



YOUNG ARCHER

March

The Romans named this month after Mars, the god of war, because fighting was so important to them. It was once the first month of their year, bringing better weather, which meant they could begin fighting again. During this month it can also be very windy (there is an old saying that March comes in like a lion but goes out like a lamb) and the roaring of the wind reminded the Romans of the roar of battle.

They believed that Mars protected them from their enemies. He was supposed to have sent them a shield as a sign that he would always watch over them. Priests in the Temple of Mars in Rome guarded this shield. Before they set out for battle, the generals went and touched the shield with their spears and asked Mars to watch over them. They believed Mars fought alongside them and helped them to win.

There was a great festival held in March in honour of Mars. His special shield was carried through the streets of Rome with the priests performing war dances. The celebrations ended with a feast where people sang songs of battle.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

Theatre Visit

The Image Musical Theatre visited the school to give a performance of *The Happy Prince*, which the children thoroughly enjoyed, particularly as they were able to join in with the acting and singing.

Basketball Coaching

Coaches from Barnet Basketball Club are helping the children to develop their skills during weekly sessions with each class in the juniors.

Building Work

The new extension project is progressing well, with the giant cement mixer having proved to be the most popular machine so far for onlookers!

World Book Day 4 March

To celebrate this event there will be a Book Week during which one of the planned activities is a sale of books after school each day.

Martin Schools

Blue Peter

As in previous years, Year 6 pupils have taken the initiative to organise and run a Bring and Buy Sale in response to the annual *Blue Peter* Appeal. The PTA kindly helped by holding a cake stall and selling teas. The children's hard work succeeded in them raising £200 for this year's charity Mencap.

Mad Hair Day

The Junior School supported Unicef's *Day for a Change* by holding a Mad Hair Day, when the children (and some staff) adopted an amazing range of hairstyles and fashions. The event raised over £150 for children in Ghana who lack drinking water and for those in Vietnam unable to reach school because of flooding.

Spring Time Clubs

The school is bursting with clubs and extra curricular activities. Sport is catered for with football, netball, gymnastics and Greek dance along with a new multi-sports group incorporating tag-rugby, football and hockey. Music thrives with individual flute, violin or keyboard lessons while groups learn the recorder or steel pans. The deputy head has introduced a music appreciation group. There are now two chess clubs, plus French, drama, sketching and sewing clubs. The homework and maths groups provide even more learning support. *Teamy*, the after school club, takes place every evening and during school holidays, whilst before school there is a Breakfast Club provided by the Infant School.

On 5 March there will be an exhibition of the work that both infants and juniors have produced during the National Gallery's *Take One Picture* project. This year British schools were asked to focus on *The Stonemason's Yard* by Canaletto. Martin Infant and Junior Schools are open for you to view on 10 March, 1.45-3.30 pm.

Digging In

Staff members Tracy Hills, Jackie Coghlan, Wendy Diamant and school keeper John Mitchell have been preparing the ground for the infant school's allotment scheme. In their own time they have been digging the ground over in preparation for planting. Meanwhile, the children have been working on graphs about what they want to grow and deciding on which vegetables to plant.

Educational Visits

Year 2 went to The Transport Museum as part of their project on travel. The school is making good use of the Northern Line under the free public transport scheme. This is available to schools that have registered and who book in advance.

Scent of Saint David's Day

By Diana Cormack

Certain smells can easily evoke memories of our schooldays. The newly polished corridors in September or chalk dust in the classrooms or the odour of the science labs come to mind, not to mention school dinners! But how many of us would mention the smell of leeks?

When we moved to Wales I didn't know why my new school friends so looked forward to 1 March. I did know it was a special day for David, the country's patron saint, but in England nobody seemed to remember Saint George's Day, let alone celebrate it!

On Saint David's Day the school held an eisteddfod. Competition was strong amongst the pupils, who performed traditional Welsh songs, played musical instruments and recited poems and stories. Everyone was keen to take part and nobody appeared without wearing a daffodil or a leek.

National emblem

The stories explaining why these plants are the national emblems usually involve David. One claims that, as a boy

studying in a monastery, David cured his teacher Paulinus of blindness and the first thing he saw were daffodils in bud. These suddenly opened into flowers that the wind shook, making the music of thousands of bells. Some people still believe that the wild daffodils of Wales flower on Saint David's Day.

After becoming a priest and preaching in many other lands, David eventually returned to Wales and set up a monastery. With his monks he worked hard farming their land and giving food and shelter to the poor. He followed a simple diet but, because it included a lot of leeks, people believed that David got his special qualities of understanding and compassion from that plant.

Take a leek

Another story tells how the Welsh, fighting an invading army, found it difficult to distinguish friend from foe. As they were fighting in a field of leeks David, their leader, told them to wear leeks in their helmets so that they could recognise their fellow countrymen. His death in 589 brought great sorrow. Where Welsh tears hit the ground, leeks sprang up!

We shed no tears on Saint David's Day for, after the eisteddfod, we had the afternoon off. However, the following morning the stench of leeks, which had been hidden in desks, stuffed behind blackboards or rammed into radiators, was enough to bring tears to everyone's eyes!!

St Patrick's Day on a far off Emerald Isle

By Sonia Singham

The island of Montserrat, also known as the Emerald Isle, in the Eastern Caribbean was brought to the attention of many when the volcano erupted in 1995. However, its colonial history dates back to 1493 when the island was given its name by Columbus and settled by the British in 1632.

During the period when Britain was sending convicts to many of its colonies, Irish convicts were transported to Montserrat. Today many of the islanders still bear some of the well known Irish surnames such as O'Garro, Murphy, Maguire, to name a few.

One of the most interesting facts of this island of 39 square miles is that it is the only island in the Caribbean which has 17 March, Saint Patrick's Day as a public holiday. The flag of the island has the Union flag in the top left hand corner,

as it is still a British colony, and the emblem of the harp of Erin to the right. If you ever have the opportunity of visit-

ing this island you will find that the immigration stamp in your passport is that of the shamrock.



www.theodora.com/flags
The flag of Montserrat

End the Year with Interest?

By Daphne Chamberlain

March may be the end of the financial year, but never borrow or lend on the last three days of this month. At least, not if you are seriously superstitious.

It used to be said that anything borrowed then could be used in witchcraft against the lender. This is linked with another old saying that March borrowed its last three days from April, which is why they are often stormy (must check this!).

Something special

So what can you do in March? Well, if you are a 'domestic' or an au pair, and providing you don't live in an alehouse, you can enter a dice-throwing competition in Guildford on the 2nd. The

winner gets £10, and it's been going on most years since 1674.

Until recently, if you lived in Deeside, in Scotland, you could celebrate Tallie Day on the 13th by attaching a tail to the seat of somebody else's pants.

Feasting and fasting

If you are dieting, or just giving up something for Lent, you might celebrate the rather oddly named Feast Day of St Nicholas von Flue on the 22nd. This fifteenth-century farmer became a healer, and allegedly cured himself of "intestinal

discomfort" by not eating for 30 years.

Perhaps it's coincidence that Nicholas's Feast immediately follows St Benedict's Day. Benedict is the patron saint of poisoning victims.

Not just St Patrick's Day

By the way, the 17th is not solely St Patrick's Day. It is also the Feast Day of Joseph of Arimathea, said to have brought drops of Jesus's blood to England in the Holy Grail. Joseph is a patron of undertakers and pall-bearers.

Have a happy March.