

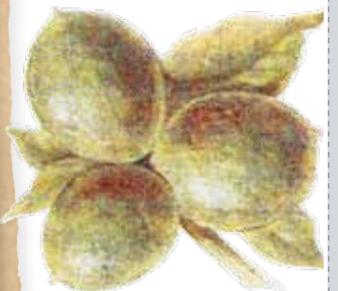
CURIOSITIES

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A journal of
thrifty projects,
nostalgic ideas
and pretty
things
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I had a little nut tree...

A nut tree makes a unique and wonderful present a friend can enjoy for years to come, and there are lots of tasty varieties to choose from: almond, hazel, cobnut and walnut among many others. They can be planted any time from October to March and you can start harvesting nuts from September to November.



PARTY LIKE IT'S 1929

Throughout late November and December, Nunnington Hall in Yorkshire will be decking the halls 1920s style as they take visitors through the different stages of Christmas Day in the Fife family household. Visitors will have a taste of what Christmas was like for this wealthy family over 90 years ago – there will be sherry in the dining room, sugared almonds in the drawing room and hair and makeup demonstrations throughout the day to help you achieve that iconic 20s look – perfect for a Christmas party. For dates visit nationaltrust.org.uk

PHOTO: NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

GO ANIMAL TRACKING

Winter is the best time for spotting animal tracks. Go for a walk in woods or along a country lane (armed with a good animal tracking guidebook) and look closely at the ground, particularly in mud near water.

If you want to take a memento home, try making a plaster cast of the print. Place a circular cardboard collar around the print and secure with a paper clip, pour plaster of Paris into the circle and leave to set for 10-15 minutes. When it's dry, remove the cast from the cardboard and clean off the mud with a brush and warm water when you get home.

Watch a starling roost

Every evening from November to March, thousands of starlings perform a mesmerising display of aeronautic acrobatics before they filter down to their roosting site. No one is sure why they do this, but some experts believe it's a distraction to ward off predators. Aberystwyth and Brighton Piers and the Somerset Levels are roosting hot spots – pack a blanket and marvel at this winter spectacle while it lasts. rspb.org.uk



Pyjama Party

We all remember the disappointment of opening a Christmas parcel as a child and finding a set of pyjamas inside, but we're older and wiser now. Derek Rose is the King of pyjama making – they made all the pyjamas for the first Harry Potter film – and they still produce traditional stripe and Paisley patterns that have been in their collection since 1926. derek-rose.com



BRING NEW LIFE TO OLD PHOTOS

It's easy to be mesmerised by old black and white portraits of stoic-looking gentlemen and doe-eyed ladies; strangers long gone. We love how Stacey Page embroiders new life into these lost photographs, almost resurrecting them, inspired by themes of status, ego, identity, fashion and evolution. staceypage.com

Rediscover driftwood

Go to any seaside town and you're likely to stumble across a little shop selling cutesy driftwood trinkets, but Cornish based Kirsty Elson has really reinvented the craft. Her rows of sea-blasted

cottages with rusted nail chimneys have such a simple charm. We particularly love her fishing boats stranded atop a gnarled piece of wood that looks like a wave. kirstyelsondesigns.co.uk



To you, from me

An old book, a music sheet or an antique map can be cut up to make gorgeous little gift tags to adorn your presents. Lynsey Searle uses discarded books and doodles cute, fat robins over the text for her cheerful tags – they look good enough to frame! etsy.com



WRAP UP WARM

It's nice to inject a bit of glamour into a winter stroll in the park, or even down to the corner shop to get a pint of milk. A vintage-inspired snood and head wrap by Marissa Thereze will keep you snug and looking fabulous, darling. Marissa uses natural yarns gathered from Devonshire alpacas for her supersoft knits. thereze.co.uk



Pull on your heart strings

Sarah Pinney of Northfield Primitives makes these heart aching lovely pull-along animals on a 1920s Singer sewing machine, using mohair and velvet, old Meccano wheels and glass eyes. They're purely decorative, though, not for playing with! folksy.com

