

spectrum Christmas 2012



About Spectrum

Spectrum is our school magazine which is produced by our students who are part of the Young Journalist Academy (YJA). Students are encouraged to take notice of local, national and international news and to write about stories they find interesting.

This is our first magazine with this year's young journalists and shows articles that they have written, many of which are published on the YJA website, <http://www.youngjournalistacademy.co.uk>.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Merry Christmas



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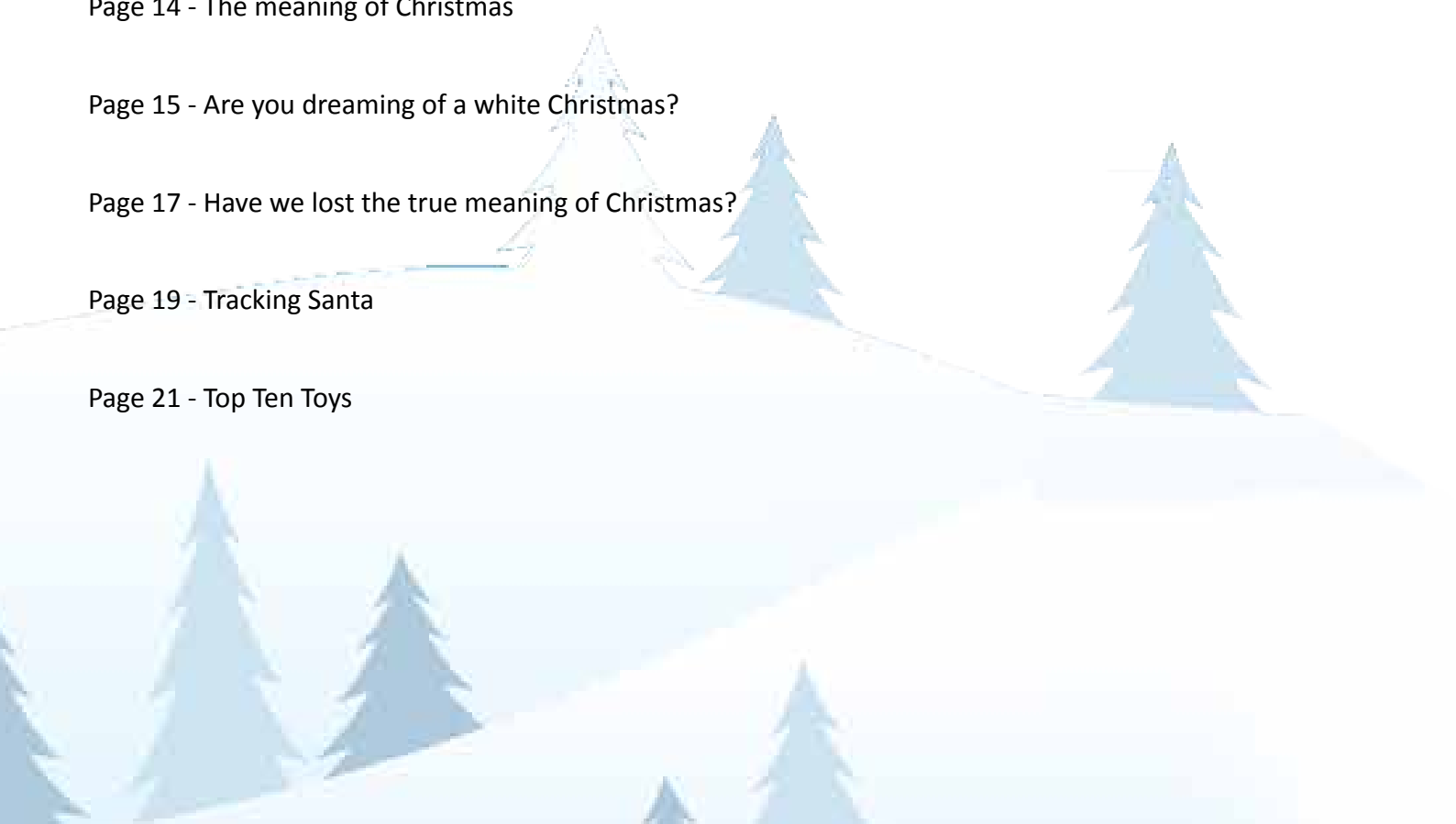
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A Christmas without Snow

Imagine a cold bracing day outside, a white sheet of snow has been laid on every object in the outside world, through the white sheet twinkles of ice appeared hiding away on the edges of the sheet. Snowflakes floating softly down to the ground. Everywhere you look is white. Is that how you want Christmas to be?

Adverts, magazines, newspapers, are all buzzing with, snow, ice, snowmen all picture in each piece of media. But is that how Christmas will be? What's the chance of it being a white Christmas?

Not a big chance to be honest. Met office has recorded that there has only been a widespread of snow four times in the past 51 years, but a snowflake has fallen on Christmas day 38 times so we can expect at least half of our Christmas's to be white-ish.

Even though we would associate Christmas as a

happy festive season with snow, ice and sleet. But that happens rarely in the UK.

For many people a white Christmas means "a snow falling between midnight and midday."

Whilst others it means "one snow flake covering a particular place".

BBC weather producer says "It's too early to say if we will see snow this Christmas. In some parts of the UK, you are statistically more likely to see you are more likely to see a white Good Friday than a white Christmas day."

So will snow fall on December 25th? We could be within a chance!

Whatever the weather, whether it snows or not have a Merry Christmas!

December 21st 2012, Myth or Reality?



Now you've probably heard of the big myth that the world will end in 2012, and you probably don't believe it. However, some devastating things that have occurred in recent months that were predicted long before they happened, may lead us to believe that the end might be closer than you think.

The Mayan calendar ends on the 21st December 2012. Ancient carvings describe that on the last day of existence, the earth would be showered in eternal darkness and all forms of life will die.

There is a place in France believed by some to be sacred and that it will protect them from the "Apocalypse" to come. Unfortunately for them, French officials have banned people entering this "sacred" place.

Now, you may think that this is just folklore or made-up fiction, but scientists have detected a large solar flare that they think is part of the coming "Apocalypse".

Some people are taking advantage of the situation by selling things like ready to eat meals, crank radios, survival kits and more. Perhaps something that people might want on their Christmas list..... ! I, myself don't believe in the "Apocalypse". However, I am still going to be wary, as the end of the world may not be just fiction and may be closer than you think

Asian Elephant "Speaks" Korean



The workers at Everland zoo in South Korea received a jaw dropping surprise when they realised that Koshik, the Asian elephant could speak Korean by putting his trunk in his mouth and making the sounds. The talkative creature can now say five words in Korean: good, no, hello and sit down.

This astounded his zoo keepers so much, that they videoed him in action, and the footage was sent to elephant communication researcher, Joyce Poole. Upon receiving the video, she pronounced it genuine and passed the information on to one of her former colleagues, Angela Stoeger, at the University of Vienna.

To reach the conclusion that yes, Koshik could speak Korean, Angela and her team had to carry out a series of investigations to confirm that the sounds Koshik made could clearly be distinguished as words.

47 recordings of Koshik speaking Korean were listened to by native Korean speakers, who were asked to write down what they heard. These people were oblivious to Koshik and his jaw dropping abilities, and so did not know what they were listening to.

The results showed that Koshik could be understood, and that the vowel sounds he made were registered particularly clearly. However, when it came to consonants, the reports written by the



native Koreans contradicted each other, as the different letter sounds he made were not easily distinguishable.

To prove that the sounds Koshik made were not natural elephant calls, his recordings were compared to those of Asian elephants. They were both completely different, and researchers continue to be amazed with his unique skill.

Joyce Poole, a Conservation Trust grantee for the National Geographic commented, "This is amazing. I can't see any chance that it is being faked and it is certainly a human voice that is being imitated".

Angela Stoeger, at the University of Vienna, commented, "He really developed a new way of sound production. Naturally, Asian elephants don't do this."

Koshik is currently enjoying his life at the zoo, and working even more with his trainers to improve his speech.

For more information, or to see Koshik in action, visit:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/11/121102-korean-speaking-elephant-talk-human-science-weird-animals/>

Which game will top the charts this Christmas?



Having the most popular and best-selling game at Christmas time is every developer's dream, but for one developer every year, it is a reality. Here is a quick rundown to which games I expect you will see topping the charts this Christmas.

5) Just Dance 4 is probably a safe bet this Christmas. Developed by Ubisoft, the Just Dance series has enjoyed phenomenal success virtually every year. It is released on PS Move, XBOX KINECT and Wii. I think that this is because of its casual style and easy to learn controls make it a family favourite. Just Dance 4 has DLC (Downloadable Content) meaning you can connect to the internet to get the routines for the newest songs. Also, it has Gangnam Style which will, no doubt, add to this game's appeal. This is going to be shifting copies left, right and centre.

4) Assassin's Creed 3 will be another big hitter this Christmas. It is also developed by Ubisoft, mean-

ing that they should receive big money from sales. Anyway, it is an action RPG for 18+ which has had 2 sequels. It is popular as you basically someone who just kills a ton of people. Lovely. But do not write off this game as it has stunning graphics and a massive map for you to explore. Ubisoft could probably live on the amount of money they will get for this game.

3) New Super Mario Bros. U is a game from Nintendo. As Nintendo's mascot, Mario is bound to do well. Just look at any of the games he has starred in and then see how many units they have sold. Even if the game is poor, which this is not, it will sell like it is the best game at the moment. Anyway, this game is very similar to the Wii version of this game released a few years ago, which was very good. This one improves on it by adding more power ups and, finally, a new plot, but you still have to rescue Peach in the end. If you are thinking this game is just New Super Mario Bros. Wii with a different name then



you are wrong. Loads of new levels, new power ups and the ability to communicate with people on the level selection menu; this is going to be one of the best games this Christmas with lots of sales.

2) Next on the list is Nintendo Land, obviously developed by Nintendo. This is a game compilation from Nintendo's most famous series. There are an astonishing 12 games in total. They include; Mario Chase, Metroid Blast, Pikmin Adventure, The Legend of Zelda: Battle Quest, Luigi's Ghost Mansion, Animal Crossing: Sweet Day, Takamaru's Ninja Castle, Donkey Kong's Crash Course, Yoshi's Fruit Cart, Ballon Trip Breeze, Captain Falcon's Twister Race and Octopus Dance. This game is designed for multiplayer action and I can see families gathering around the TV to play this. This will be one of the best-selling this Christmas.

1) Call of Duty: Black Ops 2. You predicted it, I predicted it, and we all predicted it. There is no doubt

in anyone's mind that this isn't going to be the best-selling game this Christmas. Developed by Treyarch and published by Activision, this first person shooter will improve on the original in every way, graphics, gameplay, online, everything. The original was considered best in the series by many and this looks likely to steal its crown. It has zombie mode where you frantically try and kill zombies whilst staying alive. The online is frantic with bullets spraying everywhere. This game also has a 3D option with TV's capable of doing that. Activision and Treyarch are going to be rolling in money this Christmas. Want to know why? Just read the next sentence. Within 24 hours of being on sale, Black Ops 2 raked in \$500,000,000 (half a billion dollars). This makes it the biggest entertainment launch ever. This has to be living proof that, with sales like that, this game is going to be the game to beat this Christmas.

Christmas Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger



We all love a good Christmas and we all know that everyone loves to watch a family movie at Christmas time. You munch on your popcorn, relax and join the world of Christmas Nativity 2: Danger in the manger the movie.

The story follows an overexcited classroom assistant Mr Poppy as he tries to get his class of wild kids to Wales for a pleasant singing competition. He breaks

loads of rules and even drags along his new teacher for the adventure which is full of all the action, and hopefully, singing!

We have some absolutely amazing actors in this movie we will start with the adventurous David Tennant (Starred also in Harry Potter and Doctor Who) playing as the new teacher convinced to go to Wales!



We have Marc Wootton playing Mr. Poppy, the teaching assistant going along with the successful singing competition (hopefully), we also have the hilarious Joanna Page (starred in Gavin & Stacy) and of course the wide range of kids competing to be entitled “Champions of the singing competition”

I am having the amazing feeling that this movie isn't to miss, the most adventurous and hilarious movie

to place your eyes upon. This is definitely a hit ladies and gentlemen grab your popcorn, grab your tickets and lose yourself in the film of a lifetime. The only Singing contest that the kids are out to win and they aren't going to let it go down easily they are going to fight with spirit and of course, messing around



Christmas traditions are they really British?

They are green and tall and never lose their leaves, what are they?

Christmas trees of course, we have all heard of and most likely seen and decorated a Christmas tree and now we think of them as just another part of the special wintertime tradition of Christmas. But where did the humble Christmas tree begin and more importantly why...

The humble pine tree and trees similar to it have been used as Christmas decorations for centuries but it was the Germans who first brought to life the tradition of the humble Christmas tree, way back in the 16th century they used trees to decorate their homes. More importantly they used whole trees, not just a few measly sprigs or leaves.

Later on the trees were decorated by the Germans using glass baubles, baubles were invented in a German town called Lauscha. The Germans loved decorative things and so later on extended the range of

Christmas tree decorations to things such as Wire sculptures and wafer thin silver tinsel. And when Prince Albert (a German) married Queen Victoria he bought the Christmas tree and decorations with him and we adopted this tradition as our own.

Since 1847 baubles have been produced in mass and are now, like the Christmas tree, something we associate with Christmas. But not many people know the true story of the Christmas tree. What about snow at Christmas- a white Christmas as it is often referred to?

Well we can certainly say that England's Weather isn't the nicest, but I don't think that we have a White Christmas every year, do you?

In 2010 about 50% of England had a white Christmas and last year we had a wet not a White Christmas, so what about this year. Wet or White- What do you think?



Is 'Santa Claus' real?

Well, this is a question that is on most children's lips at some point in their childhood. All the information you need is provided below, and I'm sure it will give you the perfect explanation.

Of course Santa was a real person; he was St. Nicholas the patron saint of giving. St Nicholas was born in 300 AD, he was a holy man being brought up in a monastery after being orphaned at an early age. He remained within the monastery and rose to the position of a Bishop.

He obtained his reputation for giving because there are many tales of him giving gifts to the poor and needy, and children in particular.

Over the years the European community have embraced the concept of St. Nicholas and customized it to make their own. In result of this, Santa's appearance sometimes changes, his cloak may be described as different colours but his 'giving' nature

still remains the same.

It is sometimes considered that Christmas festivities which do not include Nativity, misconstrued the meaning of Christmas. However, St Nicholas was a religious man and lived his life according to the holy scriptures of the time, and it's because of this that 'Santa' and the Nativity hold parallels.

The birth of Jesus Christ itself depicts God giving mankind his only son, and the prospect of the gift of eternal life. Additionally, the three wise men also came bearing gifts for the baby Jesus.

Although St Nicholas lived many years ago, he still lives on. He lives on because he is a major part of Christmas and we all keep 'Santa' alive, and he lives in us every year that we give another a gift at Christmas time. So, when a child asks you if 'Santa Claus' is real, say yes!



When does the festive season start for you?

When does Christmas officially start in your house? Does it start when you eat your first chocolate out of your advent calendar or when your town's Christmas lights come on?

Christmas means a lot of things to different people, for mum it's making sure she buys the right turkey and for dad it's the last minute trip to the super market because he forgot (AGAIN!). Or maybe it's you trying to hide your sprouts when Grandad's not looking.

We asked a teenage when does Christmas start for you and she said "as soon as December starts, it's definitely Christmas time".

I know its Christmas when the lights come on at 'Woodthorpe Garden Centre' because it looks like a winter wonderland.

Does your family come round for Christmas or is it

just you and your parents trying to demolish a 14lb turkey.

How do you decorate your Christmas tree? Do you put thought into every bauble you hang or do you just throw a bunch of decorations here and there like me. Do you have a specific order of tree decorations? For me it's got to be: lights, baubles, chocolates, figurines, tinsel and then the star.

The fun of staying in your pyjamas all day, trying not to ruin the festive atmosphere. The excitement of opening your presents early Christmas morning while your parents sit daydreaming because they were up at 6:00AM because of a certain someone. Whatever kind of Christmas you have I hope it's a good one.

Remember when at Christmas



Remember when at Christmas is a comedy and singing performance brought to you by 5 people. They consist of 2 dancers, 2 musicians and a singer/presenter. The dancers were named Caroline Hodgeson and Jemma Turner. The presenter and producer of the show was called Neil Sands.

The show takes you back when Christmas was valued greatly and it jogs memories of old Christmas carols and songs. They describe what it was like back in the 1900's and makes you imagine deeply. Beautiful harmonies are created by the group and make the experience one for a life time.

They really do make you realise the true meaning of Christmas and that you should appreciate it dearly.

Lots of classical Christmas songs are sung like silent night. At the end of the performance they sing newer songs which are our generation recognise more. The producer, Neil Sands, was a professional wrestler when he was young. He does not have that kind of build anymore as time went on. We watched it in the Embassy Theatre in Skegness and would recommend the venue and performance.

They do other types of place like Best of British in the summer which sounds very exciting.

Hope you go to the show and have the time of your life!

The meaning of Christmas



It's that jolly time of the year again. December has finally come and it has brought with it, all the joys of Christmas. But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the presents under the tree, the bright Christmas lights on the houses, the greetings cards in the post, the Christmas dinners with family and friends, the snow in the garden, the stockings hanging up in the living room? Is this the true meaning of Christmas?

Christmas is a time where God shows his love for us. It is a time of reflecting. Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Jesus, the son of God. God sent his son to the world and his birth brought great joy. The shepherds and the three wise men shared in the excitement of the birth and brought gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold to celebrate.

However in this modern society Christmas has become a commercial holiday rather than a religious

one; many people have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. They focus on the commercial side and become wrapped up in unimportant things, like what they want for Christmas instead of what they should give others to bring happiness.

Even though Christmas is becoming even more commercial each year there are still Christmas items that symbolise the important meanings of Christmas.

The fir tree symbolises everlasting hope, which is what God brings to many people. The star we place upon the fir tree symbolises a heavenly promise, one that God made to find a saviour for the world. The candles that you place around your house symbolise the light that Jesus brought to the world.

Christmas is a time of giving and being grateful for what you have, but in this modern day society we seem to have forgotten that, but what do you think?

Are you dreaming of a white Christmas?



What do you think of when you hear the word Christmas? Presents under the Christmas tree, singing Christmas carols around a fire, a nice Christmas meal, snow? But what are the odds of getting a white Christmas this year?

In England there is a 20% chance of snow, in Scotland there is a 35% chance, a 25% chance in Wales and a 20% chance in the Republic of Ireland. As you

can see it is unlikely that it will snow on Christmas day this year.

But why do some areas of Great Britain have a greater chance of snow than others? Regional climates in Great Britain are influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and latitude. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England and Scotland are closest to the Atlantic Ocean, so they are generally the mild-



est, wettest and windiest regions whereas Eastern areas are drier, cooler, less windy and also experience the biggest temperature variations. Northern areas are generally cooler, wetter and have a slightly bigger temperature range than southern areas. Wales and the south-west of England are the most exposed to the maritime tropical air which brings warm moist air.

An example of this could be that in summer the Northern Isles could be at a temperature of 15°C and areas around London could be at 30°C which is double the temperature of the Northern Isles! In conclusion, if you are dreaming of a white Christmas, don't get your hopes up just yet.

Have we lost the true meaning of Christmas?



Have we lost the true meaning of Christmas? Or do people still celebrate it as a Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus? Apparently not - 62% of a surveyed British group said that they wouldn't be attending a Christmas service.

I was one of four lucky people recently selected to watch a touring West End musical performance as part of the Young Journalist Academy. The musical

was called Remember When at Christmas, produced by Neil Sands, and was a pleasantly nostalgic look back at Christmases from the 1940s to 1970s and many jokes were aimed at modern Christmas traditions. Back then, children would be happy to count pockets of change in front of a fire and sing carols for neighbours. Now, Christmas is all about commercialisation and presents. It made me wonder - have we lost the true meaning of Christmas?



An October 2011 survey by polling agency ComRes revealed that 40% said that Christmas had no real meaning and was simply a good excuse for time off. Only 34% disagreed. It's hard to blame them for their views, with Christmas songs starting in shops just after Hallowe'en and Jesus Christ only appearing on less than 0.5% of Christmas cards available in 2011.

But is there hope for the true meaning of Christmas to return? As Britain is in the middle of a recession, perhaps people will go less overboard with presents and give with the heart? And even if Christmas has lost its religious meaning, 67% of adults still consider spending time with family to be the most important thing about Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

Tracking Santa



On December 24th 1955, a mistake was made in Colorado Springs, USA that now makes Christmas a bit more magical.

A “Sears” department store advertised a number in the newspaper that children could call to talk to Santa Claus himself.

However, this number was printed incorrectly, phoning instead Colorado Springs’ Air Defense Command (CONAD) center. When children called, Colonel

Shoup, who was on duty that night, told his staff to give all the children that telephoned a “current location” for Santa Claus.

A tradition began which continued when CONAD was replaced by NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) in 1958.

Today, NORAD relies on volunteers to answer all calls, making the program possible. The team handles 70,000 telephone calls a year, as well as numer-



Streetsville, Ontario, Canada

ous emails and “tweets” from all over the globe.

On Christmas Eve, anyone can log on to the website and view the “Santa Cam”. This shows exactly where Santa Claus is, and what time he will be arriving at the next location.

Whether you believe in Santa or not, Christmas is full of many surprises, and this is one everyone should indulge themselves in, even if just for a minute.

Visit <http://www.noradsanta.org> on Christmas Eve to find out when the jolly old fellow will be making his way down your chimney, giving you plenty of time to jump in your bed, pull the covers over your head and pretend you’re asleep!

Top Ten Toys



Every single year all of the toy manufacturers compete to be in Hamley's top ten toys for this Christmas.

Throughout the years the toys have excelled technologically but this year they are by far the best. For the girls the Monster high dolls that come with accessories are supposed to sell out and as they are aimed at ages three up, they are fun for all ages and all have their own personalities! For the boys spider man is the toy to beat, this new figure model has built in motorized web shooting actions that can fire the sticky web from both hands!

The technology now involved with Christmas toys has gone up so far though that 3rd on the list is a motorized dancing Mickey Mouse M3! This toy dances and even ends on the apparent signature move, a one handed hand stand!

leys has also said that the cabbage patch kids from back in the day are 8th on the list with fourteen different styles to choose from the collection can grow and grow just like the cabbage! They even come with a birth certificate for you to fill in!

Moshi Monster has been another big thing this year so it isn't surprising that the new app is on the top ten list. The app allows you to plug your phone into a teddy bear version of the characters and make them come to life.

With all of the new technology this year we need to remember the true meaning of Christmas! I hope you all have a fab holiday and enjoy all of your presents!

Along with Lego and Barbie, the classical toys Ham-