

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

2020



LINTON AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

Where History Comes To Life

2020 NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

INTRODUCTION OF THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR - page 1

FOOD RATIONING - page 2

GLORIANA - page 3



INTRODUCTION OF THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

Do you celebrate New Year's Day on January 1st? If you had lived in Britain before 1752, you would have regarded 25th March as the start of the new year. Until that year, Britain used the old "Julian" calendar, which did not adjust the difference between the calendar year and the actual movement of the sun with sufficient accuracy. In the mid-sixteenth century, Pope Gregory commissioned mathematicians to calculate a new calendar which would correct the error, and this became known as the Gregorian Calendar.

From 1582, its use spread across Europe, but Britain was slow to accept the new system. By the mid-eighteenth century, dates in Britain were 11 days different from continental Europe, and the Government passed An Act for Regulating the Commencement of the Year and for Correcting the Calendar now in Use. This came into force in September 1752, when the calendar was advanced by 11 days: Wednesday 2 September 1752 was followed by Thursday 14 September 1752.

New Year's Day did not become a Bank Holiday in England until 1974, though it was an unofficial holiday for many. For instance, Durham miners used to regard it as deeply unlucky to go down the pit on 1st January. High absenteeism was one of the reasons why the Government of the day made the first day of the new year an official day off.

Happy New Year, everyone.



old year new year

Article by Jonquil Dodd - reprinted from The Ross Gazette



FOOD RATIONING

On 8th January 1940, the British government introduced food rationing. Everyone was issued with a Ration Book, with coupons for basic items such as sugar, meat, fats, bacon and cheese. Other items were rationed using a points system. Petrol and paper for newspapers had been rationed from 1939, clothes were rationed from June 1941 and soap from February 1942.

Rationing was intended to ensure that everyone had as fair a share as possible, though inevitably a thriving "black market" developed. Britain was very vulnerable to blockade, as it was importing 20 million tons of food per year before the war, including high proportions of meat, sugar, fats, cheese, cereal, fruit and even staple vegetables such as onions. Although fruit and vegetables were never rationed, there were often shortages, and everyone who could was encouraged to Dig For Victory.

Rationing continued until 1954, meat being the last item to be de-rationed. Elizabeth David, who had spent the war working for the Government in Cairo, was inspired to write about the food of the Mediterranean whilst staying in an hotel in Ross-on-Wye during the winter of 1946-7, because she was so appalled at the food provided! The name of the hotel is not known, but Elizabeth David went on to become a great food writer, and the book, Mediterranean Food is still in print.



GLORIANA

On the morning of January 15th 1559, the last surviving child of Henry VIII was crowned Queen of England. The previous day, Elizabeth Tudor had travelled in a lengthy procession from the Tower to Whitehall, stopping frequently to hear poems, pageants and addresses of welcome and praise. Contemporary accounts emphasise the joy and thankfulness with which she was received after the cruelties of her sister's reign.

Much of the ritual of her Coronation was the same as we would recognise today, but for the last time ever the service was mainly conducted in Latin, and included a Latin (Catholic) Mass after the actual crowning and the homage of church leaders and peers. It seems that Elizabeth withdrew into St. Edward's Chapel for this part of the service, a clear sign that she would be pursuing a policy of Protestant reform.

As an old woman, more than forty years after that joyful day, Elizabeth I, Gloriana, spoke to her Parliament for the last time : "Though God hath raised me high, yet this I account the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with your loves..... And though you have had, and may have, many mightier and wiser princes sitting in this seat, yet you never had, nor shall have, any that will love you better."

