



*A Salisbury-Cathedral-centric view of History.*

*Editor: Mark Brandon: markandsuebrandon@outlook.com*

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## POPE JOAN

**P**ope Joan or Pope, a once popular Victorian family game, is an 18th-century English round game of cards for three to eight players derived from the French game of *Matrimony* and *Comete* and ancestor to *Spinado* and the less elaborate *Newmarket*. The name is a corruption of the French *Nain Jaune* (yellow dwarf) a nickname for the 7 of diamonds. The game uses a staking board (below) with eight compartments for counters. The game was popular in Scotland where the 9 of diamonds is sometimes called the *Curse of Scotland*.

So does this have anything to do with a female pope? Oh yes, and the game was even part of



Protestant the Victorian era. To the legend of a pope-ess Norwich's *The Popes* (Vintage Wikipedia.

propaganda in look further into I consulted John Julius 2012) and of course

Chapter VI of JJ's book is devoted to Pope Joan (855-7). John, an Englishman born in Mainz was Pope for two years, seven months and 4 days. The story (with many variants) is that as a girl she had been brought to Athens in the clothes of her lover. She studied and became a great master, even teaching other students. She rose through the ranks of the Church until she became the unanimous choice for Pontiff. However, whilst in procession en-route from the St

namen zenobia / von der künigin behielte / by dem pa-  
 laft diu adriani / allda endet sie ir leben .



Von johañe anglica der bābstin das xvij capl .  
**O**hañes wie wol der nam ains mañes ist /  
 so ward doch ain wÿb also geneñet . Ain  
 junkfrölin ze mençz (als etlich sagen) gili-  
 berta gehaißen / lernet in vätterlicher

Peter's to the Lateran (the pope's cathedral as Bishop of Rome), she gave birth to a baby in a narrow lane between the Colosseum and St Clement's church. Ever since, the popes have avoided this route and there is no record of her in the Vatican's official list of popes.

It thus appears to be an early example of an urban myth. There are some oddities though. For a long time there was a statue of her and the child at the spot where it happened and it is mentioned in all the old pilgrimage guide books. The

statue was probably removed by Pope Sixtus IV around 1480. Luther reported seeing it and the Bohemian reformer John Hus used the story in his defence at the Council of Constance (1414-15) and none of the Catholic clergy present denied it. It did not however prevent Hus dying at the stake. The German woodcut (left) is dated 1474 *courtesy of the British Museum (creative commons)*. The Cathedral of Siena featured a series of busts of the popes, including *Johannes VIII, Foemina de Anglia*, until it was removed following protests in 1600.

The latest thinking (and not just Catholic) is that it is decidedly a legend and the dates of the previous and subsequent popes do not leave room for any mystery pope.

There is a corollary in another story, that of the *Chaise Percée*. Adam of Usk, who was in Rome from 1402 to 1406, in writing of the coronation of Pope Innocent VII, stated: After turning aside out of abhorrence for Pope Agnes (alternative to Joan) whose image in stone stands in the straight road near St Clement's, the Pope dismounting from his horse entered the Lateran ..... and there he is seated in a chair of porphyry, which is pierced beneath for the purpose, that one of the younger cardinals may make proof of his sex. This was confirmed by Felix Hammerlein in his *De Nobilitate et Rusticitate Dialogus* (c1490) who continues that the cardinal cries in Latin *He has testicles* to which the clerics reply *God be praised*.

Two porphyry *sedia curules* were supposed to have been used by the popes. One was looted by Napoleon and the other is in the Vatican museum - it has a keyhole shaped hole in the seat and the back is angled at 45 degrees to the vertical making it more likely to be a birthing chair. The photo (right) is of a copy, I think of the Louvre chair.



## THE HOP PICKERS



**H**arry Paris writing in the *Andover History & Archaeological Society Journal* for 1996, sheds light into the forgotten annual emigration of the New Street hop-pickers. The Andover crowd would set out by train for the hop gardens of Hampshire such as at Bentley near Farnham. Some 50,000 migrant workers are supposed to have been employed all told. It was regarded as both hard work and a holiday.

Men on stilts would suspend wires across the top of the 15' poles from which strings would be plugged into the ground next to a young hop-plant for the *bines* to grow up. Old clothes were essential as hop bines stained and could not be washed off. The pickers started at 8:00am by collecting the 7-bushel baskets - a bushel is around 30 kilos. First the strings were pulled down and placed across the baskets so that the hop flowers could be removed; a boring job usually enlivened by group singing. Flasks of cold sweet tea slaked their thirsts. Children helped and babies were nested in the piles of spent vines were the soporific hops worked their magic.

A key worker was the *pole puller*. He carried a long pole with a hook at the end to get the broken vines stranded at the top of the strings. Originally the vines grew up poles and his job was to pull up the pole and lower it onto a canvas *surplice* so the hops could be picked. Children might run amok but became more tractable when the *sweet man* arrived 'carrying a tray of puddings<sup>2d</sup>, bags of boiled sweets 1d.'

The baskets were emptied into sacks provided by the pole puller and the amount would be checked by the *tallyman*. The sacks were then emptied into large metal tubs for weighing and recording as to which row was responsible. The next key worker was the drier who operated the anthracite kiln in the oast house. It was a demanding job as the degree of dryness affected the market price. Incidentally, a small pan of sulphur was included in the fire to combat any mildew.



The hops were dried on a slatted floor some 20' above the fire and were protected from falling through by a hair mat. The depth of the hop layer was about 16" and would weigh around a ton. The smell of drying hops is unforgettable as I can attest having carried out my apprenticeship in Kent. The hops were compressed into *pockets*, 5' long sacks, tight as a drum and sewn up before transporting to the breweries.

The pickers lived in rather basic huts and were fed at the cook house heated by coals from the kiln. Not all were migrant workers as there was usually a group of gypsies in their colourful *vardos* and the less salubrious *Diddicoys* (ie not of Romany descent). Saturday night was pub night and Sunday a day of rest - and gambling. A Salvation Army officer, complete with *melodeon* (a small accordion) would arrive to lead the Gospel hymns. Football contests between different hop gardens were a standard feature.



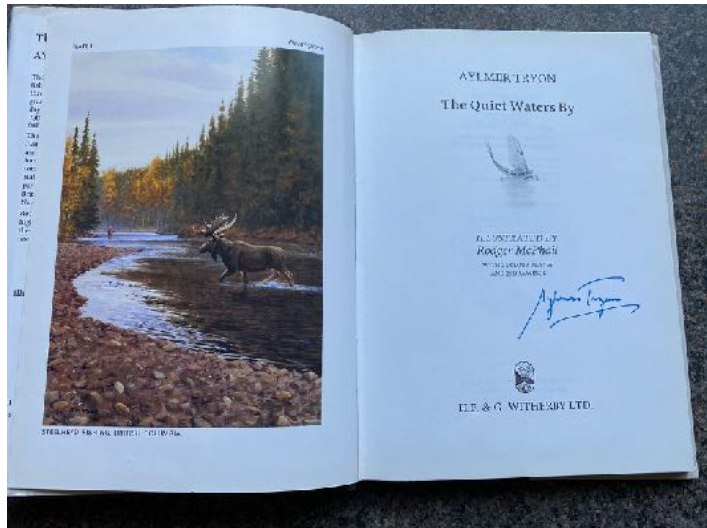
Once a garden was cleared, the workers walked to the next farm with a sign at each end of the column 'Caution Hop Pickers'. When they pulled down their last bine, the New Street pickers would save the top bunch for the Harvest Festival in St. Mary's Mission Room. Before leaving they said goodbye to the gypsies who moved on to Kent where the picking was a fortnight later owing to the different varieties. A lorry arrived to take the New Streeters to Basingstoke station for the Andover train. The next day the children were taken for their annual purchase of new clothes and shoes. If you wondered about the children's schooling, hop-picking holidays were officially recognised. The painting of Hampshire hop-pickers above is *The Green Wagon* (1920) by Alfred Munnings and comes *courtesy of the Munnings Museum in Dedham, Essex*.

## HALCYON DAYS

**W**hen I first arrived in Salisbury some 35 years ago, I took myself on a walk to explore the Woodford Valley. Crossing the River Avon I came across a water mill and got into conversation with the owner who was leaning on his garden gate.

The congenial old gentleman turned out to be the Honourable Aylmer Tryon the younger brother of Baron Tryon of Durnford (married to 'Kanga' the great friend of Prince Charles). Aylmer was chairman of the Fly Fishers Association and taught the late Queen Mother to fish; he was also the founder of the Tryon Gallery in London.

This was all brought to mind when I came across his delightful book *Kingfisher Mill* (Collins 1985). The forward is by Lord Home who notes that the local Heron is called Sir Edward (after Lord Grey the Foreign Secretary). There is also an Ex-Libris label showing that the book belonged to Eve Mackworth-Young. Eve was part of the Clan Leslie - the 21<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rothes died in 2005 and was succeeded by his son who lives in Dorset. She lived at Milford Manor and died in January 2022. Aylmer's other book is shown right.



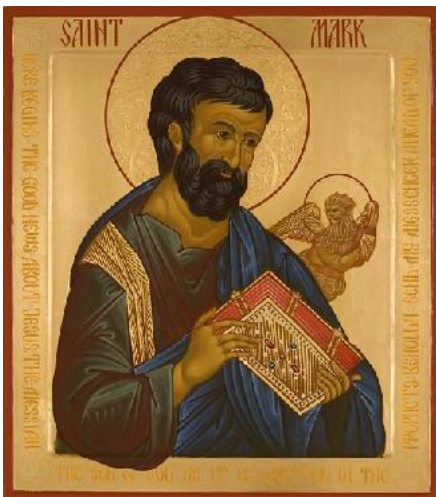
If you were puzzled by the title to this piece, *halcyon* comes from Greek mythology. *Alkyone*, the daughter of the god of the winds, threw herself into the water when her husband died. In those days it was believed that kingfishers incubated their eggs for 14 days on the surface of the sea during which period the waters were always calm (originally around 21<sup>st</sup> December). The kingfisher genus is *Alcedo* from the Greek *Alkuon*.

#### A MARK OF RESPECT

**A**pril 25<sup>th</sup> is the saints day of Mark the Evangelist. It was normal for hellenised Jews to have two names, a Hebrew name and a Latin one (Johanan and Marcus), *John whose other name was Mark* (Acts 12:12). Barnabas was his cousin and his mother's name was Mary.

According to Fr. Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (Tan Books 1955)\*, St. Mark was converted by St. Peter who referred to him as *my son* and (possibly) became his secretary travelling with him to Rome. The Roman people asked Mark to put into writing St Peter's words. This he did so faithfully, and with the sanction of the Apostle, that his chapter in the Bible was often known as Peter's Gospel (written 56 - 65AD). Many modern scholars believe that this gospel was actually written by an unknown hand and was also the earliest of the three Synoptic gospels.

St Mark was then sent to Egypt to found the Church of Alexandria where he was made bishop and his disciples became famous for their asceticism. St. Jerome refers to Mark as *the father of anchorites*. St Paul referred to Mark being 'a comfort to him'. He was eventually martyred and his remains were supposedly stolen by the Venetians. The winged lion, an apocalyptic beast (Revelations 4:6-8), and is thus the symbol of Venice. In the same genre Matthew would be paired with a man, Luke an Ox and John an Eagle.



\*I have also drawn on *Who's Who in the Bible* (Reader's Digest 1994), *The New Combined Bible Dictionary and Concordance* (Baker Book House 1996), *Hall's Dictionary of Subjects & Symbols in Art* (John Murray 1993) and *A History of the Bible* by John Barton (Penguin 2019).