

# u3a Epsom & Ewell

## Learn, Laugh, Live

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### Boxing Day Calamity

Many years ago, we owned a Great Dane called Tora, traditionally we had several friends over on Boxing Day as an excuse to "Party" but also to use up the cold turkey. I used to make a vast amount of Coronation Turkey and everyone else brought side dishes to accompany it. Lunch time arrived, we were all merry making in the kitchen, before going into the dining room to eat. Suddenly the kitchen door opened and "Tora" appeared with a large amount of cling film draped over her nose---- everybody laughed but a feeling of great apprehension overcame me. I probably don't need to tell you the end of this story, suffice to say I was very grateful for the accompanying dishes everyone else had made. "Tora" wasn't very well the next day!!!!!!!

Have a very Happy Christmas  
one and all,

Gwendy Wilkins

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## Christmas Memories

My childhood was spent in the Rhondda Valley in South Wales, during the war, that is WW2, by the way!! We lived in a small mining village, surrounded by mountains. The build up to Christmas came with the making of the Christmas cake. My mother would make the cake at home, but it was baked in the bread ovens of the local Co-op, as we called it, - the C.W.S. Cooperative Wholesale Society. Most of the mothers in the village cooked over an open fire, with an iron oven at the side, not the best for cake baking, so we would go along to the bakers to collect the empty bread tins, put our street number and name in chalk on the underneath, and then take them back for baking. We all queued up and took our turn, as the baker put our cakes into the enormous bread ovens. On a given day we would then collect our precious cakes, it signalled the beginning of Christmas. Another big treat was the arrival of the toffees from our Aunty Lily in Newport, she worked for Lovells Toffee factory, and at Christmas was allowed to purchase mis - shaped toffees for the family. Can you imagine the excitement when a whole tin of toffees arrived, just for us. At a time of rationing, when 2ozs was the limit to buy, this was children's heaven. There was no toy shop in the village, and our main present was usually hand made. Some of the men from the village worked at Bridgend Munitions factory, where the ammunition cartridges were filled and boxed, for the army.

The men would use the left-over wood from the boxes to make toys. My parents would put in an order for our toys, I remember one year, a pencil box with sliding lid, which my parents filled with what we called lead pencils and coloured pencils, pen and bottle of ink, rubbers, 6" ruler, protractor - no biros in those days. Another year it was an easel and blackboard with coloured chalks, but the star present was a rocking parrot. If you can imagine a bright green silhouette of a parrot with red beak, and weighted tail, on a stand, so that when you touched its tail, it would rock gently back and fro. Together with our stocking, that had an orange or an apple at the bottom, a few of the toffees and other little treats, these would make up our sheer delight of Christmas. Such lovely memories, during a time of war, that could have been a million miles away as far as us children were concerned.

Regards and Merry Christmas to all Dilys Anscomb



### WARTIME CHRISTMAS

Christmas was a hard time for Mum's at this time, food on ration, toys hard to come by, also sirens disrupting daily life. More than one Christmas was spent in the shelter.

We lived in Herne Hill and my Mother's family were nearby, there was Gran, Aunties Ann, Lily, Charlotte, Elsie and Joan, husbands in the forces. The sisters saved and swapped ingredients for a sort of pudding and a cake. Chicken and Turkey were out of the question, if the Butcher was feeling generous you might get a few chops providing you had enough coupons, likewise with fruit from the greengrocer. Bananas were never heard of. You only had luxuries if you were comfortably off and bought on the "black market".

Now comes decorations, these were made out of any coloured paper saved during the year, cut in strips and glued together, any holly or fir twigs that could be purloined.

### Christmas Past

As I think about Christmas  
Fond thoughts come to me  
Of the Christmas's past  
How different will this be?

They started with winter  
With snow on the ground  
The building of snowmen  
And children playing around

There was fun on sledges  
And snowball fights  
The joys of the outside  
And all its delights

As Christmas approached  
We decorated the tree  
It was the start of Christmas  
For my family and me

The Christmas tree lights  
Gave the tree a warm glow  
Paper-chains that we made  
Were hung up for show

A house now decorated  
For that festive touch  
Had the signs of Christmas  
That are loved so much

The feelings of excitement  
On Christmas Eve night  
Waking up in the morning  
With squeals of delight

The fun and the laughter  
At games that we played  
The traditional dinner  
That mum and dad made

Now all that I wish for  
And it's not anything more  
Than a Christmas for all  
That's the same as before

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Jan Stevens

My cousins and I were very lucky with the care we had, not a lot of money, only army pay, but our Mums made sure Father Christmas left us our stockings. Contents usually for us girls were a cut out book with a figure on the front and on the inside pages clothes with tags to cut out and dress the doll, (which was backed with cardboard), or a painting book with either paints or crayons. We'd have an orange, apple and on a good year if you were lucky chocolate. I remember one-year gold coloured chocolate coins. Never found out what the boys got!

If a few of the Dads made it home then we would have a real ding dong, my Aunt played the piano and if the siren went we didn't hear it. One time we did - but that's another story.

Have a good Christmas

Above all take care

Vera Toze

### "Parsnip Wine" by Marion Wray

Although I was born in Wales, I was living with my Mother and Sister in Hackbridge when war broke out. My Father had died when I was 2 years old, and my Mother thought it safer if my Sister and I went to our Grandparents in our home village of Blaina in Monmouth. I lived with my Grandmother, and although she did not drink, every Christmas she made Parsnip wine which had the potency of whisky. It was a tradition that we dressed in fancy dress costumes and visited all the neighbours to sample the wine. They would pretend not to recognise us, and invite us in for wine and cake. By the time we returned home my "Chapel going teetotal Grandmother" was almost legless. I hasten to add, I only had orange juice!!!!!!

Keep safe everyone and a "Very Merry Christmas"

## “My first Christmas as a newly married couple”

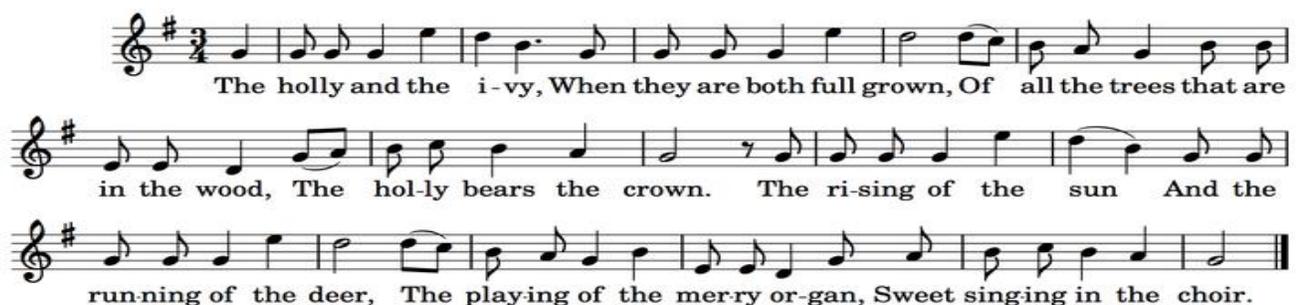
“As a newly married wife in 1963, my last day at work was on the 24<sup>th</sup> December and was full of activity before taking maternity leave, in the morning no work was done, rather it was an unofficial party. However, I was aware of the preparations I should be doing for Christmas day. I had ordered a Turkey from McFisheries (remember them?). But my journey home from Knightsbridge was quite a long one, and I was quite anxious about getting there before they closed. All was well on that score, but I had a lot of other shopping to do, before my Husband and I drove up to Paddington to meet my Parents from the Cardiff train. We had planned to get supper from a nearby fish and chip shop, but when we got there they had closed! What we gave my poor tired and hungry Parents I have forgotten but to say that I didn’t have a well-stocked food store was an understatement.

On Christmas Day my Father-in-law and Sister-in-law were coming up from the south coast to join us and needless to say, I was keen to impress!! Cooking the meal took far longer than I had planned (not being helped by an attack of morning sickness). It all went by in a blur but we managed to clear the table in time for the Queens speech, so everyone seemed happy.”

Lots of Good wishes

Lynette Attwood

This month’s submissions were all from Singing for Pleasure  
Thank you ladies, for your Christmas cheer.



The holly and the i-vy, When they are both full grown, Of all the trees that are  
in the wood, The hol-ly bears the crown. The ri-sing of the sun And the  
run-ning of the deer, The play-ing of the merry or-gan, Sweet singing in the choir.

We hope you've enjoyed the members words submissions over the past couple of months.

If you would like to submit an item for next month please email to [u3aepsom@gmail.com](mailto:u3aepsom@gmail.com)