

## WE'RE DREAMING OF A 'GREEN' CHRISTMAS!



In Class 3 we don't like to see anything going to waste – especially at this time of year when it can sometimes seem as if we're surrounded by excess. So we hit upon the inspired idea of creating our own recycled Christmas tree. It's made from painted egg boxes, and we think you'll agree the result is very impressive. If you'd like to have a go at making your own (or perhaps a smaller version!) you'll find the instructions below.

### You will need:

Tall cardboard tube (ours was an inner tube from a carpet roll; the carpet shop was delighted to pass it on to us!)  
Cardboard base  
Egg boxes  
Green paint

### To decorate:

Pine cones sprayed silver or gold  
Fairy lights  
Christmas crackers

### Special equipment:

Hot glue gun  
Paint brushes

**Be careful using a glue gun.  
You will need a grown-up to help you out.**

### How to make the tree:

**1** Cover your work area with newspaper to protect surfaces. Attach the cardboard tube to the base using the hot glue gun. Paint the

exterior of the egg boxes and leave to dry.

**2** Stack the egg boxes in a Christmas tree shape. You will need more at the bottom to make the 'branches' look fuller. Glue into position as you go. Leave to dry.



**3** Decorate your tree to get into the festive spirit. However the mood takes you – whether it's tastefully minimalist or chuck-everything-at-it bling – this is your chance to indulge your arty side!

## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

By Kiya Felstead, Y5

In other parts of the world, people celebrate Christmas in many different ways.

In New Zealand, Christmas arrives in the middle of summer! It is a time for barbecues and camping at the beach. Many towns have Santa parades with brightly patterned floats, brass bands and marching girls. Some New



Zealanders also have a mid-winter Christmas on the 21st June, with parties, presents

and a turkey feast, because they like the idea of a proper wintry celebration. In the USA some

families use popcorn threaded onto string to decorate their Christmas

trees. Houses, towns and cities are elaborately decorated with colourful lights. The most famous street lights in America are at the Rockefeller Centre in New York. Tourists from all over the world visit to see the sight – and also enjoy skating at the famous rink.

In the Netherlands, the children are very lucky because every night in December they place a shoe outside their front door and Santa comes and puts a small treat inside. The most important day for Dutch families is 5th December when children receive their big presents, and they celebrate with a huge feast on Christmas Eve.

Whichever traditions you have in your family, I wish you a very merry Christmas!

# CHATTER!

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FREE

## YOU ARE INVITED TO CELEBRATE A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS!

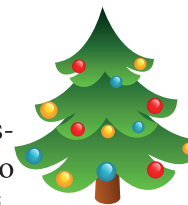
**This term, Class 4 has been learning all about how the Victorians have influenced the way we live today. To help them get into the festive spirit, they visited The Judge's Lodgings in Presteigne to see how Christmas was celebrated in a well-to-do household in the 19th century.**

By Max Kite

Victorian times started in 1838 until 1901. As the years went by they began to indulge in the spirit of Christmas more and more. Without the Victorians we probably wouldn't have many of the things we enjoy at this wonderful time of year because they introduced paper decorations, present giving, greetings cards, a festive feast, and – of course – the Christmas tree!

### Oh Christmas tree!

It was Victoria's husband, Albert, who introduced the tradition of having a tree in the home at Christmas. Of course, it wasn't possible to just pop to the shops or the local grower to buy your tree, so Victorians would go down to the woods, chop down the best-looking specimen they could find and then drag it back on the horse and cart. Once inside, it would be decorated with orange segments, pine cones, cinnamon sticks, coloured ribbons, walnuts, conkers – and a fairy on the top.



### Deck the halls!

Victorians would decorate their houses with holly, ivy, mistletoe and rosemary, and Children enjoyed dyeing peas red to thread onto string.

### Season's greetings!

Christmas cards first appeared in 1843. In that year, a man called Henry Cole wanted to send a postcard to all his friends, so he commissioned an artist friend to paint a lovely Christmas scene. He then printed 100 copies which he signed and dispatched to his nearest and dearest.

### Presents

Stockings were opened on 6th December. If you were a child from a poor Victorian family you might be given some coal to keep you warm through the winter, an apple to keep you

healthy, and perhaps a small bag of salt from which you would take a pinch to throw over your left shoulder to shoo away the devil. You might also receive a penny to bring you riches in the New Year. Children from wealthier families might have an exotic orange in their stockings, a tin train, a wooden doll and some clay marbles.

### A festive feast

Food was scarce if you were poor, but rich Victorians would hold a banquet that might have as many as 20 courses! The highlight

might have been a turkey or a pie filled with duck, pigeon, chicken, goose and pork. They also had a Christmas pudding which they cooked in a sheep's skin.

**Did you know?**  
Naughty children were given twigs in their stockings!






# GABRIEL'S BIG BREAK!



Last week saw the glittering premiere of the Key Stage 1 nativity play. Laura, Eve and Mali give you a glimpse behind the scenes

Before Mr Greaves put the stage up for us, Ms George put some plastic foot-prints out roughly where the stage would be so we'd know where to stand. For a long time we also had to practise without any costumes.

First of all the angels came on and did their actions and then the narrators said their lines and Eve ran to the front of the stage and sang, *Atchoo, Bless You!* She was very good at her solo! Mary and Joseph were told by the Angel Gabriel that they needed to go to a town called Bethlehem. Then all the innkeepers and visitors sang, *Left Out in the Cold*. After Mary had her baby, the three kings came and the shepherds gave gifts of lambs to precious baby Jesus. The kings had travelled far and they had to look for a new star to appear in the sky and shine brightly.



There were lots of songs to learn, such as, *Another Busy Day*, *Angels' Delight* and *See the Baby*. We performed the play three times. Everyone was very nervous on the first day of the real thing. We all had so much fun doing this play and we were all sad when it finished. Thank you Ms George!

## THE FABULOUS BAKER BOY

We all know that Archie Roberts in Class 5 is obsessed with farming. While his classmates are engrossed in the Wimpy Kid's diaries, Archie can usually be found with his nose in a tractor manual or a book about rare breeds.

You might be surprised to hear, however, that he has another passion: baking. 'I love it,' he enthuses. 'If I can't be a farmer when I grow up then I'll open a farm shop to sell my cakes.'

It seems Archie's inspiration comes from the women in his family. Both his mum, Lara, and granny are keen bakers. 'I remember licking the bowl when mum baked a cake. Then, when I could stand on a chair, I was allowed to help mix the ingredients. Now I'm the one creating my own recipes.'

Lara agrees: 'He's obsessed! Sometimes he gets up at five in the morning, and when the rest of us wake up we come downstairs to find a freshly baked cake waiting for us on the table. The kitchen is always covered

in Archie's baking ingredients!'

Last week, Archie set up his own cake stall at the Christmas Fair, selling his snowman cupcakes, reindeer shortbread and a chocolate Christmas pudding showstopper! He raised £35 for FOCS.

So, if you want some tips on how to make a smooth-as-silk 'crème pat' or a light-as-air sponge, then Archie's your man. Look out Paul Hollywood!





# Titanic Sets Sail



*By our Home Affairs Correspondents, Theo Taylor-George, Zofia Blood, Sophie Crane and Adam Dudley*

Jubilant crowds lined the docks in Southampton yesterday morning to watch the 'unsinkable' Titanic depart on her maiden voyage to New York. At the stroke of midday, the luxurious ocean liner's steam whistle blew and the colossal ship slipped her moorings and eased away from her berth.

Titanic will be skippered by Captain Edward Smith and is manned by 899 crew members, including eight officers, 289 firemen who will take shifts to shovel coal non-stop, 28 engineers and 18 stewardesses to look after the first-class passengers.

Fully laden, Titanic weighs 73,924 tonnes. She was built in the Belfast shipyards and the final cost

of construction was £1,300,000.

There are many rich and famous people on board, including John Jacob Astor VI and Benjamin Guggenheim, whose family has made money in mining. In total, there are 1324 passengers.

A first class ticket cost £870 and for this passengers will enjoy luxurious suites furnished with French antiques, fine linens and exquisite ornaments. There is plenty to do on board as well; first-class ticket holders have access to a pool, theatre and world-class cuisine. Below decks in third class (ticket price, £7), steerage passengers enjoy light and airy berths – and even have their own washing facilities.

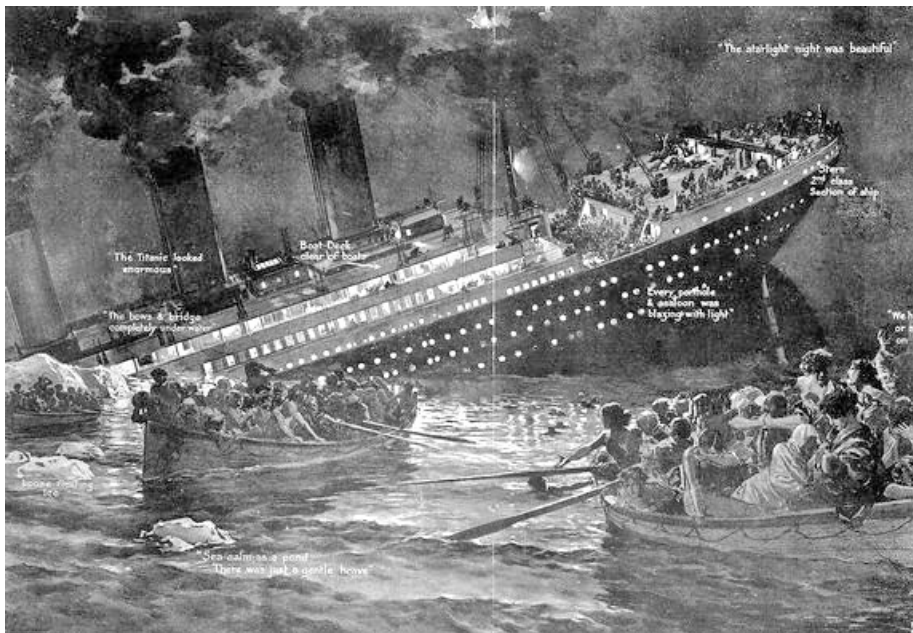
After leaving Southampton, the queenly Titanic set sail for Cherbourg in France, where more passengers are expected to embark. Following a brief stop in



As part of their literacy topic this half term, Year 6 has been studying journalistic writing. Taking on the role of reporters at the turn of last century, they were 'commissioned' to write both a news report on the departure of the luxury liner Titanic on her maiden voyage, followed by a feature article on the public inquiry that followed her tragic sinking.

Queenstown, Southern Ireland, she is expected to reach New York at the weekend.

# Why did so many die?



**The sinking of RMS Titanic earlier this year was the worst shipping disaster in modern maritime history. Our chief correspondent, India Davies, asks why so many lives were lost**

Sarah Hargreaves clung to the side of the lifeboat, her knuckles white. As the boat was slowly lowered into the freezing ocean, Sarah's husband, John, stood tall on the deck. Floating further away from the stricken ship, Sarah knew she would never hold him again.

Just two hours earlier, the luxurious ship had struck an iceberg but, such was the belief that the ocean liner was unsinkable, many precious minutes were wasted before the decision was taken to hand out lifevests and evacuate the ship.

Sarah was one of the lucky ones. She was rescued four hours later by the Carpathia but, like nearly 1000 other passengers and crew, her husband went down with the ship. Sarah was left widowed to bring up their two children by herself.

Sarah tells me her story as we sit in the cold pews of the church where

she and John were married. Her voice cracks with emotion as she tells me about that dreadful night. 'It breaks my heart to remember the fear I saw in his eyes when he realised that there were no more seats on the lifeboats.'

Each day this week, I have accompanied Sarah to the Public Inquiry into the disaster. Inside the grand Southampton Courthouse, the public gallery is packed with the families of the victims. Some sit

## 'Lessons must be learned from this disaster'



*Sarah with her husband John*

in silence; others, their faces twisted in fury, call out in disgust as the witnesses give their evidence.

The actions of the late Captain Edward Smith, skipper of Titanic, were the first to come under scrutiny. He was accused of pushing on, full steam ahead, despite warnings of ice in the area. However, lawyers acting on his behalf pointed out that conditions that night were perfect for sailing, with a clear, starlit sky and calm waters.

Deceased Chief Officer Murdoch's role in the disaster was examined. Upon receiving warnings from the bridge that there was an iceberg ahead, he acted immediately, reversing the engines and turning the ship to starboard. It has been claimed by some that this was a fatal error; that by slowing the engines the ship could not turn fast enough to avoid the iceberg. However, it was stated that he had an impeccable record as an engineer and that he was following procedure: 'He did what he could,' a shipping expert acknowledged.

Next in the dock was Bruce Ismay, owner of The White Star line. He was accused of selfishly taking a seat in one of the lifeboats. 'All the women and children were evacuated,' he thundered. 'I took the decision to abandon ship because I thought I could be of use to the survivors.'

Captain Stanley Lord, skipper of the California, was called to the dock. Even though the California was easily within reach of Titanic, he failed to respond to flares and SOS messages. 'We sent a signal by torchlight, but there was no reply. I didn't think to turn the radio on.'

Sarah, sitting beside me in the public gallery, is visibly shocked by the evidence. 'I truly cannot believe what I have heard,' she tells me. 'Lessons must be learned from this disaster; we can never allow it to happen again.'