Pantomimes, Other Customs of Yesteryear To Be Observed As Majority of Britons Enjoy Old Fashioned Christmas

By JOHN GATESHEAD
Special to The Daily News

LONDON — Most people in Britain still like to spend Christmas in their own homes with as many members of the family as possible around them. The lonely are not left out in the cold, however, and strangers can be sure of a warm welcome. Nowadays there is television in many homes to add to the occasion and there are few indeed who do not halt their festivities while to listen to the broadcast which Queen Elizabeth makes to her subjects on Christmas afternoon.

For those who prefer to go away, managements of leading hotels and country inns, particularly in tourist regions, do their utmost to offer exceptionally good eating and drinking. They arrange entertainments for the guests, including party games, dancing, charades, carol concerts and a children's fancy dress parade.

MISTLETOE CUSTOM

In hotels, as well as in private homes, the rooms are decorated with holly, paper hangings and mistletoe. It is an old Christmas custom that under a hanging sprig of mistletoe guests are permitted to kiss the lady of their choice. Nearly every home, hotel and restaurant has a Christmas tree. They range from those small enough to provide an attractive table decoration to giants which almost reach the ceiling, their boughs laden with presents. It is only a century and a quarter ago since Christmas trees were first introduced in Britain. A charming and much older device, the Kissing Bough, is now being revived in some parts of the country. Its hanging garlands of evergreens and lighted candles never fail to attract by their simple beauty.

Among the many outdoor Christmas trees which add beauty to misty December days are those on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral in the heart of the City of London, and in Trafalgar Square, where each year a giant tree from Norway, sent as an annual gift to Londoners in memory of a close alliance, glitters beside the splashing fountains. Nearby, on the steps of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, is yet another tree. This year the Mayor of Oslo will, on December 21, switch on the illuminations of the Norwegian tree. Thereafter choirs will gather on many evenings to sing carols around this floodlit tree.

December 20 marks another big London occasion. It is the date when the circus comes to Town. Bertram Mills' famous circus will remain at Olympia until February, and the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will attend a performance on December 21. Another well-known circus, presented by Tom Arnold, opens on December 24 at the vast Harringay Arena in North London.

Another traditional Christmas entertainment is the pantomime, a song and dance show, loosely based upon some English nursery rhyme, with a Principal Boy who is a girl and a Dame who is a male comedian. It flourishes in theatres throughout Britain, sometimes lasting well into February. Nowadays, when ice shows are so popular, many pantomimes are staged on skates. Thus at Wembley visitors may see "The Babes in the Wood" on ice and at the Empress Hall, Earl Court, "Dick Whittington and his Cat."

Among special theatrical entertainment for children there will be the perennial "Peter Pan" with Peggy Cummings in the title role and, at the Royal "Where the Rainbow Ends," with dancer Anton Dolin as St. George of England.

The sending of greeting cards is now almost universal. Yet it all began in Britain little more than 100 years ago, when, in 1846, John Calcott Horsley, a Royal Academician, "invented" the first Christmas card.

Christmas carols are another feature of the English scene. One hears them, sung by children or local church choirs, on one's own doorstep, as well as in cathedrals and churches throughout the land. At Oxford University on Christmas Day they sing the ancient Boar's Head Carol. In Queen's College it accompanies the triumphal entry of a decorated boar's head. It is said that this ceremony began long ago when a student strolling in the woods was attacked by a wild boar while reading Aristotle. He quickly crammed the volume down the beast's throat and choked him. This narrow escape from death has been celebrated ever since by members of the College at their Christmas dinner.

St. Paul's Church in Kensington holds its annual carol service in candlelight. Many churches, including the ancient St. Bartholomew's in the ity of London, hold the service of the Nine Lessons and Carols. Nowhere, perhaps, is this service performed more beautifully or in a more glorious setting than on Christmas Eve within the candle-lit King's College Chapel at Cambridge. There are concerts Royal Choral Society and the Goldsmith's Choral Union at the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall, London. These draw large audiences which join lustily in the singing.

In some parts of the English countryside one may still see the performance of a mumming play. This custom derives from the ancient dramas of fertility, and villagers hand down the verses by word of mouth from one generation to the next. The play given by a group of strolling actors at Overton, in the English county of Hampshire, is at least 1,000 years old. The players wear fantastic costumes made from old dresses. Mummers also perform in the tiny village of Alderley in Cheshire; at Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire; at Broadway in Worcestershire; at Eynsham in Oxfordshire; and at Sunningwell in Berkshire.

Onetime Weapon of Death: Now Signal For Kissing

The mistletoe, once a weapon of death, later became to be considered as a magical medicine, is now a universal symbol of love and peace.

It was with a mistletoe arrow (according to Norse mythology) that Loki killed Balder, the sun god after Bolder's mother had obtained a promise from all living things, other than the mistletoe, that they would not harm him. Balder was restored to life and it was ruled by the gods that the mistletoe would never again be used to do harm.

Ancient Europeans considered the mistletoe a magical medicine They carried it about with them for health and luck, and believed it a cure for ulcers and epilepsy as well as a charm promoting fertility.

The present day custom of giving a kiss of love or peace beneath the mistletoe, although a relatively modern one, is derived from the fact that down through the centuries the mistletoe has been recognized throughout the whole world as a symbol of lasting peace.

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For the Home

Xmas Tree Lights	$1.60 and $2.65
Xmas Tree Lights outside	$3.80
Extra Bulbs	2 for 17c and 17c each
Extra Bulbs Outside	18c each
Xmas Table Napkins	39c pkg.
Assorted Carol Candles from	65c
Fresh Roasted Fancy Nuts ½ & 1 lb. boxes	
Xmas Cards, Boxed, Coutts	59c to $2.50
Boxed Chocolates	50c to $5.85
Coutts Xmas Wrapping	10c and 25c
Xmas Tree Flasher Bulbs	30c
Taper Candles	2 for 49c, and 2 for 59c
Coutts Xmas Ribbon	10c and 25c
Xmas Cards	2 for 5c to 1.50 each
Boxed Stationery Plain	98c
Boxed Stationery, Scented	$1.50
Flash Bulbs	16c and 17c each
Scented Notes	90c
Films All Sizes	
Totem Candles	$1.95
Xmas Snow with Stencil	$1.29

For Her

Gift Sets:

Brush, Comb and Mirror Sets	$9.75
Hat Box Style Travel Case	$15.00
Leather Purse Kit (Dubarry)	$10.00
Lovely Coty Xmas Sets including Colognes, Perfumes, Soaps and Powders	$2.75 to $6.50
Nail Polish Kits	$1.00 to $5.50
Coty Perfume Bells	$2.50
Coty Perfume Slippers	$2.50
Bathettes	85c to $1.50
Chanel No. 5 Perfume from	$6.00
Lanvin Arpege Perfume	$3.25
Faberge Perfumes all fragrances from	$3.00
Teeter Hostess Tray	$4.95
Electric Heating Pads	$6.95
Jewelite Hair Brushes from	$2.50
Jewelite Purse Kit (Brushes & Comb)	$1.50
Faberge Quartette Jr. (Favourite fragrances in purse size cologne in white and gold box)	$3.75
Evening in Paris Gift Sets from	$2.60
Bronnley English Soap:	
Lemons—Four in gift basket	$1.50
Jumbo Bath—Assorted fragrances	$1.50
Turtle Oil 3's Assorted fragrances	$1.25
Pine Bath 3's — Assorted fragrances	$1.75
Guest size (assorted fragrances) 3's	75c
Bath size Singles	75c
6's	$1.15
Faberge Soap Singles	75c
3's	$2.00
Fitted Travel Bags	$1.98 to $5.95

For Him

Ronson Electric Razor	$26.95
Schick Electric Razor	$29.95
Remington Electric Razor	$17.95
Duratone Playing Cards:	
Single Deck	$1.50
Double Deck	$2.75
Leather Writing Cases	$4.50 to $10.50
Hair Brushes	$1.49 to $3.50
Shaving Brushes	98c to $7.50
Bill Folds	98c to $9.00
Lighters	$1.00 to $12.00
Cameras	$3.50 to $58.69
Genuine Leather Ring Binders	$7.75 to $10.60
Duaflex Camera Sets	$25.75 to $37.00
Brownie Hawkeye Camera Sets	$16.45
Anaco Camera Sets	$17.95 to $63.50
Brownie Holiday Camera Set & Flash	$7.10.
Shaving Sets:	
Kings Men	$1.75 and $3.00
Old Spice	$2.60 to $4.10
Seaforth	$2.00 to $3.50
Gaylord	$1.50 to $4.50
Yardley	$2.35 to $10.00
Williams	$3.00
Palmolive	$1.45 and $2.25
Travelling Cases	$1.75 to $14.75
Fountain Pens	$3.95 to $22.00

For the Kiddies

Oil Paint Sets	$2.50, $3.50 & $6.95
Novelty Soap	35c to $1.75
Playmor Gift Toys	$1.00 to $2.50

Rubber Novelty Toys

Rufus the Rooster	$2.49
Longhop the Rabbit	$2.49
Josie the Lamb	$2.49
Hugger the Bear	$2.49
Santa Claus	$2.49
Baby Hot Water Bottles	$1.29 and $1.75
Big Top Bubble Bath	59c, $1.00 and $1.10
Brush, Comb and Rattle Set	$1.00 and $1.59
Bathtub Toy: Cleo the Fish	$1.49
Bottle Warmer, Cereal Bowl and Vaporizer	$4.95
Tip and Sip, Cup and Bowl Set	$2.59
Baby's Own Gift Set	$1.00 and $2.00
Indestructible Toys	$1.49
Plastic Banks	69c and 1.59
Craftman Camera Set	$4.30
Jumbo Piggy Bank	$1.98

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Black Magic	90c, 1.75 and 3.50
Dairy Box	85c, 1.60 and 2.75
Special Xmas Fancy Boxes	$1.85 to $6.25
Old English Toffee	$1.00

MOIR'S

Pot of Gold	$1.75, 3.50 and 5.25
Cherry Cocktails	$2.00
Peppermint Cream Wafers	65c

FRY-CADBURY

Chocolate Drops	$1.15
Milk Chocolate Wafers	$1.15
Milk Tray	85c and $1.70
Bristol Gold	$2.25

NEILSON'S:

Enchantment	$1.75
Petite Point	$3.50 and $5.25
Aristocrat	$1.30
Cherries in Maraschino	$1.00 & $2.00
Every Piece Different	$1.30 & $2.60

DUNCAN'S

Hazelnut Whirls	85c & $1.60
Capitol Mixture	75c and $1.35
Chocolate Gingers	90c
Chocolate Fruit Creams	95c & $1.25
Peppermint Creams	95c
Larsen's Liquors	$1.60 & $2.00

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