

DAY 27 Christmas

1 Christmas origins

Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, who was probably born between 11 BC and 4 BC (the death of King Herod, who plays a key role in the events surrounding Christ's birth). Some historians try to connect Christ's birth to the famous star that guided the three wise men. If the star were the

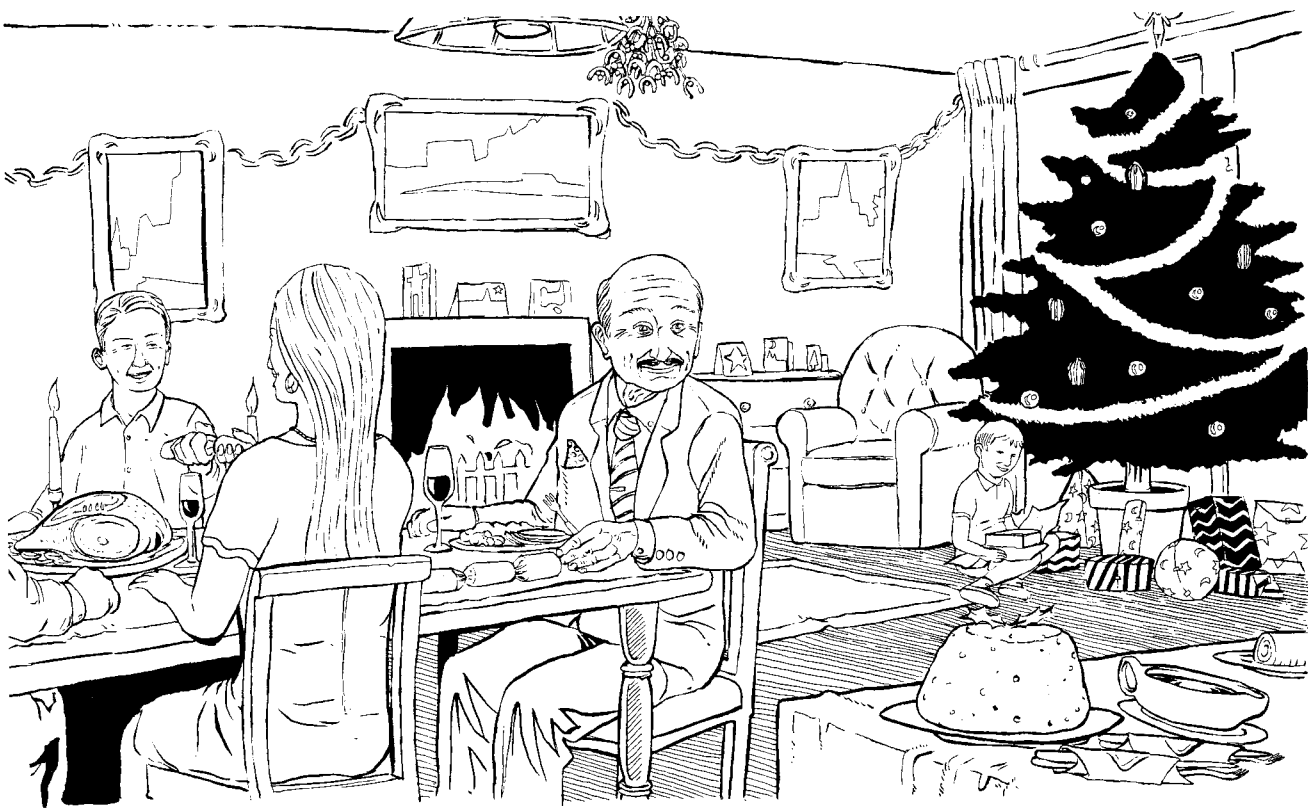
bright lights of Saturn and Jupiter in conjunction with Pisces, it would make the date 7 BC; however, if it was Halley's Comet, it would have been 11 BC.

Christmas as we know it today is really the work of the Victorians combined with a few traditions imported by the royal family from their native Germany. Until that time Easter had always been the

most important festival. In 1652 the Puritans actually banned Christmas.

A number of pagan traditions still survive, such as carol singing, the flames of the Christmas pudding, kissing under the mistletoe, excessive drinking, and bad luck if the Christmas tree is not taken down before the twelfth night.

2 Christmas scene



3 Christmas quiz

- 1 Can you match these Christmas greetings with their languages?

a Boas Festas	Esperanto
b Buon Natale	German
c Feliz Navidad	Italian
d Fröhliche Weihnachten	Portuguese
e Gajan Kristnaskon	Spanish
f Glaedelig Jul	Danish
g Hristos se rodi	French
h Joyeux Noël	Malay
i Nadolig Llawen	Serbian
j Selamat Hari Krisna,	Welsh
Dan Tahun Bahru	
- 2 a Exchanging Christmas presents derives from the three kings/wise men's example. (T/F)
- b The Christmas tree is a fairly recent invention. (T/F)
- c In Britain December the 26th is known as Boxing Day, as there is an annual boxing competition on this day. (T/F)
- d Christmas is only celebrated by Christians. (T/F)
- e Christmas cards are a derivation of a pre-Christian Jewish custom. (T/F)