

# ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



## DECEMBER

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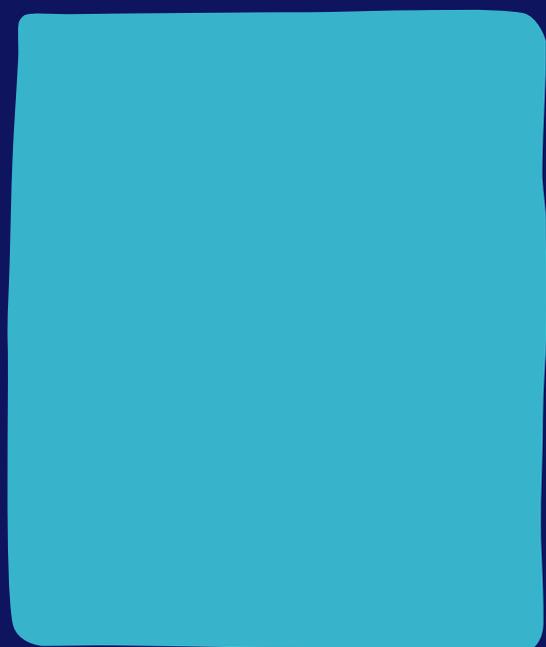
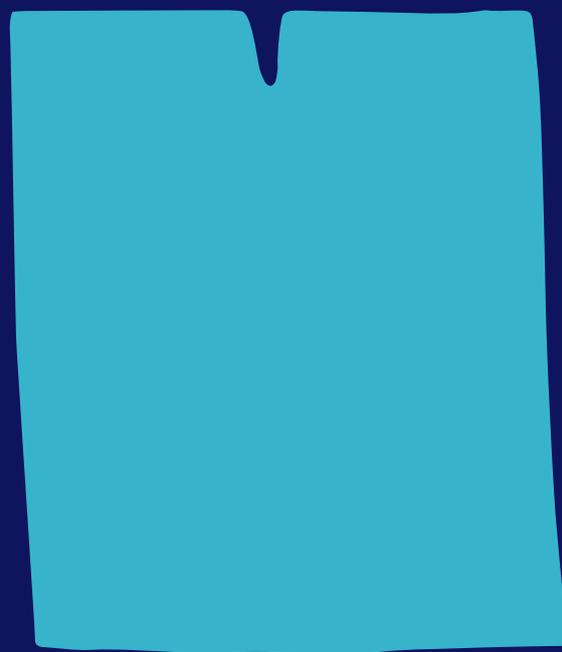
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*Christmas is looming, and some writers have chosen to embrace these winter months with articles about the history of Christmas, and how to cope if the holiday season is hard for you. Suggestions of music and film have been made, perfect for December.*



# WELLBEING AT CHRISTMAS

ZOE LETT



Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, it can be a joyful time of year, but equally, it can be one of the hardest times. While you may be getting into the festive spirit, it's important to understand that some people around you may be having a difficult time.

## Why is Christmas hard for some people?

From feeling obliged to fit in with other people's social plans to loneliness and isolation, there are many reasons why people find Christmas difficult. It's important you don't jump to conclusions about other people's experiences, as you never know what they are struggling with.

Some of the reasons why people find Christmas hard include:

- There's a huge expectation to be happy at Christmas. It's easy to feel alone or left out if everyone else seems to be having a 'perfect' Christmas except you.
- Even if you are surrounded by family and friends, you can still feel lonely. This might be because you feel you have to hide your feelings or be a different person in their company.

- Bereavement, illness, loneliness and not being in a relationship can all make Christmas a difficult time of year.
- Coronavirus may limit who you can see and what you can do.
- Worries around money can lead to stress and anxiety.
- With New Year's coming up, it can feel hard looking back at difficult memories from the past year, and it's easy to start worrying about the year ahead.
- It can be harder to access services that normally help with your health and wellbeing because of closures over the Christmas period.

## Tips for coping during Christmas time

- **Try not to compare yourself to others.**

As we all know, comparing ourselves with other people can have a huge effect on how we feel about ourselves and impacts both our confidence and self-esteem. Social media and advertisements can make this worse. Perhaps try to limit your time on social media and ignore your expectations of the

holidays, whether they're the expectations you put on yourself, or the ones society has imposed on you.

- **Show gratitude to others and yourself.**

Thanking someone for an act of kindness can improve not just their mood but lift your spirits too. Don't forget to try to go easy on yourself and extend gratitude and kindness to yourself, as this will also help you improve your self-confidence and wellbeing. Sometimes it's easy to give all of your time and energy to others at Christmas, but it's really important to practice self-care too. Make time for yourself so that you can do something you enjoy.

- **Reach out to others.**

Why not try to connect to someone who you know may be lonely – perhaps a friend who is going through a tough time, or someone who lives alone or is unable to leave their home? Maybe arrange to pay them a visit or give them a call. Even a short text can help people feel less alone.

- **Keep good memories alive.**

Many people enjoy Christmas traditions, whether it's decorating the Christmas tree in a certain way, playing a particular party game, or eating a favourite dish. Whatever you/your family enjoys, it's important to keep good memories alive which can help you through difficult times.

### **Physical health at Christmas**

Everyone likes to indulge a little more than normal at Christmas, but it's still important to be careful with your health. For me and for many others, food plays a big part at Christmas and it's very easy to over-do it. However, it's important to not get too carried away if you don't want to feel too lethargic; maybe plan a walk or another physical activity either by yourself or with others.

Food and drinks aren't the only things being passed around this time of year, as colds, flu, and other viruses are also circulating. Make sure to keep yourself warm, sleep well and stay hydrated. Plus, although it is Christmas, it does not mean that coronavirus will disappear, so please try to stay safe with your family.

### **Ways to support others at Christmas**

It is important for everyone to understand that Christmas means something different to other people, and may bring up different feelings in others. There are many reasons someone might find Christmas hard if they have a mental health problem. While they might enjoy some parts of Christmas, they may find other parts difficult, so



try to make your Christmas celebrations as inclusive as you can. Make sure to let anyone struggling know that you understand that Christmas can be difficult; let them know you're there for them, and check if there are things you can do to help. It's important to remember that people who struggle at Christmas are not trying to spoil Christmas, so be understanding and supportive. Supporting someone else can be difficult, so try to look after yourself too.

### **Where to find help at Christmas**

- Samaritans - 116 123 - free to call anytime, day or night
- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) - 0800 58 58 58 , [thecalmzone.net](http://thecalmzone.net)
- Cruse Bereavement Care - 0808 808 1677 , [cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)
- Beat - (Offers information and advice on eating disorders) - 0808 801 0677 (adult helpline) , 0808 801 0711 (youthline) , 0808 801 0811 (student line)

# THE RISE AND FALL OF NEW LABOUR

FINN PATCHESA

## new Labour new Britain

After many years of Thatcher tyranny, two unlikely heroes of Politics would rise to strike down the Tory establishment: Blair and Brown, who would come to be a powerhouse in UK politics – a unique conglomeration of old labour policies mixed with a centrist twist that saw landslide victories in 1997 and 2002.

After graduating from Oxford in 1975, Blair was involved with the labour party, aligning himself with the new “soft lefts” of the party. In 1982, he ran in the Conservative safe seat of Beaconsfield, and despite failing to achieve victory, he had begun to establish his reputation as a ‘very good candidate’. Early success was seen from him through his winning of MP in Sedgefield against the odds, and during a Conservative landslide victory throughout the UK. Blair remained at a high point in the party, and after Neil Kinnock resigned following another Labour loss in 1992, he was appointed shadow home secretary under John Smith.

At this time, a separate faction of the labour party had broken off, joining the Liberal Party to become the Liberal Democrats. This posed a great threat to the Labour government – the new Social Democratic party was seen as more progressive and modern compared to the

staunch old labourists. Blair and some fellow MPs started calling on the leader, John Smith, to modernise the party, however the success of this was limited.

Brown took a different route before climbing the political ladder. He studied at Edinburgh University, and developed a reputation for being an incredibly astute individual – even given the position of Rector, which showed his early aptitude and success as a leader. Brown would work as a tutor at the same university, before being elected as Labour MP for Dunfermline East in 1983. His intelligence and affinity for politics was noticed immediately from his time as MP and by 1987, he attained the role of “Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury”.

It was in this period in the early nineties that the duo first corresponded, and became remarkably close due to their shared views in the modernisation of the labour party, and the removal of Clause IV of the Labour constitution – “A commitment to Socialism”.

After the shock death of Labour leader John Smith, Blair and Brown realised they had an opportunity to enact what they had been planning for such a long time. At first, there was some contention over who should be

the leader, but Brown, sick of infighting within the Labour Party, made the decision to withdraw his campaign for leadership. As a result, Blair won the 1994 leader election by landslide. Allegedly, there was a pact made in this period, deciding that Blair would be prime minister for some time, but that later he would let Brown take over.

This new faction of the labour party was called New Labour, and positioned itself in the central left – at the time this was incredibly controversial, as up to that point Labour had stayed vehemently socialist, and to the far left. New Labour differed from traditional Old Labour most extremely in their economic policy – where Old Labour believed in regulation of the free market.

### **Lead up to the 1997 Election:**

Labour dominated the 1997 election. They ran an expertly-crafted election campaign that centred around capitalising on taking the votes of dissatisfied Tories. In particular, the removal of Clause IV evoked massive popularity for the Labour Party, as many previously wished to support the Labour Party, but were not keen on its socialist elements. Many also cite Alastair Campbell's work in swaying the media in Labour's favour (such as winning The Sun newspaper's support) as a pivotal reason for Blair's success. Others argue that it was voter fatigue for the Conservative Party, which contributed massively to the loss of several seats for the Conservatives. Whatever the reason, the result was the same: Labour had won with a landslide majority

Alastair Campbell, a former journalist of the Daily Mirror, was a prominent figure during the election and was employed by Blair himself leading up to it. Imperious, yet a strategical "genius", Campbell formed the basis for Blair's campaign through his immense media presence. Campbell acted as Blair's speechwriter and chief strategist, and many argue that the Blair landslide of 1997 would not have been possible without him.

### **The Honeymoon Period**

Blair's first term set out to provide the "Third Way", a political orientation that bridged socialist and capitalist philosophies to create 'the best of both worlds'. The first major policy was masterminded by Gordon Brown. It gave independence to the Bank of England, which allowed them to set their own rates of interest. This policy was massively popular with the financial establishments in London and helped to reassure Labour sceptics of their "fiscal prudence", a quality that many had previously cited as their reason for not voting Labour. Whilst maintaining economic stability, the Blair government was also credited with simultaneously enacting social

reforms that tied in with these policies. An example of this is the introduction of the minimum wage in April 1999 ensuring a minimum rate of pay for all workers in the UK. This was a universally popular policy, that helped not only increase the quality of life for the working class of the UK, but also decreased unemployment rates. Furthermore, Blair also increased funding for the NHS, and that of education – particularly shown by Educational Action Zones, that set up initiatives to improve general school life (such as breakfast clubs). Blair insisted that the UK should be a global powerhouse of upholding human rights, so he became renowned for his interventionist foreign policy, which led to both the highest and lowest point of his career. In the early years, aggressive policy was incredibly effective, such as military intervention in Sierra Leone, participation in NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (which led to the formation of Kosovo in 2008 under Brown) and the successful negotiation of the Good Friday agreement. These examples of foreign intervention cement Blair's position as a highly impactful prime minister, and as one who certainly left his mark on national, and even international politics. Moreover, Blair continued to expand the UK's parameters through a close friendship with the USA, first under the Democrat Clinton, and even more under the Republican Bush. Throughout his first tenor as prime minister, the UK was in a steady state of economic prosperity and social contentedness that many hoped would characterise the Blair premiership. Yet as the 21st century dawned, things were destined to go wrong for the Prime Minister...

### **The 21st Century Descension of New Labour**

The 2001 election saw a measly turnout rate of 58% - the lowest since 1918. Such low turnout could be explained in many ways – could it simply be voter apathy? A lack of opposition to Labour? A loss of faith in representative democracy? Whatever the reason, the results of the election still spelled another 5 years for Blair and Labour, which could have been another successful term, if not for the events on September 11th 2001. The 9/11 attacks sent the USA into a flurry of panic, and they were patriotically adamant they would seek vengeance against the culprits, and the UK being the USA's closest ally pledged their allegiance. To many, this was the fatal flaw of Blair's term as leader in the UK – many believed he was far too loyal to the USA. The new Republican President, George Bush, was a right-wing populist, who many of the Labour Party saw as equivalent to a hard-line Conservative MP, and siding with him was unpopular with much of the internal Labour Party. What began as discontent rapidly increased into



### 1997 Conservative Party Poster (Response to 'New Labour')

public outcry, especially when the UK decided to invade Iraq in 2003. Blair is infamously known to have lied to the members of Parliament about the presence of WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) in Iraq, which triggered a close vote where the MPs voted in favour of the Iraq war (139 Labour MPs voted against the war). Public outrage was mounting at this point, with over 1 million people protesting the war, and many beginning to question the reasons for the war. Although it is undoubtedly true that Saddam Hussein was a dictator, no evidence was ever found that he was harbouring WMDs, and therefore the resulting war that ensued was illegal, and not given support from the UN. To no surprise, the USA took no note of the UN, and on the 20th March 2003, a coalition of USA, UK, Polish and Australian troops invaded Iraq, which over the next 7 years of the Iraq war led to the deaths of over 400,000 soldiers and civilians. Although Blair's foreign policy was highly contested, on a domestic level Blair remained popular, and the work of his exchequer (Gordon Brown) was also extremely popular on an international stage.

Despite active public protest of the Iraq war, Conservative opposition remained minimal, and in 2005, Labour under Blair won a third term, but this time only with a reduced majority in government. Leading up to this election, there had been much talk over the promised succession of Tony Blair for Gordon Brown, yet no timetable was given and so the British people had to wait until 2007, when Blair finally resigned as Prime Minister and Gordon Brown took the reins. A new but short era of New Labour had arrived.

### The Brown Years (2007-2010)

Brown's tenor was a mix of foreign policy success, and financial disaster. Previously renowned for his meticulous management of the nation's fiscal policies, Brown's premiership disastrously coincided with the financial crash of 2007, which tarnished both Brown's and Labour's reputation for financial security. This led to a large fall in retail sales, unemployment rates rising dramatically, and the closing of a substantial number of outlets, such as MFI and Woolworths. In attempts to rescue the increasingly ruinous financial situation, Brown bought out and nationalised Northern Rock, which restored some confidence in the bank, but the damage to the Labour's reputation was irreversible. This, paired with the previous unpopularity of the Iraq War, had sunk Labour below the Conservative Party in opinion polls – and still, the Labour party is trying to recover from this.

### The 2010 Election

The 2010 Election was the closest general election of all time, but even so it was clear that voter fatigue for the Labour party had taken affect. The young David Cameron, leader of the conservative party won the election with a minority government of only 36.1% - and proved much fiercer competition than the previous Conservative oppositions. His return to "One Nation Conservatism" was a radical change from previous Conservative candidates, and many cite this as a key factor in his winning of the election. Brown came second place, with a voter percentage of 29%, and Nick Clegg came in a close third with 23% of the vote for the Liberal Democrats. For the first time in history, a coalition was on the cards: the Liberal Democrats had gained vast number of seats, and now held the position of kingmaker for the next government. Even though the Liberal Democrats align more with the Labour Party, they made a partnership with the Conservative government, and on the 11th May 2010, Labour had finally been ousted from their position of power, for the first time in the 21st Century.

# SHOULD MPs BE ALLOWED SECOND JOBS?

OLIVIA BLACKBURN



*Owen Paterson*

You may have heard the name Owen Paterson circulating through the media: a Conservative MP who was exposed to be lobbying on behalf of his second job, as a consultant for Randox, from which he earned £100,000 per year, alongside his £80,000 salary as an MP. Documents show that he then devoted considerable time and energy to lobbying on Randox's behalf to discuss its products, including talking and writing to Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, which has been thought of as having "conflicting interests".

This isn't just a recent thing either; it has been ongoing investigations since 2019 yet it was only brought to light when Paterson resigned as an MP for North Shropshire, on the 4th November. It began when Owen Paterson formed a "Conservative thinktank" called UK 2020, which was formed after Paterson lost his ministerial post as environment secretary in 2014. This so called think-tank published occasional reports on environmental and NHS based issues, despite being funded by donations from private institutions. Furthermore, it was earning thousands for Paterson - the sole director - and these funds went towards his various overseas trips. Between 2014 and 2019, UK 2020 gave Paterson almost £40,000 for these trips. This money was also never declared (which is necessary for an MP to do) so it was theoretically being hidden from the public's awareness. Following demands by both the Labour Party and the Guardian Newspaper, Paterson closed the thinktank in October

2019. One of the major donors to this thinktank was Randox.

On 5th November 2021, after light of his transactions on behalf of his second job came to public attention, Paterson resigned as an MP in the House of Commons, claiming he was leaving a "cruel world of politics".

However, Paterson isn't the only MP to have a second job: Julian Sturdy, the elected MP for York Outer, also has a job in a farming partnership with G E Sturdy and Son, from which he earns around £500 per month. His second job includes buying and selling items at certain points in the year, but mainly includes administrative work, which he does for 4 hours per week.

Furthermore, some MPs may not have official second jobs, but may still get generous donations from companies. An example would be Nigel Adams, the elected MP for Selby and Ainsty. Despite not having a second job, and therefore no annual income outside of his role of being an MP, Adams receives donations in the form of Euro 2020 tickets throughout the season, for example around £1999.14 from Betting and Gaming Council on June 18th 2021, and £1961 from Power Leisure Bookmakers Ltd on June 29th 2021 (statistics from the Northern Echo).

Having read the above, do you think MPs should be allowed to have second jobs? And if so, do you think they should be completely transparent about it?

# CARNIVALS, CANCELLATIONS AND CHRONICALS

EDIE CARTER



*Illustration of Nordic Yule Festival (1880)*

**A brief history of the celebration we now call 'Christmas'.**

Historically, around the world, the middle of winter has long been a celebrated time — centuries before Jesus and his all-important birthday. The earliest Europeans revered the time at the end of the year to celebrate light and new birth, especially on the winter solstice. |

In Scandinavia, the Norse peoples celebrated Yule from the 21st of December well into January. To laud the return of the sun, fathers and sons would set a log alight and feast until it burned out; this would often take many weeks! The Christmas leftovers of today make their turkey-laden reappearance for the next few days but months of turkey? No thank you.

The end of December has always been a joyful time as cattle were slaughtered (bringing what was often the only fresh meat of the year) and wine and beer became fermented long enough to drink. At this time of year, Germanic peoples honoured the Pagan god Odin. People were completely terrified of this nocturnal figure, who flew through the sky with the Wild Hunt, choosing who would prosper or perish in the new year. Terror-stricken

citizens often chose to stay inside.

Moving southwards to the warmer climes of Rome, Saturnalia was celebrated as a holiday honouring Saturn (a god of agriculture). In the week leading up to the winter solstice and for the following month, food and drink was plentiful and the normal social order was collapsed. Enslaved peoples were given temporary freedom and treated as equals.

In the earliest stages of Christianity, Easter had been the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated, people preferring instead to somberly honour his death — swapping carols and candles for self-reflection and silence. In the 4th Century, it was decided that it seemed sensible to institute Jesus' birth as a holiday, becoming what is arguably now the most famous birthday of all time! What's more is that the 25th of December is not even Jesus' real birth date. Unfortunately, however, the Bible neglected to include the precise date of Jesus' birth — he was only their Messiah and all. Pope Julius I handpicked the date, landing on the 25th of December, most likely to neatly absorb all the traditions of Saturnalia and the other celebrations happening around the same time. Placing the date near the winter solstice

would've increased the chances of it becoming popularly embraced. The important save-the-date notification of Jesus' birth arrived in England by the end of the 6th century.

Moving into the Middle Ages, Christianity largely replaced paganism. At Christmastime, believers would attend church in the morning. This holy, spiritual experience was then promptly followed by a raucous, drunken, carnivalesque celebration in the streets. The true meaning of Christmas has, and continues to be, a fantastic excuse to drink before 12 in the afternoon. The atmosphere is said to have been similar to our Mardi Gras celebrations of today. Each year a beggar or student would be crowned 'Lord of Misrule' and the poor would make their way to the houses of the rich and demand their best food and drink. If not, they would terrorise the upper classes for not repaying their debt to society.

However, this celebration was not long-lasting. A surge of religious reform hoovered up all Christmas joy in England in the form of Oliver Cromwell and the infamous Puritan forces which single-handedly cancelled Christmas! Like our current Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, Cromwell would soon learn just how unpopular cancelling Christmas would prove to be. At least one of the leaders got to enjoy a Christmas party in secret. Excuse me, I meant 'business meeting'. Back by popular demand and the incessant clamouring of the poor Christmas-less citizens, Charles II came to the throne and Christmas was reinstated.

Pilgrims in North America were even more orthodox Puritans than the Roundheads. Between 1659 and 1681, it was not even a holiday. In Boston, anyone 'exhibiting Christmas spirit' was fined 5 shillings! It was only declared a federal holiday in the USA in 1870.

Although, in 1819 US author Washington Irving inadvertently reinvented Christmas! He wrote the story of Christmas celebrations in an English manor house. It created ideas of the peaceful, warm-hearted holiday we are familiar with; one that brought groups together across divisions of wealth and social status. But this was not based on any fact or experience at all. Irving's 'invented' Christmas traditions became popularly accepted and still ring true today. Around the same time in England, Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' also highlighted the importance of charity and goodwill towards humankind; this resonated profoundly with American and English audiences.

The last ingredient to understanding how we came to have the Christmas of today is uncovering just where our



## St Nicholas

favourite jolly, rotund, man-in-red came from. The legend of St Nicholas originated in Turkey with a man who gave away all his inherited wealth and travelled the country, aiding the poor and sick. He entered popular culture in 18th century New York where the 'melting pot' of cultures saw Dutch families gathered to celebrate 'Sint-Nicolaas' whose name was soon anglicised into 'Saint Nick'. In 1823, 'A Visit from St Nicholas' (more commonly known as 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'), told the story of the jolly man, flying from home to home on a sled laden with sacks of toys, driven by reindeer. Santa's red and white suit (which was originally depicted in green) was immortalised in 1881 by political cartoonist Thomas Nast.

And that concludes your whirlwind guide across the globe as to how we reached the Christmas celebrations of today. It is evident that Christmas is a true international, cultural, and historical amalgamation that has coincidentally resulted in a deeply joyful and momentous occasion; one which you can now appreciate with a new insight. Merry Christmas!

# MUSIC REVIEW: THE NEARER THE FOUNTAIN

## OLIVE QUA



### *The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows - Damon Albarn*

During May's Glastonbury livestream, those who were able to push past the technical problems, heard a series of unreleased songs (by the former Blur frontman) that were far from the catchy songs of 90s Britpop. It was clear from this performance that Damon Albarn has moved on from the crowd pleasers of his mid 20s, and has adopted a worn, melancholic sound that perfectly captures the climate of the last year.

His later work in the supergroup 'The Good, The Bad, And The Queen' looked at the misery of 21st century life and a mid-Brexit Britain as inspiration for a politically charged second album. The project from 2018 (along with the success of the Gorillaz) seems to be the bridge from a pop filled youth to a much more travelled and beaten musician, with not much care for commercial success.

A childhood recurring dream of flying over black sand attracted the song writer to Iceland's volcanic beaches, where this album draws a lot of inspiration from. Originally a commission for a French arts festival to do whatever he wanted, Albarn decided to create an orchestral album while looking out of his window in Reykjavik.

Although maybe not as orchestral as initially planned, the music is layered with soft pianos and strings, fragments of jazz, saxophone, and French horns, and the ambient sound of 'Esja', all on top of a driving drum machine quietly sewing the dissonant elements together.

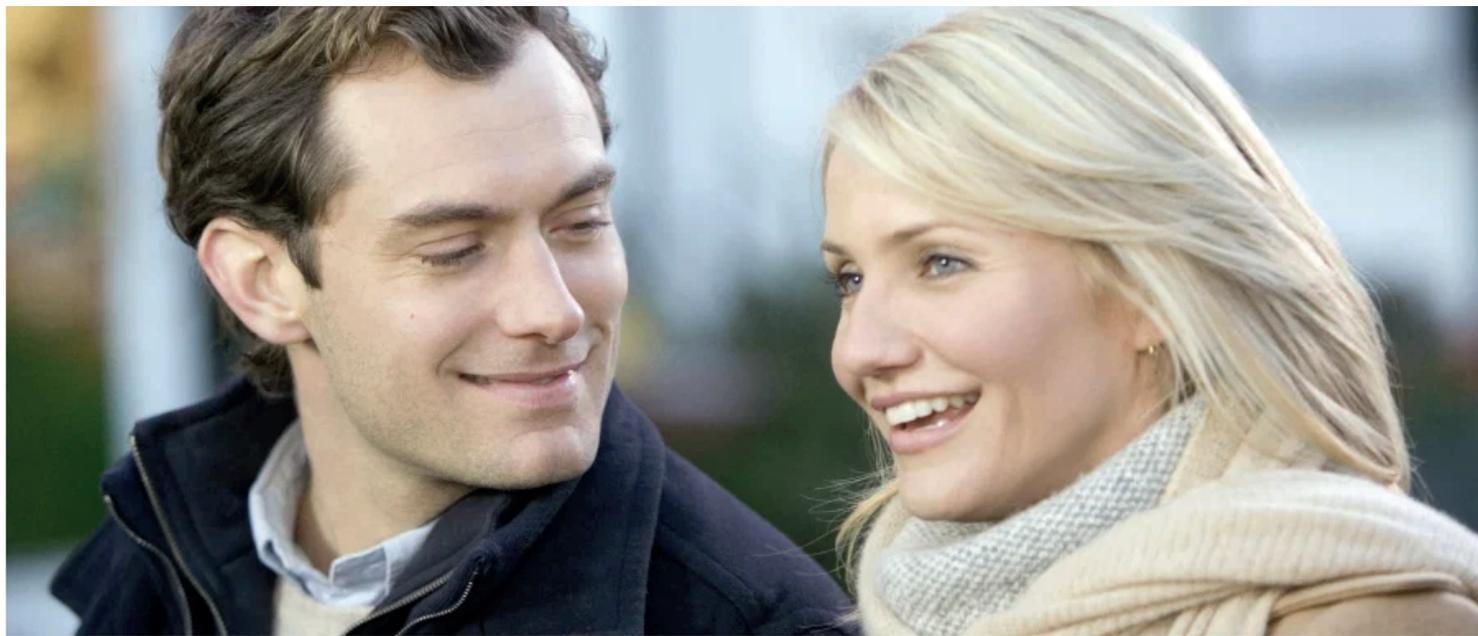
In a time of isolation this album acts as an embodiment of Albarn's escapism and dreams, and paints a very personal picture of the change that is happening in his life. Transition is a strong theme throughout the album, since lyrically it explores the beauty of moving from dark to light, memories of youth and the impact of death, and finally moving on from a period of grief to a state of ease while living alongside your past. This is also demonstrated through the contrast of consoling lyrical melodies, to sometimes chaotic instrumentals with piercing solos from saxophones and guitars. In April 2020 Damon Albarn lost fellow supergroup member and periodic collaborator, Tony Allen. The opening title track gets its name and has lyrics from 'Love and Memories', a poem by John Clare. It is about the loss of youth and mourning for it, and with the death of Tony Allen still unfamiliar to him, Albarn's grief haunts the lyrics, yet beauty still creeps into every song: "so sweet it did weave Heaven's halo around you".

At times, the music feels strikingly outlandish, where songs seem so distant from reality that they are hard to comprehend, but perhaps this suits the erratic times in which the album was written. But overall, it has a predominant atmosphere of growth and an eye for beauty. A complimentary shade of grey is composed for the winter months, as the music lethargically hovers into the haze of a worldly landscape.

This project is for himself, an intimate publication of Albarn's feelings and musical maturity with no intention of being a top 40 hit. Even without many hooks or catchy melodies, this album leaves an impression that sticks. Those who are die-hard Blur fans may be disappointed, as this album is the antithesis of the bubbly 90s era, and bares no likeness to 'Song 2' or 'Girls and Boys'. But there is no denying that 'The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows' is magnificent.

# FILM REVIEW: THE HOLIDAY

NIAMH RHODES



The film 'The Holiday' was released in 2006 and is a go to Christmas time, romantic comedy that follows the story of two girls from different countries swapping homes for the Christmas holiday to get away from their individual issues. The film focuses on their love lives: Iris, a journalist, is shown to be still in love with her ex of three years (Jasper) who cheated on her and is soon to be married. And Amanda, a book editor, is being accused by her cheating boyfriend of not being able to keep a relationship, making her feel like the breakup was her fault. In order to change their lives and lift their spirits for the Christmas period, they spontaneously agree to swap houses. Cameron Diaz who plays 'Amanda' moves away from her house in San Marino,

California and stays in Iris's cottage in London. Meanwhile Iris, played by Kate Winslet, is staying in Amanda's LA house. Their old lives are soon left behind as they get settled into their new temporary lifestyle in which they are unexpectedly swept up by exciting opportunities. The romance sparks for the female leads when they meet local guys while staying in their new houses.

The London cottage in the Christmas setting feels like warm, joyful hug to watch due to the cosy interiors in contrast to the snowy outside countryside. The film is set at Christmas yet it doesn't incorporate a typical Christmas storyline, which allows you to watch it at any time of the year. However I would recommend watching it in the build-up to Christmas as it is perfect for the holiday.

# WHO WILL SANTA SUPPORT IN 2022?

ETHAN TAYLOR-BRAMALL



A question I am sure is on everybody's mind as Christmas nears: what nationality is Father Christmas and, more importantly, who will he be supporting in the 2022 World Cup? There are many ways to answer this pressing question so I will break it down, looking at each country with a claim and whether they have a serious chance at gaining Saint Nick's support in Qatar.

The original Saint Nicholas was born in modern day Turkey during the rule of the Roman Empire and was born of Greek descent. He was buried in Bari, Italy. Historically speaking, Saint Nicholas could have considered himself a Roman, and in modern day may support the Italian National team - he would have been pleased when the Euros came Rome.

An interesting point to be made would be the distinction between Father Christmas and Santa Claus. Father

Christmas derives from old English stories and is a personification of Christmas, dating back to the 15th century as part of pagan English folk-lore traditions like Yuletide, and some Anglo-Saxon traditions too. It could also be a Christianised version of Yule Father, a nickname for Odin during festivities. Overall, Father Christmas is hard to pin down to a place if you go back far enough to separate him from the modern Santa Claus, as he was often a personification of either Christmas or the "good old days". However, considering his significance to English culture, it may be safe to say Father Christmas lives in England, as there are examples of him being used to stand for a "merry old England". Conversely, if it is not a ridiculous claim to say that modern Christmas in England was based off Yuletide then it's not ridiculous to suggest Father Christmas is just a modernised Odin and therefore lives in Asgard, which was believed to be made of ice, like the North Pole.

The North Pole is technically owned by no country, however there are five countries that are allowed to take the North Pole's natural resources: The United States, Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark. However, this is a weak claim as none of these countries own the North Pole.

Canada's northern provinces are the closest place on earth to the north pole, followed by Greenland which belongs to Denmark so perhaps he might support one of those teams. To strengthen Denmark's claim, the chair of the Father Christmas World Congress said "it's a fact: he comes from Greenland" which is certainly quite a strong point of evidence.

The name Santa Claus is a shortened form of Saint Nicholas, specifically a butchered and anglicised spelling of the Dutch "Sinter Klass", and has always referred to the big-bellied, jolly, bearded old man we all know and love. This version of Saint Nicholas is particularly relevant in the United States, and has been so ever since Dutch and English settlers mixed their Christmas traditions when colonising the new world. Modern Santa Claus is effectively a combination of old English tradition mixed with the Dutch and European traditions around Sinter Klass.

The term "Santa Claus" was first used in 1773, 3 years before the USA became an independent country. The home of this Santa is in the North Pole (according to



North American tradition) however, each Nordic country claims that Santa lives there, the most relevant of these being Greenland and Finland's claims as they have the most international recognition, specifically the claim that Santa's residence is in Lapland (Finland) - one of the most widely accepted homes of Santa. Local Lapland folklore has depicted Santa-like figures for centuries (inspired by Norse gods) who would deliver gifts on a winter's night. Surely this makes Santa a supporter of the Football Association of Finland, even despite the lack of "official recognition" from the FCWC?

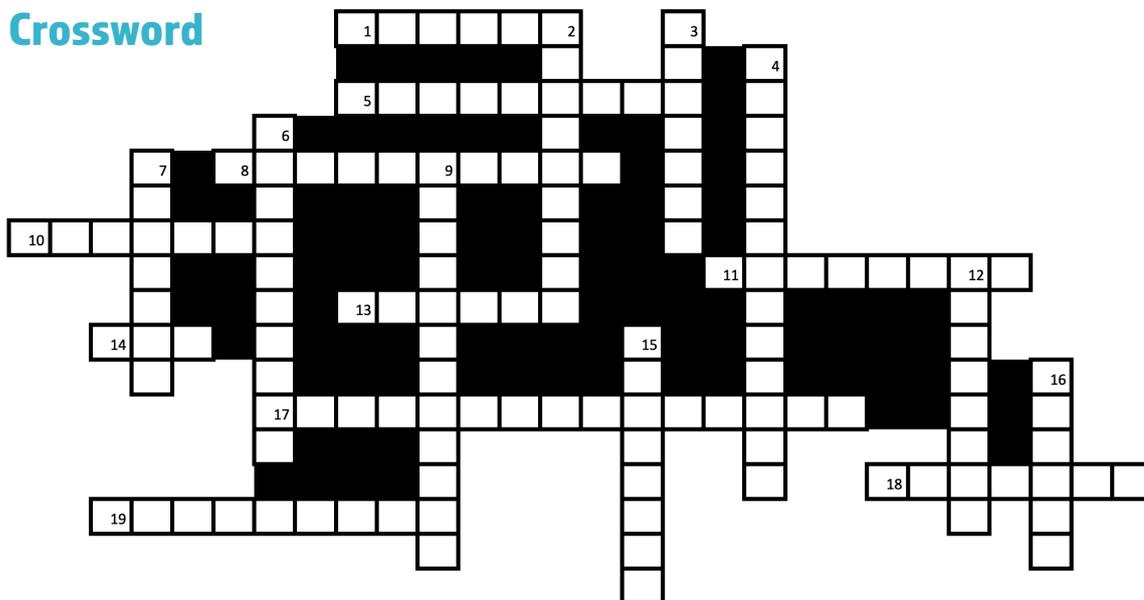
To conclude, the historical Saint Nicholas may support the reigning European champions (Italy) for the upcoming world cup due to his heritage. However,

considering his place of residence, Santa Claus could support either Denmark or Finland. Since only Denmark have qualified for the 2022 World Cup unlike their Finnish rivals, who fell just one point short, it is another possibility that he would support the Danish campaign in 2022. However, if we are talking the English representation of Father Christmas (separate from both Santa and Odin), he would want football to come home as much as the rest of us and, let's face it, an Englishman is much more likely to care about the outcome of the World Cup.

# PUZZLES

## ANYA CHIU

### Crossword



*If the film title is more than two words long, use the first word with more than 5 letters as the solution.*

#### Across

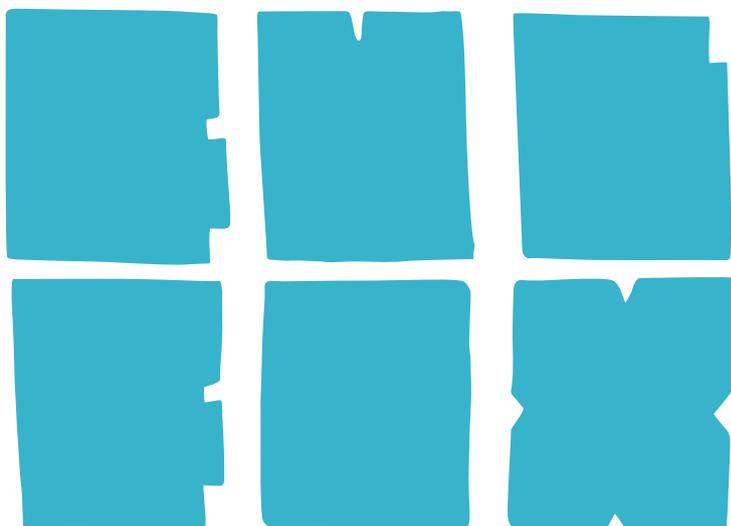
1. Troglodyte brussel sprout interacts with hair models (6)
5. Skeleton does not understand Christmas (9)
8. Rose DeWitt Bukater and Lotte Schwartz house swap (3,7)
10. If you hear bells ringing, you believe in Santa (7)
11. Furbies turn into big-eared bipedal lizards (8)
13. Become Santa by making him fall off your roof, and steal his clothes (6)
14. Man goes to New York and eats 'spaghetti' (3)
17. North Pole's military doubles as a yearly postal service (6,9)
18. Goat man defends Santa's honour (7)
19. It's a [BLANK] Life (9)

#### Down

2. Boy creates a deadly funhouse (4,5)
3. Severus Snape is murdered by a wristwatch (3,4)
4. Snake Eyes took George Michael's song too literally (4,9)
6. Snowman takes boy for a walk in the air (3,7)
7. Santa is arrested for assault, then acquitted after being compared to God (7)
9. Phoenix Buchanan dances to The Pointer Sisters (4,8)
12. [BLANK] Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (8)
15. Princess and the Pauper meets competitive baking (8)
16. Capitalist is tormented by puppets until he learns to be nice (6)

### Sudoku

2		7	1	9				
			2				5	
		5					9	
4	3		9		2			
			8	3				
				5		6	7	
1	4			6		5	2	
6	2							9
	5	9						



# Cryptogram

Each letter has been encrypted by substituting it with a different letter. Decode the text to find a Christmassy lyric.

	q	i		k	f	p	f		e	r		e	q	
g	f	p	p	y		o	k	p	e	q	r	g	s	q
		f	u	f	p	y	n	i	w	y	q			
		k	s	u	e	h	a		l	t	h			
		d	i	i	c		r	i		r	k	f		
	l	v	r	t	p	f		h	i	v		e	r	q
i	h	d	y		b	t	q	r		n	f	a	t	h

			v				b							
				v										
										w				
										b				

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
	n											
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
		j	m					u	v	x		z

# Solutions

1. Dr Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas 5. The Nightmare Before Christmas 8. The Holiday 10. The Polar Express 11. Goblins 13. The Santa Clause 14. Elf 17. Arthur Christmas 18. Krampus 19. It's a Wonderful Life 2. Home Alone 3. Die Hard 4. Last Christmas 6. The Snowman 7. Miracle on 34th Street 9. Love Actually 12. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 15. The Princess Switch 16. The Muppet Christmas Carol

h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
u	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z					
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m						
o	n	l	y															
f	u	n	t	u	r	e	u	n	o	w								
l	o	o	k	t	o	t	o	t	h	e								
e	v	e	r	e	b	o	d	y	s	u								
r	r	y	c	h	r	i	s	t	m	a								
s	o	h	e	r	e	h												

7	5	9	3	2	8	4	6	1										
6	2	8	5	1	4	7	3	9										
1	4	3	7	6	9	5	2	8										
9	8	2	4	5	1	6	7	3										
5	7	1	8	3	6	9	4	2										
4	3	6	9	7	2	8	1	5										
8	1	5	6	4	3	2	9	7										
3	9	4	2	8	7	1	5	6										
2	6	7	1	9	5	3	8	4										



RENTAL