THE ROCK

FREE

Issue 15



PEOPLE | REVIEWS | WHAT'S ON | LOCAL INTERESTS



The Rock is the quarterly magazine of the Costa Blanca Anglican Chaplaincy. For the people about the people whoever you are!

www.costablanca-anglican-chaplaincy.es

Message from the Editor

It's Christmas time again and here we are with issue 15 of The Rock!

For three billion Christians in the world, it is a time to celebrate the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. For those millions or more people who don't normally go to church, it is still a special time of year. I asked myself, "Why is this?"

A question which prompted me to ask people I know who don't go to church, "Why is it a special day for you?" Most gave the same answer, "It's Jesus birthday!" To me, that's a belief in itself of the love that Jesus has inspired in people, even those who say they do not believe in a God.

Well, whether you believe or not, Christmas is a joyous time and we should share the joy around to those who, for whatever reason, are less fortunate than ourselves.

A friend of mine in Albir helps to organise a hot meal for homeless people every day of the year and Christmas is always a special meal for them.

Others invite someone they know who is alone on Christmas day to join them for lunch. Even a phone call to someone can make it a happier day. Maybe, like my friend in Albir we could do it every day and not just at Christmas.

Then we have millions of people around the world who are suffering the effects of war, famine and disease. What can we do for them? Perhaps we feel impotent to do anything in the face of such need and desperation BUT we can say a prayer for them. Just a few minutes of your time each day to say a prayer to end war, famine and disease.

Have a great Christmas and a big thank you to all our supporters and readers of The Rock magazine.

Ed.



"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. Psalm 4:8

Just a fisherman.

Diocese in Europe

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Online services

Father Rodney and Father Robin continue to stream a service on Facebook each week. Due to early commitments most Sundays this service will usually be on Saturday at 7pm, but occasionally on Sunday at 10am. Simply open Facebook and search 'Rodney Middleton'. You can also open his Facebook page to check the time of the service, which will be confirmed on Saturday morning. The Service is available for viewing at any time after the live stream.

We have our very own Facebook group page, so please look for Albir, La Fustera and Gandia Anglican Church on Facebook, like it and follow it. For information to be included please mail David on **dhernandezmitchell@gmail.com**

If you have a story you would like to publish in The Rock, then please email it to me. Sports news, jokes or quiz questions are all welcome.

Or if you would like to advertise in The Rock please contact the editor. **davidwarblers@gmail.com**

"If you know of someone who is alone, give them a call and have a chat!"

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You can sponsor a page or story in The Rock for 25€. Your name will be printed on the bottom of the page. Just contact the editor on **davidwarblers@gmail.com**

We can help you with Christenings, Wedding Blessings and Funerals. Contact Father Paul Dean on 711061864 or frpaulddean@gmail.com

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Merry Christmas

From Fr. Paul David Dean

Lead Chaplain

Merry Christmas! On behalf of the clergy, and people of the Anglican Chaplaincy here on the Costa Blanca, may I wish you "Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year".

Christmas has a way of arriving whether we feel ready for it or not.

The lights go up in the streets. The shops fill with noise. The calendar fills with plans. And somewhere underneath it all, many of us quietly wonder: will this year feel like Christmas?

Will there be peace? Will there be joy? Will the ache and pain I carried all year finally lift?

If we have felt this way, then we are the people for whom Christmas, came into being.

The first Christmas was not tidy. It was not comfortable. It was not a scene from a card. It was a young couple far from home, a town with no room, a stable that smelled of animals, and a baby born into poverty and danger.



There was no perfect family, no perfect meal, no perfect plan. Just a child, wrapped in cloths, laid in a manger because there was nowhere else to go.

And yet, that is where God chose to begin. Not in a palace. Not in a temple. Not in a place of power. But, in a manger. He came to us as a small child, so that no one would feel too small to come to Him. He came close to us, so that no one would feel too far away to be found.

Diocese in Europe

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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We thank you for giving to the Diocese or to any chaplaincy you name with your gift.

If you need help with Christenings, wedding blessings, funerals or just a chat contact Father Paul Dean on frpauldean@gmail.com or 711 061 864.

About The Diocese in Europe (Church of England) - We are a Mission-shaped diocese - a network of Christian communities and congregations serving Anglicans and other English-speaking Christians across an enormous geographical area.

If you would like to help keep the Costa Blanca Anglican Chaplaincy alive and serving you, you can make a donation by scanning the QR code.

www.justgiving.com/diocese-ineurope

Merry Christmas continued from previous page ...

That is the wonder we celebrate: God did not stay distant. He did not send a message from heaven and watch from afar. He came to us in a new reality. He moved into our communities our families our homes. He took on our flesh, our weariness, our tears. He knows what it is to be tired, to be misunderstood, to be hungry, to grieve.

Christmas means you are not alone in any of it. The God who made the stars lay under them as a baby and cried as we cry.

And the angels understood what this meant. They did not appear to kings first. They appeared to shepherds, night workers, outsiders, people no one would have invited to a celebration. To them the message was given:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

Do not be afraid. That is still the first word of Christmas. Not "try harder." Not "be better." Not "sort yourself out." Do not be afraid. Because the Saviour has come to you.

This Christmas, perhaps the greatest gift we can receive is not something we unwrap, but Someone we welcome. To make room. Not just in our homes, but in our hearts. To lay down for a moment the hurry, the worry, the striving to make everything perfect, and to kneel, like the shepherds, before a small and holy wonder.

And perhaps the greatest gift we can give is to become a little more like that manger. To be a place where Christ can be born again in kindness. A phone call to someone lonely. Forgiveness offered where it has been withheld. A table that has room for one more. A word of peace in a house that has known tension. These are not small things. In God's eyes, they are the very meaning of Christmas lived out.

So, if your year has been hard, hear this: Christmas is not the celebration that everything is perfect. It is the celebration that God entered the imperfect to redeem it. The light did not come because the world was bright. The light came because the world was dark and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Christmas Gospel proclaims!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The Word is described as the true light shining in the darkness, which the darkness does not overcome.

May this Holy Christmas find you. May it find you in your home, in your family, in your quiet moments when no one else is watching.

May you know the peace that passes understanding, the joy that does not depend on circumstances, and the love that came down at Christmas and never left.

May God bless you and give you peace.

On behalf of the Costa Blanca Anglican Chaplaincy, Our Warden Diana, Our Chaplaincy Council, Fr. Rodney, Fr. Robin, Fr. Steve and Fr. Raymond, may I wish you a merry Christmas and every blessing for 2027.

Fr. Paul

With my best wishes and prayers

Fr Paul David Dean

(Lead Chaplain)



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??? QUIZ TIME!



1. In the song The Twelve Days of Christmas, what gift is given on the fifth day?
2. Which country is traditionally credited with starting the custom of decorating Christmas trees?
3. What is the name of the little girl in the Christmas ballet The Nutcracker?
4. In the film Home Alone, where is the McCallister family flying to when they accidentally leave Kevin behind?
5. Which popular Christmas plant is traditionally associated with kissing?
6. What is the name of the grumpy character created by Charles Dickens who is visited by three Christmas spirits?
7. In which country would you find the town of Rovaniemi, known as the official hometown of Santa Claus?
8. What traditional Christmas dessert contains a hidden coin for good luck?
9. In the song Jingle Bells, how many horses pull the open sleigh?
10. Which famous Christmas song was the first song ever played in space?

How Did You Score?

- 9–10 correct: Christmas Champion!
- 5–6 correct: A Promising Little Elf!
- 0–2 correct: Bah, Humbug!

Answers: Seek and you shall find!

- 7–8 correct: Santa's Star Pupil!
- 3–4 correct: Too Much Mulled Wine?

COMING IN OUR NEXT ISSUE...

A Lolloping Lellyplonk!

Meet Lellyplonk – a little elephant with a BIG curiosity and an even BIGGER talent for getting into trouble!

When one curious little elephant wanders away from his mother, he finds himself on an extraordinary adventure filled with unexpected friendships, hilarious mishaps and some very unusual discoveries!

Will he ever find his way home?

Don't miss the first instalment of A Lolloping Lellyplonk, starting in our next issue!

A wonderfully funny and charming tale to enjoy, whatever your age.




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Jokes That Never Made the Christmas Cracker

Two men walk into a bar.
You'd have thought the second one would have ducked!

Why are pirates, called pirates? They just ARRRRR:

What is the longest word in the English language? "Smiles" because if you take away the first and last letter it's a mile!
What did the triangle say to the circle? "You are pointless."

Why don't skeletons fight each other? They don't have the guts!

I started dating a zookeeper but it turned out he was a cheetah!

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a dog? Frostbite.

Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside a dog it's too dark to read!

What do you call a pony with a cough? A little hoarse!

Why can't you hear a pterodactyl going to the toilet? Because the P is silent.

What would bears be without bees? Ears!

What do Lawyers wear to court? Lawsuits.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I ordered a chicken and an egg online. "I'll let you know which comes first!"

Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything!

My wife told the therapist "I'm sick of him taking everything so literally." The therapist said "you know what she means"? I said "It's a feminine pronoun".

What do you call an angry carrot? A steamed veggie.

What do you call a pig that practices karate? A pork chop.

What do sea monsters eat? Fish and ships.

A man is talking to God and asked "God, how long is a million years to you"? God answers: To me it's about a minute": The man asks: God, how much is a million pounds to you"? God answers: "To me it's about a penny." The man asks: God, may I have a penny?" God answers: "Wait a minute."

What's the difference between a piano, a tuna and a bucket of glue? You can tune a piano but you can't tune a fish. I know what you are thinking what about the bucket of glue? See, I knew you would get stuck on that....

Stained Glass Windows



My childhood Church in Leicester was a very old building. I remember it with great affection. I was taken there and dedicated as a babe in arms in 1951, I was baptised by total immersion age 12 and grew up there, became Church organist and worshipped there with my family, until my marriage there in 1974.

The church was on a busy corner with traffic lights and from the outside it looked a bit dark and drab even though to my young mind it was a beautiful building, a bit like a castle with a tower which housed the print room for the weekly "Tidings". There were two school rooms attached, upstairs and downstairs with a good kitchen. The sanctury had a balcony with a small meeting room (The seniors met there for Sunday school). The church had four pillars and they were dressed at harvest time with fruit carefully placed high up on a ledge, there were four steps going up to the Altar and Pulpit, these steps were adorned with produce which us Sunday School Children all took something to place on the steps.

Right, to the point of my story - the funny thing about church windows is from the outside they can look rather dull and almost colourless. Maybe there is nothing to draw attention to the building from the outside. However, from the inside with the daylight and even better, the sunlight, streaming through them, that the full beauty and colour is revealed.

I was thinking, this could be like people. New people maybe shy and appear to be timid. It is important that we must never go by appearances or first thoughts. Thankfully, first impressions are not always the right impressions - just like the stained-glass windows.

J. Elaine Mitchell





Did you Know?

Australia is the only continent without an active volcano.

The human brain is 78% water.

A giraffe cleans its ears with its tongue.

Cats have 100 vocal chords.

This page is sponsored by Elaine Mitchell

Broadcasting in Spain

by Hugh Stewart

Part 5: Chips with everything!!



Over the past four issues of The Rock, I have described some of the highs and lows experienced by Beverly and I when we broadcasted on Onda Cero Internacional in Spain. Today, another loosely related series of memories!

As you can imagine, there were wonderful privileges that came with broadcasting to the many English speaking residents and visitors on the Costa Blanca! This includes meeting many famous and interesting people and being invited to many shows, concerts and events. One unexpected evening came in the form of an invitation to attend a party to celebrate the birthday of the late Queen Elizabeth, put on by the British Consulate in Alicante at the famous Santa Barbara Castle. A band performed stirring military music, and there were speeches by dignitaries from a host of countries, and toasts galore, all celebrating our Queen, in a grand setting so fit for the occasion.

When the formal part of the evening was over, a well drilled team served finger food from silver platters and in keeping with the Britishness of the event, the hugely original menu included mini roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, mini fish and chips and mini chicken and chips, all tiny enough for the plate to fit into the palm of your hand. The chefs deserved to get a medal, and, who knows?....perhaps they did!

The mention of chicken and chips reminds me of another evening! Beverly and I were invited to the opening of a new 'Dinner and Show' venue near Altea. We joined perhaps 50 other diners on a long table for drinks and a chicken dinner, with entertainment to follow. At a prearranged signal, a stream of servers appeared from the kitchen, each carrying on their shoulders a large tray filled with four whole chickens and enough potatoes, salad and tomatoes to feed the starving. It was very impressive as the trays were placed on the table, one for every four diners, until, that is, our waiter tried to serve us! As he turned to place his tray on the table in front of us, the entire delivery slid off his tray and was launched into the air, crashing onto the table in a shower of food, smashed plates and shattered glasses!

It was not the 'launch' the organisers had planned, but they cleared up, settled everyone down with face flannels and towels and, after a few hectic minutes, the show went on! The unfortunate server? I watched him continue his walk down the length of the table, up some steps and out through the front door, never to be seen again!

And talking of dinner shows, and switching from the ridiculous to the sublime, Beverly and I enjoyed an excellent relationship with the famous Benidorm Palace, and we enjoyed

Cont. on next page ...

This page is sponsored by Hugh and Beverley Stuart

Broadcasting in Spain continued ....

their hospitality almost every time they changed the show. David Climent, became a regular guest in the studio keeping our listeners up to date with the goings on at the Palace.

Once, we broadcast a whole programme from behind the scenes, interviewing a selection of sound specialists, musicians, choreographers, performers and, of course, dancers. We saw just how you can get a dancer off stage, change their costume and get them back on stage in just SIX seconds. Slick doesn't begin to cover it! There are usually more than thirty dancers involved in the production, and keeping one's mind on the job was quite difficult when surrounded by beautiful and scantily clad young ladies!

I told Beverly I kept my eyes shut as I interviewed them, but, yes….I lied!

That's it for this quarter! More adventures of Radio Folk next time!



I Saw a Stable

by Mary Coleridge

I saw a stable, low and very bare,
A little child in the manager,
The oxen knew Him, had Him in their care,
To men He was a stranger,
The safety of the world was lying there,
And the world's danger.

Christmas Song by Bliss Carman
Above the weary waiting world,
Asleep in chill despair,
There breaks a sound of joyous bells
Upon the frosted air.
And o'er the humblest rooftree, lo,
A star is dancing on the snow.

What makes the yellow star to dance
Upon the brink of night?
What makes the breaking dawn to glow
So magically bright, -
And all the earth to be renewed
With infinite beatitude?

The singing bells, the throbbing star,
The sunbeams on the snow,
And the awakening heart that leaps
New ecstasy to know, -
They all are dancing in the morn
Because a little child is born.

Pooh's Christmas Worry

Pooh was Troubled. This was not unusual, and he had found a Good Way to seek help at such times; he would consult his wise mentor and friend, Piglet.

Piglet, at the time of Pooh's arrival, was engaged in constructing a holly wreath from locally sourced materials. Piglet was deeply committed to Sustainable Use of all that the Hundred Acre Wood supplied, and to maintaining a Low Carbon Footprint in his activities.

Hearing the sound of his gate latch, he paused in the action of inserting a particularly tricky piece of variegated holly stem into the wreath, and greeted his friend.

An adroit twist of his trotter completed his task, and Piglet, aching slightly from having been bent over his work, rose up, stretched, and invited Pooh to be seated and take some refreshment.

Pooh had been momentarily distracted by Piglet's close attention to what seemed to be a small, circular piece of colourful hedge on the workbench. It was, he thought, a Strange Thing. Having no immediately apparent link to Hunny, he considered it to be of no import, and, squeezing himself into one of Piglet's rather small garden chairs, he tried to recall why he had come.

Piglet, meanwhile, poured two cups of warm mulled wine from a vacuum flask, and gave one to Pooh, adding a touch of Hunny to the bear's drink, knowing Pooh was partial to the taste. Removing his copy of the RHS Christmas Gardening Guide from another chair, he seated himself with a satisfied sigh of comfort.

Piglet's kindness in offering Pooh this seasonal drink reminded the bear of the reason for his visit. And Piglet had noticed his friend's anxious countenance. Cupping his little trotters around his warm cup, he leaned forward, and said "What is troubling you Pooh?" "Well," said Pooh, who sounded rather close to tears, "I've just realised it's Christmas, and I haven't got any presents for anyone. I don't know what to do, and I don't want people to think I've forgotten about them."

Pooh was clearly in a Bad Place. With a tremulous voice, he explained that he thought Christmas was all about Giving Presents, and people would be upset if you didn't give them something.

Piglet sat back in his chair, took another sip of his wine, made a mental note to use a little more cinnamon next time, and sighed. "Pooh," he said gently, "Do you remember a little while ago how we visited Eeyore, and how pleased he was to see us?" "I think so…" replied Pooh, though in truth he didn't, as anything more than a few weeks ago was a Long Time for Pooh. "And we didn't bring any presents, but we enjoyed spending some time together?" "We-e-ll," said Pooh, with Great Uncertainty. "Well," continued Piglet, "we brought the gift of sharing time with Eeyore, and we can do that with all our friends.

Christmas is not just about giving things to people, it's about sharing love and kindness and time with them." "So I shouldn't give presents then?" asked the bear, who was somewhat confused. "Of course you can," smiled Piglet, "but that's not the most important thing. And a present can be something simple, perhaps that you've made for them, which makes it more special."

Piglet finished his mulled wine, put down his cup on the side table, and rose from his chair. He moved over to his work bench and picked up the wreath he had made. "You see this wreath? Well, I've made it for

Cont. on next page ...

you to put on your door. I was going to bring it to you this afternoon, and spend some time with you. But I'll give it to you now."

Pooh was visibly moved, and felt a Warm Inner Glow because of Piglet's thoughtfulness, though possibly it was due to the mulled wine. He was suddenly in a Better Place.

"Now," said Piglet, "I've made more wreaths for our friends in the Hundred Acre Wood. Would you like to come with me to deliver them? We can start by visiting Eeyore. And we can show all our friends we are thinking of them." And Pooh, struggling a bit to extricate himself from his chair whilst at the same time trying to finish his mulled wine, not wanting to waste a drop of the hunny which Piglet had thoughtfully added to it, hastened to embark on this wonderful idea.

Piglet, quickly scribbling a note to himself about Mulled wine and Cinnamon, collected some more wreaths from his workbench, and the two friends set off towards the Hundred Acre Wood to share some Love, Time, and Friendship at Christmas.



Christmas is Love

MOFTAG CLUB OF CALPE

The final MOFTAG fair was held in Calpe at the Central Plaza on Saturday 14th November raising over 3000€.



The craft stall



left to right. Jenny Godfrey, Anita Becker and Mary Jones

After fifty years of friendship, coffee mornings, lunches, trips away and endless donations to deserving causes **MOFTAG has closed.**

No youngblood willing to take on the organising and running of the Mighty Oaks from Tiny Acorns Grow.

Jenny and her faithful helpers are finally stepping back for a well deserved rest.

On behalf of all the people you have helped over the fifty years, thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



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A LETTER TO THE TAXMAN

SUPPLIED BY ROGER DAVIS

(So it must be true!)!

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The Government has governed my business until I do not know who the hell owns it.

I am inspected, examined and informed, required and commanded, so that I do not know who I am, where I am, or why I am here at all.

All I know is that I am suspected to have an inexhaustible supply for every need, desire or hope of the Human race. Because I will not go out and beg, borrow or steal money to give away, I am cussed, boycotted, talked to, talked about, lied about, held up, rung up, robbed and darned near ruined.

The only reason I am clinging to life at all is to see what the hell is going to happen next!

Yours faithfully,



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This page is sponsored by Roger Davis



A deliciously easy Christmas treat, perfect with a cup of tea or a glass of mulled wine!

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Makes 12–16 twists

Golden, flaky pastry twists filled with delicious Christmas mincemeat and finished with a dusting of icing sugar. Impressive and incredibly simple to make!

Ingredients

2 sheets ready-rolled puff pastry

200g sweet Christmas mincemeat

1 egg, beaten

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

Icing sugar, for dusting

A little orange zest (optional)

Preparation & Cooking Method

1. Prepare the pastry

Preheat your oven to 200°C (180°C fan). Line a baking tray with baking paper. Unroll one sheet of puff pastry and spread the mincemeat evenly over it, leaving a small border around the edges.

Mini Christmas Puff Pastry Mince Pie Twists

Christmas Kitchen Tip

Make the day before and store in an airtight container. Put them into a warm oven for a few minutes before serving to bring back that lovely fresh-baked crispness.



2. Cut and twist

Sprinkle with cinnamon and orange zest if using. Place the second sheet of pastry on top and press gently. Cut into 12–16 strips, then carefully twist each strip several times. Place on the baking tray.

3. Bake until golden

Brush each twist with beaten egg and bake for approximately 15–20 minutes, until puffed up and beautifully golden. Allow to cool slightly.

4. The Finishing Touch

Dust generously with icing sugar to give them a lovely snowy Christmas appearance.

Serve warm or cold. They're delicious with whipped cream or brandy butter!



Quiz Time Answers!

1. Five gold rings 2. Germany 3. Clara (also called Marie in some versions)
4. Paris, France 5. Mistletoe 6. Ebenezer Scrooge 7. Finland
8. Christmas Pudding 9. One – a one-horse open sleigh
10. Jingle Bells – played by astronauts aboard Gemini 6A in 1965

This page is sponsored by Canon Raymond and Eileen Hodson

Two Embarrassing Moments in El Campello

Not long ago I was idly waiting in the queue at a bank in Campello. It was a beautiful morning and I was in a good mood and eager to express my happiness with the world. A young mother was standing in front of me with a pushchair containing two little babies cosily wrapped up in a blanket and who were obviously twins while her four or five year old daughter sat quietly on a bench.

Wishing to appear "simpatico" I beamed at the little girl and asked her what she was called and told the mother how lovely and delightful her daughter was. I then turned to the babies and leant over the pushchair and made cooing noises, contorting my face so that my friendly features would soothe and stimulate the infants. They appeared to be sound asleep for they gave no reaction. It was then that I realised they were a pair of dolls belonging to the little girl. One or two people in the queue looked aghast and observed me with caution and also with what I took to be a twinge of pity, while at the same time shuffling as far away from me as was possible.

Another occasion I was queueing at the checkout in the Campello branch of Lidl's. I had a couple of packs of beer and before arriving at the till fished around in my pocket for my purse, opened it up and extracted the exact change to pay for my beers and save time faffing around for the correct money.

Immediately behind me in the queue were two elderly ladies. When they saw me fumbling with my purse one of them shrieked out that the black purse I was handling belonged to them and that I had stolen it. I told them not to be so stupid and to get a grip. Sadly they took no notice and continued to raise the alarm and shout out that I was a "thief" and what was more that I even looked like a thief!

I shouted angrily back that they were a couple of lunatics and should control themselves.

The girl on the till had no option but to summon the uniformed security guard who when informed by the shrieking shrews that I had robbed them felt obliged to handcuff me.

The general hubbub that ensued caused shoppers to emerge from the depths of the store to find out what was going on. One or two of the faces looked vaguely familiar and seemed to murmur that they were not surprised at my apprehension. I was led to the front of the premises and told to stand with my back against the wall.

Fortunately with the help of the security officer I was allowed to use my mobile phone and make a call to my wife and tell her not to hold up lunch on my account. I added that if she felt like bringing me a couple of sandwiches they would be well received.

Minutes later a police car screeched into the car park, lights flashing and siren wailing. Two police rushed in at the double and spoke briefly to the guard who gave them an outline of what was going on. They took the two elderly ladies into an office and took me to an adjacent one where I was able to explain what, apart from money, my purse contained.

When my accusers were questioned they immediately began to backtrack and said that they had been confused and had made a mistake. The police behaved impeccably and asked if I wished to make a charge against the women. I considered the possibility but thought it less hassle to say no. Besides I felt a twinge of sadness that their antics had failed.

I decided I would just put it down as a new shopping experience. I even got home before my wife had finished her lunch.

by Hugh Pke



The Real Story of Father Christmas

In Venice, in the Basilica Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, there is a small triptych by Bellini. The right hand panel depicts St Nicholas of Bari, and although he is dressed in green rather than red and looks too thin to pass for the happy fat man of Lapland, it's definitely him.



St. Nicholas was a bishop of Myra in ancient Turkey, a 4th century Christian hero, famed for giving presents. The kindly bishop was passing a house one night and heard the father of the family lamenting that his three daughters had to be sold into prostitution because he could not afford their wedding dowries.

Moved to tears, Nicholas came back in the middle of the night and threw three pouches of gold down the chimney. The girls were saved and the story of Father Christmas was founded.

Because of the veneration of saint's bones and relics, the saint's body, buried in Myra, was dug up by a gang of Italian sailors returning from the crusades and taken by them to Bari. But they missed a few little bones, and these were taken to Venice.

His feast day was December 6th and gradually he was assimilated into the customs of winter, being particularly popular in Holland.

December 6th became the day when Dutch parents would give their children presents and, when Dutch settlers founded a colony in the new world and called it New Amsterdam, the legend and custom went with them. Their Sinterklaas, the abbreviated St Nicholas, became Santa Claus.

His appearance changed too. Gone were the bishop's robes and mitre, and he became more seasonally clad in a fur lined cloak with a hood. He began to put on weight, and as he grew fatter, he grew merrier.

In 1823an anonymously published poem with the famous opening line … "T'was the night before Christmas …" filled in much of the missing detail. It added reindeer and flying sleighs. The poem was so popular that scores of poets popped to claim its authorship, but none were ever proven to be the one.

It took a German immigrant cartoonist, Thomas Nast, to paint a picture of Santa Claus familiar to us. Nast was a fervent supported of the Union, and drew Santa with lots of pro-Yankee symbolism. There was the winter outfit inspired by the Stars and Stripes, with red as the dominant colour. By the time the illustration appeared in the Harper's Weekly of 1862 he looked passably like the figure we know today – apart from the cavalry sword by his side and the army knapsack containing his gifts.

Wait a moment, though. That's Santa Claus, but what about Father Christmas? In fact, actually preceding Santa, was the parallel development of an eerie character called "Father Christmas. And he was most definitely English. His roots were older than St Nicholas of Bari, and could be traced back into pagan times when the winter solstice was accompanied by hefty feasting and drinking. There are possible connections between Christmas festivities and timing and the Roman festival of Saturnalia, when the ancients went partying.

The Real Story of Father Christmas cont. ...

Throughout the Middle Ages, a succession of gaunt, weathered, drunken, scarecrows dressed in rags, with their heads topped with sprigs of holly, were imagined as the embodiment of Yuletide celebrations, and still, today, there are remnants of these with chocolate Yule logs, kissing under the mistletoe and holly wreaths on front doors.

Christmas was enjoyed so thoroughly that when Cromwell and the Puritans took over they banned Christmas altogether, and it wasn't until 1660, and the Restoration of the Monarchy, that the celebration was allowed again.



However, until the Victorian age, the English Father Christmas did not give presents, go "Ho, ho, ho", spread 'Good cheer' or even like children very much. Indeed he became rather muddled with the Lord of Misrule and grew increasingly wayward.

As the Victorians grew ever more prosperous – well, those who did – and more materialistic, the allure of America's Christmas began to appeal and gradually the figures of Father Christmas and Santa Claus began to meld. The more industrialised Britain became, the greater the need grew for a kindly and un-neurotic Christmas presence.



It was not, however, until the 1930s that these transatlantic imaginings coalesced fully with the appearance of the Coca-Cola Santa. This was the Thomas Nasts's Sinterklaas character made jollier, fatter and ruddier by Haddon Sundblom, who modelled him on a retired salesman neighbour called Lou Prentice.

Coca-Cola, seeing that the costume of Sinterklaas chimed with the colour of their label, they began to flood the posters and billboards of America with the porky Santa. The rest, as they say, is history.

Dear Mummy and Daddy, please do not let your children read this if they are under 10, or 16 if you live in America.

Christmas Poem

(With apologies to the Swan of Avon, the inimitable Bard) *by Stephen*

I'faith, in but the blinking of any eye
Or so it seem, a twelvemonth is near past
Since did we Christmas greetings warmly cry:
And Lo! Another year is gone – so fast!

And through this time we've all shared many thoughts;
Hap'ly our softer days o'ertopped the rest
Though Life for most of us doth bring all sorts
At Christmastide there's chance we all are bless'd

So let's rejoice this holy Christmastide
And share our love and joy this festive date:
As one year ends another opens wide -
Let love embrace us as we celebrate

Memories of my Great Auntie

Well, where do I start. Auntie Doff was a bundle of love. A spinster aunt (on my father's side) who always had time for us children. She didn't have money but there was always a treat in a tin in the cupboard.

A 2-finger kit-kat is all I can actually remember. She worked a factory in Wigston, she was a stitcher- making vests and knickers! Auntie Doff hated shortened names, so our girls were Sarah and Emma – what happened? They went on to call each other Sar and Em!!! The silly thing is that Auntie Doff's name was Edith Dorothy. It was my fault she was always called Doff – I was in her front garden, age 2 and picked a daisy and shouted out "Auntie Dosses Dassibuls" Trying to say daffodils – even though I picked a daisy!!! From that came Doff and it stuck with children and adults alike.

One time when we were visiting she said "It is a soft, grey, misty morning, there's nothing really wrong with me, yet I somehow feel a little fragile and in low spirits." We were a bit concerned because it was so unlike her but she went on to say "However, I have had a visit from a little friend this morning – my garden robin hopped into the kitchen through the back door, he was such a bright perky little friend" Now, there is an old belief that if a Robin finds its way indoors in November it should bring good luck! "You know" she said "somehow it made me feel more cheerful – self indulgence is not to be encouraged" She went on to decide to bake a lemon cake thinking that we would enjoy it when we were calling in later. Auntie Doff lived with our Great Grandma Lucy all her life. The bungalow had one bedroom and Auntie Doff filled the bath with blankets and that was her bed.

So, they only ever had a 'stripped wash' in the kitchen. In later life we felt she was weaker and would benefit from being in a nursing home, being looked after. After visiting a few, she chose one. Her criteria was "I want ground floor, facing the street and room for a bird table" That, she got in October 1992. We were of the opinion she would last until Christmas. Well – we had the pleasure of her for another five years! The first Christmas I went to pick her up to take her to my parents to join us all for Christmas dinner. I was staggered at her cards – many addressed to "The lady in the window" she had always waved to children passing on their way to school. Grandma Lucy died age 99 having never been ill. She just said "Doff, I don't feel so good", Auntie Doff sat down and held her hand before making a cup of tea and Grandma Lucy closed her eyes passed away sitting in her chair in 1976. Auntie Doff also passed away peacefully, she too was age 99 in 1997. There's hope for me yet with the Jebbett Genes!!!

J Elaine Mitchell



A MOUNTAIN CALLED API Part 4

By David MB Brown

In part three we established camp 4 and were trying to establish the assault camp for Meryon and Lofty to try the climb to the summit. On a day of heavy snow and poor climbing condition we manage to set up camp tucked in below a large ice serac to shelter their tent from the powder avalanches that were coming down from the summit face above. The serac, we hoped would remain stable and not collapse on our two friends.



Mike Walsh helping to supply the assault camp in harsh weather conditions.

The weather stayed unkind for another twenty four hours and Meryon and Lofty didn't have any other choice than to sit it out in their flimsy tent. Finally the weather relented and they set out early while it was still dark to climb the steep face to the summit. The conditions of the snow was so poor that they decided to climb un-roped as belaying was not possible in the unstable snow which was like a deep sugar coating over hard ice.

The temperature had dropped even lower and at twenty two and a half thousand feet both were suffering from the cold and thin air. The going was difficult and slow and with the summit a mere three hundred feet above them they had to give up and retreat back to the tent.

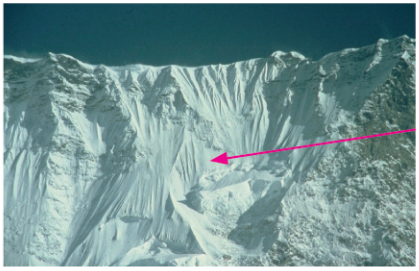
Having run out of daylight the descent was extremely hazardous. Finally they made it back to the flimsy shelter of the tent. Lofty was suffering badly with frost bitten fingers and both were very dehydrated which meant they had to spend hours melting snow to try and rehydrate.



Lofty and Meryon waiting for the weather to clear at the assault camp.

The next day was devoted to getting the pair back down to base. This was not too bad for Meryon although he was tired and still dehydrated he could use his hands to fix himself to the ropes and to abseil. Lofty's hands had to be protected to prevent further damage and the possibility of him losing his fingers to the frostbite. To achieve a safe descent for him, we took turns to be his buddy and fix him to the ropes for the abseils.

Mike Walsh and Andy Simpkins had moved to the assault camp tent to attempt the summit the next day. However, the mountain wasn't finished protecting her virginity



Assault camp for the final push.

and bombarded them continuously with avalanches for two days making it impossible to climb. Out of food, fuel and time our leader ordered a retreat and we descended back to the base camp in the valley.

Our base camp boys had prepared a feast for us all of soup, followed by tinned ham, beans and chips! What a delight afters so many weeks on dehydrated food. Some of us were to suffer from the sudden change of rich food the next day which was an exhausting experience.

(Cont. on next page...)

This page is sponsored by David Brown - Author of Hard Rain

(A Mountain called API cont...)



The high point before retreating. The rocks mark the summit.

Reversing our trek away from the mountain it was clear we would run out of food in a few days and as it was an area in famine we could not buy anything on the trek out.

The leader with the agreement of the political officer decided to make a detour which would put us at a small dirt air strip near the Nepal Indian border. Two days later out of supplies we arrived at the airstrip.



Frost bitten fingers are so painful.

The airstrip did not have any aircraft or even a control tower but a small twin turbo prop aircraft landed that day and agreed to take most of us to a border station in south Nepal where we would be able to hitch a ride on a truck to Kathmandu. The plane would then return and collect the leader, doctor and Lofty taking them direct to Kathmandu where Lofty could get treatment for his frostbitten hands.



Base camp feast

Once we had been dropped off by the plane it took us three days to get back to Kathmandu. However, what we didn't know was the pilot changed his mind about picking the others up and it took us another half day to realise that they were still stranded where we had left them starving.



The team at base camp.

Andy took over the hard haggling to get a pilot and plane to fly back and collect them. They finally arrived in Kathmandu very hungry. Despite this delay the careful administrations of our doctor meant Lofty didn't lose any fingers.



Flying out.

With the team back together we were able to enjoy a couple of days relaxing in the relative comfort that Kathmandu in 1980 was able to offer before the flight back to England.



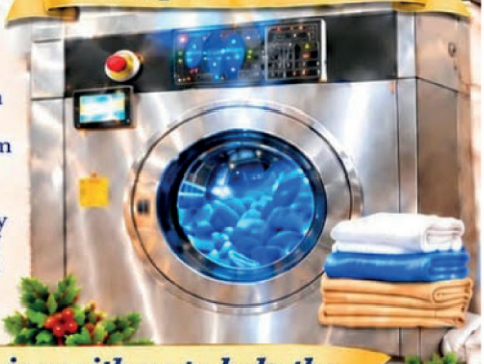
Our transport broken down in a river known for its Mugger crocodiles!



PROJECT LLOVE

Project Laundry of Love – Fundraising Appeal

Turning compassion into practical love.



Dear Friends,

Project LLove aims to empower our brothers at the Center de Acogida de San Francisco de Asís in Palma de Gandía, Spain, by equipping their laundry room with industrial machines to serve the 30-60 homeless men that they lovingly care for. The refurbished laundry room will ensure clean clothing, fresh bedding and towels for those in need.

The project is supported by the Costa Blanca Chaplaincy of the Church of England. We invite you, in the spirit of Advent and Christmas giving, to come or board with us as we tackle this ambitious project. We have already raised more than €4,000 and the manufacturers has contributed a 45% discount to the value of €20,000.

Prayerfully consider partnering with us to help the FRANCISCANS help those in need.

★ Our 3 Goals ★

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
€5000	**€9,250**	**€9,200**
more by Advent 3 (December 13)	by Christmas	by Epiphany (January 6)
- for the 1st washing machine-	*- for the 2nd washing machine-*	*- for the dryer -*

★ Total Goal: €27,000 ★

To donate to Project LLove

Capellania Anglicana de la Costa Blanca

IBAN: ES5700491418632210085071

gofundme | **https://gofund.me/024a1b51c**

for more information about Project LLove, contact:

Dennis Johnson – Treasurer
✉ tresoroblanca@gmail.com

Rev. Stephen Alegre McPeek
✉ edestiny@gmail.com

Rev. Paul Dean – Lead Chaplain
✉ frpaul dean@gmail.com

★ *Thank you for being part of this meaningful mission of care and compassion.* ★

TM LIONS
TEULADA-MORAIRA

Memory Tree Teulada-Moraira Lions Christmas Memory Tree will be displayed in the window of the Lion's Den, Moraira from November 23rd and throughout December 2026

Everyone is invited to make a small donation in memory of someone they have loved and lost.

In return, you will receive a small star, heart or other Christmas decoration on which the name of your loved one can be written. The decoration would then be placed on the Memory Tree in the Lion's Den window.

The tree will then gradually fill with names throughout the Christmas period.

This new Lions initiative is to create something that is meaningful and respectful to everyone over this Christmas period, whilst at the same time your donation helps continue supporting people and organisations in our local community

Christmas can be a particularly emotional time for people who have lost someone close to them.

The Memory Tree gives you a simple way to say:

"I remember you at Christmas."

You can write the name of your loved one, or pet on your decoration in the shop, or bring along your own creative decoration which will then be hung on the memory tree. You will also have an opportunity, if you wish, to write more about your loved one in our 2026 Memory Book.

Please support the 2026 Christmas Memory Tree. The Teulada and Moraira Lions wish you all a very special and memorable Christmas.

Teulada-Moraira Lions Club

Supporting our community

2026 | Where the Money Went

Caritas Food	€3,562	
Raquel Payá School, Dénia Swimming pool • allocated	€30,000	
Civil Protection Teulada High-visibility jackets	€2,000	
Cap d'Or School, Moraira Playground equipment €10,550 International Women's Day €510 School plaque €130	€11,190	
Teulada Football Club Sound system and banner	€10,700	
Civil Protection Moraira Blood analysis machine	€3,850	
Benitachell School Handwriting prizes		€450
Emaús, El Verger Easter gifts		€800
Project4All Van repairs		€2,302
Teulada Gymnastics Club New sound system		€2,000
Aprosdeco, Dénia Replacement kiln • allocated		€1,500
TOTAL		**€68,354**

Includes €31,500 allocated to projects

Thank you for your continued support



Diocese in Europe
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

What's happening in a church near you?

www.costablanca-anglican-chaplaincy.es

CALPE LA MERCED

Christmas Day: 10,30am
Carol Service: Tuesday 15th Dec. 6pm

Sunday Services at 10.30am
We have coffee afterwards at La Merced Camp Site 200m past the church.

If you don't wish to attend the service you are still welcome to join us for coffee. Check the website for details of our monthly lunches.

LA FUSTERA

Christmas Day: 10,30am
Carol Service: Thursday 17th Dec. 3pm

Sunday Services at 12.15pm
in the Ermita de San Josep.

JAVEA

Christmas Day: 10,30am
Carol Service: Wednesday 16th Dec. 3pm

Sunday services at 9.45am
at the Emita on the
Jesus de Pobre Road 160, Jávea.

DENIA

Sunday Services at midday
in the Ermita Las Rotas.

GANDIA

Christmas Day: 10,30am
Carol Service: Sunday 20th Dec. 3pm

Sunday Service at 12:15pm
in the Chapel of the Franciscan Hospice.

THE COMM - ALFAZ DEL PI

Christmas Day: 9,30am
Carol Service: Monday 14th Dec. 4pm

Sunday Services at 9.30am
Thursday at 11am
Albir Forum Mare Nostrum
(now known as The Comm)
Camino del Pincho 2,
03580, l'Alfás del Pi.

EL CAMPELLO

Christmas Day: midday

Sunday Services at midday in the Chapel in the grounds of Los Salesianos.

ALBIR

CAROLS ON THE BEACH
by The Anchor
Friday 11th December at 11,30am



This page is sponsored by David M B Brown, Author of Hard Rain and the Darkness

Welcome to our service

Diocese in Europe
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



Alfaz del Pi and Albir
Forum del Nostrum
(Now known as The Comm)
Camino del Pincho 2,
Alfaz del Pi, 03580, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 9.30
Thursday 11.00



Jávea
Ctra. de Jesus Pobre, 160
03737 Jávea, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 9.45
(9.30 July to September 11)
Wednesday 10.30



EL Campello
Carrer Bernat Metge, 3
03560 El Campello, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 12.00



Gandia
The Chapel of the Franciscan
Hospice, CV 686, 671.
07600, Palma de Gandia
Service times: Sunday 12.15





La Fustera
Avinguda Fustera, 33-39
03720 Benissa, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 12.15



Calpe
Parroquia Nuestra Señora
de la Merced
Av. Jaime I El Conqueridor /
Av. de la Merced, 2
03710 Calpe, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 10.30



Dénia
Ctra. Provincial del Barranc
del Monyo, 39
03700 Dénia, Alicante
Service times: Sunday 12.00



" Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." Romans 12:9
" Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. " Proverbs 10:12

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