

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Throughout the whole Kingdom to far and near the order went out. For days and weeks, the mighty and the humble toiled. No effort was too arduous to be spared. Nothing was too small to be overlooked.

These preparations were for the Christmastide review of the year to be presented in the name of Good King Richard. It was his wish to delight the populace by telling them all the good things he had provided in 1971.

At last the report was ready. To a dazzled people, the courtiers proclaimed how bright and shining had been Good King Richard's deeds. He had lifted the blight from the corn. He had caused the number of those grievously hurt in chariot accidents to dwindle by preventing them from imbibing strong drinks. He had ordered the taxes of the rich to be reduced. So notable were the King's deeds that he had been invited to tell of them in Muscovy and remotest Cathay.

Now, there were grumblers among the populace who said that not everything had been for the best during the year. These grumblers complained that their money had been devalued and there were no jobs for the jobless and no end to the foreign war and the prices of crops were very low and a spirit of discontent hung over the land.

Happily, these grumblers could not be heard for the report was presented in the Yule season with a flourish of trumpets and a beating of drums. "Bold . . . brave . . . soaring . . . daring . . . original . . . inspiring." The King listened to this description of his deeds in 1971 and gravely nodded his assent. "Let this be published in every quarter of my realm" he said.

None could doubt that 1972 was about to begin.