

Some things you might not know about the festival that is often called 'Christmas':-

1. Herod died in 4BCE, so if he had been worried he might have been displaced by an infant and taken the measures attributed to him, said infant must have been born before then. There are references to a lunar eclipse in the year in which he died, and that it was just before the Jewish festival of the 'Passover'. There was such an eclipse in March 4BCE. [I use the non-denominational term 'BCE' - Before Common Era - to denote those years usually called 'BC' by Christians and many others.]

2. The Roman tax year ended in September, and that was the month they used every so often to hold a census. It would have been quite illogical to require everyone to return to their birthplace to be taxed. A census is far more likely.

3. The Romans defined 'Quarter Days' to be the two solstices and two equinoxes. These were the 25th days of those respective months (the Julian Calendar, with its date inaccuracies, was in use then).

So, the church has got both the year and time of year wrong. Instead it hijacked the much older Pagan festival of the passing of the northern Winter Solstice. The exchange of gifts at that time is also a Pagan tradition: the darkest days of the winter were over and it could only get better from then on. It must have been pretty miserable with no electricity, television or iPads to help pass away those long winter nights. So, it is hardly surprising there was a population explosion every September (perhaps that is why the Romans chose to hold censuses in that month).

Not to say things have got much better... Those that survived the annual face-stuffing competition and looked forward to playing on-line games were bitterly disappointed when Microsoft's and Sony's outage continued into the following day. Perhaps they should have gone to the more popular Churches of Consumerism at Merry Hell or Cribbs Causeway. Or perhaps they should get a life....

# BAH! HUMBUG!

## Mid-Winter Festival

Written by S.C. Rooge

Saturday, 27 December 2014 08:47 - Last Updated Saturday, 27 December 2014 23:31

---

(and have a good 2015)