



THE PRIORY ACADEMY

LSST

Prory Press



Christmas Special!



Module 2 - Edition 4



Christmas News

Esmae Elcocks and Ava Nesom-Rogers

Early Christmas shoppers are looking for luxury deals but are being warned about dangerous online scams

Advent calendars have evolved over time to include more than just small chocolates and little pictures. Now, anything from beauty products to luxury foods and drinks can be up for grabs. The consumer group "*Which?*" are urging people to keep a close eye out for fraudsters offering deals that appear to be too good to be true. Cosmetics producer *Space NK* have asked people to consider whether what they are buying sounds realistic enough. Word has it that an anonymous seller has been selling their products for extremely cheap prices; these have turned out to be scams. For example, their £250 advent calendar was up for grabs for about £28. Lisa Webb, a member of *Which?*, quoted: "Since these products can be expensive, many people will be looking for discounted and cheaper options, but it is important to be aware of scammers trying to take advantage of this during the run up to Black Friday and Christmas." All of this shows that you need to be aware of scams or fraud. Have a lovely (early) Christmas and stay safe!

Movie news

Thomas Swinburne

Top 5 Christmas movies

A key part of Christmas is entertainment, whether it's a pantomime or shopping for presents, but as always, film is a corner stone of this time of year. There are many Christmas movies that range from good to revolutionary, so here's a list of my personal favorites.

5. Elf (2003) - This heartwarming film about Buddy the elf's journey to find his father in the city of New York perfectly encapsulates family and the Christmas spirit with some good laughs.

4. Home alone (1990) - this Christmas movie is iconic, littered with iconic quotes and moments. It is hilarious each and every time I watch it.

3. Home alone: lost in New York (1992) - the sequel to the hit 1990 movie provides better laughs traps and set pieces to the original; it is an insanely good movie that makes you laugh and feel for the characters with hilarious slapstick comedy.

2. Die Hard (1988) - yes I count Die Hard as Christmas movie and yes I consider it one of the best! It is not only a good Christmas movie, but one of the best action movies. It is effortlessly cool with John Mcclane the renegade NY PD officer who doesn't play by the rules, and Hans Gruber -who may just be my favorite villain - with his charm and charisma.

1. It's a wonderful life (1946) - this film follows the life of George Bailey who throughout his entire life, has put others above himself. Facing bankruptcy and poverty, George decides to end it all when God sends Clarence (his guardian angel) to show him a world where he never existed. This makes George realize that real wealth doesn't come from money, but from friends, family and love. This beautiful film is heartwarming, tear-jerking, and an absolute joy to watch. I can not recommend it enough.

Christmas News

Esmae Elcocks and Ava Nesom-Rogers

Christmas tree is put up in Trafalgar Square

In a well-established Christmas tradition, one that has been annual since 1947, a Norwegian Spruce tree from Norway has been transported to London to respect the many ways the UK helped Norway in World War 2, such as shielding the Norwegian King and government from 1940 onwards. The Lord Mayor Of Westminster, Robert Rigby, helped cut the 66ft tree down in Oslo and he quoted uncertainly that "It may look flat at first but don't worry since it will unfurl and look majestic." To help out the environment, the Christmas lights that will be used to decorate this tree are energy efficient and were switched on in a ceremony on the 5th of December. To keep everything further environmentally friendly, they have also made changes to the transportation - it has been changed from lorry to electric truck. The tree for this year has a shocking age of about 57 years old! It weighs a ton, and came from the Forest of Grefsenklevia that surrounds the capital city Oslo. Now, if you're wondering how this massive tree was put up, it was done skillfully by a huge crane.

This year is the 77th anniversary of King Haakon sending the very first tree into London - do you have any Christmas traditions?

Global Christmas News

Anusha Senthilkumar

Unique Christmas traditions from around the world

Christmas is celebrated in many fun and unique ways around the globe, each tradition reflecting the culture and spirit of the country. In Japan, Christmas has become a special occasion where families often indulge in a festive meal of KFC. This tradition began in the 1970s when a clever marketing campaign promoted fried chicken as a holiday feast, making it a popular choice for many families who enjoy the delicious taste and convenience.

In Venezuela, the festive season is particularly lively. Each year, families celebrate with a tradition called "La Gaita," where people skate to early morning church services. The streets come alive with vibrant music and joyful singing, creating an energetic atmosphere that brings the community together.

Italy has its own unique twist on Christmas with the celebration of La Befana. She is a kind witch, who flies on her broomstick, delivering gifts to children on the night of January 5th. Kids eagerly anticipate her arrival, leaving out stockings filled with treats and sweets, hoping for a visit from this beloved figure.

In Mexico, the tradition of Las Posadas re-enacts the journey of Mary and Joseph as they seek shelter. This nine-day celebration features festive processions, singing, and lively gatherings, culminating in a joyous celebration on Christmas Eve.

The Philippines hosts the Giant Lantern Festival, where towns compete to create the most elaborate and colourful lanterns. These stunning displays light up the night sky, symbolizing hope and joy during the holiday season.

Exploring these diverse customs not only enriches our understanding of Christmas around the world but also offers exciting ideas for celebrating the holiday in new and creative ways!



Environmental News

Rachel Ballantyne

Ways to make Christmas more eco-friendly

Christmas is a time many people spend enjoying themselves, with it being the biggest time of year where they can focus on doing what they want with people close to them. Being conscious about environmental impact doesn't mean that the holiday shouldn't be enjoyed, just that there are a few things to keep in mind.

- Wrapping paper as a default is not necessarily recyclable due to its laminated effect. Specifically looking for paper that is recyclable, paper based sticky tape, or gift bags as an alternative that everyone reuses can be a good way to reduce household landfill inputs.
- Looking at the packaging on things bought for Christmas is important. Certain products such as Christmas crackers can either be sold in boxes with plastic covering, or in boxes labelled as plastic free, which would be less wasteful. When it comes to sweets or chocolates, items wrapped in foil as opposed to plastic have a better environmental impact, and certain items like 'Quality Street' chocolates are now plastic free.
- Finally, when planning Christmas dinner, having plans on using all leftovers prevents food from decomposing in landfill, which creates excessive greenhouse gases. It also maximizes value for money, so is an easy plan to make during the holiday period.

Santa News

Anusha Senthilkumar and Aashritha Guntuka

Origins of Santa Claus

The figure of Santa Claus has a rich and fascinating history that blends folklore, tradition, and cultural influences. The origins can be traced back to St. Nicholas, a 4th-century Greek bishop from Myra (modern-day Turkey). Known for his generosity, St. Nicholas was famous for performing miracles and giving gifts to those in need, particularly children. His legacy of kindness laid the foundation for the Santa Claus we know today.

As the story of St. Nicholas spread throughout Europe, various cultures began to incorporate their own customs and traditions into the figure of Santa. In the Netherlands, for example, St. Nicholas became known as "Sinterklaas," celebrated on December 5th with parades and gift-giving. Dutch settlers brought this tradition to America in the 18th century, where it began to evolve further.

In the 19th century, the modern image of Santa Claus took shape, influenced by literature and art. The poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas," commonly known as "The Night Before Christmas," published in 1823, described Santa as a jolly, plump man who travels in a sleigh pulled by reindeer. This portrayal, along with illustrations by artists like Thomas Nast, solidified the cheerful, red-suited character we recognize today.

Over time, Santa Claus has become a symbol of Christmas cheer and generosity, transcending cultural boundaries and adapting to various traditions around the world. Today, he embodies the spirit of giving and joy during the holiday season, making him a beloved figure for children and adults alike.

History Feature

Jihanabelle Slavin

A History of the Candy-Cane

These peppermint peculiarities have long since been listed as the best-selling non-chocolate sweet during the Christmas season. The candy-cane as we know it today is a mix-and-match of various snippets of history, comprising of an iconic taste, colour, and shape.

Despite their fame, no one knows for certain precisely where or when they originate from. One popular theory suggests that the choir master of a church choir in Cologne is the one to credit. The story goes that he ordered some throat-soothing lozenges to be made for his choristers, and had them constructed in the shape of a shepherd's hook to make them more church-suited. However, the other main theory is that they were simply hook-shaped to make them easier to hang from Christmas trees.

The peppermint flavour is believed to come from the fact that many medicines were coated in sugar to disguise their hideous tastes, and make them more palatable, whilst mint was also believed to have a positive herbal impact on your health. Finally, the famous red and white stripes most likely became commonplace during the 1920s, thanks to the American confectioner Bob McCormack. Before that, they were just plain white!

Seasonal News

Max Stothard

Do other religions celebrate Christmas?

As you know, Christmas is a holiday that everyone looks forward to: right? Not many religions celebrate “Christmas” but some will be celebrating a different holiday during December, such as the Jewish community, whilst some treat the day of Christmas as just another day on the calendar. So here is how some main religions celebrate Christmas.

Islam – Muslims do not celebrate Christmas. The main reason for this is because it is a Christian festival, and is not something that is celebrated by Muslims.

Judaism - instead of Christmas, Jews celebrate Hanukkah, a completely different holiday to Christmas. Hanukkah is actually a Jewish festival lasting just eight days from the 25th of December (or Kislev), commemorating the rededication of the temple in 165 BC by The Maccabees after its desecration by the Syrians.

Buddhism – the Buddhist religion celebrates Bodhi day in December. Bodhi day Commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, experienced enlightenment. However, they do celebrate Christmas in some ways. They do not actually celebrate for the same reason Christians do, but celebrate in a similar way by exchanging gifts and putting up the Christmas tree.

Other religions like Sikhism don't recognize Christmas at all, and some still celebrate Christmas – a time of joy for all!

Christmas News

Elliot Richardson Bushell

Christmas Jumper day

Christmas jumper day happens every year at LSST. But what actually is it?

On 12th December 2024, the 12th annual Christmas Jumper Day will take place. This event was first started by the charity "*Save the Children*" which focuses on helping kids who have to face incredibly harsh conditions such as famine, war and poverty. Just last year, £3 million was raised according to their website, and over £30 million in its history, which will have changed many lives for the better. The day takes place in both the UK and Ireland and the idea is to wear a Christmas jumper and donate £2 to the charity, which has become so popular that over 1.5 million students and teachers now adopt it every year.

For LSST, the 12th falls on a Thursday during term-time, and we will be taking part just 10 days before we break up from school. The charity themselves send 87% of their profit to their cause, which is very high for a UK charity (the average is 26-87%). The work they do improve lives all over the world and your donation could make someone's life a lot better.

Education News

Holly Yelland

Christmas references removed from school pantomime to be more inclusive to other faiths

Wherwell Primary school in the south of England has announced all Christmas references will be removed from their winter Pantomime in order to help create an environment that is more inclusive. The headteacher of the school sent out a letter to the parent or guardian of each and every one of the 126 children stating that “This years’ pantomime viewing of Jack and the Beanstalk will not have any Christmas songs or references and exclude the mention of Christmas”. This decision was made to ensure that the Pantomime was inclusive of different beliefs, bringing together families who do or do not celebrate Christmas, and to make sure the trip did not disrespect the families with different beliefs in the school.

Although they are not seeing a Christmas related Pantomime, it has been announced that the school will “continue to enjoy our usual Christmas events as we continue through the remainder of the term”. This has caused a lot of outrage and controversy from their parents saying, “its not really making the school more inclusive if its only one activity and you're continuing with all of the other festive things you normally do.”

However, the pantomime company’s spokesperson has confirmed that they would normally have some sort of Christmas themed reference, not necessarily Santa Claus but maybe a song; however, as the school have requested it, they have adapted their usual performance.

Movie Review

Finley Wilkes

'Home Alone'

'Home Alone' is widely viewed as a holiday classic, but does it actually still hold up compared to newer Christmas films? The answer for me is yes. After watching it 3 days ago, I would say that in my opinion 'Home Alone' is one of the best Christmas films of all time. In case you haven't seen it, the plot follows 8 year old Kevin McCallister in Illinois as his parents forget him on their rush to their family trip to Paris, leaving him home alone. Two burglars take this as an opportunity to rob the house, which leads to Kevin boobytrapping it, eventually getting the duo arrested with the help of a kindly old man. There is a side plot of Kevin's mum teaming up with a team of poker players to get back home to Kevin, which conveniently happens as soon as he gets downstairs. There is an amazing team of actors in this film, with most of them being Kevin's family. The two burglars are given hilarious performances by Daniel Stern and Joe Pesci, who also manage to make the characters serious when they need to be. Kevin's traps are brilliant too, with really funny slapstick and creative setups alongside them. The paint trap is well acted by the two actors, with Marv's knocked-out golden tooth being found at the end - a neat detail. The use of practical set ups as opposed to CGI help the film as it ages, so it still looking to be of good quality. Overall, I'd say 'Home Alone' is an excellent Christmas film with a lot of wholesome and fun moments and still holds up well against newer Christmas films made after its 1990 debut.