



North Mayo Heritage Centre Mayo Heritage

Newsletter



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North Mayo Heritage Centre is closed until 5th of January 2026.

Are you interested in
TRACING YOUR MAYO ROOTS?

If you are interested in professional help to research your family history or are curious about your ancestry, why not contact us?



The
North Mayo
Heritage
Centre



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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Christmas Traditions



The **Advent wreath** was first used by the Lutherans in Germany in the 16th century using a cart wheel. The use of the advent wreath has since spread to many Christian denominations throughout the world. The wreath traditionally has four candles; each candle to represent hope, peace, joy and love, and is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. On Christmas Day the fifth candle (Christ Candle), normally a white one, is lit in the centre of the wreath.

The Advent wreath is made using evergreens of moss, holly and leaves to represent everlasting life brought through Jesus. The circular shape represents God, no beginning and no end, infinite love.



The Irish tradition of placing a **Christmas Candle** in the window at Christmas dates back to the 17th century. It was the time of the Penal Laws in Ireland when the Catholic Religion was suppressed. Priests hid and feared for their lives. By lighting a candle they signalled to any passing priest that this was a Catholic home.

Today we still place lights in our windows to guide all our loved ones who may have passed or cannot be with their families at Christmas.

Mary Robinson became President of Ireland in 1990. During her speech she said “*I am not just a President of those here today, but of those who cannot be here and there will always be a light on in Arás An Uachtaran for our exiles and emigrants.*” The tradition of the light in the window remains today with a Tilly Lamp permanently lit. The original light is now lit in the bedroom of her childhood home shining over the River Moy in Ballina.

Santa Claus also known as St. Nicholas, St. Nick, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, or Santa is a legendary figure known for bringing gifts on Christmas Eve. His origins are rooted in the historical figure of St. Nicholas, a 4th century Greek bishop known for his generosity and kindness.

Saint Nicholas of Myra or Nicholas of Bari was born around 270 AD and died in 343 AD. He is also the Patron Saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, toymakers, unmarried people and students. Today Santa is seen as a jolly man, white beard, wearing a red suit, black boots, lives at the North Pole with Mrs Claus and all the elves who make the toys, and on one day a year he flies around the world in a sleigh pulled by reindeers to delivery gifts to all the good children.



In the Christian tradition, a **Nativity Scene** (also known as a manger scene) is the special exhibition, during the Christmas season, of objects representing the birth of Jesus. It features a baby in a manger/crib, shepherds, Mary, Joseph, a selection of animals, angels and three wise men depicting the scene in the stable when Jesus was born. Christmas cards typically feature various forms of nativity scenes.

(images: amazon and control)

