



First Card

Who created the first Christmas card?

- Henry Cole invented the first Christmas card in 1843.
- It's being displayed at the Charles Dickens Museum, London.

Photo: A scene from a Victorian Christmas card.

First Christmas Card on Display

Sending a Christmas card is certainly a popular thing to do — billions are bought every year worldwide! But who started this tradition?

Well, at the Charles Dickens Museum in London, the world's first-ever Christmas card is being put on display as part of an **exhibition** along with images from 'A Christmas Carol'.

Henry Cole created the first Christmas card in 1843. People could buy it for a shilling (about £3). The card, though, is incredibly rare.

An American has lent the card to the museum so they can display it. The front shows a family enjoying a Christmas meal together and has a message saying "A merry Christmas and a happy new year to you".

In 1843, Charles Dickens, a famous Victorian author, also **published** 'A Christmas Carol'. It's a story about the importance of being kind at Christmas.

In it, the cold-hearted Ebenezer Scrooge changes his ways to become a more **generous** person at Christmas.

A lot of things we do at Christmas first became popular during the Victorian period.

Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, made putting up Christmas trees a widespread tradition in the UK. Tom Smith, a businessman, also had a cracking idea — he invented the Christmas cracker!

Today's news shows how some Christmas traditions have continued for many years. However, today people will video call friends and family rather than sending cards — something that was impossible in the past.

Glossary

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| tradition | Something that people have done for a long time. |
| exhibition | An event where people can go and see artworks on display. |
| published | When a book is written then made available so people can buy it. |
| generous | To be kind and to consider the needs of others. |

Questions

1. Where is the first-ever Christmas card being displayed?
 - Charles Dickens Museum
 - Christmas Museum
 - British Museum
 - National Gallery
2. Find and copy three Christmas traditions that became popular during the Victorian period.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. 'the cold-hearted Ebenezer Scrooge changes his ways'
In this sentence, tick the word that is closest in meaning to cold-hearted.
 - kind
 - lazy
 - mean
 - jolly

4. Compare and contrast how people send Christmas greetings today with those in Victorian times.

5. Why do you think the Christmas card is being displayed next to images from 'A Christmas Carol'?

6. Write a summary of the story in 15 words or fewer.
