

THE DOZEN

CULTURAL MAGAZINE

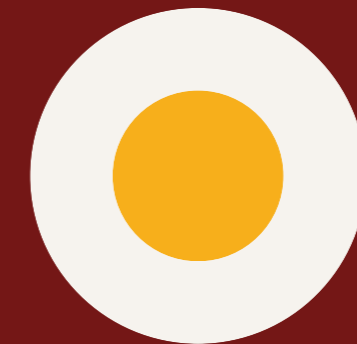


CHRISTMAS 2025

05

THE DOZEN

CULTURAL MAGAZINE



Christmas and New Years

Issue 5 2025 Holiday Special

ABOUT THE DOZEN

Welcome to the DOZEN, a monthly issue magazine by the student body, for the student body. We were tired of reading the same magazines and newspapers, regurgitating the same information with little to no change so we thought that we would give it a go! Enclosed you will discover a range of articles covering both culture, current events and academic coverage, ensuring that there is at least something here for you.

It is finally that time of year again, and we here at the Dozen decided to spread the Christmas cheer this year with a special edition dedicated solely to the most festive holiday: Christmas. Whether or not you may celebrate Christmas we hope that you may use this opportunity to learn something from this edition, even if it is only a recipe for gingerbread cookies [turn to page 13 for a sneak peek]! I would like to close by mentioning the departure of a beloved member of the community, Mr Sandiford. We will miss you and are wishing you all the best in your future endeavours. And as always, Happy Reading and a Merry Merry Christmas to you all!

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Christmas is a gold mine for the music industry. It's become a tradition for many families to put up Christmas decorations while listening to festive music. The charts are even filling up with Christmas hits even before December-13 songs made it into the Top 100 on 21st November this year. Only 3 of these songs were released in the past 20 years (none in this decade), which is surprising considering how fast the music industry changes. Although you can't beat a bit of nostalgia, surely there should be more modern input, so what's going on?

Music videos play a part in the nostalgia that these songs invoke, and it's not uncommon to see many artists go big for their music videos. Take "Merry Christmas Everyone" by Shakin' Stevens as an example, with the massive sleigh, all the animatronics, and hiring the snow machines from Tomteland in Sweden. That can't have been cheap.

However, you don't need to bankrupt your present and mortgage your future to create a memorable video. Elton John managed it quite well, revealing his supporter's card from Watford Football Club, the team that he would go on to become a stakeholder in. More memorably, perhaps, he got the camera to cut from shots of people playing their instruments to shots of him making faces and popping balloons.



CHRISTMAS & THE

Sometimes being a bit silly brings out that Christmas feeling (LadBaby and sausage rolls come to mind). Nowadays, music videos have less importance because there aren't really any TV programs that show the top hits in the charts, so the majority of people will just listen to music without watching the video on their phones.

The idea of "festive spirit" is one that many classic Christmas songs use to get their messages across, such as Band Aid's charity appeal song "Do They Know It's Christmas?", which was a charity appeal for the famine in Ethiopia between '83 and '85, and Yoko and Lennon's song "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)," protesting against the USA's involvement in the Vietnam

War. The culture of speaking up against social injustice has massively dwindled since the 1990s (but it definitely isn't dead give "Freedom" by Beyoncé and "Alright" by Kendrick Lamar a listen).

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MUSIC INDUSTRY

Music plays a huge role in the commercialisation of Christmas, with adverts often soundtracked to hits in the charts. This constant exposure to Christmas jingles helps them grow on you whether you like it or not! It would be reasonable to suggest that this is an important, albeit indirect, reason for why Christmas music won't die out.

Laufey and Michael Bublé have brought back the trend of releasing Christmas albums, a long-forgotten concept that only Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, and Frank Sinatra had tangible success with back in the '40s and '50s. In terms of Christmas albums, modern Christmas music has caught up with the classic style, but we remain waiting for some artists/bands who will just make one

Christmas hit, like The Darkness, Wizzard, and Paul McCartney. However, with the demise of popular bands, we can expect to see future Christmas hits made almost exclusively by singular artists, with some collaborating to take the charts by storm.



WARNING: SPOILERS FOR DIE HARD

The American action film *Die Hard* hit theatres in 1988, released as a summer blockbuster. Directed by John McTiernan, it followed Bruce Willis as John McClane, a New York cop caught up in a terrorist takeover of a Los Angeles skyscraper while visiting his wife during a Christmas Eve party. Alan Rickman plays the film's calculating antagonist, Hans Gruber.

Every December, a familiar argument pops up: is *Die Hard* really a Christmas movie or just an action film that happens to take place on Christmas Eve? Some people say the holiday setting makes it part of the seasonal lineup, while others insist it doesn't fit the festive mood at all. As the debate returns each year, the question remains surprisingly hard to settle.

SO, WHAT MAKES A CHRISTMAS MOVIE? AND IS DIE HARD ONE?

A "Christmas movie" should have:

A Christmas setting – The story takes place during the holiday season, often featuring decorations, winter scenes, or Christmas traditions. Does *Die Hard* have this? Yes, it takes place on Christmas Eve, and it's set at an office Christmas party.

Not every movie set during Christmas counts as a Christmas film—few people would claim that films such as *L.A. Confidential* or *In Bruges* fit the category. Still, a true Christmas movie does need a Christmas setting, and *Die Hard* clears that first hurdle by taking place on Christmas Eve. You could even argue that the film is really about an office Christmas party being derailed by a group of uninvited guests. And since the entire story plays out in that same building, you might say the whole movie is essentially one office Christmas party gone very, very wrong.

Holiday themes – The plot often centres on ideas like family, generosity, forgiveness, or rediscovering the holiday spirit.

Does *Die Hard* have this? Yes, there's a clear thread of reunion and redemption running through the film. John's entire motivation is to reconnect with his wife and children for the holidays, echoing the emotional core of many Christmas stories. The movie also sets up a symbolic contrast between the cold, corporate world of wealth and greed and the personal stakes of love and family. That tension mirrors a familiar holiday narrative/lesson: what Christmas is supposed to mean versus what commercialism can obscure.

IS DIE HARD A CHRISTMAS 02 MOVIE?

A focus on Christmas itself – Christmas isn't just in the background; it plays an important role in what the characters do or what the story means. Does *Die Hard* have this? Yes, here are some moments where Christmas is involved in the plot:

Christmas wrapping tape is a crucial prop in the climax of the story (the showdown between John and Alan Rickman)

"Now I have a machine gun. Ho-Ho-Ho": McClane makes fun of the terrorists with the body of one of them he's just killed.

The villain is the Grinch: Another classic Christmas tale is *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, about stealing all the presents of the town. And here, we have the motivation of the villain being stealing all the 'presents' from a corporation.

A Christmas present leads to the villain's demise: A Rolex gifted to his wife inadvertently results in saving the pair from Gruber.

Bruce Willis whistles "Jingle Bells," and Michael Kamen's score weaves in jingling bells throughout, giving the film a festive feel.

John McClane's wife is called Holly: probably the most Christmassy normal name you could have

So, it seems like *Die Hard* checks all the boxes. But many disagree: Star Bruce Willis and famous Christmas actor Macaulay Culkin have both said it's just a movie set at Christmas, and 44% of the British public, according to a recent poll, agree (compared to the 38% who argued that it is a Christmas movie). And so, which is the right answer? Maybe have a re/watch of *Die Hard* in the holidays – if you are old enough – and decide for yourself!

Wherever you may turn this festive season, shop windows upon shop windows will gleam with various hues of vivid and vibrant reds. Jumpers, hats, scarves and even bags all seem to harmonise in colour scheme as if they were in a symphony orchestra. But why do they? Why do we wear red this time of year? At first glance this seems like a simple question with an answer just as simple in nature; we wear red because Santa Clause does too. But this is not necessarily the case. Just like any other colour, red carries a lot of symbolism and meaning, and knowing where the tradition stems from is the first step to understanding this question.

The tradition of wearing red (and also green) is not actually based in Christmas. They stem from the Celtic holiday of the winter solstice which itself lies near Christmas -only three days separate the two! The ancient Celts believed that the scarlet berries and pine-green leaves of holly bushes could bring about good fortune and vitality for the year to come, decking their homes and dyeing their clothes in the colours to ensure their prosperity.

So, we have reached our answer; “we wear red because of Santa Claus and Santa wears red because of Celtic Winter Solstice traditions”. Surprisingly, we also cannot leave the question there. It is a little-known fact that Santa used to wear green, which begs the question of when and why he switched to his famous red outfit that we all know and love so dearly.

Based on the real-life Saint Nicholas, a fourth century Greek bishop from modern day Turkey, Santa gained his claim to fame by saving three poor girls from slavery by dropping gold through their windows every night three nights. Although depicted in red and robes, St Nicholas was primarily depicted in a multitude of colours, often seen in green. It was Thomas Nast who first gave us our jolly red Santa, depicting him in a red suit and cap with white fur lining and a buckled black belt in the 1870s. Nast produced several similar drawings of Saint Nicholas for Harper’s Weekly for over 20 years, his 1881 image of the saint titled ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas’ serving as the unofficial portrait of the mythical figure.

WHY RED?

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We cannot talk about the man in red without mentioning the influence of Coca-cola. In 1931, Coca-Cola commissioned Haddon Sundblom to produce images of Santa himself to be placed as ads in popular magazines. Sundblom took inspiration from Nast’s ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas’ donning the figure in a bright red coat with a hat to match, creating the most popular image of Santa Claus to date in 1964. The original oil paintings Sundblom created were adapted for Coca-Cola advertising in magazines and on store displays, billboards, calendars, and posters. Today these images can be seen on display at World of Coca-cola in Atlanta, USA.

So now we know how and why our love for red came about, we will further cherish our roots in Red this festive season, and I hope that all of you may wear something Red these holidays. And to end I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!



RED CHRISTMAS



As the year comes to an end, many people will be appreciating the gifts given to them for Christmas. For most of us, the greatest present each year has long since arrived. It does not lie under a tree in a box, but rather on your phone or laptop, in a little green app. This is, of course, Spotify Wrapped, the summation and definition of a year's experience through music. While the eyes of most are focused on names and titles, music taste is more than just a culmination of songs and artists. Albums are an artist's way of telling stories greater than the 3 or so minutes that a song spans. In a modern context, they are little more than a passing image on the way to your favourite song. But at the height of physical media, an album cover was truly the face of an artist's work.

The first recognised production of an album cover was from Odeon, a German record company, for a release of Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker Suite' at the start of the 20th century. The base of a physical album cover came shortly after, as records began being sold in card sleeves during the 1920s. However, it would take almost another two decades for the concept to be truly considered by Alex Steinweiss, art director at Columbia Records, who introduced the idea of putting an image on these drab covers. After this was implemented, Columbia Records saw almost a doubling in annual sales, leading to the idea catching on. Of course, as all great things do, the album cover had to become digital eventually. The album credited as being the first to be digital did so in 1979. 'Bop till You Drop' by Ry Cooder, sporting a bright pink album cover, fitting of its experimental nature.



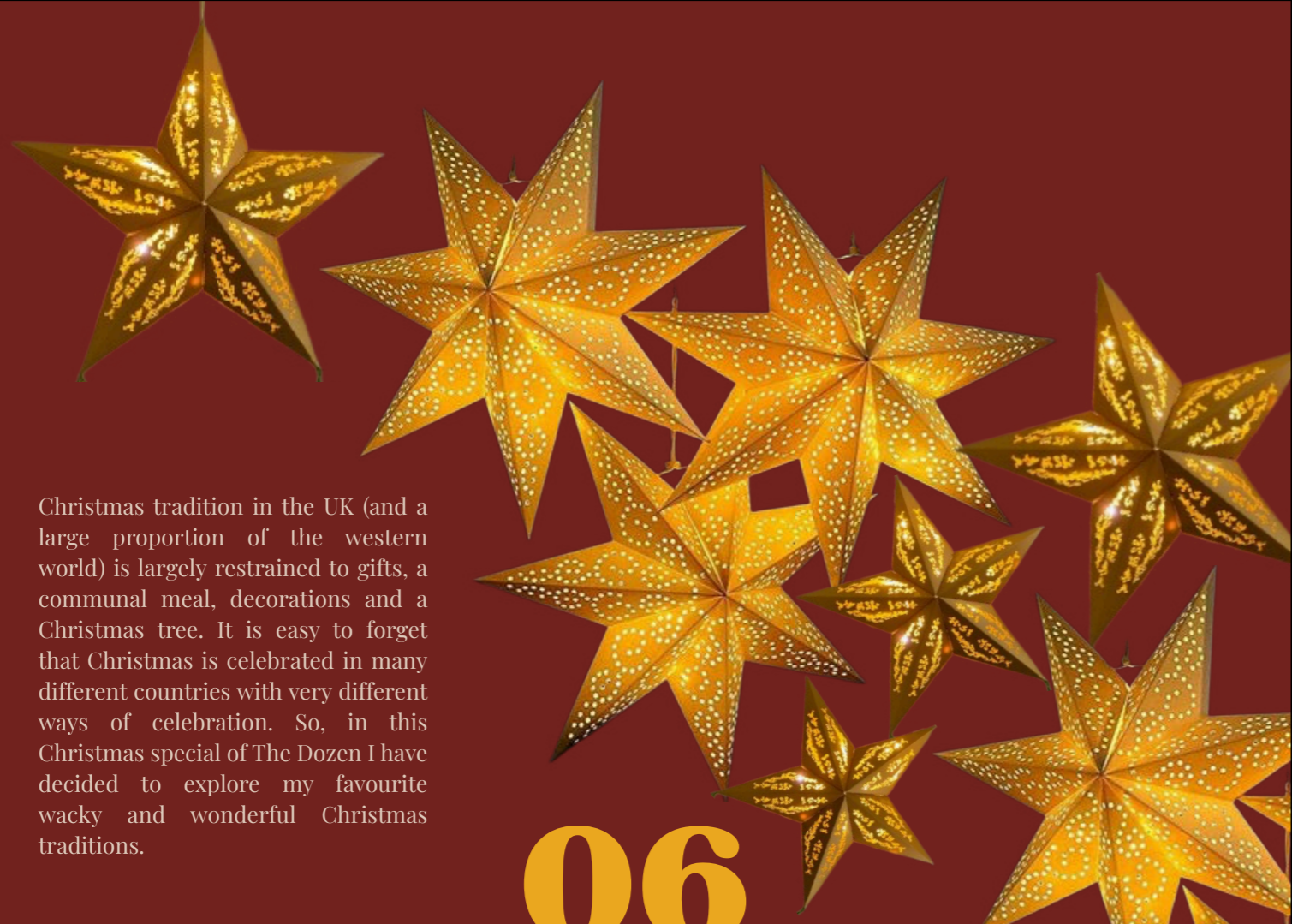
ART ON ART

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As the album cover has cemented itself into the world of music, it has primarily been an expression of photography, normally of the artist, with some colours changed to vaguely match the vibe of the album. Though this is a very sufficient expression of an album's character in its own right (such as the iconic image of Frank Ocean on 'Blonde', or the various representations of Tyler, The Creator whose albums push photography much closer to the realm of illustrations, with extreme editing and bright colours), these covers lack uniqueness and diversity due to the restrictions of photography. Illustrated album covers, though rare, are, in my opinion, the pinnacle of album design. 'I Want You', by Marvin Gaye, sports one of the most intricate and fitting album covers of all time.

Often, trying to connect a complex visual art with music can lead to two possibly conflicting stories, but this cover manages to avoid this, despite it being an adaptation of another painting: 'The Sugar Shack' by Ernie Barnes. The perfect meshing of music and visuals is a consequence of the musical nature of the scene depicted. People dance with exaggerated movements and eyes closed, embracing the music played, and the warm reds and browns support the passion displayed in songs throughout the album. The positions of the figures depicted look almost unnatural, a representation of what Barnes describes as the "sins of dance", a release of innocence in exchange for love.

Many artists have mastered the illustrated album cover since, with notable examples being the albums of MF Doom, whose albums present various comic-like styles that are suited to the character he builds, all sporting his iconic metal mask and green outfit, and Mac Miller, whose albums wield absurd and bright images that match the emotional nature of his works. Still, they are majorly unappreciated by the common listener. Some of the greatest artworks are forgotten purely because they accompany a musical piece. I implore any readers, the next time you listen to music, notice the visual as you would the sound. Look before you listen. There is a treasure to be found on the face of every album.



Christmas tradition in the UK (and a large proportion of the western world) is largely restrained to gifts, a communal meal, decorations and a Christmas tree. It is easy to forget that Christmas is celebrated in many different countries with very different ways of celebration. So, in this Christmas special of The Dozen I have decided to explore my favourite wacky and wonderful Christmas traditions.

06

You may be used to only celebrating Christmas on the 25th of December, the 12 days of Christmas, or, for those who are eager, as soon as Halloween ends. But in the Philippines, it's common for the Christmas season to start in September, lasting throughout the "ber months" (SeptemBER etc.) and ending as late as the first week of January. With over 90% of the country identifying as Christian, this long season does seem fitting.

The start of the Christmas season is marked by radio stations playing Jose Mari Chan's Christmas songs (imagine the Filipino Mariah Carey). Families decorate their homes with parols, which are star-shaped lanterns representing the Star of Bethlehem. Furthermore, carolling is one of the most popular ways of celebrating Christmas among Filipinos, with children and adults alike going door to door singing Filipino Christmas songs.

Between the 16th and 24th of December, Filipinos take part in Simbang Gabi. This is a series of nine consecutive dawn masses (usually 4-5 am) up to Christmas. Tradition states that completing all 9 of these masses grants you a wish on Christmas, making it extremely popular among children. The 24th and 25th of December, being national holidays, are the peak of the Christmas excitement. Noche Buena takes place at midnight on Christmas Eve as a welcome to Christmas Day.

Families gather for a feast usually comprising noodles and lots of sweet treats. After Christmas Day, New Year celebrations begin, and the Christmas season ends with Epiphany on the first Sunday of January (however, some families continue until the feast of Candlemas on February 2nd).

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS 4 MONTHS OF CHRISTMAS:

The long Filipino Christmas season is credited to the large proportion of Christians in the country along with a national love for celebration, music, food and decoration. Many traditions derive from the Philippines' long history of colonisation, causing festivities to resemble Spanish and American traditions.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIDER

Most prevalent in Ukraine and Poland, the tradition of placing small spider-shaped ornaments on Christmas trees and as Christmas decoration stems from Eastern European folklore. A condensed version of the folklore is as follows: a poor family lived in a small hut. One summer day, a pinecone fell on the floor. The children took care of the tree that grew in hopes of using it as a Christmas tree. When Christmas Eve arrived, the tree had grown, but the family was too poor to decorate it.

The next morning, the children found the tree covered in cobwebs, which were turned to gold and silver by the sunlight, taking the family out of poverty forever. Interestingly, many believe this is also the origin of adding gold and silver tinsel to Christmas trees.

Noche de Rábanos (the Night of the Radishes) is a special annual event held in Oaxaca City in Mexico on December 23rd. Oversized radishes are chiselled and carved into scenes of the nativity by artisans. The scenes are put on display in the city with thousands across Mexico and the world coming to see them. The radish art is then judged, and prizes are won.

The event began in the 19th century with farmers carving radishes to attract customers in the Christmas market, tying into the wood carving tradition of the city. Eventually, in 1897, the city issued its first formal competition as a way to pit farmers against each other. The event has grown so much that the government has dedicated land for growing these oversized radishes and controlling the distribution to competitors.

C E L S W H E R E M A S

07

With only one Premier League Boxing Day match taking place this year – the PL following in the footsteps of other European nations by introducing a sort of ‘winter break’ – we explore the dying art of football in the Christmas season and why we want it back.

FOOTBALL ON CHRISTMAS DAY?!

Yep, you heard that right. Football had been played during Christmas ever since its codification in the mid-1850s (as many Victorians had a day off so it allowed for an enjoyable social day out) and up until the 1960s it was common practice to see even the highest-level football matches taking place on the holy day. Indeed, the most recent First Division game played on Christmas in England was in 1965 between Blackpool and Blackburn, and it took until 1976 for the last Christmas Day match in Scotland as Clydebank and St Mirren drew 2-2.

XMAS FOOTY

However, as living standards rose and gifts became more affordable, the holiday began to shift more into the home and away from communal entertainment. Christmas Day football also gave the world one of the most bewildering results we’re ever likely to see, with Norwich beating Brighton 18-0 in 1940, a result that even the most avid FIFA player would struggle to believe – the away side only having one senior player and having to end up borrowing volunteers from the crowd. With moments like this, a far cry from the ultra-organised modern game, we’d think it would be superb to see more matches on Christmas Day again – and yes, we would be happy to volunteer to make up the numbers for Brighton if need be.

WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED ON BOXING DAY 1963?

I’m sure many of you have heard of this famous day before. 66 goals in 10 First Division matches, a record unlikely to ever be beaten, spawning a series of famous Internet memes that seem to repeat themselves every year. West Ham were beaten 8-2 at home by Blackburn with a lineup containing future World Cup winners Bobby Moore, Martin Peters and Geoff Hurst, whilst Fulham thumped Ipswich 10-1 (to this day their record victory). Nottingham Forest drew 3-all with Sheffield United after surrendering a 3-0 lead.

A DYING ART

Everton lost 2-0 to Leicester in the lowest-scoring game of the day and Wolves drew 3-3 in a derby with rivals Aston Villa, before West Bromwich and Tottenham tied an 8-goal thriller to round off the day’s events. Although the scores may give a reflection of the quality (or lack thereof) of post-war defending, the pure chaos of it all is unlikely to ever be repeated – especially now that Boxing Day games are becoming phased out, signalling the beginning of the end for one of football’s most iconic traditions. Graham Leggat scored the fastest ever Football League hat-trick – until Sadio Mané beat it in 2015 whilst playing for Southampton. Ipswich, having won the League the previous season, capped a glorious fall from grace and finished bottom in the 1963-4 season, conceding 121 goals, 10 of which came from here.

Meanwhile, Manchester United, off the back of a 4-0 defeat to Everton, travelled to Burnley and were beaten 6-1 (yes, by Burnley – times really haven’t changed after all) and Liverpool also won by the same scoreline at home to Stoke. Chelsea won 5-1 away at Blackpool while Sheffield Wednesday won 3-0 over Bolton (although two days later they were to lose by the same scoreline to the same team).

For all the glitz and glamour the Premier League offers its billions of fans around the world, it’s hard to look at the uncontrolled, frantic nature of Boxing Day football and want it replaced with more overly commercialised fixtures broadcast on Sky – because after all, some traditions are meant to be kept, and one of them is festive football.

HOW THE VICTORIANS CELEBRATED AND CHANGED CHRISTMAS.

Without a shadow of a doubt, Christmas is the most celebrated holiday in the western world. From Christmas trees, Santa Claus to the Nativity, Christmas definitely leaves a large cultural impression, even outside of a Christian context.

Despite this, Christmas as a celebration was nearly dead by the start of the Victorian Era, an effect of the rapid industrialisation and long, gruelling work hours of the urban regions. Christmas' saving grace came in the form of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol (1843). The book was an instant success, in part due to the cheap selling price of five shillings (25p), with 15,000 copies being sold by the end of the month.

Unsurprisingly, Christmas celebrations throughout Victorian Britain skyrocketed throughout the next few years, with many new traditions being created, many inspired by Dickens' vivid descriptions of the celebrations in his book. Many of these traditions have lasted until today.

PRE-VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

For most of Christian history, Christmas wasn't actually the main holiday of the year; instead, due to the religious weight in holidays at the time, Easter would be far more relevant than Christmas. Christmas celebrations and traditions mainly revolved around the Advent fast, followed by a 12-day celebration. Gift-giving started in Renaissance Europe, a tradition folded in from New Year's celebrations.

Victorian Era Christmas was where major similarities to 21st-century Christmas can start to be seen. Due to the heritage of the royal family at the time, many traditions were influenced by Northern European celebrations (Santa Claus was originally a Dutch tradition, brought to America by immigrants and then massively popularised by Coca-Cola). For example, the Christmas tree in Britain was popularised by Prince Albert, though George III had put up trees since 1800; the royal family had decorated their trees with baubles and trinkets. Victoria had also popularised the eating of turkey and Christmas pudding at Christmas, with help from Charles Dickens as well. For most poorer Victorians, any kind of bird was good for Christmas, with people even joining goose clubs to pay off a Christmas goose in small instalments.

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VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Gifts were shared on Christmas Eve, and it was common to give gifts of gratitude to those who worked under you.

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Whilst Christmas is the celebration of Christ's birth, the actual date is unknown, with the 25th of December being chosen in 221 AD due to its closeness to pagan festivals, especially the Roman Saturnalia, a festival of revelry where, among other traditions, there would be a role reversal of society, with masters and slaves trading places for the duration of the festival in some areas. Some of these pagan influences lasted past the Roman Empire, with revelry and class reversals still being common in early modern Europe. However, growing Puritan influence in England, especially from Oliver Cromwell, generally put a stop to the celebrations, as they were seen to be excessive.

Charles Dickens' book helped cement these traditions throughout Victorian Britain, especially for poorer Victorians. A Christmas Carol also put the themes of generosity and charity at the heart of Christmas, with Dickens also coining the phrase "Merry Christmas!". Dickens' novel definitely had a large impact on how Christmas was celebrated among the masses.

However, some of Dickens' hopes for Christmas didn't stand the test of time. Dickens also thought that Christmas celebrations should have a large focus on ghosts and the supernatural, evident in A Christmas Carol. Unfortunately for him, this never really caught on. I suppose it's best to leave the ghosts for Halloween.



Christmas is the most widely celebrated holiday in the world. In England, a country with deep roots in Christianity, it would be expected that its most famous celebration has always been a time of festive cheer. However, for much of the mid-17th century, this was anything but the case.

RADICAL FAITH VS FESTIVITY

It was actually the most fervent Christians who were responsible for the ban on Christmas. Puritans, extreme Protestants who dominated Parliament but were still a minority in population compared to the mainstream Anglican majority, had concerns about Christmas as a festive holiday. Observing that Christmas celebrations were often rowdy and involved heavy drinking, Puritans opposed the traditional celebration of Christmas due to their view of it as a day of permitted immorality. Puritans saw greater value in sober worship than in festivities. Puritans also, looking at the Bible, saw a lack of Scriptural basis for the celebration of Christmas, since God never commanded us to celebrate Jesus' birth. Christmas' historical ties to Saturnalia, the ancient Roman holiday, also gave it a scent of paganism among Puritans, leading to their zealous disapproval.

HOW DID CHRISTMAS BECOME ILLEGAL?

The first restrictions on Christmas were put in place through Parliament in 1644, declaring it a day of fasting, not feasting, replacing festivity with solemn worship. However, authorities didn't completely enforce this law, so some Christmas traditions stayed. In 1647 however, Parliament passed a full legal ban on Christmas, with shops required to stay open, all decorations and church services banned, and soldiers patrolling in some areas to enforce popular compliance.

After the end of the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector in 1653. Since he was also Puritan, he kept in place the bans on Christmas, though he is often personally blamed for "banning Christmas" — a common myth. Popular defiance was widespread throughout the late 1640s and the 1650s, with many people simply ignoring the law and continuing celebrations in private, and the ban on Christmas was part of the broader unpopularity that led to the Restoration. When Charles II and the monarchy returned in 1660, the ban on Christmas was lifted, and this strange section of English history came to an end.

PUBLIC BACKLASH

Christmas wasn't just like any other tradition; it was a time where the poor population of England finally had a day of rest, a day to see their family. There was widespread opposition to the ban, culminating in riots in towns like Canterbury and Norwich, as well as weak enforcement of it. This, combined with other opposition to the Cromwell regime, led to the Restoration of the monarchy with Charles II. There was a clear disconnect between the Puritan-controlled, generally wealthy Parliament and the Anglican, poor majority in England. So, the ban on Christmas did not work because of the difference between the hearts of the people and the law — a cultural revolution like this could never happen purely through parliamentary reforms; opposers of Christmas had to change the minds of the people before any laws were to be effective.

LESSONS FROM A LOST CHRISTMAS

Today, we see Christmas as a time of joy and cheer for everyone, not even just Christians. But we also see it as a constant, a celebration that comes every year, one we can count on. Therefore, remembering these times where Christmas was not constant, where the people couldn't count on it, is important so that we can view Christmas for what it is: a celebration to be treasured. So, make the most of every Christmas, because we never know when the last one will be.



09

WHEN CHRISTMAS WAS BANNED

Q&A WITH THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The results are in! You spoke and we listened. We are elated to announce that the inaugural Dozen's Students' Teacher of the year is.... Ms Senflechner. We would like to congratulate her on her victory as well as thank all our members of staff and teachers for their hard work in supporting us all this past year! Without their efforts Reading School would not be half the school that it is today, and we would be the worse for it! Below we have a special interview with your winner!

But first here are your top ten runners up:
2nd with 5% each: Mr Tuggey, Mr Hung and Dr Dowle
5th with 4.4% each: Mr Allen and Mr Cooper
7th with 4.2%: Mr Sanchez
8th with 3.2% each: Mr Sandiford and Mr Cho
And finally rounding off the top 10 is Mr Cheng with 3%

So, first question: how do you feel knowing that the students have chosen you as the teacher of the year?

Surprised? Um, because we've got a lot of much better teachers, I guess. And if they mean it seriously, then thank you very much.

Is there something you always keep in mind when you're teaching? So, for example, do you walk into a lesson with a particular goal in mind?

Every teacher does. You have got something you want to teach them, but then you go into a lesson, and it depends on your students and how they are. Because if you bump into a student who's had the worst day ever then you need to try and turn it around because they will not be able to concentrate in your lesson if they're feeling dreadful.

Well, I mean, there was an overwhelming consensus among your voters that you are a pleasant teacher who makes all her students quite happy, which brings me into a two part question: first, how long have you been teaching? Secondly, has your teaching style remained constant?

I've been teaching since 2003, but I started as a teacher in Austria. I studied nutrition, so I was a food Tech teacher. So, I taught cooking in Austria but only up to A-level, so I was mostly in kitchens, and I did nutrition alongside it, basically telling students what to eat and what they shouldn't eat. They made me do an English degree because there was a lack of English teachers. It was my choice to come to the UK, to improve my English. I've actually completely changed my career since then.

Yeah, that kind of leads into my next question! Is everyday an enjoyable one? I can comfortably say that I don't leave school with the same mood that I walk in with. So how do you deal with some of the difficulties?

It depends on the difficulties and no, not every day is enjoyable for me either; every day is completely different. Sometimes you walk out worried about the student, and sometimes you walk out thinking, "oh, it was actually quite nice to have had this lesson at the end because now I feel better again".

Then, would you say that you feel like every student reflects you directly?

When I started teaching in Austria, they said, "you have to serve your own classroom", which means if they're loud, what have you done [to make them loud], or if they're good - what have you done [so that they're good]? But it's also: what happened to the students beforehand? That they react one day, one way, and another day, another way. For example, on a Friday afternoon a double lesson in a foreign language is definitely hard and I come out needing chocolate.

Alright, so: is there a certain group that you enjoy teaching the most? For example, do you prefer the energy that the year 7s give off? Or do you like the calmness of a sixth form classroom?

I think the variety is good, because sixth form is really easy to teach. It doesn't make you a good teacher to be a sixth form teacher. It makes you only a good teacher when you have a class that is challenging and to actually get them to be good at your subject.

Yeah, that makes sense. Now here's a hard question. Do you have favourites or not?

So, favourites... I don't like having favourites, because I grew up in a small village and the children of the shopkeepers were the favourites. I fought myself up to get the top grades because I didn't want them to have the good grades that I deserved. Because of that I hate people who have their favourites because it's unfair, isn't it?

Definitely. And do you remember your students after they leave?

Yes. Every single one.

Bonus

We've decided to finish the year on a sweet (or savoury) note with the staff's favourite Christmas foods! We'd love to hear what you've been reading so feel free to send us a quick email at: thedozen.publicity@gmail.com

From all of us in the Dozen, we wish you a very Merry Christmas!



DANIEL



PROFITEROLES



YULE LOG



THEODORE



RICHARD



CHRISTMAS
PUDDING



PIGS IN
BLANKETS



YUVRAAJ



TOM



YORKSHIRE
PUDDING



PIGS IN
BLANKETS



EVAN



JADEN



STUFFING



NANDAN



NUT ROAST



GIL



ROAST
GAMMON



JALEBI



MOJTABA



ABDUL



GULAB JAMUN



MINCE PIES



AMANUEL



JAMIN



BREAD SAUCE

