

A stylized illustration of a Victorian street scene. In the foreground, a man with a full brown beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white high-collared shirt, looks directly at the viewer. Behind him are several multi-story buildings with numerous windows, some with shutters. A small white flag or banner is visible on a pole in the background. The overall style is that of a classic children's book illustration.

# First Card

## First Christmas Card at Charles Dickens Museum

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## First Card



Photo: A Victorian Christmas scene

- [What was the Victorian era?](#)
- [What was a Victorian Christmas like?](#)
- [How do different people share Christmas greetings?](#)

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).

It's being displayed next to drawings from 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. It was also [published](#) in 1843 and tells the tale of how a cold-hearted businessman becomes more [generous](#).

Read the full article online [here](#).

Click here to explore the 60-second read.

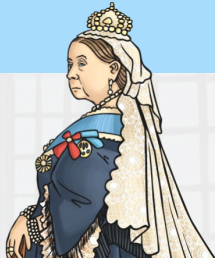




## What Was the Victorian Era?

Queen Victoria was born on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1819.

The Victorian era is the time in British history when Queen Victoria **reigned**. This was from 1837 until her death in 1901.



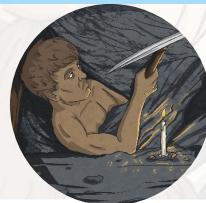
She was the longest-reigning monarch until Queen Elizabeth II!

There were a lot of changes during this time.

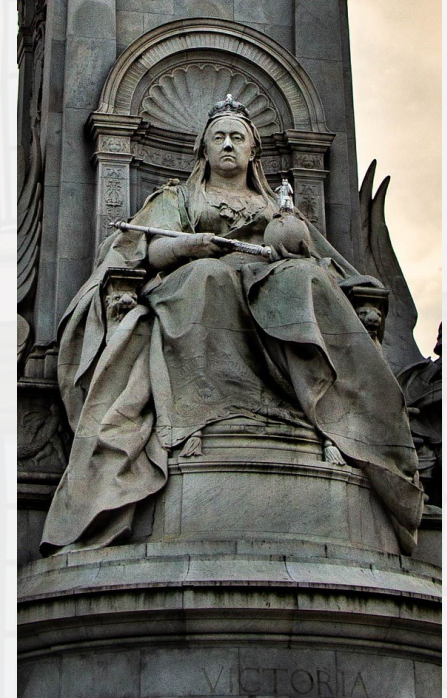
The Industrial Revolution led to **various** inventions, such as lightbulbs and even ice cream!

Inventions, such as the telephone and telegram, allowed people to communicate across the world!

However, life for the poor was **difficult**. Children had to work in mines and factories.



reigned  
various  
difficult



Why was this period of time called the Victorian era?



What else do you know about the Victorian era?





## What Was a Victorian Christmas Like?

Many of the Christmas traditions you **probably** know started in the Victorian era.

Christmas trees were introduced by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. It was a German tradition which he brought to the UK.



Christmas **favourites**, such as Christmas cards and crackers, were invented at this time.

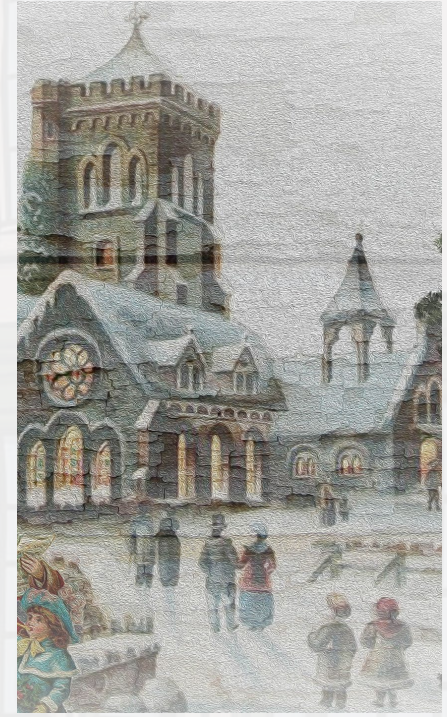
Even Christmas presents come from the Victorians! Before, gifts were given at New Year instead of Christmas Day.



The day after Christmas, a box of gifts was given to workers. Many people **believe** that is where we get Boxing Day from!



probably  
favourites  
believe



Find a verb that means the same as started.



What is your favourite Christmas tradition?





## How Do Different People Share Christmas Greetings?

Some people may send e-cards rather than **ordinary** Christmas cards.

Some people believe this is better for the environment as they don't use **materials** like paper.

Imperial College London says 1.5 billion Christmas cards are thrown in the bin every year.

**Groups** like Friends of the Earth are encouraging people to send e-cards or to make their own cards.

They **believe** this will result in fewer materials being wasted.

Unlike Victorian times, people can video call friends and family around the world on Christmas Day!



It goes to show you that the world is getting smaller!

ordinary  
materials  
groups  
believe



What do you think the author means by it shows 'the world is getting smaller'?



Will you be sending Christmas cards this year?



## Card Times

**8** Sending a Christmas card is certainly a popular  
**16** thing to do — billions are bought every year  
**22** worldwide! But who started this tradition?  
**30** Well, at the Charles Dickens Museum in London,  
**39** the world's first-ever Christmas card is being put on  
**48** display as part of an exhibition along with images  
**52** from 'A Christmas Carol'.  
**60** Henry Cole created the first Christmas card in  
**70** 1843. People could buy it for a shilling (about £3).  
**78** It's being displayed next to drawings from 'A  
**86** Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. It was also  
**96** published in 1843 and tells the tale of how a  
**101** cold-hearted businessman becomes more generous.



## Quick Questions

1. Where is the first-ever Christmas card being displayed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Find and copy a word that means 'unkind' in the last paragraph.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you think the Christmas card is being displayed next to images from 'A Christmas Carol'?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Write a summary of the story in 15 words or fewer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Card Times

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## Answers

1. Where is the first-ever Christmas card being displayed?  
**Charles Dickens Museum**
2. Find and copy a word that means 'unkind' in the last paragraph.  
**cold-hearted**
3. Why do you think the Christmas card is being displayed next to images from 'A Christmas Carol'?  
**Accept any reasonable answer that refers to the story, e.g. I think the Christmas card is being displayed next to images from 'A Christmas Carol' because they were made in the same year, 1843.**
4. Write a summary of the story in 15 words or fewer.  
**Accept any reasonable summary that is 15 words or fewer, The first-ever Christmas card is being displayed at the Charles Dickens Museum in London.**



## Glossary

Word	Definition
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.





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