

LONGSCHOTT'S CHRISTMASCELLANY



Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this publication is correct and true. But, as Oscar Wilde noted, 'The truth is rarely pure, and never simple'. The authors can therefore accept no responsibility for anything, at all, whatsoever.

Concertina-fold card with six faces

SOME SEASONAL TERMINOLOGY*

ERISWELL Seasonal tendency to say nice things to complete strangers, which reaches a peak around 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and subsides completely by 27th December.

ETAL Striped tea towel used as headgear for a Nativity-play shepherd.

HAMSTERLEY Feeling that occurs after having forced in too many Brussels sprouts.

LOSTOCK Parcel under tree whose label has become detached and no one has the faintest idea whose it is or who it might be from.

OCCOLD An opened *lostock*, whose contents provide no further clue to origins or ownership.

SWEFLING Any cuddly toy – bear, dog, rabbit, etc – taking the part of a sheep in a Nativity play.

PENGE Feeling of mild anxiety induced when friend/colleague/hairdresser says, ‘Are you ready for Christmas, then?’, when you have yet to make a start.

WASDALE HEAD Dispute arising over custody of an *occold*.

*With apologies to Douglas Adams and John Lloyd

CHRISTMAS CARDS SENT 1995–2004

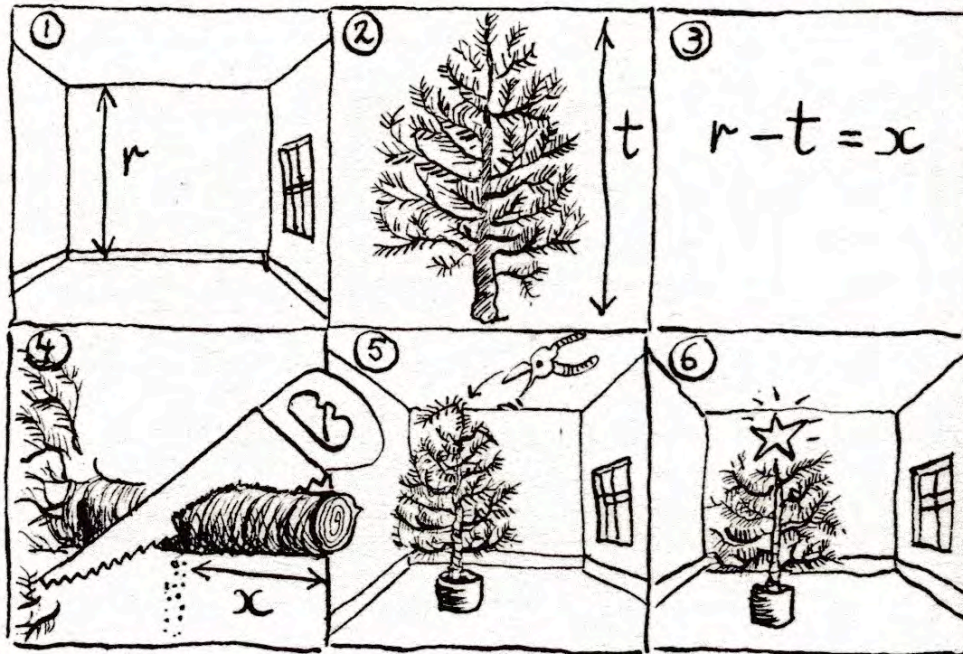
The homespun cards we have sent over the last ten years.

- 1995 Net for self-assembly cube with snow scene
- 1996 Christmas collage
- 1997 Watercolour and wax-crayon palm tree*
- 1998 Minimalist kings & star paper sculpture
- 1999 Pop-up angel*
- 2000 Tree / Christmas carol pyramid puzzle**
- 2001 Pencil drawing, 'Candle of the sky'
- 2002 'Happy Christmas', musical motif by EAP
- 2003 Seasonal images as letters of CHRISTMAS

* Unfeasibly labour intensive; seemed like a good idea at the outset

** Number of recipients who actually solved puzzle: 2; number of recipients who realised it was a puzzle: 3

THE CORRECT METHOD FOR INSTALLING
A CHRISTMAS TREE



WHEN JESUS WAS BORN

When Dionysius Exiguus did the sums in the Middle Ages, he forgot about having a year zero and started counting from 1 AD – an easy mistake to make. So when Jesus was born he was already a year older than his chronological age and was in any case almost certainly born about six years before that because Herod was waiting for Jesus to be born before he could die, as calculated by scholars, in the year 4 BC. Thus, it is six years later but one year earlier than we thought, being now 2010.

WHITE CHRISTMASSES

Officially, it is a White Christmas when at least one snowflake falls on the roof of the London Weather Centre. Since 1900, this has happened six times:

1962 • 1963 • 1970 • 1980 • 1999 • 2000 • 2004*

* For Sylvie, to go with her reindeer. Odds at time of going to press: 11/4.

FOGGYE PUDDINGE

1 slightly stale panettone, crumbled $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
2 cups goose fat, shredded $\frac{5}{8}$ orange
6 eggs (for the meringue) 1 pod, or similar
A pinch of currents Stoned dates
4 gills milk, or vodka 2 lb fairly plain flour*

**Optional*

Infuse the pod. Rub all the dry ingredients together, fold in the fruit and then the infused liquid. Turn into well-greased moulds, cover each with a large woollen sock, and boil steadily for 7 hours. Serve with mulled wine. Makes ten 2-pint puddings.

FOOD EATEN ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE UK

	CONSUMED BY	NO. EATEN
Turkeys	93%	11 million
Puddings	90%	12 million
Brussels sprouts	73%	220 million*

*Based on recommended serving of 5.4 sprouts per person.