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Victorian Christmas Decorations

Most people know that it was Prince Albert, husband to Queen Victoria, who first brought the idea of Christmas trees to Britain. However, a lot of people don't know that up until the Victorian period Christmas was not a festival for children or the family. This was all changed by Queen Victoria and her large family.

The Victorians really embraced the idea of Christmas and its function as a family celebration. The decorations they used demonstrate this. Many of the decorations were either natural or handmade.

Greenery such as ivy, holly, laurel and other evergreens were used to decorate the home. Other items were handmade, which meant they were largely produced by the women in the family and were therefore very feminine. Many decorations were sewn or embroidered, using lace and feminine colours such as pink, burgundy and the festive dark green. Children would make paper chains and other paper decorations. The Victorians would also hang small dolls and soldiers on the tree, as well as pinecones, ribbon and baked decorations.

Why not have a go at making your own Victorian-inspired Christmas decorations? To get you started here are some simple ideas.

Make your own Victorian Christmas decorations:

Paper Chains

These can be used to decorate trees or can be used as garlands.

You will need:

- Strips of coloured paper
- Glue or sellotape

Step One

Take one strip of coloured paper and glue one end to the other, creating a loop.

Step Two

Take a second strip of coloured paper and create another loop, but before you glue it together, thread it through the first loop, so that they are connected.

Step Three

Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have a chain. You can make it as colourful and long as you want to. Have a go!

Cinnamon bunches

You will need:

- Cinnamon sticks
- Ribbon
- String
- Optional: fishing wire

Step One

Depending on how strong you want the scent of cinnamon to be, take 4 or 5 cinnamon sticks and tie them tightly around the middle using the string, to create a bunch.

Step Two

Tie the ribbon around the middle of the bunch, leaving a length of ribbon to use to hang up the bunch. Alternatively you could turn the ribbon into a small bow and use the fishing wire to hang it up!

Dove Tree Decoration

You will need:

- White card
- White paper / doily
- Scissors
- Pencil

Step One

Draw the body of a bird onto the piece of card. Then cut the bird shape out.

Step Two

A) Doily: Take the edge of paper doily and fold it over about 2 cms wide. Then turn the doily over and fold (in the same direction) another 2 cm wide fold.

Keep doing this until the whole doily has been folded and you have created a fan effect.

B) Paper: Firstly draw a circle onto the paper and cut it out, then follow the same steps as with the doily.

Hint: Draw around a side plate or dinner plate to get the size circle you need, depending on the size of the bird's body.

Step Three

In the side of the bird shape, cut a slit of about 2cm

Then take the folded doily/paper and push it through the slit, until half is on one side and half on the other.

Step Four

Fan out either side of the doily /paper to create the bird's wings.

Now your bird is ready to hang on the tree.

Garland

You will need:

- Victorian print Christmas cards
- Thin ribbon or string
- A thick needle

Step One

First cut off the back of the Christmas cards. Then, using a needle, create two holes in the top corner of the card.

Step Two

Carefully thread the ribbon through the holes.

Step Three

Continue this until you have a garland at the length you require.

Hang up your garland and enjoy.