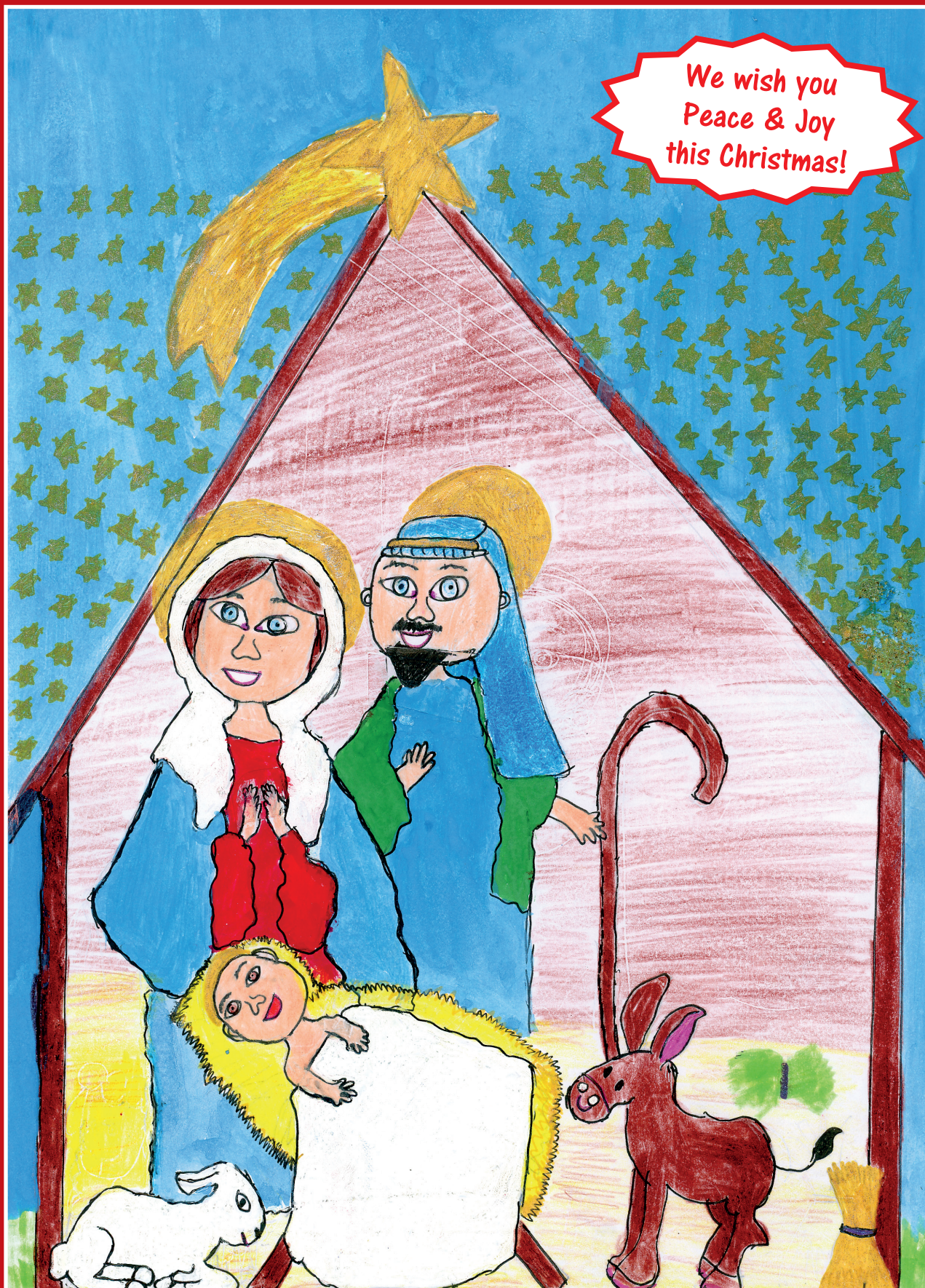


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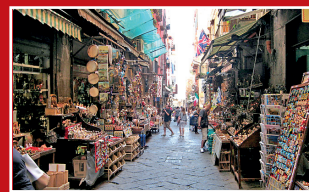
SUNDAY  
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# FUN DAY TIMES

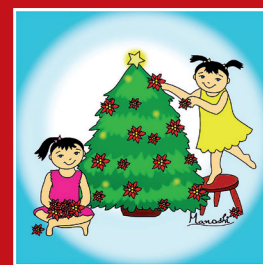


Art by  
Nethmi Batuwita  
(12 years)



**LANDMARKS**

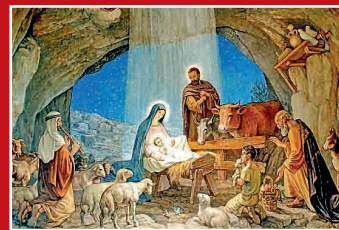
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**STORY**

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**(ONLINE)**



**CHRISTMAS**

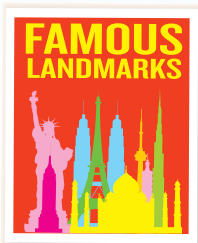
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# Via Di San Gregorio Armeno

## A street of Nativity scene makers

*Naples is famous for its crib tradition and it has even a road exclusively with crib shops. Via San Gregorio Armeno is one of the most amazing attractions in Naples.*

Via Di San Gregorio Armeno, a pedestrian street in the historic city of Naples is full of artisan shops on both sides. It has been nicknamed 'Cribs Street' by locals for its unique shops. The deep knowledge of the artisans is handed down from father to son. Numerous shops are filled with creative nativity scenes and figurines in all variations. Here Christmas decorations and Nativity scenes are available all year round, as craftsmen work hard every day to preserve their precious traditions, shaping terracotta figurines that will be placed later in Neapolitan Manger scenes.

Their unique way of depicting this special time of the year has become more and more appreciated that nowadays tourists from all over the world choose December to visit the fascinating Naples. In this street it is possible to admire the craftsmanship of Naples inhabitants in the whole working process, from the creation stage, to the exhibition and delivery to clients.

Besides the Jesus and Madonna figurines you will also find detailed copies of pizzerias, fruit markets, all household objects, gastronomic delights, exotic



**Nativity figurines.**

animals and sometimes even caricatured politicians and football players.

Moreover you can find thousands of accessories and building materials for your Neapolitan crib, like cork to create the mountains, ready-to-place houses, wells, waterfalls powered by electric engine, small lakes with water, trees, grasslands, bridges and towers. And all (or nearly all) handmade! Fully completed cribs ("presepe") with or without crib figures are also available.

During Christmas time in Naples, more than half a million tourists from all over the world come to see the shops with the original miniature figurines and the street is especially busy. However, most shops are open all year round.

Neapolitan figurines stand out for their uniqueness: A myriad of extraordinary and unconventional representations of the birth of Jesus is seen here. From the main characters of Mary, Jesus and St. Joseph to shepherds, butchers and the Biblical Magi, in this area you will find all that you need to make your personal Nativity Scene at home.



**Via San Gregorio Armeno in Naples.**

The tradition of the Neapolitan Nativity scenes dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when St. Francis created the first Nativity scene at the Sanctuary of Greccio, in central Italy. At the beginning, the creation of Nativity scenes was a privilege of holy sites such as churches.

Finally, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, people from wealthy social classes in Naples desired to have their own ones. Local artisans were commissioned impressive Manger scenes, with plenty of Baroque features. Soon this became a true highlight of the city, and artists opened their shops and exhibitions in Via di San Gregorio Armeno.

In the National Museum of San Martino on Vomero hill you can see a famous collection of Neapolitan nativity scenes including the largest nativity scene, the Presepe Cuciniello, with 162 people, 80 animals, angels and about 450 miniature objects, among the finest nativity scenes in the world.



**A traditional Neapolitan Nativity scene.**



**The Cuciniello Nativity, kept in the National Museum of San Martino.**

Sources: [Portanapoli.com](http://Portanapoli.com) & Rome Private Guides

### Famous Landmarks Quiz 37

**Q:** Where can you see the famous Cuciniello Nativity scene?

**Famous Landmarks Quiz 36** **Senula Navaratne, Narammala**





# A Christmas to Remember

By Manoshi de Silva

**N**ethuki and Saheli stared at the small evergreen tree outside in their garden. The two sisters planted it and cared for it every day until it grew big enough to be decorated as a Christmas tree. "Let's decorate it each year for Christmas and let it grow naturally in our garden!" the two girls decided soon after planting the tree. This year the tree was as tall as Nethuki, so the girls decided to have it decorated from this year on.

There was one problem though, although the evergreen tree grew tall enough, the rest of the girls' plans weren't going too well. The girls' father, who worked far away, came home each year for Christmas. But this year he informed them he was not able to do so, as he had a lot of work to attend to.

Celebrating Christmas without their father at home was not easy. Also the girls' father had promised to bring Christmas decorations to decorate their small evergreen tree. So now the girls were left with a beautiful tree but nothing to decorate it with. "Shall we ask Amma to buy us some decorations?" asked Saheli and her sister stopped her at once. "No, let's not do that. Amma was saying that she only has enough money for our food and clothes. We shouldn't trouble her!"

The girls sat on the doorstep next to their mother who was stitching floor-mats from scrap pieces of cloth. She sent the floor-mats she stitched to the town, to earn a little extra money. Nethuki pulled out a strip of red cloth from her mother's work basket and folded it without much thought. "That looks like a Poinsettia flower," pointed out Saheli. Nethuki's eyes lit up. "That's it!" she said.

"Amma, can we have some pieces of cloth that you won't be needing?" asked Nethuki and their mother agreed. Nethuki collected a handful of red cloth strips and taught Saheli how to fold them like she did before, making them look like Poinsettia flowers. As Saheli folded and made them, Nethuki stitched the edges to hold the petals together.

She inserted some tiny pieces of yellow cloth in the middle as well.

Finally the girls' handiwork looked like a beautiful bunch of Poinsettia flowers. "Those look beautiful, girls!" exclaimed their mother after seeing the creative handwork of the two girls.

The girls went outside and decorated their tree, hanging their handmade decorations on the evergreen branches. Their little tree looked absolutely beautiful in no time.

As they were hanging the last decoration, a car stopped in front of their small house. A small girl and a very small boy got out of the car. "We stopped to see this beautiful tree," said the girl, "from where did you get these beautiful decorations?" "We made them," said Saheli.

"I want these!" the small boy started crying pointing at the decorations. "I am sorry," said the girl, "my brother is still very small and he doesn't understand things." "That's alright, here take a few for your Christmas tree," said Nethuki. She and Saheli removed a handful of Poinsettia flowers and gave the girl and the small boy.

"But your tree looks bare now!" said the girl. "Don't worry. We can make a few more," said Nethuki and explained how she and her sister made the flowers from their mother's work basket. The two delighted children thanked the girls and ran back to their car with the decorations they received. "Let's make a few more to hang on the empty branches of our tree," said Nethuki and the two girls got back to work.

The next morning, the day before Christmas, the two sisters got up and went out to see their tree. There was a small package hanging on an evergreen branch. "What is this?" Saheli wondered as she removed it. The package was wrapped in a beautiful glittery wrapping paper.



Inside the package was a shiny Christmas decoration, a gold star, and an invitation.

"Malli and I appreciate your kindness very much. Please join us for lunch with your family on Christmas Day," said the card with the address of the little girl and boy who came the day before. The girls were very happy and showed the gift and the card to their mother.

Nethuki hanged the Gold star they received, right on the top of their tree. She looked into the blue sky above and made a wish. "Please God, let Thaththa come home to celebrate Christmas with us!" Before Nethuki could turn around, Saheli shouted "Thaththa is coming!" Both girls ran towards the road and hugged their father who was carrying a heavy bag full of nice things for them.

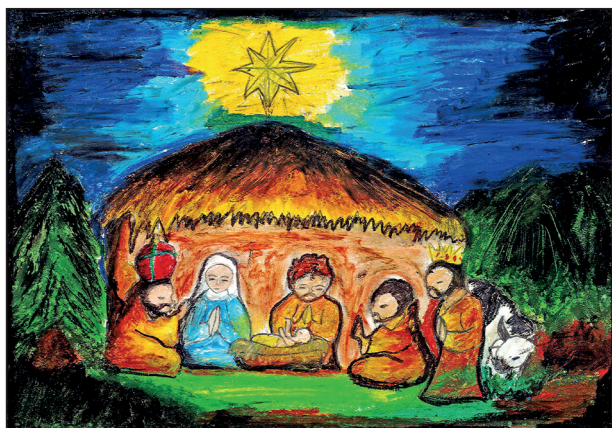
That evening the two girls told their father about the evergreen tree and the invitation. "I couldn't buy decorations for the tree as I promised earlier, as I didn't want to get late and miss the train," said their father. "But now I am glad that I didn't. Your tree looks absolutely beautiful, just like your hearts!"

The girls' father held them close to him. "Christmas is a time to share and because of the good deed you two did to make the other two kids happy, you got a beautiful gift of friendship in return. This is sure to be a Christmas you will never forget!"





## Christmas Art



**D. Shandeep** (11 years)  
St. Clement's College, Kandy



**Nulara Ekanayake** (11 years)  
Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo



**Zeina Ramzi** (11 years)  
Ilma Int. Girls' School



**Kaveen Gnanaweera** (7 years)  
Brisbane Int. School, Kohuwala



**Adeesha Jayasekara** (6 years)  
Wesley College Primary



**Onithi Herath** (12 years)  
Royal Int. School, Kurunegala



**Nihinsa Stephani** (9 years)  
St. Thomas' Catholic Int. College,  
Seeduwa



**Seyara Silva** (10 years)  
St. Ambrose Catholic Primary School,  
Sydney, Australia



**Dylan Roshan** (8 years)  
S. Thomas' Preparatory School, Colombo 3

## Happy Birthday



**Shahana Shazly**  
10 years on December 23

**Please send competition entries to:**



**Funday Times**  
C/O the Sunday Times  
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.  
Or  
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,  
Colombo 2.

**Closing date for weekly competitions:**

**January 11, 2023**



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**Email: [fundaytimes1@gmail.com](mailto:fundaytimes1@gmail.com)**

**In our online issue this week:**

- **Page 5** – Christmas
- **Page 6** – Christmas poems
- **Page 7** – Christmas trees around the world
- **Page 8** – News in Pictures

Please log on to the Funday Times website on [www.fundaytimes.lk](http://www.fundaytimes.lk) or check out the Sunday Times epaper on [www.sundaytimes.lk](http://www.sundaytimes.lk) for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.





# CHRISTMAS

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

Christmas is the annual celebration on December 25 that marks the birth of Jesus Christ. Despite being a Christian holiday, it is celebrated by non-Christians around the world and is arguably the biggest holiday season of the year. Some countries (such as Sweden, Denmark and Iceland) celebrate Christmas on December 24.

## The Nativity

Over 2000 years ago, the Roman Emperor decreed that a census was to be taken, resulting in everyone having to return to their hometowns. Among them, in the town of Nazareth, were Mary and her husband, Joseph, whose hometown was Bethlehem. Once they reached Bethlehem, they were unable to find accommodation due to the large number of people who had travelled for the census, so they are believed to have taken shelter in a cave. That night, Mary gave birth to Jesus, who was laid in a manger (a long trough for animal feed), since there was nowhere else to keep Him.

The Baby's first visitors were shepherds who were informed by angels of His Birth. A few days later, three Magi (wise men) followed a bright star (the Star of Bethlehem) which led them to where Jesus was and they brought Him gifts.



## "Christmas" in other languages

Navidad (Spanish)  
Natale (Italian)  
Natal (Portuguese)  
Noël (French)  
Noel (Turkish)  
Weihnachten (German)  
Jul (Swedish)  
Jól (Icelandic)

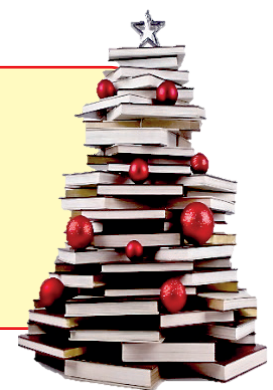
The nativity is re-enacted through plays during Christmas and figurines that depict the nativity scene are popular decorations.



Gingerbread houses have almost become as synonymous with Christmas as Christmas trees. Besides these edible decorations, other Christmas foods include Christmas Cake, Christmas Pudding and Christmas Cookies.

## Jólabókaflóð

Pronounced 'yo-la-bok-a-flot' and roughly translating to "Christmas Book Flood", Jólabókaflóð is an Icelandic tradition of gifting books on Christmas Eve and then spending the rest of the day reading, usually while drinking hot chocolate. The tradition began during World War II, when paper was one of the few items that were not rationed, which resulted in an increase in giving books as presents.



## The Christmas Spider

A legend widely known in Ukraine tells the tale of a poor widow who could not afford to decorate her Christmas tree. While she and her children were asleep, spiders decided to decorate the tree with their webs, which magically turned to silver and gold. This legend is credited as the origin for the tradition of decorating Christmas trees with tinsel, and has also resulted in spider-shaped ornaments being used to decorate the tree in some countries.



While Christmas is often associated with receiving gifts from Santa Claus, decorating houses and so on, the important aspect of the festive season is to give to those less fortunate.





### The First Christmas

It never snows at Christmas in that dry and dusty land.  
Instead of freezing blizzards,  
there are palms and drifting sands,  
and years ago a stable and a most unusual star  
and three wise men who followed it, by camel,  
not by car,  
while, sleepy on the quiet hills, a shepherd gave a cry.  
He'd seen a crowd of angels in the silent starlit sky.  
In the stable, ox and ass stood very still and calm  
and gazed upon the Baby, safe and snug in Mary's arms.  
And Joseph, lost in shadows, face lit by an oil lamp's glow  
stood wondering, that first Christmas Day,  
two thousand years ago.

– **Marian Swinger**



### Bethlehem of Judea

A little child,  
A shining star.  
A stable rude,  
The door ajar.  
Yet in that place,  
So crude, forlorn  
The Hope of all  
The world was born.



### Christmas Star

A diamond shines no brighter  
than that lovely Christmas star  
It shines in all its brilliance  
it's seen from near or far.  
A symbol of the Christ child  
as He lay upon the hay,  
It tells to all the waiting world  
a King was born that day.  
O Bethlehem Star keep shining  
give us faith and hope and love.  
Keep our thoughts forever turning  
to the Saviour up above.  
Give us strength and hope and  
courage  
to do our best by far  
And never falter in our faith  
as we watch that Christmas star...



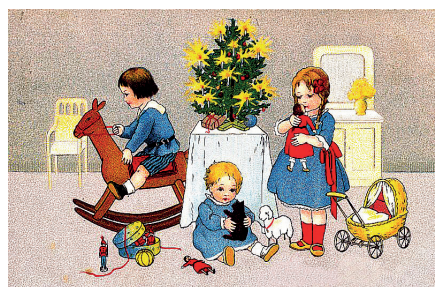
### Christmas Bells

I heard the bells on  
Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth,  
good-will to men!

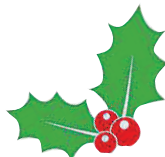
– **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**



### A Christmas Wish



I'd like a stocking made for a giant,  
And a meeting house full of toys,  
Then I'd go out in a happy hunt  
For the poor little girls and boys;  
Up the street and down the street,  
And across and over the town,  
I'd search and find them everyone,  
Before the sun went down.



### Snowball

I made myself a snowball  
As perfect as could be,  
I thought I'd keep it as a pet,  
And let it sleep with me.  
I made it some pajamas,  
And a pillow for its head,  
Then last night it ran away  
But first—it wet the bed!

– **Shel Silverstein**



### The Little Christmas Carollers



We are a band of carollers,  
We march through frost and snow,  
But care not for the weather  
As on our way we go.  
At every hall or cottage  
That stands upon our way,  
We stop to give the people  
Best wishes for the day.  
We pray a merry Christmas,  
Made bright by Christmas cheer,  
With peace, and hope, and gladness  
And all they may hold dear.  
And for all those that happen  
To pass us on our way  
We have a smile, and wish them  
A merry Christmas-day.

– **L.A Franc**



### A Christmas Angel

Oh, I wish I was an angel on the tree  
Oh, I wish I was an angel on the tree  
I'd give every girl and boy  
Lots of Christmas peace and joy  
Oh, I wish I was an angel on the tree

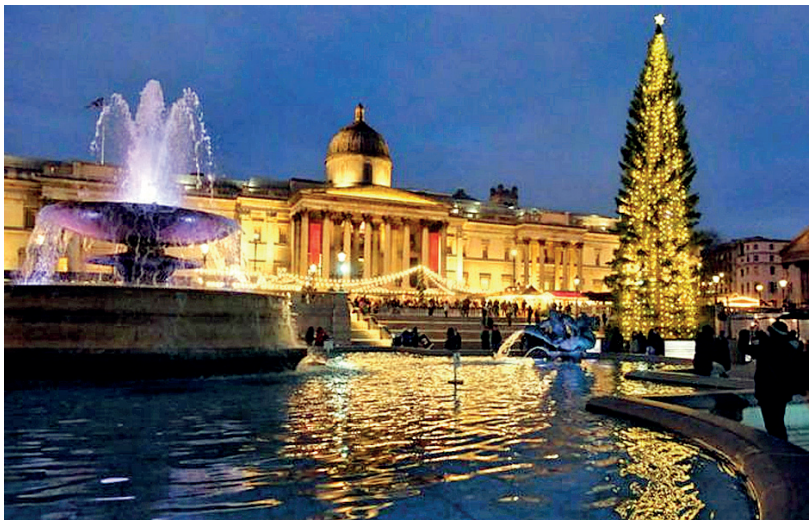
– **Denise Burke**



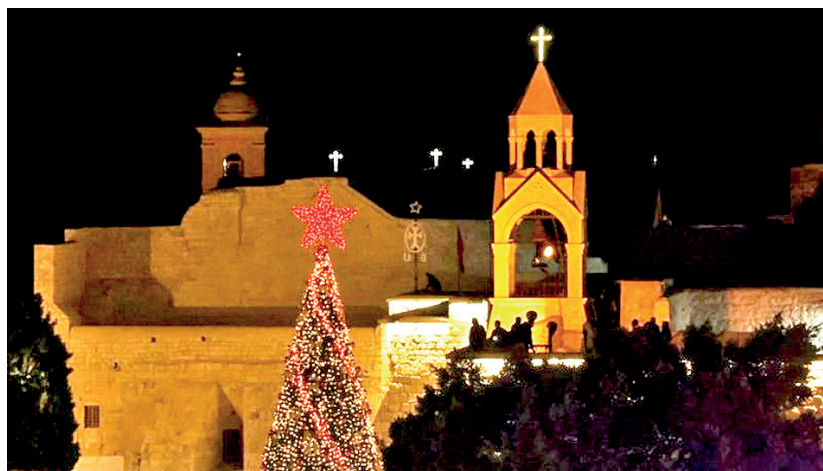




## Christmas Trees from around the World



Did you know that the Christmas tree that stands every year in London's Trafalgar Square is actually a gift from the people of Norway? It is selected from the forests surrounding Oslo and is brought to the UK by sea before completing its journey by lorry. The tradition began in 1947 as a thank you from Norway for Britain's support during World War II. The tree is decorated in traditional Norwegian fashion, with vertical strings of energy-efficient lights.



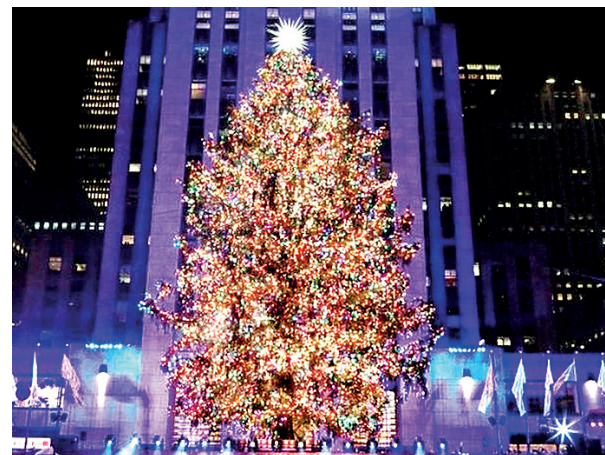
This is the Christmas tree at Manger Square in Bethlehem. It stands in front of the Church of the Nativity, one of the oldest working churches in existence today and is located on the spot believed to be the birthplace of Jesus. The Church is one of the most sacred Christian sites in the world and is a popular place for Christmastime pilgrimages.



This year, Italy's capital Rome has decided to come up with more eco-friendly ways to light up the city's Christmas decorations. These include a pedal-powered tree, where members of the public can hop on six bikes to generate electricity which lights up the tree! They've also put up a tree in one of the city's squares which is lit up entirely by solar power!



In Georgia's capital Tbilisi, the statue of St. George has been decorated with lights to look like a Christmas tree! The country is mainly Orthodox Christian and celebrates Christmas according to the old Julian calendar, on January 7.



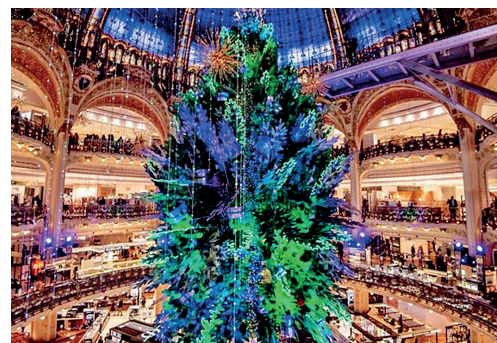
This iconic Christmas tree stands outside New York's Rockefeller Center. It's a tradition that began in 1931, when workers there decided to put their money together to buy a Christmas tree. The dazzling display features more than 50,000 multi-coloured lights and the star at the top contains 3 million sparkling Swarovski crystals across 70 triangular spikes!



The Vatican's Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square is accompanied by a wooden Nativity Scene, made entirely of cedar wood harvested from a sustainable forest and features life-sized hand-carved figures. Behind it is St. Peter's Basilica, where Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church, holds a special service at midnight on Christmas Eve, to celebrate Christmas and the Birth of Christ.



Venezuela's capital Caracas has also gone down a more sustainable route. The South American country's tree is 10 metres high and is made from 15,000 recycled plastic bottles which were collected from the streets of the city.



This giant tree is located inside one of Paris' most famous department stores, Galleries Lafayette. It's over 20 metres tall and extends all the way up into the famous dome! Every 30 minutes, the lights on the tree go out and a sound and light show begins in which as if by magic, the Christmas trees come to life!

Source : CBBC Newsround





December 20

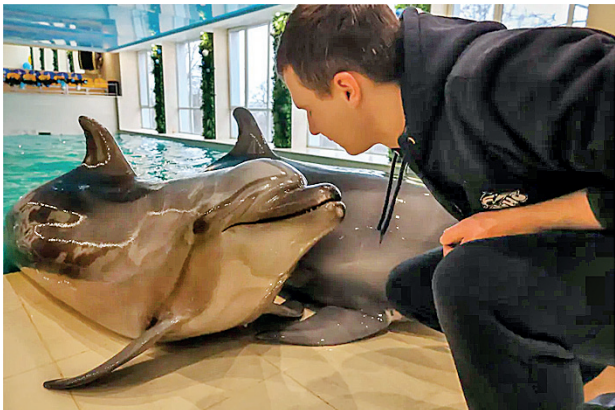
## News in Pictures

**Vancouver, Canada**

Guests walk by a light display during Festival of Lights at VanDusen Botanical Garden in British Columbia, Canada. The festival features more than a million lights decorating 15 acres of the gardens.

**Tokyo, Japan**

A group of dogs – one in a Santa Claus outfit – sit in a pushchair.

**Kharkiv, Ukraine**

Dolphins Zlata and Moon at Kharkiv Dolphinarium. Due to the war, workers at the facility were forced to evacuate the seals, sea lions and dolphins to another city but they have now been returned.

**Seoul, South Korea**

A girl looks at divers in Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer costumes during a promotional event for Christmas at an aquarium.

**Funchal, Portugal**

Azura and Aidanova ships are seen at the port with the view of Christmas city lights in Madeira. Portugal's Madeira is an archipelago comprising four islands off the north-west coast of Africa and a popular Christmas and New Year's Eve celebration destination.



## December 19

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Argentinian soccer fans celebrate their team's World Cup victory over France.

**Duisburg, Germany**

Young koalas, the male Yunga and the female Erlinga, are pictured during their first outing at the koala house of the zoo.

**Berlin, Germany**

German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, speaks during the celebrations of the Hanukkah festival at the Heinz Galinski Jewish elementary school. The eight-day holiday, the Jewish Festival of Lights, marks the rededication of the second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

**Esfay, West Bank**

The head of the European Union's mission to the West Bank and Gaza, Sven von Burgsdorff, talks to children as he visits with a delegation, the site of a Palestinian school which was demolished by Israeli authorities in the Masafer Yatta area in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.



Source : The Guardian