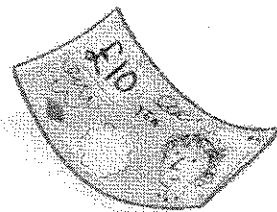


Lidwina (Virgin martyr, 1380-1433), who was injured in a skating accident and spent the rest of her life in bed. She bore her mortification with forbearance and performed several wonders: for instance, eating nothing but Holy Communion wafers for seven years. You can read more about her at www.totallysaints.com/lidwina.html

The truth is, there is always a patron saint. As St Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) once said to me, 'Saints are like television. They're everywhere. But you need an aerial.'



Anthony can't believe I've got this far without mentioning European Monetary Union.

European Monetary Union
by
Anthony Cunningham, Year Six

Money was invented in China in 1100 BC. Before that Chinese merchants used knives and spades to trade with. These were too heavy to carry, so they used model knives and spades instead. These were made of bronze and were the first coins. Soon every country had its own coins. In Europe alone there were the sturdy German Deutschmark, the extravagant Italian lire, the stylish French franc and of course the Great

British pound. The pound was first invented in 1489, when it was called a sovereign. On 17 December it will be replaced by the euro.

When you put an old pound in the bank, they put it on a special train that takes it to a secret location to be scrapped. Then the train comes back in the morning with new money. So right now nearly all the money in England is on trains.

You should collect your old coins in separate jam jars – one for five pence, one for tens, one for twenties and so on. When they're full, take them to the bank to exchange. 17 December is '€ Day', the day we say GOODBYE to the old pound.

Anthony said goodbye to the old pound nearly every day. On the way home from school, he used to run like mad to the middle of the footbridge, then wait there till a train went roaring by beneath us. Then he'd wave and yell until it was out of sight, just like the Railway Children, shouting, 'Goodbye! Goodbye, old pounds!'

He made it sound like every single ten-pound note was a personal friend. Sometimes you'd think he was going to cry. 'Just think,' he'd say, '500-odd years of history, up in smoke.'

Other times, he'd seem quite happy about it. 'Just think,' he'd say, 'come Christmas we'll be able to spend the same money from Galway to Greece.'

Every night before we went to bed, the three of us dropped any small coins we had into a big whisky bottle at the foot of the stairs. On the way to bed, Anthony would nearly weep as he dropped his five pence in. On the way to breakfast, he'd stroke the bottle happily and say, 'Amazing how fast it mounts up.'

Personally, I think, so what? Money's just a thing and things change. That's what I've found. One minute something's really there, right next to you, and you can cuddle up to it. The next it just melts away, like a Malteser.

