

Historical Environment Christmas Report

As I write, members of the Historic Environment Group continue to send in entries for our 'My hero/heroine in 200 words' project. The Forum deadline is too early for me to publish these until January, but if our readers (even non group members) wish to send in entries, please feel free. You choose the subject and sum up the reasons for your choice in no more than 200 words. Here is mine by way of a seasonal taster:

Good King Wenceslas

I have been intrigued by this character since a Czech guide made three surprising claims about him: he was not 'good', he was not a King, and his name wasn't Wenceslas! He was in fact Vaclav, Duke of Bohemia, who banished his mother from the country, then quarrelled with and was assassinated by his brother Boleslaus the Cruel on 23rd September 935 AD. He became a post-mortem Christian 'hero', perhaps for propaganda purposes, thanks to Emperor Otto I and by the twelfth century stories were becoming attached to his name; one preacher said "no one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty." It was in 1853 that John Mason Neale attached the famous words "Good King Wenceslas looked out .." to an old 13th century tune since when the carol we know today has been part of a British Christmas.

Below is a quiz which I hope is self-explanatory. I am happy to receive answers from non-group members on my usual email!

I think we can look forward with a fair degree of confidence to resuming our programme earlier in 2021 than we thought a month ago. Watch this space, and enjoy a safe and enjoyable holiday period.

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Christmas U3A Historic Environment Quiz 2020

DECEMBER 25th

1. Which Frankish Warrior King known as 'Father of Europe' was crowned Emperor on Christmas Day 800 AD.
2. Who led 2,400 troops on a daring Christmas night crossing of the Delaware River before attacking Trenton on Boxing Day?
3. What information system was given its first trial run on Christmas Day 1990?
4. Which British Scientist was born on Christmas Day 1642?
5. Which famous British Comic Actor died on Christmas Day 1977?

6. What happened to Charles the Bold on Christmas Day 875 AD?
7. Which European dictator was executed on Christmas Day 1989?
8. What happened to the actor Humphrey Bogart on Christmas Day 1899?
9. What is a Swedish Astronomer said to have introduced to the world on Christmas Day 1741?
10. Who invaded Afghanistan on Christmas Day 1979?
11. Who held their first meeting in Pulaski, Tennessee on Christmas Day 1865?
12. Which two countries concluded a Peace Treaty on Christmas Day 1812?
13. What sank on Hispanola on Christmas Day 1492?
14. Who was given his first drum kit on December 25th 1959?
15. Which Tracy reached Australia on Christmas Day 1974?

JANUARY 1st

16. Which glassblower put forward on January 1st 1724 his system for making Thermometers?
17. What happened to the journal 'London's Daily Universal Registrar' on January 1st 1788?
18. Which Caribbean island was taken by Britain on January 1st 1807?
19. In which country did John V succeed to the throne on January 1st 1707?
20. Who is said to have led his army to the successful capture of Mecca on January 1st 630
21. Which transport route between 2 major cities of NW England was opened on January 1st 1894?
22. What were British ships sent to recover on January 1st 1833?
23. What did Portuguese navigators discover on January 1st 1502?
24. Which cricketer made his England debut on January 1st 1908 and scored a record career 197 centuries?

25. Which country joined the European Union on January 1st 1995 along with Finland and Sweden?
26. What deterrent did the BBC start sending round on January 1st 1953?
27. What did Venezuela nationalise on January 1st 1976?
28. Which army occupied York on 1st January 1660 under Thomas Fairfax?
29. What was officially held for the last time in Rome on January 1st 404 AD?
30. What undesirable-sounding territory did Britain take from Nicaragua on 1st January 1848?