

## Family, music, food substance of English Yule

An English Christmas in the 30's, for most middle class families, was a time of family, music and food.

I don't remember the 30's (honest I don't) but my mother does.

She was a small child of mixed Irish and Scottish stock, the middle child with an older sister and a younger brother.

Christmas started the Saturday before when children were taken to town for shopping—no November panic for these sensible people. Pennies had been saved from the weekly sixpenny allowance and a small parental contribution swelled the sticky palm-clutched fortune.

Woolworths was a favorite store for such purposes, being the original 'five-and-dime' of England (an American store made good). Here purchases could be made for a few pennies, the posy bowl for mother, the handkerchief for daddy and a big box of mixed sweets or chocolate for brother for sixpence.

These were smuggled home and stashed under each bed until wrapping time.

**Church activities**

The Sunday before Christmas was the children's service at the old Church of England round the corner. Gifts were wrapped and given to the underprivileged.

In the afternoon a nativity play was put on for the Sunday school by the girl guides. There was no party or Father Christmas, this wasn't seemly for a church celebration, but a children's carol service was enjoyed where little ones could sing their favorites. The church was all decorated and children wore their best clothes.

By Christmas Eve, a day my mother liked even better than Christmas Day, Mother and her sister helped with food preparation. The cakes and puddings had been made weeks before. The whole family stirring the batters and making a wish. My grandmother would leave the batter overnight if one member of the family couldn't make that important stir until then.

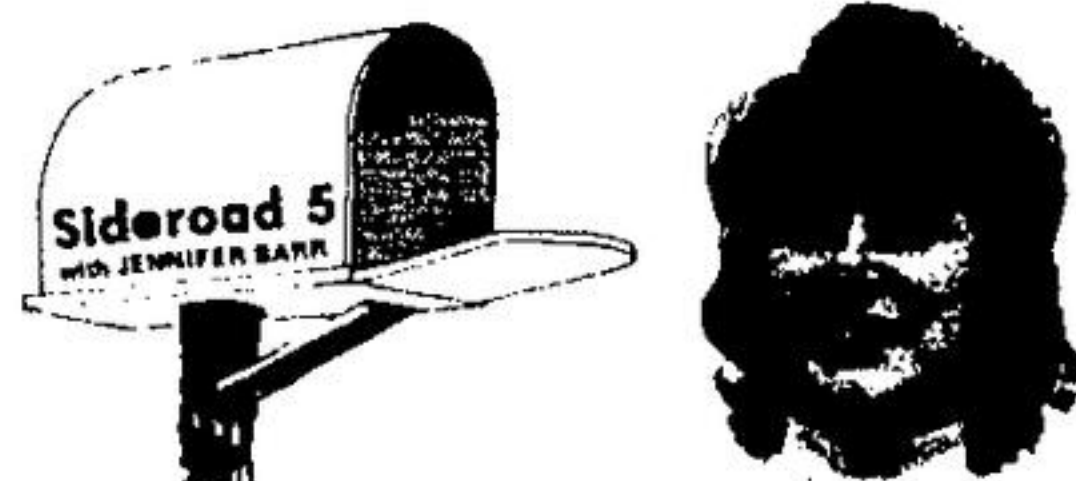
After all the vegetables had been cut and prepared, last

minute shopping and errands done, mother, her sister and brother sat down to a small tea.

Then the tree!

This small artificial tree, handed down in the family, was decorated with heirloom ornaments. My grandmother had a fear of fire so mother never saw a real tree.

Supper followed, with carols on the radio, and then Grandpa's stockings were hung on bedposts. He always complained later they were pulled out of shape.



Bedtime was 7:30!

Mother always had a tough time getting to sleep but loved lying cosy and warm in bed listening to the Salvation Army make the rounds singing carols.

When Christmas morning dawned, the children weren't allowed to open their stockings until enough light showed in the room to see by (must remember that rule).

The stockings would contain, sweets, chocolate, party favors and usually a tiny china doll dressed in woolen dress or bonnet, with the inevitable orange, apple and sixpence in the toe. Children were allowed to eat the fruit but no sweets before breakfast. This whole stocking could be purchased for the equivalent of a dollar.

The living room was locked until all children had completely eaten their good breakfast of bacon, sausage, egg and toast—something my uncle had tantrums over.

Finally, the piece de resistance came when the living

room door was opened. A roaring fire and the decorated tree with the presents.

Well-mannered children sat quietly by the fire while father handed out presents consisting of clothes, dolls, toys, and the annual story book.

After the goodies, children were expected to tidy up, take their toys to the playroom and play peacefully till 11 o'clock. At this time, the best party clothes were brought out, something mother loved, and scrubbed children were dressed for Grandmother's house.

The whole family, consisting of some 30 members gathered at my Great-Grandparents' home for a huge Christmas dinner. My Grandmother usually contributed the vegetables, aunts brought other dishes. Mother still groans at the thought of the food they ate—the turkey, ham and pork, the celery and asparagus, the pies and puddings, the 20 dishes of bonbons.

Each child would have two or three helpings.

After dinner, the maids would clear and wash the great pile of dishes and then retire for their own party.

At 4:30 the whole process would start again with Christmas tea—sandwiches, Christmas cake, mince pies with thick whipped cream, shortbread cookies.

The family, stuffed to the gills, would settle down in front of the fire for an evening of music. My great-great aunt Norah was a famous concert singer and pianist, so she would lead a carol sing that included folk songs and classics.

Mother would be allowed to stay up till midnight but rarely made it, falling asleep on her father's knee around eleven.

It was the music and family closeness that made my mother love Christmas so—the music that became a part of her life forever.

What a nice kind of Christmas to remember.

To all our many, many friends, two and four legged, merry, merry Christmas from Mack, Jenny, Pat and Erica.

## Reed wants Hydro accountable to public

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed introduced a Private Member's Bill into the Ontario Legislature Tuesday, December 12, which attempts to clear up the public accountability of Ontario Hydro.

"The purpose of my Bill," Reed said, "is to provide a means of clarifying the functions and duties of Ontario Hydro as they relate to the production, generation, transmission, distribution, supply, sale and use of development of energy resources in Ontario."

Reed said that in the past Ontario Hydro has operated pretty much on its own with little direction from the Government, with little regard for cost to the taxpayer or the impact on the environment, but it has drawn up expansion plans and merely submitted them to the Government for rubber-stamp approval.

"Currently, the relationship between Ontario Hydro and the government seems to be solely dependent upon personalities of the individuals who are, at a given time, responsible for making the system work. This is unfavorable and cannot be allowed to continue," Reed said.

"Ontario Hydro must be accountable to the Ontario legislature, and through the elected members, to the people of Ontario."

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## Band's Christmas concert another musical treat

The baton of conductor George Elliott took Acton Citizens' Band and a hushed audience through hushed medieval cathedrals, modern movie and TV sets, marching down Fall Mall and through loved Christmas carols during a two hour musical treat at the McKenzie-Smith middle school Sunday evening.

The occasion was the band's annual Christmas concert and once again it showed the extraordinary versatility of a brass band. Unfortunately the auditorium of the school was only three-quarters full for the concert. Those who braved the winter blizzard to attend showed their appreciation by giving the band and conductor a standing ovation at the conclusion of the two part concert.

Doctor George Elliott has a knack of explaining each selection chosen for the concert in language the audience can fully understand. The first selections really needed no introduction—the theme march from Hogan's Heroes and the band responded to the light hearted march with enthusiasm.

With the audience in the palm of his hand, conductor Elliott chose to turn to more mystical themes, with the Advent carol, O Come, O Come Emmanuel as arranged by Eugene Mitchell. The haunting melody always gives this writer goose pimples and the band's treatment succeeded again.

Dr. Elliott explained the medieval mind's fixation with the role of kings and their genuflection to the king of kings before turning to the Fantasy on Christmas



Dr. George Elliott conducts the audience in Christmas carols during Sunday's fine band concert.

Carols—A Legend of Kings—by Charles Richard Spinney.

In deference to younger members of the group, the band played a transcription of a piece of the rock group, "Queen"—Bohemian Rhapsody—which showed a brass band does not necessarily have to stick to marches but ran a poor second to an original fantasy offered next called Introduction and Caprice. The melodious work by Charles Carter showed the band off to good advantage before the final instrumental number of the first half, the movie theme from Pink Panther, composed and arranged by Henry Mancini.

Proving no instrumentalists have to stick to their first love, band members assembled in front of the stage to wind up the first half with choral arrangements of familiar carols, highlight of which was the basso profundo of Jim Cotes in their rendition of the Boar's Head Carol.

Stirring music

The stirring Standard of St. George starting the second half of the program showed any brass band is at its best when performing marches especially when they can give full vent to martial music.

For more variety Dr. Elliott had first clarinetist Paul Bray conduct the band in Sabre Dance. Paul won five medals at the CNE for his ability on the clarinet but it was obvious Sunday evening he might someday also be a conductor as he led the band through the ballet suite which is familiar to most music lovers.

With guest conducting in vogue and conductor Elliott

under lamp posts until instruments freeze up. Then they board a bus, unfreeze their instruments and do the same at the next post. —H. Cotes

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 Parking of a vehicle on streets between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 7:00 a.m. for a period of time longer than three consecutive hours, is prohibited by by-law. As on-street parking hinders snow cleaning operations, please comply with the requirements of this by-law.

**Authorities may have vehicles ticketed or towed away at the owner's expense.**

**SNOW CLEANING:**  
 Placing of snow or ice on streets in any manner as to obstruct or encumber is prohibited by by-law. As improper snow and ice cleaning can be a serious hazard, please comply with the requirements of the by-law so as not to create a hazard.

**Authorities may have the snow and ice removed at the property owner's expense.**

**\*\*YOUR CO-OPERATION IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE WINTER CONTROL MEASURES AND SAFE CONDITIONS.**

### B & E at donut shop

Halton Regional Police are investigating the break in and theft of money from the Canadian Style Donut shop at the corner of Mill and Main Streets last week.

The thief forced open the front door, then went to the till. About \$40 was removed from the cash register, but another \$90 was left.

A science quality weigh scale was stolen from Acton High School. The device is described as being of Mettler manufacturer model PL300. Serial number is 689885K. The scale is grey in color and its dimensions are ten inches by eight inches and six inches.

Police are continuing in the investigation of a break-in of a Main Street North home from which a large assortment of household items was taken. Total value of the theft, including some sound equipment, is \$4,762.

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Larry, Coral & family

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