



Christmas past and present - around the world

Memories of Christmas Past

By Mal Jacobs

When I think of Christmases in bygone years they really were such wonderful times. I remember in our town how the shops always displayed a real Christmas tree, covered with tinsel, stars and lights, then the fun of buying one and taking it home.

Cooking seemed to go on for ever and it must have been several days. A major part of the festive season was all the different cooking smells that filled the air. It tasted like real food then!

It was a time for relatives to get together and the air was filled with talking and laughter; a true festive spirit. We put our Christmas stockings on the end of the bed, hoping that Father Christmas would visit us. We didn't expect very much (and never got very much) but what we did get were thrills galore and all that lovely food to come.

Ice and fire

I recall the local bakery cart with fresh baked bread, rolls, and dozens of dairy foods. The cart was painted brown with the name of the baker emblazoned in gold and the horse, with har-

ness in black and red, panting in the cold air.

At night there was a hot chestnut stand. As the chestnuts popped and sizzled, we rubbed our hands to keep warm with the wonderful aroma of hot chestnuts in the air.

On the big day we got up early, checked the stockings and ran downstairs to light the candles on the tree and enjoy the festivities. Looking back, it must have been a fire hazard with those real candles and a dry tree!



Young Jyoti, Premila, Kamla, Rekha and Ruxana celebrating Divali at Bar XL in November. Photo by Erini Rodis

Divali Celebrations

By Diana Cormack

For the past five years the window of 114-116 High Road has displayed Happy Divali greetings. The interior is decorated too, with bunting and flags forming a colourful background for the annual Divali Party, held on the premises by owner Bharat Patel.

Bharat lives in East Finchley and is a former pupil of Martin Schools, which his three children now attend. Along with his brother Dinesh he runs Club XL where you can find food, drink and a variety of entertainment. There is also a great variety in the club's membership of over 2000, representing different nationalities from all over the world.

at the karaoke on Thursday nights. On Fridays there are disco nights with music from the 70s, 80s or 90s. Saturdays are for Asian and international music, though Bharat says that the type played can depend on the clientele present, who can also watch sporting events and films on the big screen or have a game of snooker.

At this year's party a lively group of Czech people made enthusiastic use of the dance floor. There was a pleasing mix of Asian and Western music provided by the DJs, with the odd bit of karaoke and requests thrown in for good measure. Guests were treated to a free drink with which to wash down the food prepared by the skilled Nepalese chef. Club member Barry Jones, a chauffeur from Watford, described it as the best Indian food for miles around.

Over the last few years Club XL has been the venue for some interesting events such as salsa nights. At the moment Bharat is thinking about holding jam sessions on a Monday evening if there is enough interest. Why not pop in and let him know, or just go along to see if the club itself interests you?

Can you help?

THE ARCHER requires volunteer distributors for the following rounds:

- ♦ Long Lane (part of), The Mead, Font Hills & Lucas Gardens.
- ♦ Lynmouth Road, Annington Road & Keynes Close.
- ♦ Woodside Avenue (part of) & Lanchester Road.

Delivery takes place once a month and a typical round takes 30-45 minutes. We also require car owners to drop off to our distributors each month. (Average 6-8 distributors per person). For details, please call us on 020 8883 0433.

Christmas Church Services

St Mary's RC Church

Christmas Eve - 6.30 pm Children's Mass of Christmas; 9.30 pm Carols; 10 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day - 8.30 am Mass; 10 am Mass; 11.30 am Mass

Boxing Day - 10 am Mass

Holy Trinity Church

22 December - 6 pm Carol Service; Christmas Eve - 6 pm Blessing of the Crib; 11.30 pm Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day - 10 am Parish Communion (sung)

All Saints Church

22 December - 6.30 pm Christmas Carol Service

Christmas Eve - 3-5 pm Children's Christingle Service with Christmas Party; 11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day - 8 am

Mass of the Dawn; 10 am Mass of Christmas Day with Carols.

East Finchley Baptist Church

22 December - 6 pm Carol Service; Christmas Day - 10.30 am Family Service.

Christmas in South Africa

By Kay Faust

As a Jewish child in South Africa, Christmas was the day you got together with family or friends to have a "braai" barbecue or picnic meal - though not turkey. My aunt used to make a Christmas pudding and put "tickies" - six pence pieces, now out of use - in it. It was considered good luck to get one.

The other memory I have is of Africans singing in the street. I didn't realise it then, but they were singing church music. It was only on my last trip to South Africa, six years ago, that I heard the same music coming from someone's room. I got very excited to hear African music from my childhood, and when I enquired about it I was told it was church music on the radio. It was very joyous.

As an adult, we Jewish librarians used to work Christmas and Easter Eve, when the other workers had short shifts or left early, so by the time the library closed all the workers were Jewish. None of us minded though, because we used to leave early for the Jewish holidays. Many Jewish people volunteered to go into hospitals to feed patients on Christmas Day. Soup kitchens too.

We children didn't feel as left out of the festivities as children do today, because there wasn't so much publicity then. South Africa didn't get TV till the 1970s.

Christmas Calling

By Sue Holliday

One memorable Christmas was the time I got my first transistor radio. Oh joy of joy, I could listen to radio Luxembourg without my parents shouting at me to turn that row off, which they often did if I played my records. Those days seemed a lot simpler or is it that I am looking back through rose-tinted spectacles?



The Archer's production manager - who wishes to remain anonymous - (above left), Xmas 1973.

As I grew older, Christmas became special for a different reason; that being the food and drink. For instance, as I remember it, you only saw certain foods in the shops at that time of year; like turkey, dates, figs, nuts, and tangerines.

Also Christmas was the only time I could have a drink at home: eggnog on Christmas Eve, wine with the lunch, then as a teenager I could have a port and lemonade.

**All Saints' Church,
Durham Road, East Finchley
Church of England**

Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.

Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life and a riotous Youth Club for church members. Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy, on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.

Experienced singers are always welcome.

Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

North London Hospice Shop Mary & Eugenia

Wish all our friends & customers

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**Thank you to all our customers
& friends for your custom & donations over the years**

North London Hospice Shop, 123 High Road, East Finchley N2