

If January's magazine seemed thin, you can blame it on me!
My article on "New Year's Resolutions" never appeared,
for the simple reason that it was never written!
Hours of research carried out by Wiltshire Libraries (of June 1974)
revealed nothing at all.
The topic of Valentine's Day is equally obscure,
but I offer the following for your edification.

Valentine's Day

According to one source, there were two St. Valentines, one an Italian Bishop, the other an Italian priest, both were put to death on the same day.

Another source suggests that St. Valentine, patron saint of lovers (but why, I failed to discover) was a Roman who was persecuted and martyred for his Christian beliefs in 269AD. After trial before the Roman Emperor, Valentine was entrusted to a judge, one Asternis. Valentine entered the judge's home, and before crossing the threshold he said, "*Bless this house and everyone in it. Help them to know Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.*" Upon hearing this, Asternis said, "*If this is true, and you can restore the sight of my blind daughter, then I will believe.*" As the little girl came forward, she heard Valentine say, "*Lord Jesus Christ who art the true Light, give light to this thy child.*" At once she opened her eyes and could see, and all the household believed from that moment on.

Seemingly there is little connection between St. Valentine and Valentine's Day. The latter may have its origins in a Roman pagan festival called Lupercalia (15th February) when it was the custom to draw lots for the name of a marriage partner. It was also believed to be the day when the birds chose their mates.

In England, a Valentine was the first man a lady met upon rising in the morning. He was given the rather doubtful privilege of being allowed to offer the lady a present, this was traditionally a pair of gloves.

It was in the 18th century that Valentine cards first became popular. They were made by the sender, and consisted of a drawing and a verse. Commercial cards first appeared in the 19th century and were lavishly adorned with lace, real flowers, feathers and moss. As Sam Weller remarked in Dickens' Pickwick Papers, "*Never sign a Valentine with your own name,*" the recipient had to guess from whom it came.