Readers' Crossword

The clues in *italics* are connected by a seasonal theme

Across

- **7** Failed US presidential candidate in 2000 who became a prominent environmentalist. (2,4)
- 8 A book by David Nicholls, or a topsy-turvy reference to when 21 across 19 down arrived. (3,3)
- 9 A feature of many homes at Christmas. (4)
- **10** One of those active on day eight. (8)
- **11** Prominent places where fires are lit in celebration. (7)
- 13 "We cannot really love anybody with whom we never _____" – Agnes Repplier. (5)
- 15 Lennon said it would get you instantly. (5)
- **17** Stab? (7)
- **20** From Persian meaning 'walled enclosure', it's one idea of the afterlife. (8)
- 21 To separate. (4)
- 22 Name for an English pirate at time of Elizabeth I. (3,3)
- 23 Surname of victor in Pakistan's elections in October. (6)

Down

- 1 Surname of sci-fi writer who first imagined geostationary satellites. (6)
- 2 One of so many turtles. (4)
- **3** The politically strong Greens in this country united with Alliance 90 in 1993. (7)
- **4** Archaic word for a blackbird. (5)
- **5** To seep through. (8)
- 6 Actions of so many geese. (6)

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- **12** Member of the SAS, perhaps. (8)
- 14 Baron d'Holbach argued that all children were born thus. (7)
- **16** This shrub of the rhododendron family blooms at Christmas in the southern hemisphere. (6)
- **18** He told us about Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance. (6)
- **19** Geographical feature such as followed by the ancient route through Wiltshire to the Thames. (5)
- **21** Williams or Conference, perhaps. (4)