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this month includes...

January 2025

New Year thoughts

Who was Wenceslas?
by Robin

Crossover Breakfast

A Queen query
by Ian A

plus
Alpha news
Epiphany

Down time The time between Christmas and New Year generally means a change from the normal routine. To the question “what did you do over the break?” we often respond with a list of things we’ve done or places we’ve seen. But, how about the courage to say “I’ve **done nothing**”, and the wisdom to mean it as a **positive**? We don’t need to feel shamefaced about in-action, it doesn’t mean being a couch potato, it can actually be one of the most **creative** things we do! We need time to recharge our batteries because if we run on empty, our depleted energy has to be directed at keeping the essentials going, so there’s no **elbow room** in our lives, physically, mentally or spiritually. If we get overwhelmed with the detail of life, however pressing or well intentioned, we can find that our busyness is **drowning out** our connection with God.

A fallowed field recovers its goodness and pests die off as the plants they feed on are temporarily removed. For us, if we are fortunate enough to be able to step away even for a few minutes,



temporarily removing the clogging details our worries feed on, we too can find **restoration**. Down time gives us a chance to look at the bigger picture, **consider** things from a different point of view, even just let blessed sleep clear our brains and imagination. We are open to **listen** again, to **ponder** whether we might have been **mistaken**. We can **take time** to find out all the facts – palatable or unpalatable – and weigh them up before jumping in; thoughts can **gradually** mature – some to be taken forward and some to be laid aside; we can give full and compassionate **attention** to people’s needs rather than rushing in with a one size fits all solution. **Time to think** rather than pressure to act can help us to discern the difference between something urgent and something **important** ...

see overleaf

... - and to choose the latter. We need those odd **moments of stillness** to hear God speaking or to recognise his kick – it so often seems to come when we are not expecting it. So, let's be thankful for the break, and pray that we start the New Year with **a clearer vision, a new idea, a kinder and more grateful heart, a fresh inspiration from God.**

Don't waste your time on resolutions that don't ultimately matter; resolve instead to live for Christ.

A question for a New Year quiz? *Historical speculation by Ian Aldred*

Q. How many Queens of England have been called MATILDA?

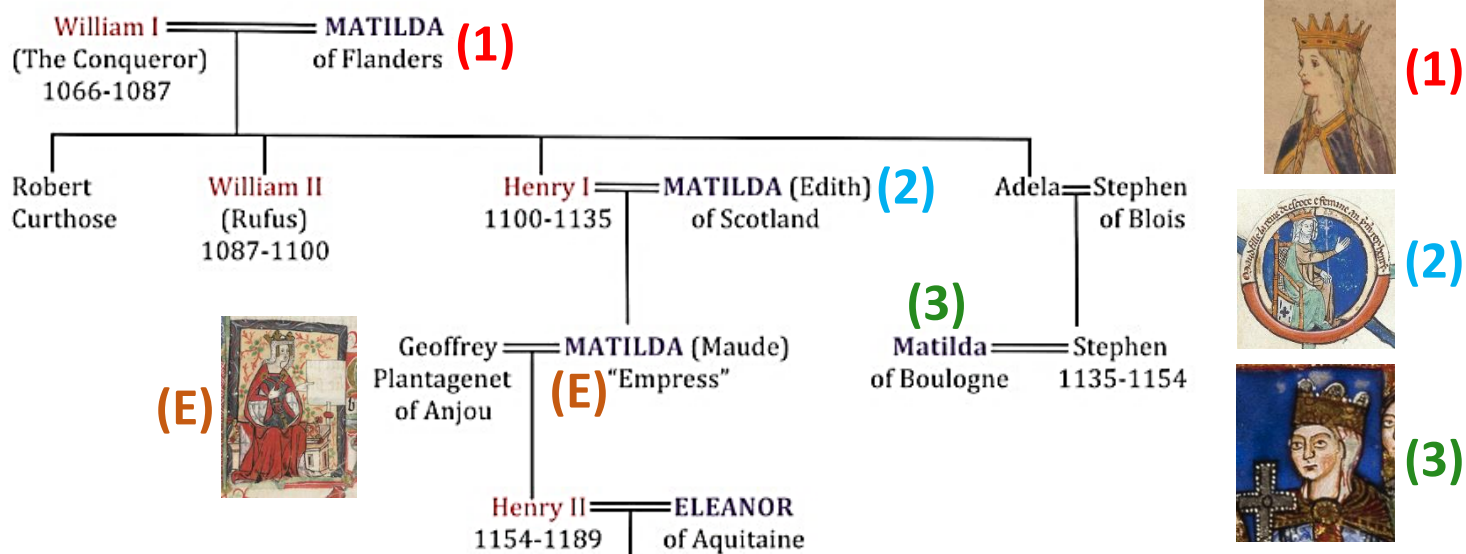
A. 3 - BUT it could have been 4, IF male chauvinism, amongst other things, had not prevented it!

So, who were the 3?

(1) MATILDA of Flanders was the wife of William the Conqueror.

(2) MATILDA of Scotland was the first wife of Henry the First (fourth son of William the Conqueror)

(3) MATILDA of Boulogne was the wife of King Stephen of Blois who was a grandson of William the Conqueror and who succeeded Henry the First.



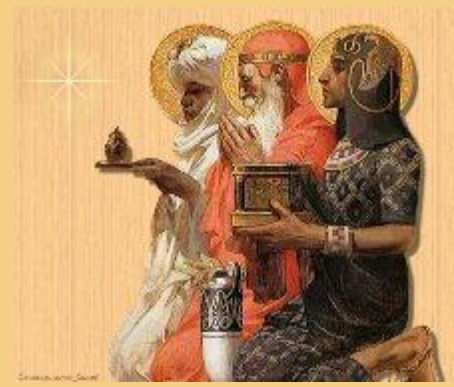
So chronologically that's three in a row, as William Rufus (William II) never married.

Now Henry I had a daughter **MATILDA (E)** and a son William, in that order. William was drowned at sea, crossing the Channel to Normandy, so Henry made **MATILDA (E)** his heir as he had no (legitimate) male heir. When Henry I died in 1135, the Council (all male), didn't like **MATILDA (E – known as “The Empress”)** or her second husband, the Count of Anjou, and anyway considered that a woman was unsuitable to be the sovereign. They therefore offered the crown to her cousin Stephen of Blois. Stephen's wife was **MATILDA** of Boulogne, **MATILDA (3)**.

IF, however, the Council had agreed that **MATILDA (E)**, the first born and Henry's stated heir should be offered the Crown and **IF MATILDA (E)**, as Queen, had died before Stephen and his wife **MATILDA (3)**, Stephen would then have inherited the Crown and his wife would have been **MATILDA (4)**, not **(3)**! One of life's great 'IFS'. It didn't happen, anyway, and the next queen was called Eleanor.

6th January : The Epiphany (revelation)

The magi *a poem by Godfrey Rust*



Will you study these signs as carefully as you studied the prices in the Christmas catalogues?

Will you seek out the manger as diligently as you searched for the right scarf or this year's toy?

Will you examine your heart's pilgrimage, and be sure towards what stable it carries its precious gifts?

Will you be a wise fool, to find and follow the strange star of truth in a sky full of glittering lies?

ALPHA at The Fleece Wednesdays 7pm, re-starts from 8th Jan : drop in for informal conversation about life and faith - see stpetersaddingham.org.uk/alpha

Robin Leleux asks Who was Good King Wenceslas?

At Christmas, one still popular carol tells of a Christian king setting out with his page, in the harsh depths of winter, to deliver practical alms to a poor man: **Good King Wenceslas**. *Who was King Wenceslas?* He was actually **Duke of Bohemia**, then a province within the Holy Roman Empire, at a time when Bohemia was divided between Christianity and paganism, and threatened by Magyars, Saxons and Franks. Brought up by his **Christian grandmother Ludmila**, she became regent in 921 when his father died. This upset his pagan mother who

promptly had Ludmila murdered and took the regency herself, initiating anti-Christian moves. At 21 in 928 Wenceslas could finally take control, ruling until 935 when he was assassinated by his jealous brother, backed by his mother.

During his reign Wenceslas ('**Vaclav the Good**') sought to strengthen his authority using Christianity, banishing pagan supporters; he built churches and introduced Latin priests while also practising much **alms giving**.

Immediately after his death he was regarded as a martyr and saint, with stories circulating and a cult developing widely in both Bohemia and

England. The Emperor posthumously made him King, since when he has always been the **popular symbol of Czech nationhood**; his statue in Prague was a focus for anti-communist demonstrations. The 12th century Czech hymn '*Saint Wenceslas Chorale*' remained popular such that it nearly became the Czech national anthem in 1918 and was often sung during the Nazi occupation.

In England the hymnwriter **John Mason Neale** had already included Wenceslas's tale in his children's anthology; in 1853 he made it into a Poem and with Thomas Helmore into a **carol** using a 13th century Eastertide melody which they had found in a Finnish songbook of 1582. This upset traditionalists so that the *Oxford Book of Carols* hoped its popularity would fade away; it has not, and its **lesson of Christian charity** is still resonant today.



John Mason Neale

Our next meeting is
Soup & Sandwich
Afternoon

Tues 7th Jan 3pm

contact Liz Powell to book



Cross-over Breakfast

Sunday 19th January, 8.45am

Meet up with old friends or make new ones over Fairtrade breakfast in the hall, an all-age opportunity to get together, whether you are normally at 8am, 10am, Evensong, Messy Church, Alpha or none of these – whoever you are, you'll be welcome to drop in to share this simple meal with St. Peter's.

Many thanks to **Derryck and Joan Higgs**, whose beautiful woodcrafted gifts have raised **£161** for the work of St. Peter's

Peace point

Peace can be a rallying cry. The desire for it is as old as society itself. It is a positive aspiration for many of the best qualities of human beings and lies at the heart of all major religions.

Steve Killelea

Happy New Year to you
with love from all at St. Peter's

ACT Carol Singing around the village raised £295.93 for **Martin House Children's Hospice**, and brought a bit of Christmas to some housebound residents, so **thank you** to all singers, and to all who waved from windows, opened doors, sang along, or welcomed us into pubs and clubs along the way!



Here's a glimpse of the Family Service at 4pm on Christmas Eve – if you weren't there you missed a treat (but it was standing room only!). Special thanks to Tamsin, Briony, Mark, Tricia, Shannon and all the *Messy Church* team for their work welcoming children and families during 2024.

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Find out more

www.stpetersaddingham.org.uk

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For up-to-date details of all services and activities, please look at our website, follow us on Facebook or pick up a "What's On" leaflet.

Everyone is welcome and you can also join with St. Peter's online; we livestream many of our services to our Facebook page, so take a look.

You can also follow **C.a.f.e** – **children and family events** at St. Peter's Addingham

Watch all **St. Peter's Podcasts** via the church website – click **Online**, scroll down to **Podcasts**, then click **Watch on Vimeo**

From the Registers

Funerals

3rd December Martin Sandland

17th December Olive Hirst

THANKS from the **Salvation Army** for all Christmas food/present donations, and for **£235** generously donated at very enjoyable Christmas Cheer *Fairfax Singers* concert