and sea  
Become a Child on earth for me?**

**No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
Can with this single Truth compare—  
That God was Man in Palestine  
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine**

*verses from John Betjeman*  
***The Real Christmas not the make believe version***