



We often think we know a lot about Christmas but how much do we actually know? Read on to learn some interesting facts about Christmas traditions.

The Royal Christmas Message

The Royal Christmas Message, which was also known as The Queen's Speech for many years during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, is a central part of Christmas celebrations for many families.

In 1922, King George V (His Majesty the King Charles III's great-grandfather) was asked if he would broadcast a Christmas message on the BBC's new radio service. King George V refused as he felt the radio was just for entertainment and not an appropriate way for a king to address his people. In the years that followed, the use of the radio became more and more prevalent and in 1932, he was asked again if he would record a Christmas message. Encouraged by his wife, Queen Mary and the prime minister, King George V agreed, believing it to be a good way to be heard by his people all over the world.



Did You Know...?

The Royal Message delivered in 1932 was written by author Rudyard Kipling, who wrote 'The Jungle Book'.

King George VI continued the tradition of delivering a Royal Christmas Message when he came to the throne, followed by his daughter Queen Elizabeth II, who gave the first address to be broadcast on television as well as radio, in 1957.

In their carefully scripted address, the monarch provides a review of key events from the year that is coming to an end, as well as some more personal comments.

Queen Elizabeth II broadcast 67 Christmas messages during her long reign; 2022 saw the first message from her son King Charles III.



Fascinating Christmas Facts

Christmas Number Ones

The singles pop music charts have been around since 1952. That year, Al Martino got to number one on Christmas Day with his song 'Here in My Heart'.

The Beatles achieved Christmas number one three years in a row during the 1960s and St Winifred's School Choir got to number one in 1980 with a song called 'There's No One Quite Like Grandma'.

Cliff Richard has had four number ones on Christmas Day. In 1962, he was beaten by Elvis Presley's popular song 'Return to Sender'.

In the early 2000s, 'X Factor' winners often reached the number one spot but charity choirs have been more successful in recent years. In 2015, the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS choir sang 'A Bridge Over You' which kept Justin Bieber from being number one. All of the profits made from the NHS choir's single were given to a few different charities. Justin Bieber posted on social media, "Just heard the news. Amazing. That is what Christmas is all about! Very cool!"

White Christmas

Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas' is the highest-earning Christmas song of all time. Written by Irving Berlin, it has sold more than 100 million copies worldwide since Bing Crosby sang it in 1942.



Did You Know...?

Only six Christmas number ones actually have the word 'Christmas' in the title. This doesn't include Slade's song, 'Merry Xmas Everybody' from 1973.

Questions

1. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order in which they happened.

- ☐ St Winifred's School Choir got to number one.
- ☐ King George V was asked again if he would record a Christmas message.
- ☐ The singles pop music charts first appeared.
- ☐ The Lewisham and Greenwich NHS choir sang 'A Bridge Over You'.

2. Why did the King George V initially refuse to read the message? Tick one.

- ☐ He didn't like Christmas.
- ☐ He thought that it was too early.
- ☐ He thought that radio was only for entertainment.
- ☐ He wanted to wait until New Year's Day.

3. Who wrote the 1932 Royal Christmas Message? Tick one.

- ☐ King George V
- ☐ Queen Elizabeth II
- ☐ Rudyard Kipling
- ☐ The radio

4. Underline one word in the quotation below that suggests that the radio was very common at the time.

*In the years that followed, the use of the radio became more
and more prevalent...*

5. Look at the section called **The Royal Christmas Message**.

Find and copy one word which means to 'persuade someone to do something'.

6. Who read 67 Christmas messages during their long reign?

Fascinating Christmas Facts

7. Explain what the king or queen says in their Royal Christmas Message.

8. How did Justin Bieber feel about not having a Christmas number one?

Explain how you know.
