

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



Baker Street *Elementary*

THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
105 -- VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS - FEBRUARY, 2022



**WELCOME TO TOPIC # 105... TODAY WE'LL BE
LOOKING AT VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS**



ALTHOUGH THE BIRTH OF CHRIST HAS BEEN CELEBRATED FOR THE BEST PART OF 2,000 YEARS IT ONLY BECAME A FESTIVAL AS WE KNOW IT IN VICTORIAN TIMES.



**IMAGINE A CHRISTMAS WITH NO CHRISTMAS
TREE, NO CHRISTMAS CRACKERS, NO CHRISTMAS
CARDS, NO TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS AND NO TIME OFF WORK!**



MANY OF THESE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS WERE INTRODUCED TO ENGLISH SOCIETY BY QUEEN VICTORIA AND HER HUSBAND, PRINCE ALBERT.



BEING FROM GERMAN ARISTOCRACY, ALBERT WAS USED TO THE CUSTOM OF BRINGING A FRESH FIR TREE INTO THE HOME AND DECORATING IT ON CHRISTMAS EVE SO HE HAD THE FIRST VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TREE BROUGHT TO WINDSOR CASTLE IN THE 1840s.



INTRODUCING VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS, THE BURNING WAX CANDLES AND DECORATIVE CHRISTMAS BAUBLES WERE A FOCAL POINT OF VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS...



**...AND QUICKLY THE IDEA BECAME FASHIONABLE
IN VICTORIAN PARLORS EVERYWHERE.**






ELECTRIC LIGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS TREES WERE INVENTED BY THOMAS EDISON'S ASSISTANT, EDWARD JOHNSON, IN 1882.



**HOWEVER, THEY DID NOT BECOME MASS-
PRODUCED AND AFFORDABLE TO THE GENERAL
PUBLIC FOR MANY MORE YEARS.**



NO DANGER
from the Lights on
CHRISTMAS TREES

when **Edison Miniature Lamps** are used.

No Smoke, Smell or Grease.

Lamps can be either bought or rented at a low cost.

Anyone can readily wire and put up the lamps if there is
electric current in the house.

Our leaflet on Christmas Lighting tells all about it.

EDISON DECORATIVE AND
MINIATURE LAMP DEPT.

General Electric Company,
Harrison, N. J.



**IN 1846, THOMAS J. SMITH, A LONDON
CONFECTIONER, HAD A GREAT IDEA FOR SELLING
MORE SWEETS AT CHRISTMAS.**



HE WRAPPED A BON-BON IN A TWIST OF COLOURED PAPER, ADDED A LOVE NOTE, A PAPER HAT AND A BANGER MECHANISM WHICH WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY THE CRACKLE OF A LOG FIRE!



THIS NEW IDEA TOOK OFF, AND IRONICALLY THE BONBONS WERE EVENTUALLY REPLACED WITH A SMALL TOY OR NOVELTY.





THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CARDS IN ENGLAND WERE
DESIGNED FOR SIR HENRY COLE, THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE ARTS.



THE YEAR WAS 1846 AND THE FIRST 100 CHRISTMAS CARDS DESIGNED BY JOHN CALCOTT HORSLEY, WERE PRINTED AT GREAT EXPENSE WHICH RATHER HINDERED THE IDEA FROM TAKING OFF.



**HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTERWARDS COLOR
LITHOGRAPHY WAS DEVELOPED MAKING PRINTING
MUCH CHEAPER.**



**ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTOR WAS THE RISING
POPULARITY OF THE ROYAL MAIL ALLOWING
POSTAGE COSTS TO BE REDUCED TO ONE HALF
PENNY PER OUNCE.**



BY THE EARLY 1870s, ANYONE WHO WAS ANYONE COULD AFFORD TO SEND CHRISTMAS CARD GREETINGS.



INITIALLY, VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS WERE SINGLE POSTCARDS WITH SIMPLE DESIGNS BUT SOON PLUM PUDDINGS, ROBINS, AND SNOWY SCENES BECAME POPULAR DESIGNS.



THE COMMON PLANTS, HOLLY, IVY, AND
MISTLETOE ALL PRODUCE WINTER BERRIES AND
WERE HELD TO BE 'MAGICAL' LONG BEFORE
VICTORIAN TIMES.



THE HOLLY BERRIES WERE SAID TO REPEL WITCHCRAFT AND A BERRY-LADEN SPRIG WOULD BE CARRIED INTO THE VICTORIAN HOUSE BY A MALE AND USED TO DECORATE THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.



MISTLETOE HAD PAGAN ORIGINS AND IN VICTORIAN TIMES IT WAS NOT ALLOWED IN CHURCHES.



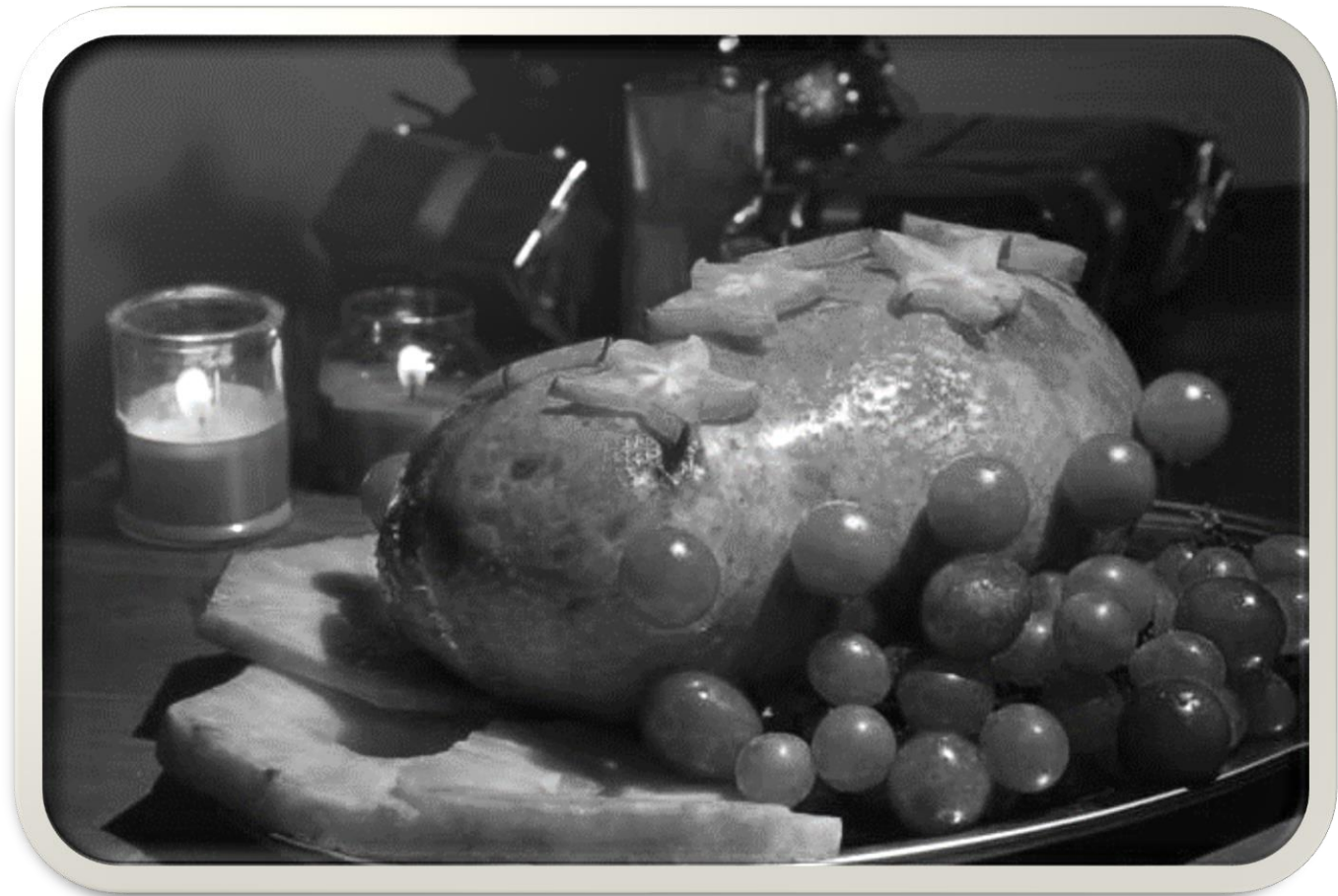
*HOWEVER, KISSING UNDER THE MISTLETOE WAS
POPULAR IN VICTORIAN HOMES.*



AFTER EACH CHASTE KISS A WHITE BERRY HAD TO BE REMOVED FROM THE SPRIG UNTIL THERE WERE NONE LEFT - AND NO MORE KISSES WERE TO BE HAD.



AT VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS SERVICES, ALTHOUGH CHRISTMAS SONGS HAD BEEN SUNG BY WASSAILERS FROM THE 15TH CENTURY, IT WAS ONLY AT CHRISTMAS IN VICTORIAN TIMES THAT THEY BEGAN TO BE SUNG IN CHURCHES.



"SILENT NIGHT," FOR EXAMPLE, WAS WRITTEN IN AUSTRIA AND WAS ONLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH IN 1871 WHEN IT WAS ADDED TO THE METHODIST HYMNAL.



**TRADITIONALLY THE VICTORIAN ERA CHRISTMAS
BEGAN ON CHRISTMAS DAY WHEN CHURCH BELLS
CALLED EVERYONE TO CHURCH FOR SCRIPTURE
READINGS INTERSPERSED WITH CAROLS.**



CHRISTMAS DINNER WAS A GRAND FAMILY AFFAIR FOR THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD IT WITH A GOOSE, CHICKEN OR ROAST BEEF... TURKEY BECAME POPULAR IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY.



**CHRISTMAS PUDDING WAS SERVED THEN CRACKERS
WERE PULLED AND EVERYONE EXCHANGED GIFTS
BEFORE PLAYING PARLOR GAMES.**



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 105 IN OUR SERIES...

IN TOPIC # 106, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT THE PERIOD IN WHICH WE LIVE, THE VICTORIAN ERA.



AboutBritain.com

ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS TOPIC:

- [HTTP://WWW.ABOUTBRITAIN.COM/ARTICLES/VICTORIAN-CHRISTMAS-TRADITIONS.ASP](http://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-christmas-traditions.asp)



Baker Street Elementary

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE
RUSTY MASON
&
STEVE MASON

