



Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society

December, 2019



Moran Taing

Many thanks to Kris Satterwhite for organizing Holiday Gift Wrapping times at the Flagstaff Mall. If you would like to help with this NACHS fundraiser call Kris for times 928-853-8552.

Membership Renewal Time

Time again to renew your NACHS membership. Advance thanks for everyone who supports what we do!

Holiday Hooley

Don't miss this year's Holiday Hooley on December 7th at the McKenzie home - 3393 S Carol Dr. Bring an hors d'oeuvres to share and a party mood! Festivities start at 6.

First Friday with The Knockabouts

Join the Knockabouts at Collin's Irish Pub every first Friday from 7 - 10 PM.



Christmas Traditions in Ireland

By Meredith Young

Centuries ago, Irish families would decorate their homes with holly and ivy leaves instead of the traditional Christmas tree. Holly bushes covered in berries were believed to bring the most luck. As holly was plentiful in Ireland, everyone used it. This also allowed poor families to decorate in the same manner as rich families, which brought a sense of unity and equality during the holiday season. Mistletoe also played a large role in old Irish traditions, as ancient pagans believed that it had strong healing powers. Christians thought this was such a heathen tradition that they banned the use of mistletoe until the Victorian Era's "revival of Christmas."

Little Christmas (or Women's Christmas) is an old Irish tradition that takes place on the 6th of January. In past centuries, women took care of large households with no help from men in terms of cleaning or cooking. Little Christmas was their one break of the year. Women would take the day off from working in the home and would go out and celebrate with each other, while their husbands did all the housework. In those days, it was considered bad luck to take down Christmas decorations until after Little Christmas but are usually removed on that day.

Forget leaving Christmas cookies and milk for Santa Claus -- the more popular tradition involved leaving a bottle of Guinness and a mince pie. And in Ireland, Santa left presents at the foot of the bed, not under the tree. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was especially revered at Christmas time. Irish families would light a candle in their windows; the candle was meant symbolically to welcome Joseph and Mary as they wandered in search of lodgings. This candle was usually lit and extinguished by a girl named Mary, and Mary was once the most popular girl's name in Ireland.

The traditional Gaelic greeting is "Nollaig Shona Duit" (pronounced null-ig hun-a dit), which means Merry Christmas. Nollaig Shona Duit and Happy Holidays to the readers of the NACHS newsletter!

