COURT AND SOCIAL

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Court Circular

ST JAMES'S PALACE
December 23rd

The Prince of Wales this morning visited Tetbury Railway Yard, Gloucestershire.

The Princess Royal, President, Save the Children Fund, will visit Save the Children Fund Shop, 5 School Lane, Disbury, Greater Manchester, on Jan 16.

BIRTHDAYS

Christmas Eve: Mr Philip Ziegler, author, is 67; **Sir Colin Cowdrey,** former England cricket captain, 64; **Sir Ivan Lawrence, QC, MP,** 60; and **Prof Anthony Clare,** psychiatrist and author, 54.

Christmas Day: Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester will be 95.

Princess Alexandra 60.

Lord Grade, Chairman, The Grade Company, 90; **Lord Annan,** Vice-Chancellor, University of London, 1978-81, 80; **Sir Peter Matthews,** Chief Constable of Surrey, 1968-82, 79; **Sir Noel Stockdale,** Honorary Life President, ASDA Group, 76; **Miss S.J. Browne,** Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, 1983-92, 72; **Lord Sheppard of Didgemere,** former Chairman, Grand Metropolitan, 64; **Mr Ismail Merchant,** film producer, 60; **Prof Philip Love,** Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool University, 57; **Sir Kenneth Calman,** Chief Medical Officer, the Department of Health, 55; and **Miss Annie Lennox,** singer, 42.

Today is the anniversary of the birth of St Ignatius Loyola in 1491

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Mr M.C.B. Smith and Ms L.A. Newman
The engagement is announced between Michael Clive Bowker, younger son of Mr and Mrs John Smith, of Dartmouth, Devon, and Louisa Ann, youngest daughter of the late Sir Ralph Newman, Bt, and of Ann, Lady Newman, of Blackpool House, Dartmouth, Devon.

Dr G.D. Wattles and Miss J.M.H. Davies
The engagement is announced between Gurdon, eldest son of Lady Newns, of Cambridge, and the late Mr Ray Wattles, and stepson of Sir Foley Newns, and Jessica, eldest daughter of Mrs Ferelith Davies, of Chipstead, Surrey, and the late Mr Peter Davies.

Mr T.A.H. Kirkwood and Miss P.J. Strange
The engagement is announced between Tristram, elder son of Sir Andrew and Lady Kirkwood, of Blackheath, Guildford, and Pamela, twin daughter of Mr and Mrs John Strange, of Gaddesby, Leicestershire.

Capt C.R.S. Hay and Miss S.A. Lucy
The engagement is announced between Colin, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Peter Hay, of Inverness, and Sarah, only daughter of Mr Richard Lucy and the late Mrs Brenda Lucy, of Ledbury, Herefordshire.

The Rev T.G. Anderson and Miss L. Johnson
The engagement is announced between Timothy, younger son of Mr and Mrs Colin A.J. Anderson, of Saintfield, Co Down, and Lynn, daughter of the late Mr Peter Johnson and of Mrs Greta Johnson, of Christchurch, Dorset.

Dr P.D.W. Kiely and Dr T.M. Shah
The engagement is announced between Patrick, son of Dr and Mrs D.G. Kiely, of Emsworth, Hants, and Tanja, daughter of Seyed N.A. Shah and Gertraud-Luise Shah, of London.

Mr P.S. Heath and Miss R.J. Keeling
The engagement is announced between Peter, son of Mr Paul Heath, of Wansford, and Mrs Deirdre Smee, of Stokenchurch, and Rebecca, daughter of Major General and Mrs Andrew Keeling, of Salisbury.

Mr R.J. Bowen and Miss K.H. Stancer
The engagement is announced between Roland, son of Dr and Mrs R. Bowen, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, and Katherine, eldest daughter of Mr John Stancer, Wyck Rissington, Gloucestershire, and Mrs Alison Stancer, of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Mr L.B.M. Foster and Miss A.J. MacKenzie
The engagement is announced between Benedict, fourth son of Mr and Mrs Michael Foster, of Richmond, Surrey, and Alexandra, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ian MacKenzie, of Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

Mr A.M. Dykes and Miss K.E. Neill
The engagement is announced between Alan, son of Mrs Nan Dykes and the late Mr Michael Dykes, of Sligo, Co Sligo, and Karen Elizabeth, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Neill, of Thurgarton Hall, Norfolk.

Mr J.D. Shaxson and Miss A.E. Baigent
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, second son of Mr and Mrs Alister Shaxson, of Elsted, Midhurst, West Sussex, and Anne, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Baigent, of Trotton, Petersfield, Hampshire.

Mr A.J. Hagen and Miss H.R. King
The engagement is announced between Anthony, younger son of Mr and Mrs Roger Hagen, of The Old Rectory, Riddlesworth, Diss, Norfolk, and Helen, second daughter of Mr and Mrs P.N. King, of The Homestead, Glatton, Cambridgeshire.

Mr M. Grainger and Miss A. Beveridge
The engagement is announced between Martin, eldest son of Mr and Mrs P. Grainger, of Middlesborough, and Angela, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs J.L. Beveridge, of Gifford, East Lothian.

Mr E.D. Wauchope and Miss K.C. Payne
The engagement is announced between Ewan, younger son of Mr and Mrs Duncan Wauchope, of Wellow, Hampshire, and Kate, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs James Payne, of Crowborough, East Sussex.

Mr P.W. Bledsoe and Miss C.M. Boddington
The engagement is announced between Paul, youngest son of Mr Carter Bledsoe, of McLean, Virginia, USA, and the late Mrs Phyllis Kunze, and Celia, daughter of Mr and Mrs W.G. Boddington, of Broad Campden, Gloucestershire.

Mr D.R.C. Norland and Miss L.A.R. Broadbent
The engagement is announced between David, son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Norland, of Mayfield, Sussex, and Lucy, daughter of Mr Paul Broadbent, of London, and Mrs Jane Broadbent, of Chesham, Buckinghamshire.

Mr S.R.C. Rowntree and Miss S.E. Jones
The engagement is announced between Stuart, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Rowntree, of Oxted, Surrey, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Jones, of Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan.

Mr P.J.E. Rolliston and Miss J. Williamson
The engagement is announced between Peter, son of Mr and Mrs J.A. Rolliston, of Farnham, Surrey, and Joanne, daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Williamson, of Wimborne, Dorset.

WEDDING

Viscount Coke and Miss P.M. Whately

The marriage took place on Saturday at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Gillingham, Dorset, of Viscount Coke, elder son of the Earl of Leicester and Valeria, Viscountess Coke, both of Norfolk, and Miss Polly Whately, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs David Whately, of Dorset. The Rt Rev E.J.K. Roberts officiated, assisted by Canon J. McNeish.

The bride, who was given away by her father, was attended by Molly Miller-Mundy, Iona Stewart-Richardson, Guy Coltman-Rogers, Archie Bellville, Emma Finlayson and Archie Philpotts. Mr Robbie Buxton was best man.

A reception was held at the home of the bride and the honeymoon is being spent abroad.

RECENT SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

Recent appointments in the Services include:

ROYAL NAVY & ROYAL MARINES

Commodore: A K Backus — Staff of CINCFLEET, 20.2.97.

Captain: G P Bilson — Staff of FOSF in rank of Cdre, 15.4.97; G B D Lane — Staff of CINCFLEET in rank of Cdre, 10.12.96; S A Locke — Staff of FONA, 14.3.97.

Surgeon Captain: C W Evans — MoD London in rank of Surgeon Cdre, 10.1.97.

Commanders: N J K Dedman — Dryad, 1.8.97; N J G Harland — MoD London, 25.4.97; P J Linstead-Smith — Taunton, 25.3.97; R A Mark — Scott in Cmd, 8.4.97; S P C Westwood — MoD Bath, 21.1.97.

Major: R M Bowkett — MoD London, 4.2.97.

ARMY

Major General: Brigadier A G Denaro CBE — to be Chief Combat Support ACE Rapid Reaction Corps in the rank of Major General, 21.10.1996.

Colonels: S L Bennett — to be Director HQ BVO, 21.10.96; A W Blackett OBE — to be DA/MA Kathmandu, 26.10.96.

OBITUARIES

Sergeant Edmund Murray

Former Foreign Legionnaire who became Churchill's most trusted bodyguard

SERGEANT EDMUND MURRAY, who has died aged 79, was Winston Churchill's bodyguard from 1950 until 1965 — a post which involved many services beyond the scope of his professional duties.

As a young man Murray had served eight years in the French Foreign Legion. "I hope we shall get along well," Churchill observed at their first meeting. "You have had a most interesting life. And I hear you even paint in oils."

At first Murray's artistic potential was exploited merely in carrying Churchill's painting equipment and keeping gawpers at bay. He was also required to photograph the scene that Churchill was painting, so the picture might be completed in the studio.

As their relations developed, Churchill would ask Murray for his advice on how to tackle a painting. The counsel given would be ostentatiously ignored — and later incorporated in the picture as though it had been the artist's own idea.

But Churchill was generous in his commiseration when Murray had some paintings turned down by the Royal Academy: "You know, your paintings are much better than mine," he told his bodyguard, "but yours are judged on their merit." Murray had some consolation for the Academy's rejection when one of his works, a still life of flowers on the Riviera, found a place in the White House during Eisenhower's presidency.

Churchill found a wry amusement in the zeal with which Murray approached his professional duties. He expressed mock alarm as Murray unceremoniously seized an intrusive hairdresser in a French restaurant: "Do not be too rough on him, my dear." When he retired as Prime Minister in 1955 and was obliged to make do with only one bodyguard he unhesitatingly selected Murray.

Many of the tasks which Murray performed were menial: retrieving spectacles and false teeth; inking his master's underpants so that a hole in his trousers would not show; searching for a hip bath in Paris; gathering up discarded cigar stubs.

Murray's autobiography, *I Was Churchill's Bodyguard* (1987), recorded many delightful snippets of Churchilliana. There was the time at Lingfield when Churchill's horse was badly beaten by the Queen's. "Congratulations upon your fine win," he telegraphed the monarch. "Sorry you were not in closer attendance," returned the Queen.

Although Murray's admiration for his master was immense, it was never uncritical. On his first day at Chartwell he observed Churchill telling his gardeners to do something — and then firing off a completely conflicting instruction ten minutes later.

Murray himself was more than capable of standing up to the great man. In Greece in 1961, he provoked a severe fit of Churchillian sulks by refusing to take his charge along a narrow path with a sheer cliff drop to one side. Indeed, he forcibly removed Churchill from the scene.

Returning to Britain in the aeroplane soon afterwards, Churchill asked his bodyguard to sit next to him. "It was not very nice, Sir Winston, was it," Murray opened in reference to his master's behaviour. "Bloody awful," Churchill returned. Then, with his most winning smile, "I'm very sorry . . . you probably saved my life and I am most grateful."

Murray admired Lady Churchill, and shared her distaste for Emery Reves, the European editor of the *War Memoirs* who would invite Churchill to stay at the Villa La Pausa, above Menton. He took a more generous view of Aristotle Onassis who, he reckoned, entertained his celebrated guest without any ulterior motive.

In August 1959 he was present with Sir Winston at a gathering on Onassis's yacht *Christina* which included Onassis's wife, his future mistress Maria Callas, his future wife Jackie Onassis and her husband Jack Kennedy. On that occasion, Murray recorded, Onassis did not speak more than a dozen words to Mrs Kennedy.

In January 1965, as Sir Winston lay dying in Hyde Park Gate, Murray gently took his hand, and at once felt his fingers close in a firm grip. It was almost the last action of that tumultuous life.

Edmund Murray was born on Aug 18 1917 at Friarside, Co Durham, the third of five children. His father was deputy overman at Friarside Mine and the gamekeeper of Friarside Woods. Both the mine and the woods were owned by the Bowes-Lyon family.

Edmund won a scholarship to Alderman Wood secondary school at West Stanley, where he did well, though family circumstances forced him to leave before taking the Oxford examination, for which he was a fancied candidate.

He went to London, where he had a succession of jobs. He worked in Sainsbury's, at Chingford and Brondesbury; as a packer; as a deck steward on a steamer which plied between Tower Pier and Southend; as a soldier in the Irish Guards, from which he resigned after 28 days (though not before he had shown himself adept at fisticuffs); and as a checking clerk at the Holborn Restaurant on Kingsway.

In 1937 he suddenly decided to throw up life in Britain and join the Foreign Legion. No sooner had he arrived at Boulogne than he entered a café and lost his virginity, *la patronne* helpfully making a bedroom available for the purpose.

After the hellish initial training at Sidi Bel Abbès in Algeria, Murray became a tenor saxophonist in the Legion's military band. In Paris for some celebration he found himself not only in the Place de la Bastille but also in the arms of Marlene Dietrich, who administered a lingering kiss.

In 1940 the Legion sent Murray to Indo-China. In Haiphong the Japanese were collaborating with the Vichy authorities. Murray found himself a concubine, and was co-opted into the Resistance group within the Legion.

Later he was involved in the fighting retreat from Tonkin, during which the Legion, vastly outnumbered, held off Japanese attacks for 52 days before the survivors escaped into China. At Sze Mao Ting, in May 1945, his eight-year contract to the Legion came to an end.

Subsequently, the British Military Mission in Kunming sent him to the Bay of Bengal to train agents to be dropped behind enemy lines in Burma and Malaya. After the war he returned to Britain, where he worked as a courier for a travel company.

In 1947 he joined the Metropolitan Police, and after 18 months on the beat was transferred to Special Branch. "How would you like to go on protection?" his superior officer demanded. "It depends very much on the person I should have to protect," Murray responded. After Churchill's death Murray ran a hotel in Devon, was briefly curator of the Wookey Hole Caves, and worked at the Ministry of Defence.

He married, in 1947, Beryl Hafliger; they had a son.

Murray entering two of his paintings for the Summer Exhibition, 1957

Murray (left) escorting Winston Churchill from the polling station on Election Day in 1951

CHRISTMAS CHURCH SERVICES

Christmas Eve

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 7.30 Mattins; 8 HC; 2.30 Evensong (said); 4 Children's Carol Service and Blessing of the Crib; 11.30 Midnight Mass (Charpentier, Messe de Minuit). Canon Michael Saward, Treasurer.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 7.30 Mattins; 8 HC (ASB, Rite B); 12.30 HC (ASB, Rite A); 3.30 Evensong (said); 4 Abbey Service of Lessons and Carols; 11.30 Abbey Eucharist of Christmas Midnight, sung by the Vasari Singers (Stanford, Communion Service in C and F).

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 11 pm Choral Eucharist (Charpentier, Messe de Minuit), The Bishop of Southwark.

ALL SAINTS, Margaret St: Midnight, The Vicar.

ALL SOULS, Langham Place: 11 pm Communion Service, Preb Richard Bewes.

GROSVENOR CHAPEL, South Audley St: 11 pm Carols for Choir and Congregation; 11.30 Midnight Mass, Rev Simon Hobbs.

HOLY TRINITY, Brompton Rd: 11.30 Midnight Communion, Rev Simon Downham.

ST BRIDE'S, Fleet St: 11.30 Candlelight Mass, Canon John Oates.

ST CLEMENT DANES, Strand: 11.30 Choral Eucharist, Rev Peter Bishop.

ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 Eucharist; 12.15 Meditation; 1.05 Eucharist (said, with Address); 5.45 Evening Prayer; 11.30 Midnight Mass.

ST MARGARET'S, Westminster: 11.45 St Margaret's Eucharist of Christmas Midnight (Kodaly, Missa brevis), Canon Dr Donald Gray.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS: 6.30 Carol Service; 11.30 Midnight Mass, Rev Bernhard Schünemann.

ST MARYLEBONE, Marylebone Rd: 11.30 Midnight Mass, Rev Richard McLaren.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 11 Midnight Mass of the Nativity (1662), said, with hymns.

CHAPEL ROYAL of St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London: 11.30 Midnight HC, Rev R C Abram.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks: 11.15 pm Carols at the Manger; 11.30 Midnight HC.

CROWN COURT (Co-o-S), Covent Garden: 11.30 pm Watchnight Service.

ST COLUMBA'S (Co-o-S), Pont St: 11.30 pm Candlelight Service.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: Masses: 8, 9, 10.30, 12.30 pm; 4.15 Solemn Pontifical First Vespers of Christmas, The Cardinal (de Monte, Josquin, Messiaen); 5.30 Vigil Mass of Christmas with Carols; 11.30 Admission by ticket only (broadcast live on BBC 1). Vigil and Midnight Mass, The Cardinal (Peeters, Verner).

FARM STREET: Masses: 6 pm, midnight.

WESTMINSTER METHODIST CENTRAL HALL: 11.15 Midnight Communion, Rev Eden Fletcher.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC (Rite A); 11 Crib Service, Archdeacon of Canterbury; 3 Cathedral Carol Service; 5.00 Evensong (Sumsion in A).

ST ASAPH: 11.45pm Very Rev K Goulstone. In the bleak midwinter, Darke.

BELFAST: 11.30pm First Eucharist of Christmas.

BRADFORD: 11.30pm he Provost. In the bleak mid-winter, Darke.

CARLISLE: 11.30pm Canon D Weston.

CHESTER: 11.30pm Canon J Newcome.

ST DAVIDS: 11.30pm The Dean, Away in Manger, arr Willcocks.

DERBY: 11.30pm Rev Canon T Chesterman. This day Christ is born, Byrd.

DURHAM: 3.00 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

EDINBURGH: 11.30pm The Provost, Silent night, Gruber.

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 11.15pm Very Rev W D Morris. A Christmas Carol, Darke.

GLASGOW, ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL (Scots Episc): 11.30pm Rt Rev Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, Star carol, Rutter.

LINCOLN: 11.30pm Mass of the Quiet Hour, Oldroyd.

LIVERPOOL: 3.00 Christmas Eve Carol Service.

MANCHESTER: 11.30pm The Bishop.

NEWCASTLE: 11.30pm The Provost, What sweeter music can we bring, Rutter.

RIPON: 11.30pm Canon P Marshall, Bethlehem down, Warlock.

SOUTHWELL: 11.45pm The Bishop, Infant holy, arr Willcocks.

YORK: 4.00 Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Christmas Day

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 Mattins; 11 Sung Eucharist (Charpentier, Messe de Minuit), Very Rev John Moses, Dean; 3.15 Evensong (Stanford in C).

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC (BCP); 10.30 Abbey Eucharist of Christmas Day (Mozart, Messa brevis in D), Dr Anthony Harvey, Sub-Dean; 3 Festal Evensong (Purcell, Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in B flat).

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Eucharist and 11 Choral Eucharist (Schubert in G), The Very Rev Colin Slee, Provost.

ALL SAINTS, Margaret St: 11 Rev I E Davies.

ALL SOULS, Langham Place: 10.30 Family Service, Rev John Cook.

HOLY TRINITY, Brompton Rd: 11 Family Service and 12.15 HC, Rev Sandy Millar.

ST BRIDE'S, Fleet St: 11 Family Eucharist, Canon John Oates.

ST CLEMENT DANES, Strand: 11 Choral Eucharist, Rev Peter Bishop.

ST JAMES GARLICKHYTHE, Garlick Hill, EC4: 10.30 Sung Eucharist.

ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 Sung Eucharist, Rev Donald Reeves.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS: 10.30 Eucharist, The Vicar. 6.30 Carols and Readings, Rev Bernhard Schünemann.

ST MARYLEBONE, Marylebone Rd: 8 HC, 10 Choral Eucharist, Rev Peter Wells.

TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet St: 8.30 HC, 11.15 Morning Prayer, followed by HC, The Master.

QUEEN'S CHAPEL, Savoy Hill: 11 Sung Eucharist, The Chaplain.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC (1662); 11 Matins.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 Sung Eucharist, Rev W J Booth.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks: 11 Mattins, The Chaplain, Band of the Blues and Royals; 12 HC (said).

GRAY'S INN CHAPEL: 8.30 HC.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST ANNE AND ST AGNES, Gresham St, EC2: 11 Choral Eucharist, Andreas Fischer.

ST COLUMBA'S (Co-o-S), Pont St: 10 HC, 11 Family Service.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: Masses: 7, 8, 9, 12. 10 Morning Prayer. 10.30 Solemn Mass, The Cardinal (Victoria). 3.30 Solemn Vespers and Benediction (Bevan).

FARM STREET: Masses: 8, 9.30 11 Solemn Mass, 12.30, 6.

THE ORATORY, Brompton Rd: Masses: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (Solemn), 12.30, 4.30, 4 Benediction.

CITY TEMPLE, Holborn Viaduct: 10.30 Dr David Hilborn.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, City Rd: 11 Morning Service, Rev Dr Leslie Griffiths.

WESTMINSTER CHAPEL, Buckingham Gate: 11-12 Christmas Day Service.

WESTMINSTER METHODIST CENTRAL HALL: 10.30 Worship and Celebration, Rev Dr Peter Graves and Rev Eden Fletcher.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, 10 Mattins (Ireland in F), 11 Sung Eucharist (Mozart, Missa Brevis in B flat), The Archbishop; 3.15 Evensong (Howells in G), Carols.

BANGOR: 11.00 A babe was born, Mathias

BELFAST: 11.00 Ding! Dong! merily on high, arr Wood.

BLACKBURN: 10.30 The Bishop. St Nicholas Mass, Haydn.

CARLISLE: The Dean, Hodie Christus natus est, Carter.

CHESTER: 10.00 The Bishop of Birkenhead; 4.15 Choral Evensong with Carols.

ST DAVIDS: 11.15 The Dean, On this day, Stewart.

DERBY: 10.45 The Bishop.

DURHAM: 10.00 The Dean, Hodie Christus natus est, Sweelinck; 3.30 Fantasia on Christmas Carols, Vaughan Williams.

EDINBURGH: 10.30 The Bishop, Bethlehem Down, Warlock.

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL: 11.00 Very Rev Dr W J Morris, Communion Service.

GLASGOW, ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL (Scots Episc): 10.30 Rev D Reid, Ecce novum gaudium, Elliott.

INVERNESS: 11.00 The bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness.

LINCOLN: 9.30 The Precentor, O little town of Bethlehem, Davies; 3.45 Ding, dong, merrily on high, arr Wood.

LIVERPOOL: 10.30 Rt Rev D Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool.

RIPON: 9.30 The Bishop; 4.00 Canon K Punshon.

SHEFFIELD: 10.30 The Bishop, Hodie Christus natus est, Poulenc.

SOUTHWELL: 11.00 The Precentor, Hodie Christus natus est, Sweelinck; 3.15 Evensong (said).

WAKEFIELD: 11.00 The Provost, Coronation Mass, Mozart; 5.00 Evensong (said).

YORK: 10.00 Most Rev & Rt Hon Dr D Hope, O magnum mysterium, Poulenc; 4.00 Hodie Christus natus est, Sweelinck.

Wang Shoudao

Maoist veteran of the Long March

WANG SHOUDAO, who has died aged 89, was a veteran communist who rose to become Communications Minister of the People's Republic of China.

Wang began his revolutionary activities when still a teenager. As a militiam commissar he took part in the Long March, the 6,000-mile communist retreat from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces, when Mao Tse-tung established himself as leader.

Wang was an orthodox Maoist, loyal to Mao even during the disastrous years of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. He had impeccable Maoist credentials: peasant origins, untiring youthful activism, Marxist study and dedicated service.

Wang Shoudao was born in Linyang, Hunan province, in 1907. As a boy he sold firewood and tended the family's only ox. Aged 12, he was adopted by a more prosperous uncle. After a brief apprenticeship to a maker of firecrackers, he attended a state agricultural school and joined a communist students' group.

In 1925, fearing arrest for revolutionary activities, Wang fled to the European enclave of Canton, where he joined the Chinese Communist Party and studied at the Peasant Movement Training Institute. By the end of 1926 he was organising unions in Chiyang, southern Hunan; a campaign against communists forced him to go into hiding. He spent five months reading Marxist theory.

Wang returned to Liuyang in 1927 to join a peasant movement which was confiscating and redistributing land. In 1929 he joined the committee of the newly established "soviet government" in southern Hunan.

During the communists' ill-fated attempt to capture central Chinese cities, Wang was assigned to Changsha and appointed chairman of the communist government. When the communists were driven from the city in 1930, Wang fled; his wife was executed.

After the Long March, he became director of the political department of the 15th Army Corps. "The political commissar is all-powerful in the policies of the army," he said. He was governor of Hunan from 1950 to 1952, and Vice-Minister and then Minister of Communications until 1964.

He last served, from 1982 to 1987, on the party's Central Advisory Committee, a body set up for influential elderly revolutionaries.

Oliver Pritchett

ANOTHER VIEW

Go on, Wenceslas, or you'll end up a square

THE question that troubled me for many years was this: was there a Queen Wenceslas? I mean, did he have a wife? If so, what was she doing on the Feast of Stephen? In the carol, the King gets all the credit for traipsing out through the snow with the Page trudging behind him in his footsteps, to go and fetch yonder peasant, but there is no mention of what the Queen was doing.

The implication is that on the Feast of Stephen she did not even bother to look out. She just sat in a cosy room in the castle, glued to her tapestry, showing no interest in what was going on in the outside world. Perhaps she said to her husband: "I warn you, Good King Wenceslas, if you give yonder peasant flesh and wine you'll have a whole lot of other yonder peasants, from a good league hence and beyond, coming round here asking for the same things."

It would not be surprising to hear that, among the people who lived right against the forest fence by St Agnes' fountain, the wife of Good King Wenceslas was known as Ursula the Uncaring. They probably used to say to each other: "The man's a saint — I don't know how he puts up with a woman like that."

In fact, this is a grave injustice to the wife of Wenceslas. I have recently made a dramatic discovery which proves that she was the organising genius behind this famous act of kindness.

While searching through some archives of 10th-century Bohemia, I found a fascinating document. It appears to be some sort of list. At the top it says "Get more pine logs". This must be important because, next to it, there are five exclamation marks and a big arrow pointing at it.

It is almost certain that this is a list prepared by the queen in the period running up to the Feast of Stephen. Among the items I was able to decipher were "Order flesh" and "Check wine" and "Remind GKW to look out on F of S".

There is also a note, rather hurriedly scrawled, which says "Get warmer socks for Page". There is a line next to this which leads to the bottom of the sheet of paper with an asterisk and the words "see other list".

I believe I have succeeded in tracking that all-important other list. On this, it says: "If no sox, tell Page to t i h m f where s l d." I puzzled for some time over these initials, but I now believe I have worked them out. The queen was saying that the Page should tread in his master's footsteps where the snow lay dinted (s l d).

At the bottom of this sheet of paper in urgent handwriting it says: "Find Third List!" It is my theory that the queen never did manage to locate that third list. It was scrumpled up into a ball in an old pine chest which also contained what could be part of a job reference for the Page. You can just make out the words "... obedient and hardworking, but does not like the cold which tends to make him complain . . ."

Anyway, on the screwed-up piece of paper which I believe to be the third list, the queen has written: "Snow laying all about, looks a little too d and e." (This must mean deep and crisp and even.) Then she has added: "Get GKW to have snow cleared to allow easier access for yonder peasants."

There are also some frantic squiggles down the side. It is difficult to make them out because of all the creases, but they could say: "Card for Page" and "Spouts!"

I think it is marvellous that the ancient tradition of making a list (or several lists) before Christmas has survived for so many centuries. It is a comfort to think some parts of the festival are still the same as they ever were. When we rush to scribble "batteries" or "parsnips" on a scrap of paper before batteries and parsnips escape our memory forever, we are forging a link with the monks of old, toiling patiently over their illuminated manuscripts, writing "defrost haunch venison".

Then our forefathers would painstakingly inscribe reminders for themselves, such as "change going a-wassailing from Tuesday am to Thurs pm" and "pay tithes?" and "tell R to deliver mead to back door".

It is a tradition that may even go back to the very first Christmas. When I sit and wonder what Good King Wenceslas's good queen was like, my thoughts also turn to the wives of the Three Kings. After all, they probably did have wives. Perhaps one of them, all those years ago, also made a list, starting with: "Check if anybody else is taking myrrh".

CHESS

Arkell lands £3,000 prize

By Malcolm Pein

THE Leigh Grand Prix, which tests the success of Britain's leading congress players throughout the year, has again been settled at the final weekend congress at Islington with GM Keith Arkell, second to Matthew Sadler last year, claiming the £3,000 first prize.

Arkell had battled against GM Mark Hebden throughout 1996 mantaining a slight lead for most of the time, but when his rival raced to 5/5 at Islington, where points scored count tenfold in the Grand Prix, a late reversal of fortunes was a distinct possibility.

However, Hebden drew his last two games when 5/5 was his required score and he had to settle for second place.

The Islington Open was won by Michael Adams with 5/5 and this score lifted him to third place in the Grand Prix.

The Prixette was won for the tenth year by Susan Lalic; Luke McShane was the top junior.

Arkell, of Derby, has travelled thousands of miles to accumulate his winning score of 195-1/200 which included first or second prizes at: King's Head (London), Stockport, Midlands Championships, 4 NCL, International (London), Surrey Open, Rhyl, Calderdale, Morecambe, Aintree, Hereford, Greater Manchester, Warwick Open, Glasgow, and Leighton Buzzard.

Grand Prix (final scores): Arkell 195-1; Hebden 193-7; Adams 192-2; Lalic 188-2.

Prixette: Lalic 83-6; Hunt 72-3; Arakhamia-Grant 69-5. **Amateur Prix:** Kelly 45-6; Bishop 45-5; Kobylka 43-5. **Unusually Handicapped Prix:** Lilley 37-5; Wragg 19-5; Benson 18-0

Jan Timman has started with three straight wins at Groningen. Timman defeated Peter Leko, Alexey Shirov and Loek Van Wely. Nigel Short, the top seed, is second on 2-3 having defeated Julian Hodgson and Viktor Korchnoi and drawn with Boris Gelfand. Julian Hodgson has 1/3 after a third round win over Ivan Sokolov.

One of Arkell's best wins:
C Gorka — K Arkell
Warwicks Ch

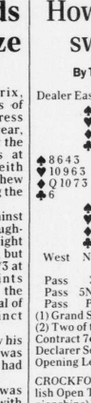
1 d4	Nf6	2 c4	e6
3 Nc3	Bb4	4 f3	c5
5 d5	d6	6 e4	exd5
7 cxd5	Nh5	8 Bb5+	Bd7
9 Bxd7+	Nxd7	10 Nge2	Qb6+
11 g3	Qh3	12 Kf2	c4
13 Qa4	Bc5+	14 Be3	Bxe3+
15 Kxe3	f5	16 Nd4	f4+
17 gxf4	0-0	18 Ne6	Ne5
19 Raf1	Rxf4	20 Nxf8	Rxf8
21 Qd1	Ng2+	22 Kd4	Rxf3
0-1			

BRIDGE HAND

How Winter swept in

By Tony Forrester

Dealer East, E/W Game



West	North	East	South
Pass	3♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	5NT(1)	Pass	7♠(2)
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Grand Slam Force (GSF)
(2) Two of the top three honours

Contract 7♠
Declarer South
Opening Lead ♦6

CROCKFORDS Cup (The English Open Teams of Four Championships) has a new format for 1997.

The qualifying round, disliked by all, has disappeared to be replaced by a knock-out format down to the last eight.

Also, seeded teams had a bye for two rounds, for the first time in the event's history.

In the third round, two Northern ties caught the eye. Today we will look at the clash between Steve Ray (North-East) and Bill Townsend (Yorks).

On the deal above, Richard Winter (South), playing for the Ray team, brought home his grand slam with the aim of some good card reading. This made up for an inferior line of play earlier on.

The auction was direct and effective. Once South had opened the bidding, it was hard to conceive that North would stay out of a slam, but to be confident of taking 13 tricks, he needed to know about the quality of his partner's spades.

Enter the Grand Slam Force, a bid designed to inquire solely *about honours in the trump* suit.

South jumped to 7♠ to show two of top three honours, despite having a minimum opener.

West led a club and South was delighted with the contract. He won ♣Q, crossed to ♠A, took ♥A and ruffed a heart. Next came a diamond ruff, before he drew the outstanding trumps.

The problem was, which loser should he discard on the last round of spades — a heart or a club? The mathematical odds favoured a heart pitch, but Winter decided that West's club lead might signal that the suit did not break.

He went with his instinct and played for hearts to divide kindly. A fine recovery.

"Wang Shoudao." Daily Telegraph, 24 Dec. 1996, p. 17. The Telegraph Historical Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/IO0702239031/TGRH?u=tou&sid=bookmark-TGRH. Accessed 9 July 2024.