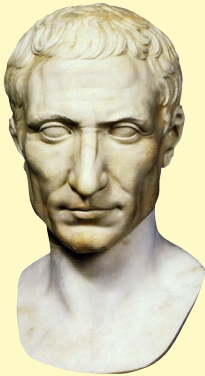




# MARCH



The month of March is named for **Mars**, the Roman god of war. In **Gustav Holst's Planets Suite** Mars is subtitled *The Bringer of War* and



uses military rhythms building to a violent climax. **Velazquez** hides the personal



identity of Mars in shadow, but makes much of his physical power and air of brooding menace.



At the **Vernal Equinox**, around **21 March**, the Sun is directly overhead at the equator, giving an equal duration of day and night all over the globe.



In the Roman calendar the term *ides* was used for the mid point of each month. The Ides of March in 44BC saw the assassination of **Julius Caesar**. A seer had foretold great danger on that day, telling him to **'Beware the Ides of March'**. On his way to the senate-house Caesar mocked the seer, saying 'See, the Ides of March has come, and I am safe.' The seer replied 'Yes, the Ides of March has come, but it has not yet passed.' At the Senate, Caesar was attacked and stabbed to death – 32 wounds were found on his body – by a group of senators calling themselves the Liberators. Brutus, Caesar's erstwhile ally, later issued coins the reverse of which showed the cap of liberty with two daggers to demonstrate his credentials in the removal of the despot.



The **March March** is a 30 mile walk from March (a Fenland market town in the Isle of Ely) to



Cambridge, undertaken in March each year by students and academics from Cambridge University.

*Lewis Carroll*

In Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the **March Hare** plays a leading part in events at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. **Sir John Tenniel** produced his wonderful illustrations for the *Alice* books despite his loss of vision in one eye in a fencing accident, not to mention the considerable time he obviously devoted to moustache maintenance.

**We are not amused...** A popular urban legend relates that Queen Victoria, having enjoyed one of **Lewis Carroll's** children's books, wrote to him suggesting



**Saint David's Day** The patron saint of Wales is celebrated on 1 March. St David's best-known miracle is said to have taken place when he was preaching in the middle of a large crowd. When those at the back complained that they could not see or hear him, the ground on which he stood rose upward, giving everyone a good view. In a more mundane account of the event he told them to move closer...

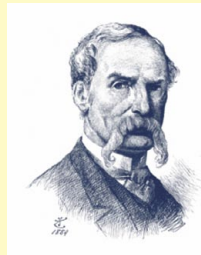


that he dedicate his next book to her. According to the story, Carroll duly obliged; unfortunately the work – published in his real name of Charles Dodgson – happened to be a mathematical textbook, entitled *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants*.

*Charles Dodgson*



In far West Wales, **St David's** – in Welsh *Tyddewi* – is the United Kingdom's smallest city, with a population of under 2000 and a tiny cathedral dedicated to the saint.



**St Patrick's Day**, 17 March, sees a worldwide surge in sales of Guinness. Patrick was born in southwest Britain in about 390AD. As a dissolute youth he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. Escaping after six years he returned to his family a reformed character, and in later life revisited Ireland as bishop and missionary, as shown on this farthing coin of 1670.

**John Gilroy's** witty and direct images – a far cry from today's special effects overkill – promoted Guinness throughout the year.

