

Looking Back at Christmastime in California

Christmastime in California for our family has been very traditionally American, as the States are a melting pot of unique traditions from all over the world. My brothers, sister and I were all first generation Americans. Our parents sailed from Scotland and emigrated to the U.S. in 1953 with open minds and hearts, and all of their proud and cherished roots from home.



God the Father for sending them to us. Opening gifts was saved for after Christmas Mass! We learned to embrace the blessings of extended family and that life's journey had brought us together. My mother's table

knew no end to it. "It's just another tatty in the pot," she would say. My father being a joiner would just find a bit of wood from the garage to make the table as long as it needed to be! Mum would put a lovely tablecloth over the top, beautiful food on the makeshift table and everyone knew they were welcome.

Both Sides of the Pond

I can remember in my early years, celebrating the holidays with friends of the family who had also sailed over from different parts of the British Isles. Washed away were any regional or religious differences, we were a family. Christmas brought everyone together, all the children running round, my dad at the piano and everyone singing Christmas songs new and old from both sides of the pond. There was turkey and treats, trifle, and tablet, clootie dumpling and custard, and a wee dram was not to be left out, just to name a few of the special things enjoyed from back home.

Christmas in our house always was, firstly, a time to celebrate our Lord's journey to earth, the Holy Family and

The Best Gift of them All

In the weeks before Christmas as we would talk about what gifts we wanted, Mum would remind us that "It's Jesus' birthday not yours!" She did not want us to be disappointed on Christmas day, as there were many of us and little money to go round! Yet it seemed as a child, that a Christmas miracle would happen, as we were never disappointed on the day. Looking back, they always found a way to give each of us at least one gift that we really wanted. And more importantly, they gave us a gift that we all cherish to this day, the love of family.

Maureen Sandate

Alice in Wonderland at the New Beaconsfield Hall

This magical production is presented by the Oxfordshire theatre company in association with Pegasus Theatre. It is written by Neil Duffield, is suitable for all the family and combines puppetry with song and dance. Come along to the NBH on **Friday 17th December**, doors open 6.30pm and the performance starts at 7pm. Tickets are £5 for a child, £8 adult and £20 Family. Contact Lee on: 01993 832216 or 07530 690444.