

Myths and traditions of Christmas

by Ed Goodall

The Yule Tide season brings with it many traditional activities for people living in a rural area.

The cutting down of a Christmas tree, the gathering of mistletoe and the collecting of holly to decorate the home, are exercises the whole family can enjoy. But what has this to do with the celebration of the birth of Christ?

The Romans used holly in early Christian times as an emblem of goodwill and friendship. Holly became a Christian symbol almost immediately after the death of Christ, as people believed His crown of thorns was made of holly.

The use of mistletoe dates back to Pagan times as recorded in Norse mythology. The Christian tradition began in the 14th century when a holly bough was placed over the doorway. Any person visiting a house during the Christmas period had to be embraced as they crossed the threshold. This was done to demonstrate that, in the Holy Season, everyone was loved in a Christian way. By the 16th century the greeting became more effusive and included kissing.

The Christmas tree became customary in England at the time of Queen Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert in 1840. The tradition originated from Germany where the Queen had family connections. The German fondness for the fir tree however, goes back to ancient times when the evergreens were thought to possess mystical powers, because they continued to flourish in the cold of winter. Missionaries were quick to point out to the unbelievers, that the fir tree has a triangular shape with three points representing the Holy Trinity; with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The decorating of trees was first done to ward off evil spirits. This custom in old Europe preceded the notion of bringing the tree indoors. When the new idea of having the tree indoors began in Germany, it was natural to continue to have the decorations. The making of the decorations challenged the creativity of the whole family as the men would whittle their carvings in soft wood or soap, the girls would thread glass beads and mother would bake gingerbread men and sweetbreads. Small

candies in little tin holders were added, presenting a dangerous situation if left unattended and the star of Bethlehem took its place at the top.

In the 19th century, German Royalty, through marriage, began to scatter across Europe taking their Christmas tree idea with them.

It was Charles Dickens who provided the idea of giving presents to the poor and needy when he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, in 1843. This vivid account of Ebenezer Scrooge's conversion from a cold hearted miser to a compassionate keeper of the Christmas spirit has kept readers enthralled ever since. But as we move into this Yuletide season it is the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that rings a chord as he wrote his *Christmas Bell* poem in 1863.

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day,
Their old, familiar carols play; And wild
and sweet the words repeat, Of peace on
earth, good-will to men. It was as if an
earthquake rent; the hearthstones of a
continent; And made forlorn the house-
holds born, Of peace on earth, good-will
to men. And in despair I bowed my
head, "There is no peace on earth," I
said; For hate is strong and mocks the
song, Of peace on earth, good-will to
men. Then pealed the bells more loud and
deep "God is not dead; nor doth He
sleep!" The wrong shall fail, the right pre-
vail, Of peace on each, good-will to men.*



Come and see our beautiful selection of

- Holiday Wear • Formal Wear
- Leathers

Happy Holidays
from
MY SISTER'S CLOSET

Your first choice for second debut fashions

26B Main St. E., Milton
(Between LCBO & Prosperity One)
905-875-0232
Hours: Tues-Wed 10-5 Thurs & Fri 10-6 Sat 11-5

Season's Greetings from
bell'occhio
gifts and good things

- Christmas Ornaments & Decor
- Scented Jar Candles
- Belle de Provence Soaps & Fragrances
- Original Holiday Gift Baskets
- Quilts & Throws

Gifts for home, family & friends

500 Steeles Ave. E., Milton
905-693-9888

Visit our Christmas booth at Milton Mall!



PHOTOS WITH SANTA (Photo by Milton Photo)

Mon/Tues/Wed
Dec. 10-12: 3-8 pm
Dec. 17-19: 2-8 pm

Thurs/Fri
Dec. 6, 7, 12, 14: 3-8 pm
Dec. 20, 21: 2-8 pm

Saturdays
Dec. 1, 8: 11-5 pm
Dec. 15, 22: 11-8 pm

Sundays & Xmas Eve
Dec. 2, 9: 12-4 pm
Dec. 16, 23, 24: 11-4 pm



Ex-TEN-ded Hours
Begin December 10th

Mon.-Sat. 10 am-10 pm
Sun. Dec. 16, 23 10 am-5 pm
Xmas Eve: 9 am-5 pm
Boxing Day: 10 am-5 pm

Christmas Cheer

is here . . . at

MILTON MALL

friendly & familiar
Escarpment Country™ Tourism Partner

Holiday Gift Wrap Service
Begins December 14th
Milton District Hospital Auxiliary

3 fabulous prizes to be drawn
on December 21. Ballots in our
"Christmas Cheer" Brochure,
available throughout the mall.

Corner of Main & Ontario
905-878-3900

Shopping Hours:
Mon. to Fri. 9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Sunday Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Season's Greetings from



We will continue to provide all our clients with professional & personal care.



Jenni, Zara, Shannon & Melanie

Holiday Specials for the Festive Season



PEDICURE
Reg. \$36
NOW \$30

FACIAL
Reg. \$55
NOW \$50

MANICURE
Reg. \$20
NOW \$17

MAKE-UP APPLICATION
Reg. \$27
NOW \$23

EAR CANDLING
Reg. \$27
NOW \$23

UP-DO's & FINISHED STYLES
15% OFF

Gift Certificates Available

Prices in effect until December 24.

We still honour
DZ One
Gift Certificates

SPA ONE
(formerly DZ One)

84 Main St. E.,
Milton

905-876-3761

First,
Drop
Off
the



Kidz. Second,

Shop Till
You Drop

Smart shoppers stop at
Kidz Korner first!

Milton's largest indoor playground

150 NIPISSING RD.,
UNITS #10&11
call us at
905-878-4697