

Villagers All this Frosty Tide...

Imagine if you will a time before the arrival of lights. A time when the sole source of light and limited warmth was the sun that kept company with the earthly peoples who warmed the earth and sought shelter in caves, emerging to absorb whatever goodness emanated from its skyward orb that came and went repeatedly.

At times, when the produce of the earth died back, withered and lay upon the ground, the companionable sun would seem to tease, threaten to stay away for longer and remain for shorter and shorter periods of time.

What fear must have gripped those primitive minds, fear that in total darkness they would freeze...?

Fear gripping, fear spreading, fear filling the shortening time until-eyes searching for the bright orb in the arching sky could longer hold it in their gaze, longer linger to warm the skin, longer linger to thaw the frosted berries, longer linger to lure the animals, wild by nature, from their lair to make for quarry-and so the hunters to make chase and secure food for the feeding, skins for the clothing, a degree of warmth to surround them.

So much to celebrate for the great orb sun had chosen to return and stay for even longer day by day.

So it was that each time this cycle of light and dark and light and life set a pattern, the peoples responded and lit up accordingly, celebrated the light of the world which had chosen to be their life long companion and provider.

So time rolled on and with it came tribes who wandered, tribes who settled, tribes who formed the wilderness of the world and worked together with the sun to cultivate the goodness sprouted, to share the labours, share the produce and celebrate.

Once the peoples had sensed this rhythm, this pattern of changing times and found various ways of measuring and recording them, then the seasonal changes could be marked, become a time of gathering together, of celebrating together, of ritualising the special times.

As with all good community celebrations preparation is the key to success-thus a time of preparation evolved from this time of short days and long, dark nights to become a focus for people of a fragile world.

From North to South and East to West each people chose what was the best, which story told their legend clear of light that rises east to west and brings its share of treasures born of man's endeavour.

Each peoples told their story, for example Lucia, she who brings the day of celebration in Sweden (13th December), with garland of light and bearing the dawn's refreshment that breaks the fast of night in Artic lands.

Then moving slowly southwards to the low lands (Holland) and there we find the people of an earlier age with clogs upon the hearth and woollen stockings hung up high above the fire's heat to dry in preparation for the new born day.

Here in times of yore came Nicholas, a local bishop who secretly left purses of gold coins on the window sill of a needy family. On his third and final visit his identity was uncovered and thus he moved into the realm of legend. Good children were rewarded by his hand and misbehaviour censured by his wrath. His time, his day (6th December) falls within the preparation time and offers us an opportunity to expect the best of youngsters and ourselves. Good being rewarded-how refreshing this concept.

Would we could all recapture the essence of a meaningful, magical time of expectation and preparation, feel the excitement building, sense the need around us to

share some of the glittering baubles that adorn our homes and encompass us with man made brightness that seems to light our days. Could we but see what lurks in the shadows-maybe it is not to be feared but is wanting to be illuminated? Maybe, just maybe, that which lurks in darkness is waiting to see a great light. Maybe those that walk in the darkness need to feel that the stars high above shine for them, that welcome awaits in a place freshly prepared, made ready to welcome all those who take a step over the threshold, through the open door and who knows-there could be more.

Doors can appear to close us out-yet a closed door may be more to do with the keeping of the warm air in, maintaining warmth that can welcome, can surround and include.

The challenge is to sense (as Mole did one snowy night) the door that waiting to open, to welcome, to offer good to the wayfarer and that good has little to do with fiscal calibration but all to do with celebration.

Let us draw closer one to the other, out of doors, within doors, through doors, to celebrate the season. Let us light the way, signpost the route that leads to doors behind which preparation has been made and seasonal goods await those who will be welcome if they enter with the spirit of the giving season. They, then, will be ready when the nights rapidly lengthen and the stars shine brightly to celebrate in seasonal style-green for growth and red for fruits plus gold for precious gifts-ourselves golden for the giving.

Come, all you folk to St. Marychurch and fill the Village with your cheer for there

you will find: Malloy's Pub	Cornerstone
Goldilocks the Hairdressers	Drowers
Ophthalmic Opticians	The Happy Apple
Oxfam	Herbs and Honey
Chantell's Hair Advice Centre	G.L. Hockin Sweets Shop
Fiesta Red the Florist	Floor Clinic
Café Babbs	Driftwood Café
Scruples the Hairdressers	Little Cherubs
The Dolphin Pub	Precinct News
Lang's	Boots
Seaway Insurance	Louie's Gems
Gilbert's the Pet Store	G.B. Fisheries
The Thimble	Bob's Barber Shop
Halcyon Gifts	Animals in Distress
Timekeepers	Savva's Sandwich Bar
Melissa Jewels	Debonair
Lloyd Maunder	St. Marychurch Carpet & Flooring Centre
Halletts Bakery	Jack Bevan
Family Matters the Solicitors	Waterford Glass Centre
Best Wishes Gifts	Johnson's Dry Cleaners
Pick of the Crop the Green Grocers	Phillips Footwear
Sheer Indulgence the Hairdressers	Classic Clothes
Devon Spa	Rendezvous Cafe
Hair Connections	Precinct Bazaar
Bowden Partners	Photography Matters
Memories Bistro	St. Marychurch Beauty Salon
Rowcroft Hospice	
Fables the Bookshop	

So come, make your way and spend the day in profitable pursuit and pleasurable activities for here one can make merry in traditional ways all during the preparation and celebration days.

Italian Market on Friday 13th –Sunday 15th November

St, Nicholas Fair and street party on Saturday 5th –Sunday 6th December, an annual celebration in aid of the Children's Hospice South West and the Coombe Pafford School for children with learning difficulties.

We look forward to welcoming you to seasonal and festive days in St. Marychurch.