

Christmas crafting – the wreath

Tradition of the wreath and other evergreens

In ancient times, northern societies used to enliven the dark days of winter with a celebration of fire, light and jollity at the time of the winter solstice (when the days became longer and the promise of spring returned).

Since these times evergreens have been valued for their ability to retain signs of life in the middle of winter – even in some instances producing berries and flowers and so early cultures displayed evergreen plants in the home to symbolise everlasting life. Holly, ivy and evergreen herbs such as bay and rosemary were the most commonly used, all with symbolic meanings that were familiar to our ancestors. Rosemary, for remembrance, and bay for valour, are still well known. Holly and ivy were a particularly popular combination, the holly traditionally thought to be masculine and ivy feminine, giving stability to the home.

In Germanic cultures this celebration was called Yule and was again about the sun coming back after the dark winter. Yule lasted 12 days and the tradition of the Yule log was born from here where a large piece of firewood was sought to keep the fires burning over this time. This was known as the Yule log and is the source of the chocolate cake many of us eat today.

In the medieval period, the Yule log was ceremoniously carried into the house on Christmas Eve, and put in the fireplace of the main communal room. Often decorated with greenery and ribbon, it was lit with the saved end of the previous year's

log and then burnt continuously for the Twelve Days of Christmas, providing much needed light and warmth.

Living in a house with a front door rather than a flat means we could put a wreath up. Eli was excited about this, as it felt like real Christmas type thing to do.

Making things ourselves would be something fun that's a together memory and would be creating Christmas decorations that mean something personal to us rather than just having shop bought ones.

So full of enthusiasm, off we went to Hobbycraft to see what we could find. A short while later we came home laden down with crafty goodies, high on the smell of glitter glue and tinsel.

The challenge was to turn these all of these shinies into something festive for the front door



I've never really done any "grown up crafting", only paper chains and the obligatory random snowflakes, but I figured all

those years watching Blue Peter presenters making advent crowns from coat hangers and tinsel must have had some sort of influence, so I went for it.



I reckon it took about 45 minutes, and only a small amount of bleeding from a wire induced injury, and this was the result –



It was great fun to make and a lot easier than I thought it would be – just take some time to plan, try things out before you wire or glue it all together and its jingle all the way!

And as a bonus, the leftover bits became an indoor decoration

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