



Museum shows first ever Christmas cards Holiday pieces made back in 1843



Only 21 of the 1,000 original cards survive.



THE first printed Christmas card in the world is currently **on display** at the Charles Dickens Museum, located in London. Printed in 1843, it was **commissioned** by Henry Cole, the first **curator** of another London museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Cole asked an artist, John Callcott Horsley, to create 1,000 holiday cards, on which a drawing and the words “A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You” are present. The drawing is of a wealthy family around a table, with three **generations** raising their drinks to wish one another a happy holiday.

The design was **carved** onto a stone tablet, pressed onto cardboard with black-brown ink and coloured in after the printing. They were sold at a shilling each. Of the 1,000 printed cards, only 21 remain, one of which is on loan to the museum from a book dealer in San Francisco (三藩市), until 19 April, 2020.

Abe becomes Japan's longest-serving prime minister

AS of late November, Shinzo Abe has been **in office** as Japan's (日本) longest-serving prime minister. But his **administration** is currently facing many challenges, such as Japan's economic problems.

The **previous** longest-serving Japanese prime minister was Taro Katsura, who served from 1901 to 1913. Abe, age 65, is also the second-longest serving leader of a G7 country, with

Germany's (德國) Angela Merkel being in power the longest amongst the G7 leaders.

Abe actually first became prime minister back in 2006, but was **voted** out just one year later. He got back into office in 2012. Abe said he has learnt his lesson from his one-year term well, and has worked hard for the Japanese people ever since.



Prime minister Shinzo Abe has held his job for over 2,887 days. (AP)



Circle the correct answer

1. When were the cards printed?

- A. 1800 B. 1843 C. 1900

2. Who actually created the drawing?

- A. Henry Cole
-
- B. Charles Dickens
-
- C. John Callcott Horsley

3. How many cards are there now?

- A. 21 B. 1,000 C. 1

4. Who is Japan's current prime minister?

- A. Sun Goku
-
- B. Taro Katsura
-
- C. Shinzo Abe

5. How old is Abe?

- A. 65 years B. 100 years C. 40 years

6. When did Abe first become prime minister?

- A. 2012 B. 2006 C. 2019

- Do you like the Christmas card in the news? Why or why not?
- Do you still send physical cards on the holidays? State your reasons.
- Have you ever visited Japan? Why or why not?
- Name three countries that have a prime minister.

Answers on P12

'Commission' here means paying someone to make a work of art for you.

... it was **commissioned** by ...

Another meaning of 'commission' is a group asked by the government to do a task.

A **commission** was formed to look at labour conditions.

One more meaning of 'commission' is allowing someone to be an officer in the military.

Doctors usually receive a **commission** to work in the military.

To say something is not working, you can say 'out of commission'.

Sorry, but the restroom is **out of commission** today.

Before the late 19th century, Japan did not have a prime minister, because the emperor was the absolute ruler of the country. But after Japan was forced to open its doors to European and American trade, the Japanese emperor decided to set up a constitution and the office of a prime minister. At this time, the prime minister only advised the emperor. But after Japan lost in World War II, the US took over and made the prime minister, who has to be elected, the actual ruler of the country, with the emperor being only a symbol.



in office (phr)
執政

administration (n)
政府

Vocabulary
Challenge ★★★★★

previous (adj)
上一任的

vote (v)
投票