

The Storyline

Magazine of The New Zealand Guild of Storytellers Nga Kaikorero Purakau O Aotearoa



La Befana: The Witch of Christmas

By Il Postino Staff and Tessa Derksen

The legend of Befana began thousands of years ago and remains to this day a tradition practised by Italian children and their families. As the story goes, one day, the three Magi left their country bearing special gifts of gold, incense and myrrh for the new-born Jesus Christ. There was one old woman who did not join the Magi when she was invited. She claimed to be too busy with her housework. Later she realized her mistake and frantically ran after the Magi with gifts for the child, still clutching her broom. But it was too late – the Magi were long gone.

Ever since then the old woman has been known as “La Befana” or simply “Befana.” On the eve of January 6th, Befana flies from house to house on her old broomstick and delivers all the gifts she didn’t give to the Holy Child to good girls and boys.

DECEMBER 2016



Editorial

As we come into the Christmas season it is interesting to look at the customs around the world. I know many children are amazed at the way Father Christmas can get to every chimney in such a short time AND carry all those personalised gifts. But, of course he doesn't. Many children expect a different gift giver at a different time. As I was asked to tell a Christmas story at a family programme I chose to tell about Befana. Even her story varies from area to area but she always comes on the eve of Epiphany.

My story has her as an old woman walking the world with her ever-full bag of gifts to give to children as she looks in the windows still seeking the Christ Child.

I have gathered more such stories and have included some of them in this issue.

Children of today know Befana as an old woman who flies a broom and wears a black shawl over a dress dirty with soot from the chimneys she climbs down to deliver her gifts. For the good children she brings sweets, toys and books. And, as in the past, she brings onions, garlic and coal for the bad children. In modern-day Italy some shops sell carbon or black rock candy that actually looks like pieces of coal.

Many people believe in La Befana's existence, while others believe it is a fanciful story created for children. But Befana's question of existence is irrelevant. Either way she still fulfils her function, which is to reaffirm the bond between family and ancestors through an exchange of gifts.

In Austria the Christkindl - a golden-haired baby with wings who symbolises the new born Christ - decorates the tree and brings gifts.



In Belgium St Nicholas might bring gifts on December 6th so children leave shoes in front of the fireplace, a present such as a drawing or a biscuit and a carrot for his horse and something for Black Peter, his assistant. St Nicholas arrives on his horse and Black Peter goes down the chimney with the gifts.

In Brazil Papai Noel + Bom Kelhinho (Good Old Man) come and the children leave a sock near the window. If he needs a sock he will exchange it for a present.

In Costa Rica The Gift Bringer is Nino Dios (Child God means Jesus) or Colacho (St Nicholas)

And in Croatia on St Nicholas Eve (5th December) children clean their shoes/boots and leave them in the window hoping St Nicholas will leave chocolates and a small gift. If they have been naughty Krampus – a big monster with horns – leaves them golden twigs to remind them to behave.

Chant used by Italian children

*La Befana comes at night
In tattered shoes
Dressed in the Roman style
Long live la Befana!!*

*She brings cinders and coals
To the naughty children
To the good children
She brings sweets and lots of gifts.*

And so it goes on and on. Enough stories for us to build and tell for a long time. And to open the hearts and minds of us all to the wonder of difference.

I will put some more customs in the body of the magazine.

And I will pray you a blessed season whatever custom you follow. Over this season there are many many religious festivals. Wow!

Liz Miller - lizm@xtra.co.nz

President's Report

December 2016

My annual President's report is a continuation of information from previous year's reports and a celebration of this years' growth. The Guild has again had a year of quiet progress.

We have produced four 'Storyline' magazines and the feedback that the magazine editor, Liz, and I have received for these has been consistently positive. As always, we need people from all areas around New Zealand, and abroad, to contribute stories, news, snippets and ideas for inclusion to make the magazine truly reflective of our membership and be genuinely worthwhile to them. It is heartening to hear of the events that the different groups around Aotearoa are holding and that storytelling is alive and kicking! Sharon Moreham in Christchurch has been particularly proactive in promoting storytelling events in her area – kia kaha, Sharon!

Our new website is now fully operational, thanks to our web-master Hemi, who does a great service. We all need to be putting information, events, stories, ideas etc. etc. on here. The website should be an important information point for people wanting to contact New Zealand storytellers. For it to function in an optimal way it needs to be an evolving, up-to-date, easily navigable, appealing site and for this to be the case we need members to continue to provide up-to-date information for inclusion.

(Liz butting in here – if you are not on the web-site others cannot find out who else is in an area which is sad. We have enquiries and if you aren't there we cannot connect you.)

This year Gaye Sutton has also set up a Facebook page for the Guild and, although it has not had a lot of 'traffic' there have been some very encouraging comments on there, and anything that raises our profile is welcomed.



Membership of the Guild continues to grow slowly and we are now 34 members – some groups, more individuals and two overseas tellers, who became members to show support for our Guild. As the aim of the Guild is to unite New Zealand tellers and provide communication between us all it seems logical for as many tellers as possible to be members and for all members to contribute in whatever way they can – big or small.

I believe wholeheartedly in the future of New Zealand storytelling and storytellers – in 2017 and beyond we need to work together to ensure it not only grows but also thrives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our secretary/treasurer/magazine editor, Liz Miller, not least for all her hard work but also for her vision and tenacity – without her we likely wouldn't have a Guild or a magazine. Although we continue to be a small group with big dreams many a great oak has grown from small acorns, and we shall keep doing what we can to keep storytelling alive and growing in New Zealand.

Happy telling, all.

Tania
andrewtania@hotmail.com

Secretary Report

We have 34 members. 2 live in the USA, 3 group memberships. This means just 29 individual memberships in NZ.

We welcome a new member. Emere Pirhia Karaitiana/Emily Priscilla Christian lives in Auckland and we are so glad to have her on our list. She says she is happy to be part of our group and join with other kindred spirits. She says she was born in answer to the needs of the universe and right now believes this is her path both as a listener and learner. Welcome indeed.

We have had two other requests for forms to join and that will build our numbers.

Editor's Report

DEADLINE for next issue is mid- **MARCH 2017** for April issue.

Election of officers and committee

President **Tania Faulkner-McKenzie**

Antoinette Everts/Liz Miller/Lesley Dowding/
Heather Perriam/Barbara Rhodes

Vice-President **Antoinette Everts**

Liz Miller/Tania FM/Gaye Sutton

Secretary/Treasurer **Liz Miller**

Antoinette Everts/Gaye Sutton/Lesley Dowding/
Moira Wairama/Heather Perriam/Miriam
McCabe/Barbara Rhodes

Committee

Mary Sheddou	Tania F.M/Liz Miller
Gaye Sutton	Liz Miller/Tania F.M
Lesley Dowding	Tania F.M/Liz Miller

Moved that the nominations all be accepted.
Keith Levy/Tania Faulkner McKenzie

Liz will continue as editor unless someone else offers.

Treasurer's Report

The audit was complete and we sent out the balance sheets by email.

We had \$7,088.72 when the audit was complete.
We had \$7,014.50 at mid-November.

We never did find out who, in the name of A.F. Simpson, banked \$25 electronically last February. So we give up.

We called the AGM for 27th November. We had 3 present on the phone and 7 present by proxy.

Proxies were given by Margaret Dockrill, Barbara Rhodes, Heather Perriam, Sharon Moreham, Mary Kippenberger, Gaye Sutton, Diane Ferlatte.

We do thank these 7 people for their positive responses and support.

We kept the quorum number at 5 for the meetings.

We kept the subscriptions the same - \$25 for individuals, \$30 for groups and international.

We have 5 new members this year. We lost 6 members.

*There are three crimes which
shall not be forgiven us:*

- A class of children singing without joy.*
- A class of children dancing without laughter.*
- And a class of children who, listening to poetry, are naked of delight.*

Website Matters

Remember, all members have a personal code for our website so you can just go in and use it.

If you are unsure how to add your profile, an event, or anything else, you can send it to our webmaster, Hemi, and he will do it.

Hemi has added all the past copies of the Storyline (back to July 2013 which is all he had available) and will keep each issue as a new one is published in that file.

Things you can do on the website:

- Create a storytelling profile to advertise your storytelling services.
- Add your profile as a member interested in this amazing art.
- Post ideas, news and stories.
- Post upcoming events.

To login go to storytelling.org.nz and click the yellow "Member Login" button in the bottom right corner of the website.

We also have a more direct login – www.storytelling.nz

Then follow the instructions. If you have forgotten your password click the request for a new one.

Have a question or need help? Simply email the site administrator at: hemi.ruatoto@gmail.com

A web-site is only as effective as the members make it. We cannot make up things to add to it.

Some of our members have not posted their profile at all. Why?

Even just your name and what and where you tell or listen will at least let people know we don't only have the few members listed.

A new story on the web-site would be good.

Regional News

We really want to send our heartfelt thoughts to the people in Kaikoura, Wellington and all the areas affected by the latest earthquake.

We have had messages from so many storytelling people around the world.

Priscilla White in California, Ed Stivender and his sister, Nancy Clancy, in Pennsylvania, Sandy Schuckett in California.

Some of our members are very close to the centre of the shaking and those in Christchurch will be touched very closely.

WELLINGTON

Arohanui , Moira

This year Wellington Storytellers have enjoyed hosting regular monthly sessions held at The Fringe Bar in Wellington with a number of excellent guests including Nancy Fulford, Gordon Hall, Neil Thornton, Margaret Austin and of course our own committee members. We were delighted to have Mona Williams pop in when back in Wellington between her busy schedule storytelling around the country as well as in Australia. Big thanks to Holly de Ket who manages our face book page.

While the new venue has been very supportive, our small committee have found it difficult running the monthly sessions alongside our other storytelling commitments and are now discussing alternative ideas for the future.



For an example of how busy our committee is check out our November schedule. Starting off the month the Baggage Co-op celebrated 20 years of work by producing three new shows at BATS theatre. Ralph Johnson's A Kete of Cooked Kumara wove the stories of his ancestors and their relationships with Tangata Whenua in the Wellington-Wairarapa districts between 1840 – 1880 to create an intimate portrait of NZ's colonial history. Tony Hopkins's Three Wise Blackmen paid homage to the three men who played an important role in shaping his life philosophy: his father Ervin Hopkins, a street hustler called Sophisticated Player and Ken Dixon, the friend who introduced him to theatre. Moira Wairama's show Poneke, specifically created for local school children, focused on legends and myths around the naming and creation of Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara/Wellington Harbour.

Judith Frost Evans, creator of the Belly of the Whale School of Storytelling based in Pukerua Bay, is also convener and facilitator of the Kapiti Storytelling Circle and regularly hosts storytelling workshops and overseas storytellers. Most recently she hosted Carolyn Welkins's Through a Prism Workshop. Caroline is a storyteller, trainer and comedian from Wellington, who presented her new workshop, now titled Prismatic Tales, which she recently delivered at the Sydney International Storytellers Conference. As well as running Belly of the Whale, Judith herself performs and runs workshops and in 2017 will be attending a three month storytelling workshop at The International School of Storytelling in the UK.

For anyone interested in knowing more about The Belly of the Whale check it out on <http://inthebellyofthewhale.org/>.

Another member of our committee, storyteller and writer, Linda Hanson, has built a strong reputation as a performer in rest homes and with younger audiences and is also launching her new children's novel early in December. And, of course, where would we be without the most excellent Judith Jones and her Storytelling Aotearoa New Zealand face book page which

keeps us all informed of storytelling events, news and resources.

Exciting to see that storytelling is alive and well in Wellington and the rest of NZ.

Moira Wairama

CALIFORNIA

Dear storytelling friends,
Greetings from California.

Liz, Tania and I have just shared again that most amazing storytelling festival at Jonesborough Tennessee with its 5 huge tents taking 1000 to 1500 people each all concurrently hosting world class storytellers. Clever Liz worked out a schedule to see almost all the tellers at one time or another. And everywhere we went Liz was welcomed, with hugs, stopped for reminiscences by story tellers whom she has hosted in NZ or who know her from her many previous visits.

We 3, and delightful and famous storyteller Diane Ferlatte, had private accommodation with a family who lives right in the village. So convenient, comfortable - and a great way of catching up with each other.

Wish I could come and listen to you in your NZ storytelling sessions! Hear from you at or after the AGM.

Happy birthday wonderful NZ Guild of Storytellers!

Hugs to all from Antoinette

SOUTHLAND

The Celebrate Story committee of the Southland Literacy Committee have invited two storytellers to be the guests in May next year for the Southland Festival of the Arts.

Ed Stivender from USA
Donna Jacobs Sife from Australia.

The dates will be 13th May until the 19th May.

We will give you much more information early in the year when we have the publicity available.

SOUTHERN STORYTELLERS

Southern Storytellers has enjoyed a full year, the most recent events being telling at a U3A group, the children's workshop and dinner / concert with 23 entrants this year and a very well attended and successful concert on 25th November. You will already have read of the overseas adventures of two of our members. Still to come to complete the year some are telling at a Fellowship (Probus) group in December and we have our own club Christmas shared meal planned. Along with all this individual members have Storytelling commitments at clubs and schools.

But there are still people who ask what Storytelling actually is or who are amazed that there should be such events. Our 'missionary work' continues!

Nicol Macfarlane

NEWS FROM CANTERBURY.

Natural Born Storytellers

Yay! We have come to the end of the first year of Natural Born Storytellers. This is a new event celebrating that everybody has a story to tell. We have been delighted to partner with Exchange Christchurch (find out more at <http://www.xchc.co.nz/>) to offer a fun, friendly and supportive evening of true life tales every second month from February to November this year. Every evening both prepared or 'booked' tellers share true auto-biographical tales around a theme. For example in August we heard stories of "Lost in Translation", plus there are spare spots for spontaneous stories from members of the audience. We started off with about 18-20 people at our first evening and now have a regular crowd of around 40 or more people. We are delighted to see people transitioning from listeners to tellers for the first time and writers have a go at telling for the first time. We have discovered some amazing hidden talent in our community! We love seeing familiar faces

return again and again and also new faces - to listen or tell. We could never have done this without the incredible Exchange Christchurch to support us to experiment with this new concept, take risks, and learn by doing. No night is ever the same! We have received funding for an independent evaluation by The Collaborative - a group of local social researchers - and we are looking forward to what we learn from this so we can best meet the community's needs into 2017 and ensure these events are meaningful for people. Sharon also undertook an ethnographic study of the event as part of her Anthropology studies at the University of Canterbury, which produced some very interesting insights about the role of storytelling in the community and the creation of supportive storytelling spaces. We look forward to next year where we will be back in February, April and June 2017 at Exchange Friday's free community events to end the week on a good note. And we are also producing a radio programme or two that will include live performances with Plains FM, our local access radio station, which will be exciting!!! You can find out more at <http://storycollective.weebly.com/natural-born-storytellers.html>

OTHER CANTERBURY EVENTS INTO 2017

We'll be running some workshops next year so keep an eye out at www.thestorycollective.nz or [Facebook.com/TheStoryCollective](https://www.facebook.com/TheStoryCollective) for announcements. We are also hoping that we may be lucky enough to have some international storytellers pass through, so also watch out for that. We'd love to know what other story activities are of interest to people in Canterbury, so please feel welcome to drop us a line with your ideas to thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com. For example, do you still want a Story Circle? How might this work best for you? We'd love to hear from you!

Sharon

Contributions

May I say how wonderful it's been to be a member of the Guild over the last year and for the ability to post my reviews on the site. That has been invaluable to me and my credibility and has enabled my storytelling career to progress very well as the reviews have been seen by many.

I'm surprised that more members don't avail themselves of the Noticeboard.

I'm sure by the comments I receive from people by either phone or email that my referring to the Guild in all my printed promotional material also contributes to the raising of awareness of Storytelling as a whole in New Zealand.

It's a pleasure and a privilege to belong and I look forward to doing so for many years to come...

Thank you so much to Hemi for administering this site.

I send hugs and best wishes...

Keith,
The Roaming Rhymester

Years ago I was given a little fridge magnet and I often read it:

"Please Lord,
fill my mouth
with
worthwhile stuff,
and
nudge me when
I've said enough."

These days I would like to paraphrase it:

Please Lord,
fill Storylines
with
amazing stuff,
and
nudge our members
when there's not enough.
Liz

Heather Perriam writes...

He walked slowly dragging his right leg. He told anyone who asked it was shrapnel from the war in Afghanistan, but it wasn't. Still he really didn't want them to know a car had driven over his ankle as he lay in a drunken sleep in the gutter.

He sighed as he rummaged in a rubbish bin. How had he got to this? His eyes brightened as he spied a half-eaten burger and some chips. Quickly he put them in his pocket and limped over to a park bench. This was the best meal he'd had in days.

Food eaten, he wiped his face on a dirty sleeve and his thoughts returned to his past and how he had gotten from a successful lawyer to a homeless tramp.

It had all seemed so easy to him in the beginning. School was a breeze, Uni was fun and learning seemed as natural as breathing. He had no trouble getting a position in a prestigious firm in the middle of the city.

Then there was that lovely blue eyed blonde in the next office. He was completely confident she would admire him as he admired her and she seemed to.

He took her to all the best places and felt very proud with her hanging on his arm.

Within a year he had become a junior partner in the firm, had proposed to her, been accepted and bought a lovely new house in the best suburb.

Their wedding was an extravagant affair. All the best people were there. Why, the dress alone had cost him a month's salary. But what the heck? He was on a roll.

Life was perfect.

One year later he broached the subject of children with his lovely lady. She was horrified and totally shocked him when she informed him that she would not be having children and spoiling her figure.

Things seemed to go downhill from that point. His bank account could not keep up with her spending and his firm was suddenly facing hard times.

Finally he was called into Sir's office and told they were very sorry but they would have to let him go.

He returned home to find his home ransacked. Well, it seemed that way. Most of the furniture was gone, his wife was gone, even the family dog was gone.

His heart suddenly plummeted. He rang the bank. Yes, his bank accounts were cleaned out. Even his investments had been broken and the money was gone.

He sat down with a thump on the floor. "Well, I guess all I have left is my house," he thought. Then he remembered he'd put the house in his wife's name. "A wedding present, honey," he now recalled telling her.

"You stupid, stupid man!" he told himself.

Pulling his wallet out of his pocket he counted the notes. \$110.

"Well!" he thought. "I know just how to deal with that."

There was no one in the pub when he got there except a barman polishing glasses.

"I'll have a whiskey on the rocks double," he told the barman.

He had no idea when the \$110 was done but vaguely remembered being thrown out because he couldn't pay for his drinks. He landed in the gutter and since getting up seemed all too hard he just went to sleep. That was when the car ran over his ankle. He's not sure it even woke him up, but of course he did finally wake up with a head like a rock and a searing pain in his foot.

He hobbled home only to find the locks changed and a for sale sign at the gate.

He hobbled over the road to the park and plonked himself down on a park bench. Well, that was a month ago and he'd scarcely moved since then. If it rained he moved over to the

band rotunda because it had a roof, otherwise he just sat on his park bench hoping someone would throw away some food that day.

He'd met other homeless people and in the beginning he thought he was better than them. After all, he was a lawyer and what had they been? Nothings, really. But as time went on and he saw the kindness they had toward him and one another he started to see that he wasn't better than them at all. In fact right from the start he had been convinced the world owed him a living not the other way round. He had expected the good things of life to fall in his lap and he hadn't really stopped to appreciate any of them.

These people were the complete opposite. They cared for each other and if they could they helped each other. They shared the tiny things they might have and often went without to help another.

He dragged himself to his feet and limped over to the fish pond and gazed down at the dirty reflection staring back at him.

"I'm a lawyer," he thought. "I could help these people. I know people. I just need to ask someone to help me get on my feet. There must be someone who will help me get started."

He turned away from the pond and limped slowly toward the city.

For the first time in his life he had a purpose that was not all about him.

Our visiting teller to Southland next year wrote:

You get what you pay for
What did the Magi think they'd find that night
At journey's end to make their trek worthwhile –
What answers to what questions, what rare sight,

What arcane truth to make a wise man smile?

And how about the shepherds, why would they
Just leave their flocks behind them in the field?
What was it that the Angels seemed to say,
What promise did those Angel voices yield?

And what of us, as we approach the feast?
(Mall muzak doesn't match deep Heaven's choir,
No star of wonder beckons in the East.)
What gift might satisfy our hearts' desire?

No trinket from the whiskered good ol' boy,
But past all expectation – Christmas Joy?
Ed Stivender

Benjamin Zephaniah

Rastafarian, born in England
but visited Jamaica for
the first time when
he was 9 wrote...

Civil Lies

Dear Teacher,
When I was born in Ethiopia
Life began.
As I sailed down the Nile civilization began.
When I stopped to think Universities were built.
When I set sail
Asians and true Americans sailed with me.

When we traded nations were built.
We did not have animals.
Animals lived with us.
We had so much time
Thirteen months made our year.
We created social services
And cities that still stand.

So teacher do not say
Columbus discovered me;
Check the great things I was doing
Before I suffered slavery.
Yours truly,
Mr Africa.



More Customs From Around The World



CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO

In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from the December 12th to January 6th.

From December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions or Posadas. Posada is Spanish for Inn or Lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay. For the Posadas, the outside of houses are decorated with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns.

In each Posada, children are given candles and a board, with painted clay figures of Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph, to process round the streets with. They call at the houses of friends and neighbors and sing a song at each home. The song they sing is about Joseph and Mary asking for a room in the house. But the children are told that there is no room in the house and that they must go away. Eventually they are told there is room and are welcomed in! When the children go into the house they say prayers of thanks and then they have a party with food, games and fireworks.

Each night a different house holds the Posada party. At the final Posada, on Christmas Eve, a manger and figures of shepherds are put on to the board. When the Posada house has been found, a baby Jesus is put into the manger and then families go to a midnight Church service. After the Church service there are more fireworks to celebrate the start of Christmas.

One game that is often played at Posada parties is piñata. A piñata is a decorated clay or papier-mâché jar filled with sweets and hung from the ceiling or tree branch. The piñata is often decorated something like a ball with seven peaks around it. The peaks or spikes represent the 'seven deadly sins'. Piñata's can also be in the form of an animal or bird (such as a donkey). To play the game, children are blind-folded and take it in turns to hit the piñata with a stick until it splits open and the sweets pour out. Then the children rush to pick up as many sweets as they can!

As well as the posada's, another type of Christmas play known as Pastorelas (The Shepherds). These tell the story of the shepherds going to find the baby Jesus and are often very funny. The devil tries to stop them by tempting them along the way. But the shepherds always get there in the end, often with the help of the Archangel Michael, who comes and beats the devil!

Nativity scenes, known as the 'nacimiento', are very popular in Mexico. They are often very large, with the figures being life size! Sometimes a whole room in a house is used for the nacimiento, although this is less common now. The figures are often made of clay and are traditionally passed down through families. As well as the normal figures of the Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the Shepherds and Three Kings, there are often lots of other figures of different people, including women making tortillas, people selling food and different animals and birds, like flamingos! The figures can be bought from markets in cities all over Mexico. The baby Jesus is normally added to the scene during the evening of Christmas Eve. The Three Kings are added at Epiphany.

Christmas Trees are becoming more popular in Mexico, but the main/most important decoration is still the nacimiento.

Christmas Eve is known as 'Noche Buena' and is a family day. People often take part in the final Posada and then in the evening have the main Christmas meal. At midnight, many people go to a Midnight Mass service, known as the 'Misa de Gallo' (Mass of the Rooster). There are lots of fireworks to celebrate Christmas Day.

Poinsettia flowers are known as 'nochebuena' (Christmas Eve) flowers in Mexico.

People in Mexico also celebrate 'los santos inocentes' or 'Day of the Innocent Saints' on December 28th and it's very like April Fools Day in the UK and USA. 28th December is when people remember the babies that were killed on the orders of King Herod when he was trying to kill the baby Jesus.

In some states in Mexico children expect Santa Claus to come on December 24th. In the south of Mexico children expect presents on January 6th at Epiphany, which is known as 'el Día de los Reyes'.

On el Día de los Reyes the presents are left by the Three Kings (or Magi). If you've had a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve, you might also get some candy on el Día de los Reyes!

It's traditional to eat a special cake called 'Rosca de Reyes' (Three Kings Cake) on Epiphany. A figure of Baby Jesus is hidden inside the cake. Whoever has the baby Jesus in their piece of cake is the 'Godparent' of Jesus for that year.

Another important day, is Candelaria (also known as Candlemas) on the 2nd February and it marks the end of the Mexican Christmas celebrations. Lots of Mexicans have a party for Candelaria.

In Mexico, presents might also be brought by 'El Niño Dios' (baby Jesus) & Santo Clós (Santa Claus)

In Mexico most people speak Spanish (Español), so Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Feliz Navidad'.

In the Nahuatl (spoken in some parts of central Mexico) it's 'Cualli netl catilizpan' Happy/Merry Christmas in lots more languages.

The largest ever Angel Ornament was made in Mexico. It was made in January 2001 by Sergio Rodriguez in the town of Nuevo León. The angel was 18' 3" high and had wing span of 11' 9"! Perhaps the most amazing thing about the angel was that it was completely made out of old beer bottles, 2946 of them!



NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, like its neighbour, Australia, Christmas comes in the middle of the summer holidays.

Lots of people like to spend time of the beach, camping or at their baches (holiday homes) for Christmas.

Many towns have a Santa parade with decorated floats, bands and marching girls. This can be any time from mid November onwards and is really a commercial event but much enjoyed by all. As it is warm, Santa is often seen wearing 'jandals' (New Zealand sandals) and sometimes he swaps his red top for a New Zealand 'All Blacks' rugby shirt!

Children in New Zealand leave out carrots for Santa's reindeer and Santa might be left a beer and some pineapple chunks!

In the main cities like Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Hamilton, there are big Christmas light shows and displays. There are big carol services throughout the country, even in small town, villages and rural areas.

New Zealand has some special carols of its own. These include 'Te Haranui', Christmas in New Zealand and A Kiwiana Christmas! These

are sung at most carol services around the country.

Many people have a Christmas Tree in their homes and decorate it like people in the USA or UK. Kiwis also have their own special Christmas Tree, the Pohutukawa. It can grow to be a very large tree and has bright red flowers which are popular decorations and also feature on Christmas cards. It's been associated with Christmas since the mid 1800s. The Pohutukawa is also important in Maori culture.

Many New Zealanders have a barbecue for Christmas lunch and this is becoming more popular. The food cooked on the barbecue is often ham slices or even venison or some other kind of exotic meat. Shrimps and other fish are also barbecued. White bait fritters are also popular. It's common to have Christmas Crackers on the Christmas dinner table.

They open their presents on Christmas day once the whole family is all together. This is usually before the Christmas lunch.

In the Maori language Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Meri Kirihimete'.



HUNGARY

On Christmas Eve children hope Jezuska (Jezus) will leave gifts under the tree.

They wait outside and when they hear the bells ringing they can go in.

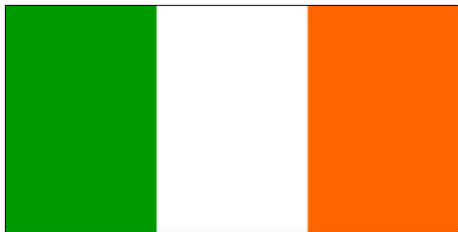




INDIA

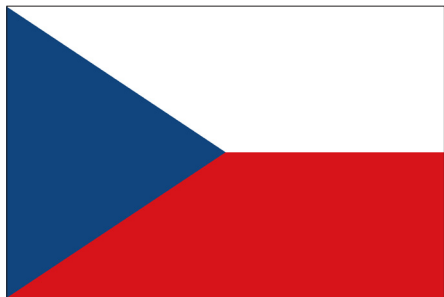
Father Christmas delivers the gifts from a horse and cart.

The tree will be a banana or mango tree and often people will light small clay lamps on their flat roofs to show their neighbours that Jesus is the light of the world.



IRELAND

They will often light a thick candle and place it in the window to burn all night to be a welcoming light for Mary and Joseph.



CHRISTMAS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

During the evening of the 5th December, children are very excited and watch for St. Nicholas (Svatý Mikuláš) to arrive. He normally

is accompanied by one or more angels and one or more devils. He asks the children if they've been good all year and also asks them to sing a song or recite a poem, and gives them a basket of presents, often containing chocolate and fruit. If you've been naughty, the devil might give you a lump of coal. Like in the The Netherlands and some other European countries, St Nicholas' Day is a very separate holiday than Christmas.

In the Czech language Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Vesele Vánoce'. The main Christmas celebrations are on Christmas Eve. Some people fast during Christmas Eve in the hope that they will see a vision of 'the golden pig' appear on the wall before dinner! This is meant to be a sign of good luck!

The Czech traditional Christmas dinner is eaten during the evening of Christmas Eve. The meal often consists of fish soup (made of carp), and fried carp with potato salad.

Ježíšek 'Little Jesus' (the Czech version of Christkindl) brings presents during the Christmas Eve dinner and leaves them under the Christmas Tree. Czech children have their dinner in a different room from where the tree is located. When they hear the bell ring (usually after the children have finished eating their main meal but when they are still at the table), that means that Ježíšek had been and has left their presents under the tree. The presents are normally opened right after dinner.

Religious families also usually sing Christmas carols by the tree, and go to church either at midnight or on Christmas Day.

There's a superstition in the Czech Republic that says if you throw a shoe over your shoulder on Christmas day, if the toe points towards the door, you will be married soon!



**Liz, Tania and Antoinette at the National Storytelling Festival
in Jonesborough in early October.**

Storytelling Groups/contacts

Regional Contacts

The person nearest to you should be happy to talk to you or help you arrange an occasion or start a group or just talk storytelling! If there is no one in your area perhaps YOU would be the regional contact. Let us know.

Auckland	7.30pm 1st Thursday of month	Margaret Blay 09 630 6774	40 Croyden Street, Mount Eden, 1024 margaretblay@gmail.com
Thames	7.30pm 1st Wed of month	Jackie Black 07 868 8393 027 264 8051	5a Waipapa Road RD1 Thames, 3578
Central Hawkes Bay	Phone for details	Mary Kippenberger 06 856 8367	212 Argyll Road, RD1 Otane marykipp@hotmail.com
Wairarapa	Email for details gaye@storyweaver.co.nz	Gaye Sutton	Gaye Sutton, Te Pukeko, Chester Road, Rd1
Manawatu	Phone for details	Ken Benn 06 359 5024	3 Hardie Street, Palmerston North, kenbenn@paradise.net.nz
Wellington		Tony Hopkins 04 381 3307 txt 027 737 3185	blackcherokee@actrix.co.nz
Blenheim	7pm, 2nd Thursday monthly	Katrina Oliver 03 577 7787	katrinao@xtra.co.nz
Canterbury	7.30pm third Wed of the month Sydenham Room, South Library, 66 Colombo Street	Sharon Moreham Tel 03 9677 888 Mob 022-121-3648	thestorycollectivechch@gmail.com
Timaru	3.30pm last Tuesday monthly in Timaru Library	027 292 5270	dockrill@xtra.co.nz
Dunedin	Phone for details	Kaitrin McMullan 03 467 9550	305 Malvern Street, Dunedin mail@kaitrin.co.nz
Invercargill	7.30pm 4th Tuesday of month	Heather Perriam 021 180 6090	hrp@xtra.co.nz
Balclutha	7pm 2nd Wednesday monthly	Vicki Woodrow, Clutha Library	raine@ihug.co.nz
Okato	7 pm 1 st Thursday of the month Step into Story	Lesley Dowding 06 772 4545	lezley@xtra.co.nz

If there are any changes, please let me know.

Sender
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c/o Elizabeth Miller
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Invercargill - 9812
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