

# CourtCIRCULAR

WINTER 2023



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**Retirement**  
SECURITY



# Welcome

Christmas message from the CEO and the Retirement Security board of directors

The Festive season is one of celebration and charity, when our thoughts often turn to those less fortunate than ourselves. As the New Year approaches it is also a time of reflection on the year past and thought to the year ahead.

Within Retirement Security our past year has seen positive change and I thank those who have recognised its necessity, embraced it positively and have made the progress possible. You know who you are, and I would like to take this opportunity to more publicly recognise the important contributions from Directors, Managers and Owners who selflessly gave up their time to support change initiatives. It's your ongoing loyalty to our Company that makes our growth and success possible, and we can't tell you enough how much we appreciate that dedication. It was also a pleasure delivering training to both Boards and Managers to ensure the success of their respective Courts.

Turning to the year ahead, I am pleased to tell you that there is more positive change on the horizon. This will further benefit all Owners and so I am looking forward to working with even more of you to build on the progress made to date. Together ensuring all Owners benefit from more years of security and a strong business relationship.

It is in this spirit that we send greetings of peace, joy and love to you and your loved ones this Christmas season. Thank you and best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

May the good cheer last throughout the year ahead.

Best wishes,



## What is happening at your court?

We would love to hear from you, so we can share it in the next edition of our new Court Circular.

Simply email Michelle Hackett at [michellehackett@retirementsecurity.co.uk](mailto:michellehackett@retirementsecurity.co.uk) or send handwritten notes and printed material via your Court Manager.



Find your Court Circular Supplement inside



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16-23 Court Community

It's been a busy year for events, check out how our Courts have celebrated







Managing your money this winter

Winter is one of the most expensive times of year.  
If you are worrying about money, you might be entitled  
to some additional financial support.

Winter Fuel Payment

This is an annual tax-free payment to help with heating costs. Make sure you are registered to get it - once you are, you will receive it every year without having to do anything.

Cold Weather Payment

If it is very cold where you live (at or below 0 degrees) for a period of time, and you're receiving certain benefits, you may be eligible to receive £25 a week for each 7-day period of cold weather.

Warm Home Discount

This is a discount on your electricity bill. You may be able to get this if you are in receipt of Pension Credit or on a low income.

Cost of Living Payments

These are one-off payments for households on means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit.

Disability Cost of Living Payments

You may be entitled to a payment of £150 if you are receiving a disability benefit, such as Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance.



Introducing our new Wellbeing & Welfare Manager

Retirement Security is pleased to announce the creation of a dedicated role focusing on the wellbeing and welfare of our Owners.

Many of you already know and have had the pleasure of working with Michelle Hackett over the past 10 years in her role as Services Manager. Owners have always been at the heart of her work and her dedication to the fulfilment and enrichment of their lives has benefitted many.

So, what is 'wellbeing'?

It could mean many things; quality of life, happiness, joy, sense of purpose, life satisfaction, independence, dignity. Wellbeing incorporates how we are managing, in all areas of life, including financial, health, social, personal and the local environment.

Life's challenges

Many studies have looked at the challenges that tended to push people into low wellbeing, overriding factors included poor health, poor finances or bereavement.

Some people are able to maintain a high wellbeing despite having these challenges. However, it has been documented that some people are not able to improve their wellbeing on their own, and one of the reasons for this is a lack of a support network.

Retirement Security recognises that Owners could benefit from additional support to overcome barriers such as being in a poor financial situation, having poor physical or mental health, caring responsibilities, or a lack of awareness of the range of services and support available.

What's next?

Michelle will be working closely with our Services Managers and your Court Managers to ensure that you receive the right guidance and support when you need it.

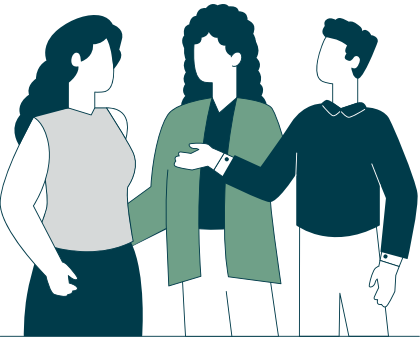
The main aspects of life impacting on our wellbeing are our social lives, health, financial situation, hobbies and activities.

It is important that we understand the needs of our Owners to ensure we invest in the support and services that will most benefit you. We will soon be asking you to participate in our first national survey, to ensure your feedback can be included in our work. Your involvement in shaping the future of these services will be the key to its success.





Retirement Security staff were delighted to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual ARCO Conference this summer



Over 440 experts representing over 170 organisations, from across the Housing-with-Care sector, participated in this year’s event, bringing together relevant, insightful and varied voices.

We heard from Rachel Maclean MP, Minister of State for Housing & Planning,

Professor Julianne Meyer CBE, Chair of Older People’s Housing Task Force, as well as over 40 speakers and Integrated Retirement Communities residents who participated and shared their expertise.

Paul O’Brien  
Services Manager (North)



Retirement Security introduces Paul O’Brien, our new Services Manager

Paul O’Brien is the new Services Manager responsible for the Northern region. His background before 2007 was in the Rail Industry, where he dedicated 20 years of service. Paul started as a freight guard, progressing to a passenger guard, inspector, and eventually a manager.

In 2007, Paul transitioned to the care sector, taking on the role of Manager at Gorselands Court. During his tenure, he accomplished an NVQ level 4 and held the position of registered manager with the Care Quality Commission.

After serving as a Court Manager for 16 years, Paul felt a desire for a new challenge.

Seeking fresh opportunities, he joined Retirement Security. Paul aims to bring a unique perspective to his role, drawing on his extensive experience from both sides of the table. His training is now complete, and he has been assigned six courts, which he has started to visit to fulfil his various responsibilities and cultivate positive relationships with Managers, Staff, and Owners.

Similar to his fellow Services Managers, Paul is committed to delivering excellent service and contributing real value to the Courts.



Supporting You

There are many ways in which we support our customers, and regular training and updates for your local on-site teams is part of that.

Directors’ Update – The session took place online on 7<sup>th</sup> August. Items covered included Resales and Companies House reforms. The event was very well received and will return again next year.

Court Manager Training – Court Managers were invited to attend the event which took place on 12<sup>th</sup> September. Following this session we have provided a number of online training sessions for Managers to support them when dealing with employee matters.



## An Owner's Tale – Mary Stebbing

A life of 2 halves



Mary Louise Browne was born at home in Sandbanks on March 4, 1929. Her father, Arthur Russell Browne, was in the Canadian Air Force.

During the 1914-18 war he came to England and was billeted at the Royal Bath Hotel as a serving member of the Canadian Air Force. Whilst there, he met Helen Andrews and was so struck by her beauty that he returned to England as soon as he could after the war, to marry her in 1928.

At that time property in Sandbanks was very cheap so Helen and Arthur bought a bungalow virtually on the beach, where both Mary and her younger sister Rosemary were born. Mum Helen was quite an entrepreneur and in her early 30's she borrowed money to buy two plots of land in Sandbanks, where she built two bungalows. She then went on to build and redevelop many more properties in

the Sandbanks area, including the big house next to the ferry and built two bungalows with water frontage in the grounds. As a point of interest, John Lennon bought one of Helen's bungalows for his aunt Mimi.

Boats always played a very large part in Mary's life – she had her own boat from the age of 4; she and her sister would sail all over Poole harbour, sailing and fishing throughout the war years. After attending the Dorchester School in Parkstone, at the age of 12 Mary was evacuated to a large girls' boarding school in Staffordshire. Here her love of all sports kept her going – tennis, cricket, lacrosse and particularly hockey.

Sandbanks was under the flight path favoured by the Germans and the Browne family would take refuge every night in the Morrisson shelter. It was learned that the Germans planned an air-raid on Poole and the ships moored in Poole Harbour. So a plan was hatched to mislead

them – a huge fire was started in the middle of the then privately-owned Brownsea Island; this, of course, destroyed the greenhouses and all plant life, but Poole Harbour and the ships were saved. Fire engines from Poole had to be brought over by barges.

After the war ended Mary trained at Eastbourne Secretarial College, before starting a job in London. On one occasion her lift home to Sandbanks was shared by Peter Stebbing; (his great-grandfather was Sir Merton Russell-Cotes and his aunt owned the Royal Bath Hotel). They fell in love and married in 1951, although in hindsight Mary believes they were much too young.

They lived in London for a while, then moved to Ham, by the river near Kingston-on-Thames, where their daughters Nicola and Ann Louise were born. Peter was training as a horologist, looking after the clocks at Buckingham Palace

and many other prestigious buildings

In the 1950s Mary's sister Rosemary moved to South Africa for her husband's work. Mum Helen went to visit them, her first ever time abroad; and took her experience in building new properties with her – she built a beautiful house overlooking the sea at Camps' Bay. Peter, Mary and their children went to visit her in 1958; Peter could only stay for one month, but Mary and the girls stayed for three months!

In the early '60's they moved to Compton Avenue, Poole; Peter bought a shop in Post Office Road and set up an antiques business, where Mary helped; several years later he opened a tiny sandwich shop next door. From the ages of 4 and 6 the girls attended St Monica's School in Upton, Poole and from the age of 11 Wentworth School, Boscombe; Nicola went on to the sixth form at Canford to study in the language laboratory. Mary and Peter loved living by the water and took advantage of it, swimming and water-skiing in the sea and even using the ski-jump behind Brownsea Island – although Mary admits that she was so terrified by it that she only did it once!

Unfortunately, in about 1980 Peter and Mary's marriage broke down and the second half of her life began. Mary moved to a smaller house in Lilliput, with lovely neighbours, including several old friends.

One Christmas in the early 80's Mary attended a bridge weekend at Steeple Aston, near Oxford, run by her good friend Betty Elson. There were many players and too few helpers, so Mary and her friend Roy volunteered to help. Many more bridge weekends, under the auspices of Mr Bridge followed; and then bridge cruises. Mary's suitcase was always packed and ready to go at a moment's notice. She cruised all over the world for several years, enjoying not only the bridge tournaments, but also the free accommodation and meals, excursions, cocktail parties etc. She visited wonderful destinations meeting many interesting people, including Peter O'Toole, Robert Powell and Bernard Ingham (Mrs. Thatcher's personal secretary).

Around 1985 a good friend, Len, retired and organised lengthy sailing trips to different parts of the world on his 60ft yacht, which Mary loved. They went to the most wonderful destinations – Easter Island, Pitcairn, Tahiti, Iceland and Greenland and

many other exotic places; her favourite trip was the two months they spent sailing round the Greek Islands. She had to take one year out, moving in to care for her mother, but resumed cruising when her sister visited from South Africa.

Family has always been important to Mary - she is very proud of her family – her two daughters look out for her beyond the call of duty and she greatly enjoys the company of her two grandchildren, James and Holly and James' two babies.

So what brought Mary to the relative tranquillity of Melton Court after such exciting years? She knew it was time to move home; she had visited at least 20 friends from the Golf Club who had lived here since about 2000. They were all very happy, so it was the obvious place for Mary to choose as her next home.

Since coming here Mary has been involved in setting up a fortnightly bridge group, along with Daphne Phillips and Eddie Bathgate. She enjoys the lunches, walking around the grounds and socialising with her many friends, both old and new. She says there is nothing at Melton that she doesn't enjoy – she says **"What's not to like?"**

**Helena Greene**



### Eileen Murphy

The one song that means so much to me is **"Amarillo"** by Tony Christie

The reason is it brings memories of my small granddaughter whom we sadly lost when she was just four years old.

Ellie was a devoted fan of this song, so much so that it was played twice at her funeral as... **"once was never enough"** for her!

I can never hear this being played without the image of her singing her little heart out!

## "Life's a Beach" at Burcot Court

The BBC first introduced Desert Island Discs on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1942.

The programme invites guests to imagine they are shipwrecked on a desert island and pick eight records to take with them. Duty Manager, Julie Morley has inventively adapted this much-loved programme.

Julie says 'I'm touched that an idea of mine has been so warmly embraced, supported and enjoyed by all involved, from my wonderful castaways and their stories to our receptive audience, and not forgetting myself as DJ Julie. I have very much enjoyed facilitating this social event. I simply invite each owner by letter to choose up to six pieces of their favourite music, a book and a luxury item, that they would take with them if they had to be castaway to a desert island. Our sessions are very relaxed and made all the more special with nibbles and a glass of wine (or two). Due to its popularity, I have decided to continue the idea with a Christmas theme for December. Here are some of my favourite stories from our castaways':

### Mike Jobbins

Unchained Melody - famously recorded by Jimmy Young and latterly The Righteous Brothers, this 1955 top of the charts hit evokes lasting memories of discovery and courtship with Pearl, my beloved wife and best friend, (**"my Pearl of great price!"**). Those first heady years saw us squeezing in precious times together between my practical work schedules and study courses towards qualifying as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.

Time and again, **"parting was such sweet sorrow"** as I spent frequent periods away on term building contracts, so exchange of letters and 45rpm recordings became the norm and Unchained Melody was favoured for its lyrics, as well as musicality.

Pearl has gone ahead of me now, but I still have her letters and playing this timeless recording still brings back memories of those early times of getting to know each other and planning a future together that was to last over 60 years.



### Lynn Bennett

Where do you start when you're asked to choose just six records out of the millions out there?

I quickly abandoned trying to select my favourites and settled on six pieces of music each with a particular memory attached to it.

One such piece is **"A Policeman's Lot is Not Happy One!"** from the Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert and Sullivan. My husband, Mike and I were very fond of G&S, loving the catchy tunes and clever words, especially as performed by the D'Oyley Carte touring cast. When they came to Birmingham, we went to the shows at the Alexandra theatre four or five times a week.

We would treat ourselves to a meal at **"Gino's"** where **members of the cast could be spotted "in the flesh!"**

Why this particular song? Mike was proud to serve as a Special Constable, doing a weekly night duty alongside regular officers and found out for himself how true the title was, it reminds me of waiting for him to come home safely with tales of the night's events.

### Jen Gray

Trumpet Voluntary - Jeremiah Clarke, recording from St Paul's (25.07.2009). I chose this piece as I have always found the music so rousing and thought it would cheer me up on my desert island!

This version, played on the organ at St Paul's, was filmed showing many areas of the cathedral including the organist playing. It would remind me of an uncle of whom I was very fond, he played the organ in my own local church.

### Gareth Hardwick

The single disc I would choose out of my six would have to be **"Count Your Blessings One by One...., and it will surprise you what the Lord has done"**.

Why? I'm not a religious person but I try to be constantly positive and if I stray into negative territory I will sing this hymn to myself and it refreshes my thoughts. I also think I'm very lucky to live in Burcot Court - another reason to count my blessings.



# Gorselands Court welcomes their new Court Manager Susan Thomas



I have worked in retirement housing for the past 12 years, during which I have had the pleasure of working with two housing associations.

I worked at Riverside Housing as a Sheltered Scheme Manager, I then changed roles to Health and Wellbeing Coordinator for all 43 sheltered schemes in Merseyside. This role was such a pleasure as it really ensured all our tenants were

supported across all schemes and that no one felt isolated or lonely. I took the lead on many projects, one of my favourites being intergenerational work with local primary schools including linking in with Liverpool Football Club.

My next role was with Your Housing Group where I managed a 111-bed extra care scheme. I thoroughly enjoyed my 4 years there however, when I saw the job role advertised for Gorselands Court and researched Retirement Security...

...I was completely overwhelmed by their ethos and when I read 'Communities for Owners run by Owners' I applied straight away.

Over my career I have had a few interviews but never have I experienced one quite like I did at Gorselands Court. I thought it was so inventive to have Owners interview each candidate; after all they are the ones working alongside the Court Manager for many years to come. I was thrilled to find out I had secured the role. I joined Owners at their coffee morning before I started, and as soon as I walked in I knew I had made the right choice. I felt a true sense of community spirit straight away.

My first two weeks at Gorselands Court was spent with the previous Court Manager, Paul O'Brien. To find out Paul would be my Services Manager going forward really was the icing on the cake.



By week three I took over the reins, it was all going so well until disaster struck and I was having to deal with a major burst water pipe five-foot-deep underground! I have to say in all my years I don't think I have experienced such a flood of water coming from underground. 'It never rains but it pours'.

Having had varied roles within retirement housing I have a lot to bring to my new role. I have many ideas and have already made positive changes; the support from the Directors and Owners has been invaluable.

The staff team have warmly welcomed me and really do go above and beyond in their work, I can't thank them enough. It has been a joy getting to know everybody and I look forward to many fruitful years ahead at Gorselands Court.





# The Story of Molly & Millie

Tannery Court



Molly and Millie are two sisters who live at Tannery Court, born from the same litter. They are 4 ½ years old and live with Rae Cass and Val Hyde. They are real characters, love people, are very affectionate and are friends to all at the court.

Having recently lost her dog who was 17 years old, Val felt something was missing in her life, and that's when she spotted a litter of long haired chihuahua puppies advertised for sale. Val found out that the best suited dogs to live in an apartment were chihuahuas, yorkshire terriers

and dachshunds. Having recently sold her car she asked her neighbour, Rae, if she would take her to see the puppies. On arrival Val instantly fell in love with Molly, who wouldn't leave her side, and decided to give Molly a home straightaway.

Rae had no intention of buying a puppy, but when she held Millie whilst waiting for Val her heart melted. A couple of weeks later Val picked Molly up and Rae immediately saw the difference having a puppy had made to Val and how easy it was to look after her.

Rae rang the dog breeder to see if Millie was still available - and she was. Rae was so delighted and knew it was meant to be.

**Val and Rae have since become best friends and all enjoy walks together around the gardens, have play dates in each other's apartments and arrange trips to the groomers to keep Molly and Millie looking beautiful.**


# Joyce Ade's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

at St George's Court



St George's Court had a lot to celebrate in November when Joyce Ade turned 100! Joyce had an amazing time with approximately 50 guests marking the occasion with her; she particularly loved her meaningful scrabble cake, which represented all things about her. **Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Joyce!**



  
**Peter Helm's 101<sup>st</sup> Birthday and Catalina Bateman's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday**  
at Boat Lane Court

They celebrated in style with cake and bubbly. An event enjoyed by all Owners and staff.





Melton Court

# Melton Court is in Bloom!

The Poole in Bloom competition seeks to celebrate all the hard work that local community groups, businesses, and households put in to make Poole a beautiful place to live.



In October the Owners at Melton Court were delighted to receive a Silver Gilt Award in the Communal Grounds category of the competition.

Special recognition must go to Sam Clarke, Facilities Manager who spent many hours at home growing seedlings and making hanging baskets, while Keith Sansom, Handyman, did all the planting and watering.



Melton Court

# Memories of Summer

Nicki Wheeler and her team always bring the sunshine to Melton Court with their ever popular 'Summer Vibes' evening meal.



“ This event is one of the highlights of our social programme, the evening was full of fun and laughter – it was a great success”.  
Nicki commented





Margaret Court

# Enter if you dare!

Margaret Court certainly got into the ‘spirit’ of Halloween with a spooky evening of entertainment.



The themed evening started with a glass of ‘Dracula’s Blood Elixir’ followed by a wonderful meal which included ‘Soft Baked Brains & Crunchy Bones’. Many Owners dressed up for the event.

“I always make sure I dress up for Halloween, it’s great fun.”

Mrs Alexander



Tannery Court

# Christmas ready!



Saxon Court

# Halloween meal and Spooky Quiz





Boat Lane Court

Knit & Natter



New Owners Maggi Francis & Sandra Waterfield have restarted a weekly activity that many Owners used to love and attend before the pandemic at Boat Lane Court.

Maggi & Sandra both enjoy various crafts; Maggi enjoys knitting whilst Sandra loves crafting, sewing & knitting.

After meeting and chatting at Afternoon Tea they hatched a plan and called on friends to

assist with materials, recycling items from the Women's Institute.

Knit & Natter started on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. There was a fantastic response with Owners turning up and supporting the event.

It was a roaring success and a positive step in getting together and sharing skills and experiences.



Cathedral Green Court

Putting the 'Fun' in Fundraising!

The staff at Cathedral Green Court took part in a 6 mile 'Memory Walk' around the beautiful Ferry Meadows in Peterborough to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society. They managed to raise an amazing £700 for this worthy cause.

The Alzheimer's Society informs us; every year thousands of incredible people come together to take part in a series of sponsored walks for a future where dementia no longer devastates lives.



Craft Club

Cathedral Green Court craft club was set up by Duty Manager June Anderson who thought it would be nice for Owners to get together and enjoy all sorts of crafts.

They do crochet, knitting, colouring, diamond art and painting. The craft club has generously donated items to Bonnie Babies charity and local care homes.



Bushmead Court

Exploring different cultures

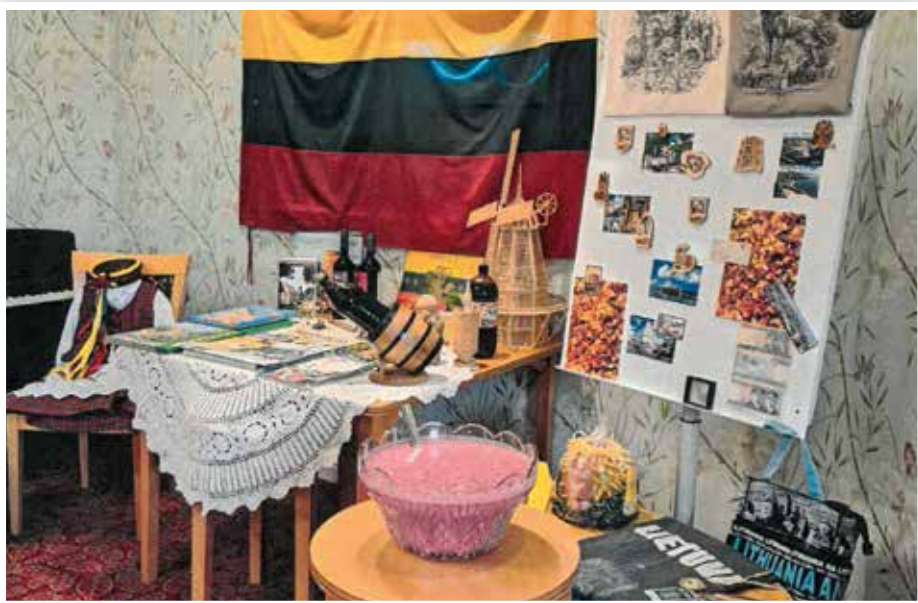
Steph Reed, Court Manager at Bushmead Court was exploring different social activities to hold at the Court when an Owner suggested a themed food evening. The inspiration came from the multicultural team who work at the Court and how wonderful it would be to experience their food and culture.

Steph explains, “Our first night was Lithuania. We have a number of staff who are Lithuanian and they came together to put on a spectacular evening of food, wine, culture and colour. Most of the Owners came to the event and had a thoroughly amazing time. As I left one Owner said:

“

What lovely food,  
lovely company, a  
wonderful evening,  
the girls worked  
really hard.”

Our next event is already planned – Malaysia!”



“

“A perfect way to spend an evening. Good food, drink and company. We felt like we were on holiday”.

Mr & Mrs McCoy

“

Such good fun. We had cocktails on arrival, beautiful food and live music. It was the best night out we have had in a long time, and we didn't need to leave the court.”

Mr & Mrs Taylor

Priory Court

Caribbean Evening

Priory Court inspired memories of summertime and palm tree paradises with their annual Caribbean evening.



Winter poetry competition

“The colour of springtime is flowers; the colour of winter is in our imagination.” Terri Guillemets

There's a chill in the air, the leaves have fallen and the nights are growing longer; winter is upon us. Whatever your thoughts are about wintertime, write a poem in any style and send it to us.

Our favourite poets will receive a prize and feature in the next edition of the Court Circular.

- 1st Prize £75
- 2nd Prize £50
- 3rd Prize £25

Send your entry to [michellehackett@retirementsecurity.co.uk](mailto:michellehackett@retirementsecurity.co.uk) or by post via your Court Manager. Deadline for entries - **Monday 15th January 2024.**





# CourtCIRCULAR

WINTER 2023

## FUN FACTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

TO IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS

A  
VERY  
MERRY  
XMAS



The term  
**'XMAS'**  
comes from  
Greece, X is  
the Greek  
symbol for  
Christ



The  
first ever  
**CHRISTMAS  
TREE**  
wasn't a tree  
at all, it was in  
fact made of  
dye goose  
feathers and  
came from  
Germany

The first use of **LIGHTS**  
on a Christmas tree  
was in 1882 by Edward H  
Johnson, a close friend  
of Thomas Edison

**'WHITE  
CHRISTMAS'**  
by Bing Crosby  
is the bestselling  
Christmas song  
of all time

In 1843 the **FIRST  
CHRISTMAS CARD**  
was produced  
and sent by Sir  
Henry Cole

The world's  
**TALLEST  
CHRISTMAS  
TREE**  
was 221ft  
high and was  
displayed in  
a Washington  
shopping mall  
in 1950

**2.1  
BILLION**  
Christmas  
cards will  
be sent this  
festive season

Every Christmas **10 MILLION  
TURKEYS** are cooked and  
consumed in the UK alone

Santa Claus was first  
used by **'COCA COLA'**  
as a winter promotion

**MINCE PIES** did  
originally contain meat



Retirement  
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