



NEWS

Tony Blair writes on *the Paper* – page 3



LIFESTYLE

Winning designs in T-shirts – page 27



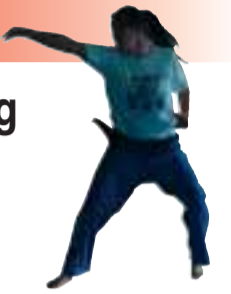
COMPETITIONS

Two chances to WIN a camera – centre pages



SPORT

'Kick boxing changed my life' – page 36



WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT CHRISTMAS



(and the things you hate) – revealed in our exclusive reader poll



Top five loves:

- Presents
- Seeing relations
- Chocolate
- Decorating the tree
- Holiday and no school

Top five hates:

- Shops start trading too early
- People forget Christ
- Queues in shops
- Finding everyone presents
- Too much turkey

'A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every 25th of December!'

That is what Scrooge believed, but the spirit of Christmas won through and even the mean character made famous by Dickens loved Christmas in the end.

But is Christmas too commercialised? Our exclusive *Paper* survey of 10 to 18 year-olds in Cambridgeshire schools and colleges revealed the top Christmas hate was shops that display tacky and expensive Christmas stock weeks before Advent starts (37%).

A lot felt this commercialised

By Anna Wharton and Frances Haynes

Christmas too much and did not represent the true meaning of Christmas.

Most shopped in different stores rather than trying to get all gifts in one shop and 27% said queues in shops were a headache. A further 27% mentioned it was hard to find presents for everyone.

Not surprisingly, the number one love about Christmas was getting presents. (40%)

Our surveyed sample also liked seeing relatives, even though some of them were annoying!

And, of course, everyone likes to share a box of chocolates!

Most people interviewed by members of the editorial team thought Christmas is great. Twenty five per cent loved the holiday (with no school) but 10% felt many customers and traders alike needed to focus less on commercial promotion and more on traditional things at Christmas.

Many worry the focal point of Christmas – marking the birth of Christ – has been forgotten

Some people object to the way 'Christ' has been taken out of 'Christ-mas' and the celebration turned into 'Xmas'.

However, Christmas celebrations in England have always involved pagan customs such as use of holly, mistletoe and Yule logs. Ten per cent enjoyed decorating the Christmas tree.

Christmas is celebrated differently around the world. In England roast turkey is a popular Christmas meal, whereas in Italy it is treated as a fast day and very little is eaten and drunk.

Italian children receive gifts from La Befana rather than Father Christmas. She is said to be one of the people who denied hospitality to Mary and Joseph and leaves gifts to make up for her error.

Season's Greetings!

