

It Happened One Christmas

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496 Clovis I, king of the Franks, and 3000 of his followers converted to Christianity and were baptised on Christmas day.

800 Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the Romans on Christmas day by Pope Leo III.

1066 William the Conqueror was crowned king of England in St Peter's church on Christmas day by Aldred Archbishop of York.

1158 King Henry II of England removed the crown from his head on Christmas day. He never put it on again, throughout the remainder of his reign, which ended in 1189.

1214 King John of England was presented with a list of demands by his barons. He ignored them. Six months later they spoke up a little louder on the field of Runnymede, and the Magna Carta was signed.

1358 Edward III of England graciously shared Christmas with his royal cousins, Jean II King of France and David King of Scotland, his captives as a result of failed military campaigns.

1398 Richard II of England sponsored the great Litchfield Tournament. This 14 day pageant was so spectacular that it has been frequently described in chronicles of his reign!

1418 Henry V broke the siege of Rouen on Christmas day to "(refresh) all the poore people with vittels, to their great comfort and his high praise." As he had been in the process of starving them into submission, this was a remarkable act of charity.

1492 On Christmas Eve, the Santa Maria ran aground on the shores of Hispaniola. Columbus left a colony of men on what he thought was Japan, and sailed for Spain in the Nina.

1518 Henry VIII dismissed his entourage and kept no Christmas for fear of plague!