

# The Answers To All The Christmas Quiz Questions

I set forty-two questions for you to ponder over. I chose to set forty-two questions so that I could remind you of an interesting Christmas fact about the number forty-two: to wit, there are forty-two generations given in the Gospel of Matthew's version of the genealogy of Jesus. That is to say, the Greek word *gennao* is used 42 times and its usual translation is the English word 'begat' because the lineage is traced through males who 'beget' a son.

Forty-two is also the number of youths torn to pieces by two female bears for making fun of Elisha's baldness at 2 Kings 2:24 ("And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them" – KJV). Be warned those who dare to mock the follicly challenged! Also rather interestingly, at Ezra 2:24, and at Nehemiah 7:28 where a near identical verse is to be found, there were forty-two men of Beth-azmaveth who were counted in the census of men of Israel upon return from exile ("**1** Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city; **2** Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: [*take as read the listing verses 3 to 23 and continue with:*] **24** The children of Azmaveth, forty and two." – Ezra 2, KJV).

It may interest you further to know that the Gutenberg Bible is also known as the 'forty-two line Bible' on account of it

having forty-two lines of print on each page. Forty-two is also a significant number in the Kabbalistic tradition wherein it's the number that God used to create the universe. In Judaism there is also the forty-two lettered name of God ("The Forty-Two Lettered Name is entrusted only to he who is pious, meek, middle-aged, free from bad temper, sober and not insistent on his rights". – *Talmud Kidduschin 71a*, as translated by Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein).

For those interested I can tell you that the phrase 'little children' appears forty-two times in the Old Testament, and in Numbers 33:1 to 50 you'll find that the children of Israel had forty-two tarriances, or wanderings, in the desert until they were finally given rest. It may also be of interest to those of us who are fascinated by such trivia to note that the number forty-two is very often found, much more often than chance would dictate, as a factor in the names of anti-Christian people in the Bible when numerical substitution is used on the letters in those names, and that that seems to hold good in Hebrew, Greek and English – very odd little twist, that one, wouldn't you agree?

On a more secular note, in Will Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" the effects of the potion offered to Juliet by Friar Lawrence are supposed to last for forty-two hours ("...And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death//Thou shalt continue two and forty hours, //And then awake as from a pleasant sleep." – Act 4, Sc. 1, Lines 107, 108 and 109). Equally as secular, Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert (Prince Francis Albert Augustus Charles Emmanuel of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the Prince Consort of Queen Victoria) died at the age of forty-two, and, incidentally, he and the dear old Queen had forty-two grandchildren. Co-incidentally, their great-grandson, King Edward VIII, abdicated at the age of forty-two in AD1936.

It was in the reign of England's King Richard III that the crown authorities defined the wine puncheon as a cask holding

eighty-four gallons (twice forty-two) and a tierce as holding forty-two gallons (watertight casks of many sizes were crafted by 'tight coopers' and their guild, the Worshipful Company of Coopers, prescribed the manner of construction and made sure that lesser skilled craftsmen, known as 'slack coopers', made only casks, barrels, and pails for dry goods). Born from this definition but centuries later, in August AD1866 to be more precise, a handful of America's earliest independent oil producers met in Titusville, Pennsylvania, and agreed that henceforth forty-two US gallons would constitute a barrel of oil.

Right, enough of the trivia. Let's deal, in order, with all the quiz questions that I set for your Yuletide enjoyment.

Here are the answers to the twenty-one questions that I set in the last week of the Advent fast. You can also find the questions [on this NER page](#).

(1) What would cost you around eighty thousand pounds (around one hundred and seven thousand US dollars)?

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" is perhaps the one carol that people misunderstand the most. Many people tend to think that the "twelve days" are the ones leading up to Christmas, but they are actually the twelve days after Christmas Day. Secondly, many people tend to think that the singer of the list is simply re-reading the gifts given the day before along with the ones given that day, but actually, the "true love" in question is really giving all of those gifts mentioned for a specific day on that day. So, for example, the recipient would be getting twelve partridges and twenty two turtle doves and in all there would be a total of three-hundred and sixty-four gifts. That's why the annual calculation of the cost of

all the gifts mentioned is so high. More confusing than the context and the number of gifts though are some of the gifts themselves. For example, "four calling birds" are in fact "four colly birds," and in case you're wondering, the colly bird is the sweet-singing English blackbird. Similarly, it seems strange that the giver of these presents would jump from four birds to "five golden rings" and then go back to giving birds, but the reality is that the golden rings is a reference to pheasants and not to jewelry – specifically to the common pheasant found in England, *Phasianus colchicus*, and the ring marking on the neck of a member of that species is romantically supposed to be of a golden hue. That means all the first seven gifts are birds, which makes more sense, although that's a rather of a lot of birds, especially by the time the whole song is has been sung. Many other secular carols still exist and "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is one that probably derives from a traditional parlour game played on Twelfth Night. Each player would have to remember all the items mentioned by previous players and then add one of their own. The tune is French and out of copyright, except for the line in which we sing "Five?... goooo-ooooold?...rings". That was first used in a version arranged by Frederic Austin in AD1909 and the copyright of that version is owned by Novello & Co. Ltd. The PNC financial services group based in Pittsburgh runs an annual Christmas Index that is used to judge the price of the goods and services in the song by looking at the market price of buying all the gifts and they reckon that the total cost would be US\$34,558.65. My figures are based on British costs. It should be noted that as PNC calculate it the cumulative cost of all the gifts when you count each repetition in the song (364 gifts) would be US\$157,558.00

(2) What was the name of the first song ever broadcast and who broadcast it and when?

The first song ever broadcast was a carol. On Christmas Eve, AD1906, the Canadian inventor Reginald Fessenden (AD1866-AD1932) played "O Holy Night" on the violin and sang the final verse while broadcasting from his Brant Rock radio tower in Massachusetts. This was the first broadcast of the human voice anywhere and was, apparently, picked up by receivers several hundred miles away by prior arrangement. Fessenden, not Marconi, is claimed to be the true inventor of radio.

(3) What did Franz Xaver Gruber do?

In AD1818, Father Joseph Mohr, the priest of Oberndorf near Salzburg, asked the local schoolmaster Franz Xaver Gruber to compose a tune for a lyric he had written. "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht" has now been translated into one hundred and forty languages and in AD2011 was declared an "intangible cultural heritage" by Unesco. During the Christmas truce on the Western Front in AD1914, it was sung simultaneously by troops in German, French and English, as it was the only carol all sides knew.

(4) What, or who, were 'Waits'?

Before carol singing in public became popular, there were sometimes official carol singers called 'Waits'. These were bands of people led by important local leaders (such as council leaders) who had the only power in the towns and villages to take money from the public (if others did this, they were sometimes charged as beggars!). They were called 'Waits' because they only sang on Christmas Eve (this is sometimes known as 'watchnight' or 'waitnight' because of the shepherds were watching their sheep when the angels appeared to them), when the Christmas celebrations began. Later in history 'waits' would sing at other times of year as well as at Christmas.

(5) What was stopped in England in AD1647?

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in AD1647, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. After that, carols remained mainly unsung in public until Victorian times.

(6) What did William Sandys and Davis Gilbert do?

Carols remained mainly unsung in public until Victorian times, when two men called William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from the villages of England and carols, and other songs, became popular again as a result.

(7) What was the name of the first carol broadcast from space, and who sang it and when?

“Jingle Bells” was the first song performed in space. “Jingle Bells” was originally written to be sung during Thanksgiving time, not Christmas. The song was also the first song to be broadcast from space, as Gemini 6 astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra sang the song as a Christmas prank in December of AD1965 after they told NASA, “We have an object, looks like a satellite going from north to south, probably in polar orbit... I see a command module and eight smaller modules in front. The pilot of the command module is wearing a red suit...”

(8) What was the carol that is the answer to question seven originally written for, and who wrote it?

“Jingle Bells” was originally written to be sung during Thanksgiving time, not Christmas. While we associate “Jingle Bells” with Christmas, the song was originally written by James Lord Pierpont to celebrate the USA Thanksgiving.

(9) Who is responsible for the idea that Santa Claus and his reindeer drawn sled land on rooftops?

The first Christmas song to mention Santa Claus was Benjamin Hanby's "Up On The Housetop." Written in AD1864, Hanby was inspired by Clement Moore's AD1823 poem "A Visit from Saint Nicholas." "Up on the House Top," written by Benjamin Hanby in AD1864, is responsible for creating the idea of Santa and his reindeer landing on people's homes before said Santa heads down the chimney.

(10) "Grandpa's Gonna Sue the Pants Off of Santa." Why?

This is a sequel to "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," titled "Grandpa's Gonna Sue the Pants Off of Santa." The connection is, I think, obvious.

(11) Who translated the twelfth century carol "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" from Latin into English, and when?

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is one of the [oldest Christmas hymns](#) we have. Originally composed in Latin during the twelfth century, some say much earlier and place its composition in either the eighth or the ninth century, it wasn't until AD1851 that John Mason Neale translated it into English.

(12) What comestible is mentioned in "The Christmas Song", and who wrote "The Christmas Song", what is it more commonly known as, and what is odd about when this winter carol was written?

Mel Tormé's "The Christmas Song", more commonly known as "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire", oddly, was written during a summer heatwave in AD1944.

(13) Whose version of "White Christmas" did Irving Berlin hate so much that he tried very hard to stop radio stations from playing it?

Irving Berlin hated Elvis Presley's version of "White Christmas" so much that he tried to prevent radio stations

from playing Presley's take on the famous song.

(14) Who invented "Bangs of Expectation", and when did he do so and what are they more commonly known as?

The Christmas cracker was invented by a London, UK, sweet shop owner called Tom Smith. In AD1847, after spotting French bonbons wrapped in paper with a twist at each end, he sold similar sweets with a "love motto" inside. He then included a little trinket and a "bang". His "Bangs of Expectation" included gifts such as jewelry and miniature dolls. By AD1900, he was selling thirteen million a year.

(15) In the Netherlands, what do St. Nicholas's donkeys eat out of?

Hanging up stockings evolved from the Dutch custom of leaving shoes packed with food for St. Nicholas's donkeys. He would leave small gifts in the shoes in return.

(16) In what way is an advertising cartoon tiger related to "How the Grinch stole Christmas"?

Thurl Ravenscroft, the singer responsible for the classic song "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" from the film "How the Grinch Stole Christmas", also famously voiced Tony the Tiger, the mascot for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes.

(17) In what way is the number "364" relevant to Christmas?

See the answer to Question (1), above.

(18) What do Sheep-Cote Clod, Gully Gawk, Stubby, Spoon-Licker, Pot-Scraper, Bowl-Licker, Door-Slammer, Skyr-Gobbler, Sausage-Swiper, Window-Peeper, Doorway-Sniffer, Meat-Hook, and Candle-Stealer have to do with Christmas, and where?

These are the names of the Yuletide-lads, a.k.a. the Yule Lads or the Yulemen, and they are figures from Icelandic folklore that are portrayed as being mischievous

pranksters. In modern times they have taken on a benevolent role similar to Santa Claus. Their number has varied over time, but currently there are considered to be thirteen. They put rewards or punishments into shoes placed by Icelandic children on window cills during the last thirteen nights before Christmas. On each of the thirteen nights, one of the Yuletide-lads visits each child and leaving gifts or rotting potatoes, depending on whether the child has been "naughty or nice" during the previous twelve months.

(19) Who gave a two hundred and twenty-five ton gift on Christmas day in AD1886, and to whom was it given, what was it and where is it now?

The Statue of Liberty was gifted to the USA by the French on Christmas Day in AD1886. It weighs 225 tons and thus you could consider it to be the biggest Christmas gift in the world. It is currently on Liberty Island in Upper New York Bay.

(20) What was first performed in Dublin in AD1742, and who wrote it?

In Dublin in AD1742 the Christmas oratorio "The Messiah", by George Frederick Handel, was first performed.

(21) Famously, Boston, USA, and London, UK, are two cities that receive gifts of Christmas trees for public display. Who gifts the trees, and why, and when did these annual gifts start?

The very tall Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square is donated, and has been since AD1947, to the people of London every year by the people of Oslo, Norway in thanks for their assistance during World War II. Since AD1918 the city of Boston has received a giant Christmas tree as a gift from the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. Boston lent considerable support to the city of Halifax during

that city's AD1917 explosion and subsequent fire disaster.

Moving on, here are the answers to the five questions I posed on the last Sunday of Advent – Christmas Eve – that you can find [also here at NER](#).

(1) When were carols first sung in churches and who introduced them?

Carols weren't sung in churches until they were introduced into services by St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century.

(2) Traditionally, when does one add the kings, the wise men, to one's model nativity tableau?

Twelfth night, often known as Three Kings' Day.

(3) Which national post office was first to release a Christmas stamp, and when did it do so?

The Canadian Post Office in AD1898.

(4) Who wrote "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" and what is it better known as today?

This poem was first published anonymously in AD1823 and later attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, who claimed authorship in AD1837. Some researchers believe that there is some small evidence that the poem was written by Henry Livingston Jr. It's more commonly known today as "The Night Before Christmas".

(5) What has a 'welkin' to do with herald angels?

The original title of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" was "Hark How the Welkin Rings".

HARK how all the Welkin rings  
Glory to the Kings of Kings,  
Peace on Earth, and Mercy mild,  
“GOD and Sinners reconcil’d!

‘Welkin’ is an archaic term for heaven or the vault of the sky. Charles Wesley, the author of this hymn, in AD1739 wasn’t thinking about angels singing, but the sky declaring the news. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (KJV, Psalm 19:1-2). The entire heavens and the earth are tied to the incarnation and redemption of Christ Jesus. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” (KJV, Psalm 24:1). All of creation portrays the message of Christ. From the stars in heaven, to what we call “earth,” to the animals and people who populate earth, it is all His. When you care for the earth and everything and everybody in it, you give ringing testimony to our Lord’s birth.

The answers to the ten Christmas Day questions are as follows, and the questions can [be found on this page](#) as well.

(1) According to his friend William Stukeley, this person “...went into the garden, & drank thea under the shade of some appletrees...”. Who was he and when was he born?

Isaac Newton, by the Julian calendar then in use, was born on Christmas Day in AD1642.

(2) “This is the Record of John” is not about the compiler of this quiz, but is an Advent text from St. John’s Gospel set

for solo countertenor, or tenor, alternating with a full chorus. Who set it to music and when was he baptised?

Orlando Gibbons set this text to music and he was baptised on Christmas Day in *AD1583*.

(3) Count Giovanni Angelo Braschi ruled from 15th of February in *AD1775* to his death on the 29th of August in *AD1799*. What did he rule, by what name and regnal number is he better known and, most importantly, when was he born?

The required three answers are respectively: The Papal States; Pius VI; and Christmas Day in *AD1717*.

(4) Johann Georg Palitzsch saw something first. What did he see and when did he see it?

He was the first to see the predicted, by Halley, return of the comet named after him – Halley's Comet – on Christmas Day in *AD1758*.

(5) This *AD1953* Christmas song was written by Joan Javits (the niece of Senator Jacob K. Javits) and Philip Springer and the singer most associated with it originally recorded it with Henri René and his orchestra in New York City in the July of that year. What was the song called, who was the singer and when did she die?

The necessary answers are, in order: "Santa Baby"; Eartha Mae Keith better known as Eartha Kitt; and Christmas Day in *AD2008*.

(6) In an African war a shell was fired that contained a food item and not gunpowder. What was the war, where was the shell fired, what did it contain and, most importantly, when was it fired?

The answers that are needed are, sequentially: the Boer War; the Siege of Ladysmith; a plum pudding; and Christmas Day in *AD1899*.

(7) The Scottish authoress of “The ewe-buchtin’s bonnie” and the well-known “And werena my heart licht I wad dee” is famous for her poetic songs and her ‘Household Book’. What was her name, how is it usually styled and when was she born?

Her name was Grizel Baillie, but she’s normally styled Lady Grizel Baillie, and she was born on Christmas Day in AD1665.

(8) The discoverer of Saturn’s rings released the discoverer of Titan, a moon of Saturn, successfully. What are the discoverers called, what was released and when was it released?

The discoverers, serially as asked, were Giovanni Domenico Cassini and Christiaan Huygens. The Cassini orbiter released the Huygens probe (which successfully landed on Saturn’s moon Titan on the fourteenth of January in AD2005) on Christmas Day in AD2004.

(9) He wrote “Makar’s Dream” and he explored spirituality all through his rebellious life. Who was this Russian and when did he die?

The Russian and Ukrainian short story writer, journalist, human rights activist and humanitarian Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko, having opposed both the Tsars and the Bolsheviks, died on Christmas Day in AD1921.

(10) Crème Valaze, that probably included herbs from the Carpathian Mountains, made her name. Who was she and when was she born?

Cosmetics entrepreneur Helena Rubinstein was born on Christmas Day in AD1872.

Bet you didn’t know that Christmas Day could be so interesting!

However, onwards! The next batch of five questions were set on Christmas Sunday (31/xii/'17) which was also the Feast of the Holy Family as well as New Year's eve. They were [posted here](#).

(1) What does a "thief of the tree" have to do with Christmas?

Mistletoe is commonly used at Christmas time. *Phoradendron* is the scientific name for mistletoe, meaning "thief of the tree" in Greek.

There are around 1,300 species of mistletoe worldwide, around 20 of which are endangered. Mistletoe is a parasite, sinking its roots into a tree from which it obtains its nutrients. *Phoradendron* is the scientific name for mistletoe, meaning "thief of the tree" in Greek. The word mistletoe comes from an observation in Anglo-Saxon times that it often grew around bird droppings. "Mistal" meant "dung" and "tan" was "twig". Years of language shift gave us 'mistletoe' from those two Anglo-Saxon root words. Several birds, butterflies and bees feed off the berries, leaves and nectar of mistletoe, making it an important part of the ecosystem. In Norse mythology, mistletoe's white berries were believed to be the tears of the goddess Frigga, which restored to life her murdered son Balder. Long before Christmas trees, a "kissing bough" hung with mistletoe was a popular decoration. Any woman who refuses a kiss under the mistletoe is said to be punished with bad luck. After a kiss, men must pluck a mistletoe berry. When no berries are left, the kissing has to stop. Mistletoe berries contain a poison called phoratoxin. Don't eat them and don't leave them where your pets could eat them.

(2) What did Sir John Horsley do for Sir Henry Cole in AD1843?

The first commercial Christmas cards were designed in

AD1843 for senior UK civil servant Sir Henry Cole by his artist friend Sir John Horsley.

Sir Henry Cole was Assistant Keeper at the Public Record Office and Sir John Horsley was a painter who was so passionately opposed to the use of nude models that he acquired the nickname 'Clothes Horsley'. His first Christmas card design had two panels showing people caring for the poor and a centre panel of family having a large Christmas dinner. It sold for one shilling and 1,000 were first printed with another 1,050 when they ran out. In AD2001, a card sent by Sir Henry Cole himself to his grandmother in 1843 sold at auction for £22,500. In Finland, around six hundred thousand cards are sent to Santa Claus every year. Last Christmas, around one hundred million single cards were bought in the UK, plus another nine hundred million in packs or boxes of cards. Around £50 million is raised each year from the sale of charity Christmas cards. The term "Christmas card", first seen in AD1869, predates "birthday card" by more than thirty years.

(3) Which royal personage first used a Christmas tree in the UK?

England's first royal Christmas tree was erected at Windsor by Queen Charlotte (née Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz), wife of King George III, in AD1800, but it was the trees erected in the *annis Domini* of the 1840s by Prince Albert (Prince Francis Albert Augustus Charles Emmanuel of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha), the Prince Consort of Queen Victoria, that led to their popularity throughout the UK and beyond.

(4) What did a saint do in AD1223?

Saint Francis of Assisi, the fearless confronter of Muslims, is credited with creating the first live nativity

scene in AD1223 in order to cultivate the worship of Christ. He himself had recently been inspired by his visit to the Holy Land, where he'd been shown Jesus' traditional birthplace. The scene's popularity inspired communities throughout Christianity to stage similar scenes and the static model nativity tableaux we know and love today arose from this practice.

(5) What was the fourteenth President of the USA the first to do?

In AD1853 (or AD1856) Franklin Pierce, the fourteenth President of the United States of America, was the first President to erect a Christmas tree in the White House. It should be noted that there is a reference to President John Tyler hosting a children's party in the *annis Domini* of the 1840s at which there was a Christmas tree with gifts, but that reference is from forty or more years after the event it purports to record and may not be trustworthy.

The Twelfth Night Bonus question's answer is the final one in this festive season quiz. The question was posted at NER late yesterday.

Q. Illuminatingly, who did what with a tree at Christmas in New York City in AD1882?

Edward Hibberd Johnson, an inventor and business associate of the famous USA inventor Thomas Alva Edison, created the first known electrically illuminated Christmas tree at his home in New York City, USA, in AD1882.

Edward Hibberd Johnson (January 4, AD1846 – September 9, AD1917) was an inventor and business associate of the

famous USA inventor Thomas Alva Edison. He was involved in many of Edison's projects, and was a partner in an early organisation which evolved into the General Electric Company, one of the largest Fortune 500 companies in the United States of America. When Johnson was Vice-President of the Edison Electric Light Company, a predecessor of Con Edison, he created the first known electrically illuminated Christmas tree at his home in New York City, USA, in AD1882. Edward H. Johnson therefore became known as the Father of Electric Christmas Tree Lights. Ironically he died in an electrical accident.

That's it until the muse of quizzes (probably Cleo in collusion with Mneme) deigns to inspire me again. I hope that you've all enjoyed it and that you've all had a wonderful Christmas and a really happy new year.