

A festive Victorian Christmas wreath is the central focus. It features a circular gold-colored frame with a black outline, adorned with green ivy leaves and holly leaves with red berries. At the top of the wreath, four red candles are arranged in a row on a green base of pine needles and holly. In the center of the wreath, a single white candle is lit, with a yellow flame. The background is a solid light yellow color.

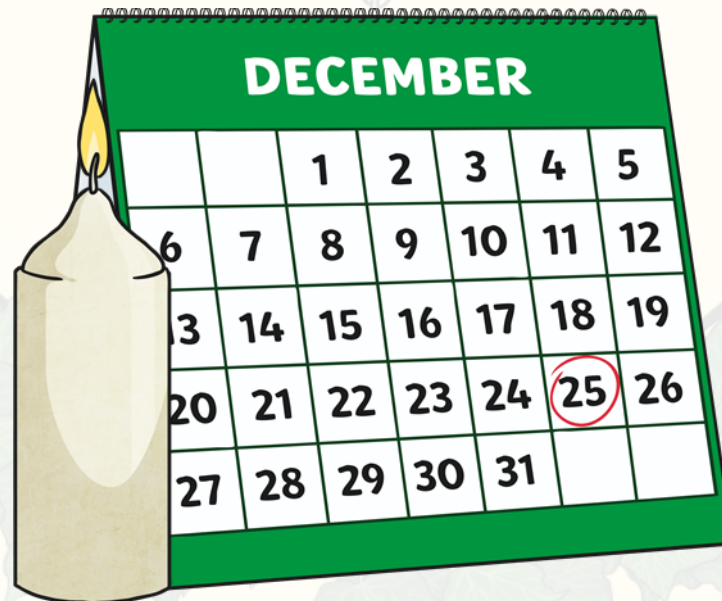
A Victorian Christmas

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A Victorian Christmas

Let's step back in time to 25th December 1836.

How do you think people celebrated Christmas that year?
Share your thoughts with the person sitting next to you.



A Victorian Christmas

No Christmas cards were sent.



No stockings were hung on the fireplace.



No Christmas trees were decorated.



No Christmas carols were sung.

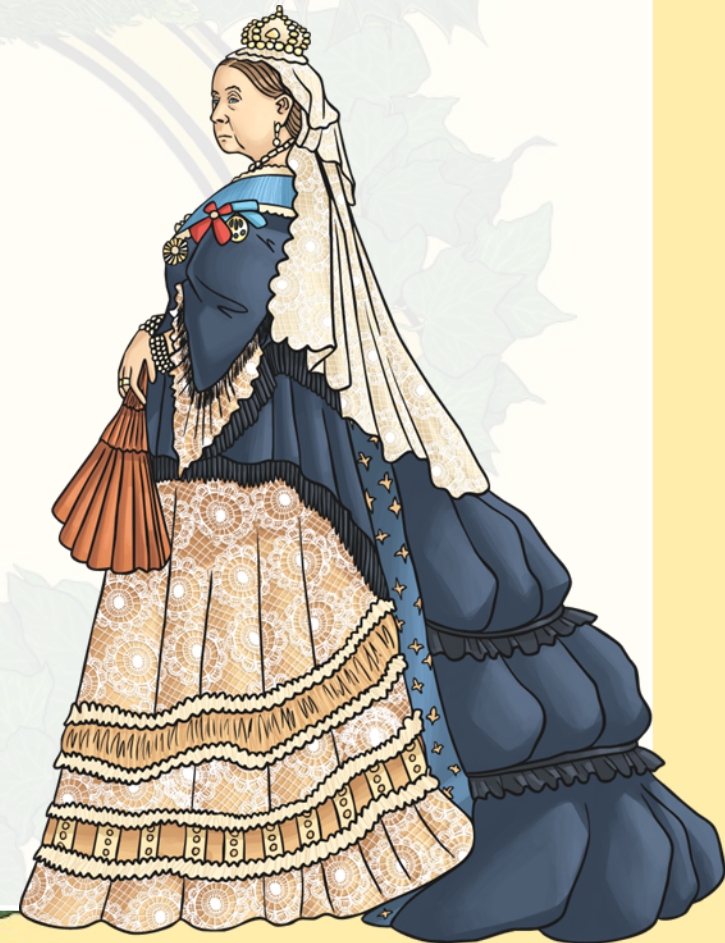


In fact, Christmas Day was like every other day.



A Victorian Christmas

But things began to change when Queen Victoria started her reign in 1837.



Christmas Cards

The first ever Christmas card was sent in 1843 by John Calcott Horsley to his friend Sir Henry Cole.

The following year, Sir Henry Cole and John Calcott Horsley produced 1000 cards and sold them for one shilling each (about 12 pence).



Did you know?

In Victorian times, Christmas cards were delivered on Christmas Day by postmen known as robins. That's why you see robins on Christmas cards now.



Christmas Crackers

Tom Smith, a British sweet maker made the first Christmas cracker around 1847.

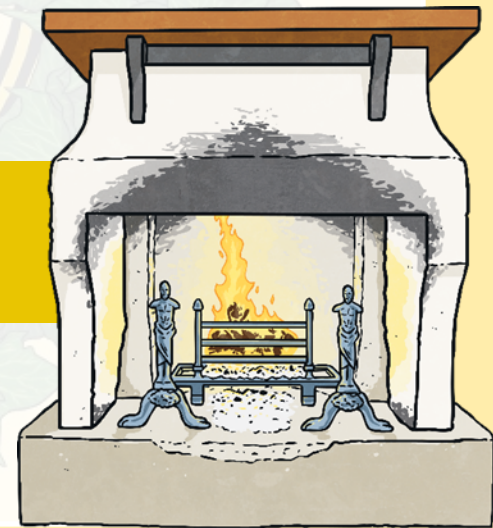
He got the idea after visiting France and unwrapping a sweet from a wrapper.

The first cracker only contained sweets and wasn't a big success.



Did you know?

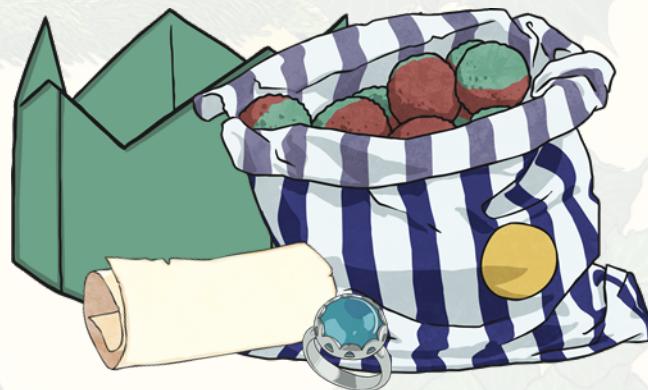
Tom got the idea of a 'banging' cracker whilst he was watching a log fire spark and crackle.



Inside a Victorian Cracker

Victorian crackers were originally made from a cardboard tube wrapped in twisted tissue paper. They contained:

- a paper hat, mask or bonnet;
- sweets, such as sugared almonds;
- small love verses called 'kisses'.



They also contained a small gift. The gifts ranged from miniature toys to false teeth and wedding rings.

One set of crackers even contained a doll. Inside each of the crackers was an item of clothing for the doll to wear.



The Christmas Tree

Prince Albert introduced the Christmas tree to the United Kingdom in 1848.

Trees were decorated with homemade decorations and dried fruit.

Christmas tree lights weren't invented until 1882.



Did you know?

Christmas trees were originally decorated with lit candles.



Victorian Christmas Dinner

Christmas Menu (wealthy Victorians only!)

Baked cod head

Cold game pie

Roast goose, beef or turkey with
stuffing and cranberry sauce

Plum pudding garnished with a sprig
of holly

Mincemeat pies (made with meat)

Rum punch

Christmas Menu (for the poor)

Rabbit or a very small goose with
bread stuffing

Steamed pudding

Roast chestnuts



Victorian Parlour Games

Victorians loved to play games during the festive season usually after their Christmas dinner.

Here's an example of some.

The Laughing Game

- Sit in a circle.
- Takes it in turns to say “Ha”, “Ho” or “Hee”.
- If you start to laugh you are out of the game.
- The game continues until everyone is out.
- The winner is the last person to laugh.

Blind Man's Bluff

- One person is blindfolded and everyone else scatters around the room.
- If the blindfolded person catches you, they have to guess who you are.
- If they guess correctly, you are captured and are out of the game.
- If they guess incorrectly, you are now the catcher.

Christmas Then and Now

Share with the person sitting next to you the Christmas Victorian traditions we still have today.

Write on a sticky note something that has stuck with you about a Victorian Christmas.



