

From the planting of 'the Union Jack atop the Christmas-tree' at the height of the Victorian Age, to Betjeman's 'tissued fripperies' ushering in the tidal wave of Christmas shopping and consumerism, to the American-style television Christmas: all these images show Christmas adapting yet remaining by far the most significant annual celebration. Mark Connelly here examines the traditions of Christmas in the context of their Anglo-German origins and the Victorian idea of the bourgeois Christmas expressing family virtues. He describes the revival of English music in Victorian times – perhaps the greatest age of church music and carols since the fourteenth century – while showing how shopping and, later, broadcasting grew to become perhaps the core elements making up the modern festival. In doing so *Christmas: A History* provides an original perspective on the West's most enduring social and cultural institution.

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