

# Midlanders recall Christmas past

by Shirley Whittington  
Memories swarm in ah Christmas time. Poignant, joyous, or bitter sweet—the threads of memory weave are woven into Christmastide. The Times talked to some Midlanders to find out their warmest Christmas memories. Perhaps their reminiscences will spark a few fond memories for you. We hope so. Remembering happy times is a good part of Christmas.

Mayor Moreland Lynn has one happy Christmas memory that is a family tradition, now finding its way into another



generation. "Every year, the whole family would get out and clean off a rink on the Bay in front of our home. We all had new hockey sticks and we'd get out there and play hockey together. And the next generation is starting on that tradition this year. Probably my best Christmas present was one year during the war. My brother Ken was away in the Air Force, and we didn't expect him home. Christmas morning—I woke up and found Ken sleeping on the chesterfield. He's gotten leave unexpectedly and had come home to surprise us all. That was a good Christmas."

Nancy Keefe, Councillor for Ward One, reacted immediately and joyously to our question. "I remember so clearly, a sterling silver bracelet that my grandmother gave me when I was four years old. It might as well have been a diamond tiara—I was so thrilled. I can still see the box, and I remember exactly how I felt when I opened it. But

my mother didn't think I was old enough to look after it. However, I kept it for many years. And I can still remember how beautiful it was."

Syndicated Columnist Bill Smiley reached back into his memory for the married: "We were married in September. A month later, I learned



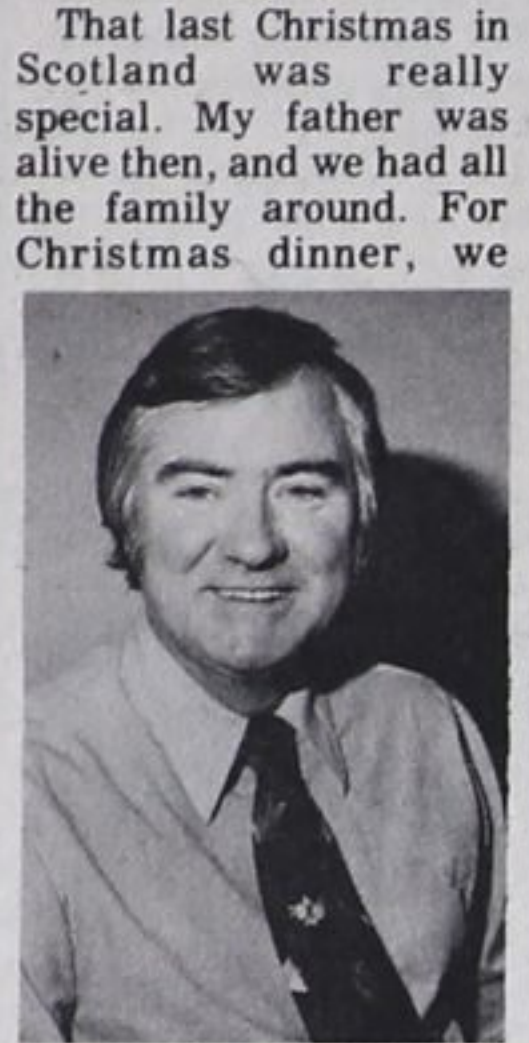
that I had TB. At the same time, my wife, as young wives do, realized that she was pregnant. I was allowed out of the hospital and we spent Christmas with my parents. I left on Boxing Day for a sanatorium, leaving my child bride pretty distraught. TB was no joke in those days. People died from it.

Just about a year later, I left the San, and again we spent Christmas with my folks. This time, we had company. There was a fine little fellow with brown eyes and a toothless grin to make us forget the year of loneliness and heartache and frustration. Unto them a child was born. The X-rays were clear. The baby was a beauty and the love was undamaged by a year of separation. That was a pretty good Christmas."

Councillor William Orr says Christmas was a pretty lean affair when he was a kid. "We lived in a house up in the country and we had no electricity and we burned wood. In fact, in the winter we used to go to bed with a heated brick wrapped in paper, to keep the bed warm. On Christmas morning, I remember going down to get our stockings, my brother and I, and we'd scurry back up to bed to open them because that was the warmest place in the house. What was in

the stocking? An orange, some nuts, and some grapes. And those days, that was a pretty big thing!"

Another councillor, Jim Malcolm remembers his last Christmas in Scotland. "It was our first married Christmas. We got married in October and planned to come to Canada soon after."



That last Christmas in Scotland was really special. My father was alive then, and we had all the family around. For Christmas dinner, we

didn't have a turkey. We had an enormous chicken, decorated for some reason, with sausages!"

Sam Ancio still remembers the thrill of finding his first bicycle under the Christmas tree.



"I was nine years old, and I can see that bike yet. It was a sparkling blue. I kept that bike for years.

and polished it and looked after it. Then I handed it down to my younger brother. We lived in a large house in Toronto and my parents kept that bike well hidden somewhere—it was a complete and great surprise to me."

Bill Ogilvie thinks that for him, the Christmas of 1945 was the most memorable, and he's sure that a lot of people look back to that Christmas with special feelings. "It was the first Christmas following VE Day (May 8, 1945) the day war ended in Europe with the Allied victory. Hundreds of thousands of Canadian and Allied families were reunited after five years

of conflict. There were a great many celebrations following the Allied victory. However, I believe the most meaningful times for most were the Christmas festivities of 1945."

Marion Turner is a local business woman whose happy Christmas memories typify those that most of us treasure. "To me Christmas means family. We go every year to my husband's family farm. It's beautiful. We see everybody, we have fun together and that's what Christmas is all about for me."

May your Christmas be happy and filled with memories—if not of the past, in the making.



All of the blessings of the Christmas season to you and yours. We hope that you will find peace and contentment, hope and happiness.

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