

The Spirit of Christmas The Matthews Family Toast

The Matthews family around the world stand at the end of the Christmas meal and raise their glasses to 'ALL FRIENDS AROUND ST. PAULS.' St. Paul's, London is the centre of the universe and therefore covers family and friends around the world. The toast is given by the youngest member at the table and is followed by everyone remembering out aloud their own extended family. I do not know when it started but it came down from the Fifield Matthews and continues now with the younger generations!

Anne Matthews



An American Christmas

As a little girl growing up on the windswept prairies of north Illinois, I could count on seasonal weather for Christmas. A heavy blanket of snow always accompanied the festivities. Christmas Eve was the highlight of my family's celebration. The dinner was held at our house with uncles, aunts, cousins and special guests crunching through the snow to our door at 6pm. They were greeted with a festive eggnog served by candlelight in the dining room, living room and music room decorated with holly, evergreen boughs and crimson velvet bows. The crèche

was featured on the fireplace with a crackling coal blaze underneath. One year we were all seated around the dining table when Mother and Daddy appeared from the kitchen with a platter of such enormity that it took two of them to carry it. Upon a bed of roasted vegetables lay – I gasped! – a beautifully browned suckling pig with a large red apple in its mouth. I was five years old and the picture in my mind's eye of this phenomenon has never dimmed. Is it any wonder that I ended up living in the land of Charles Dickens?

Trudy Yates

