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)