

Christmas and its customs

Start date Sunday 2 December 2018 **End date** Sunday 2 December 2018

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Patrick Harding **Course code** 1819NDX015

Director ISP and Lifelong Learning	Sarah Ormrod
For further information on this course, please contact	HoACA, Lifelong Learning, Zara Kuckelhaus shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746204
To book	See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Patrick Harding has taught courses at Madingley for the last 30 years. Formerly a lecturer at Sheffield University he has been free-lance for over 20 years during which time he has written 8 books including one on Christmas; the others about flowers, trees and fungi. Patrick enjoys taking an interdisciplinary approach, mixing science with the arts. He considers humour to be important; education does not have to be boring.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	Session 1 Introduction. Gospel accounts and what might have happened at Bethlehem. Why December 25th?
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Session 2 Glastonbury, calendars, candles plus holly and ivy.
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3 Victorian and modern changes to our Christmas celebrations
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Session 4 Father Christmas and Santa Claus – are they the same?
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to attempt to separate fact from fiction concerning the birth of Jesus. We will attempt to evaluate what might have happened and when. We will also seek the origins of the many customs surrounding Christmas using a broad background of source material.

Content:

Is it really Gospel? A close look at what the Gospels tell us about the birth of Jesus and how science and history can add to the original story. Why do we celebrate the birth on Dec 25th and how have changes to our calendar influenced the Christmas story? What are the origins behind the decorations, candles, cards, robins and not to mention the food and drink associated with Christmas. What changes happened in Victorian times and have happened in our life time – Christmas does not stay the same. Santa Claus or Father Christmas – we will examine the stories behind these Christmas icons.

Presentation of the course:

The four sessions will take the form of illustrated lectures plus time for questions and discussion. There will be a display of books about Christmas. If time permits we may take a short walk in the grounds to look at some Christmas plants.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- 1 Show (by questions and in discussion) that their previous understanding of Christmas has been changed as a result of the course.
- 2 Take a broader view of Christmas and take account of a range of source materials.
- 3 Acknowledge that Christmas does not stay the same with reference to their own experiences.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Golby, J M & Purdue A	<i>The Making of the Modern Christmas</i>	Sutton, 2000
Harding, C P	<i>The Christmas Book</i>	Metro, 2007

Note the above book is available 2nd hand in various editions is now out of print but is available in a well-illustrated, revised edition (2018) only from Patrick – he will bring down copies for anyone wishing to buy one. The usual published price is £16.99 but Patrick will sell signed copies for £12.00 on the day.

Vermes, G	<i>The Nativity</i>	Penquin, 2006
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Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 21 November 2018