



Christmas in Great Britain



People began to celebrate Christmas many, many years ago.



The legend of the very first Christmas tells: « ... The shepherds heard from the Angel that Christ the Lord was born to Mary in Bethlehem. They came there and found a little boy in a stable, lying in a manger. His name was Jesus. "Glory to God!" - they said. "Glory to God!" ...»

Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December.
It is the greatest holiday in Great Britain.



There are a lot of interesting traditions connected with Christmas in Great Britain. Some weeks before Christmas English people decorate their houses with holly and electric lights.



Holly is an evergreen plant with sharp-pointed leaves and red berries. Many years ago people began to put holly in their homes during the dark cold winters. They liked to look at holly and think about spring and the sun.



MARTHASTE

Eve (December, 24) there is a bunch of mistletoe in every house. Mistletoe is an evergreen plant with small leaves and small berries. Under this bunch boys kiss girls.



Advent Wreath

Four weeks before Christmas people bring home a special wreath - Advent Wreath. They put it on the table and place four candles on it. Every Sunday they light only one candle. It is a old tradition.

Children like to make Advent Calendars.



Advent Calendar



A Yule log is a piece of wood which people burn in the fireplace on Christmas Eve.



People also buy and send Christmas cards to their friends usually containing the message “Merry Christmas”. The cards often show pictures of “Nativity”, Santa Claus, Christmas tree, “Robins” or scenes of old-fashioned Christmases.

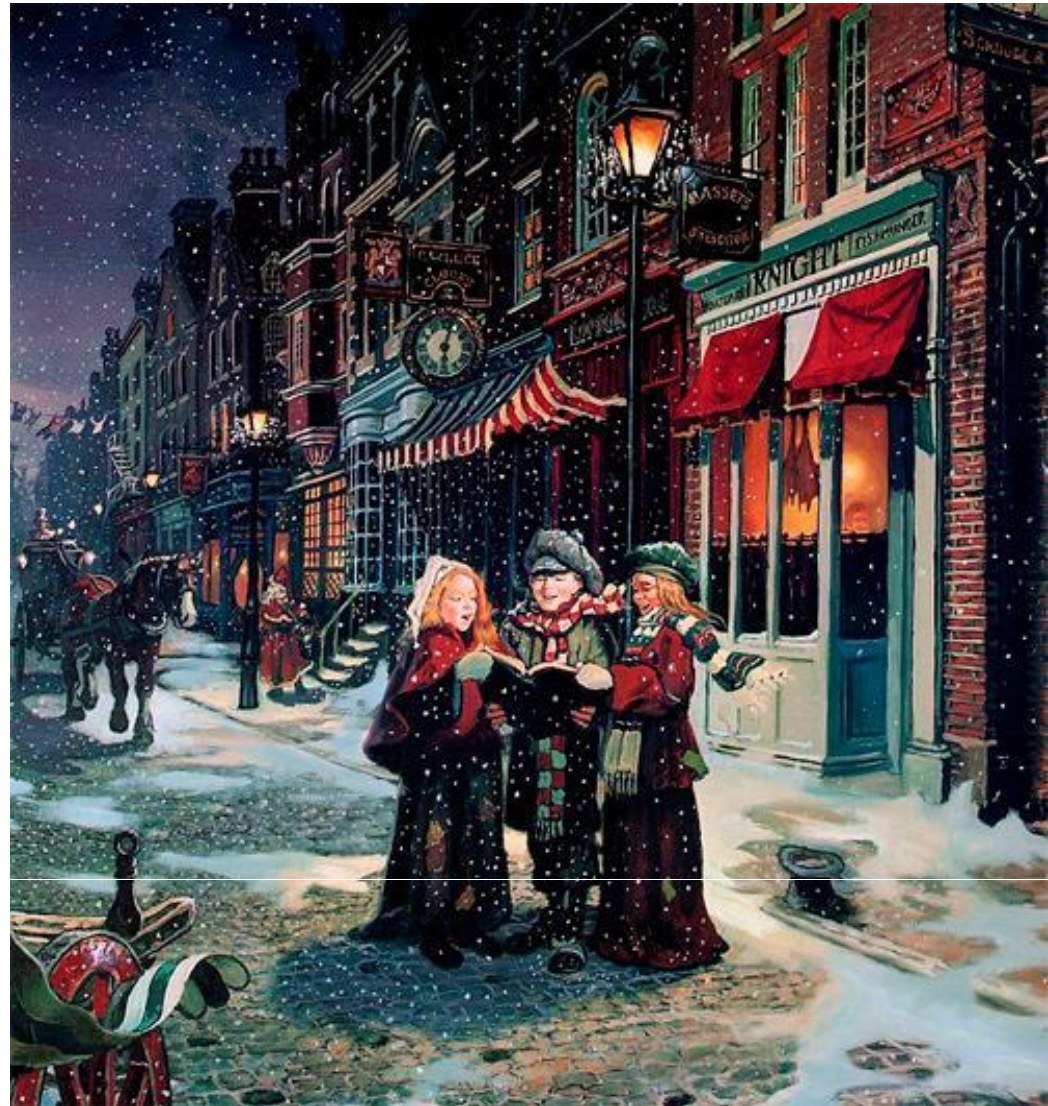


Many years ago postmen had bright red coats. They looked like robins. At Christmas they brought many Christmas cards. And people began to think about a robin as a Christmas bird. You can see it on almost every Christmas card.

Carol-singers can be heard on the streets as they collect money. Then they give the money to poor and old people. Some carols, for example, "O, Come All Ye Faithful" and "Holy night" are well-known.

"Holy night"

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round your Virgin Mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.





A pantomime is a traditional performance for children at Christmas. All the children have much fun when they watch fairy tales with princes, beautiful princesses and fairies "Cinderella", "Pussy in Boots", "Dick Whittington" and many others.



Most families usually have a Christmas tree in the front room, glittering with coloured lights, bright shining balls or other decorations (tinsel, toys, ...). There is a shining star or an angle at the top of the Christmas tree.



Every year there is a very big Christmas tree from Norway in London, in Trafalgar square. In the evening before Christmas people come to Trafalgar Square to look at the tree.



The shops are very busy on Christmas.
People buy a lot of food and drink for Christmas parties.



Children write letters to Father Christmas.

Father Christmas has a white beard and long green or red clothes. Children believe Father Christmas lives at the North Pole where he spends most of the year in his workshop making toys with the help of elves. People think of him as a happy man who says: "Ho, ho, ho".





On Christmas Eve children leave long socks called Christmas stockings at the end of their beds or by the chimney or hang them by the fireplace so that Father Christmas will fill them with presents. Children hope that Father Christmas will come down the chimney during the night and bring presents. A Christmas stocking is big and beautifully decorated.



On Christmas Day at 3 o'clock p.m. English people watch the Queen on television as she delivers her traditional Christmas message to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.



Crackers are a usual tradition at Christmas dinner. Two people pull a cracker, it makes a bang and a Christmas hat, a small toy and a piece of paper with a joke on it fall out of it!



Christmas turkey

English people celebrate Christmas Day with a big holiday dinner. Families sit down to a big turkey dinner followed by Christmas pudding. They like to eat roast turkey, potatoes and green vegetables. A turkey is a traditional Christmas bird.



People usually decorate Christmas pudding, they put holly on it. Traditionally a coin is placed into the pudding. It brings good luck to a person who finds it.



Mince pies

People like to enjoy
a Christmas cake too.

Mince pies are small round
pies.
Children like these sweet
pies very much.



Christmas cake

On Christmas people wish their nearest and dearest
a Merry Christmas. They like to sing a song:

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
And a Happy New Year!

Good tidings we bring
To you and your king,
We wish you a Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year!





December, 26 is Boxing Day in Great Britain. Boxing Day is celebrated after Christmas Day. Boxing Day is a public holiday. People do not work on that day. People usually visit their relatives and friends.



On this day people go to the church. There they can get different presents, collected for the poor in the Christmas boxes. These boxes are always opened on Boxing Day.



Christmas has a special magic for young and old alike.