

Let's trim the Christmas tree

The Christmas Tree is a ubiquitous element of festive celebrations across the globe. Today, having a Christmas tree in one's home is an expected form of celebrating, often involving a gathering, various forms of decoration and eventually displaying the abundance of presents to (1) _____ opened on Christmas morning.

The modern Christmas tree originated in western Germany. The custom was widespread (2) _____ the German Lutherans by the 18th century, but it was not (3) _____ the following century that the Christmas tree became a deep-rooted German tradition. Introduced into England in the early 19th century, the Christmas tree was popularized in the mid-19th century (4) _____ German-born Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. The Victorian tree was decorated (5) _____ toys and small gifts, candles, candies, popcorn strings, and fancy cakes hung from the branches by ribbons and by paper chains. Taken to North America by German settlers as early as the 17th century, Christmas trees were the (6) _____ of fashion by the 19th century.

In the 1930s, artificial trees made of brush bristles were developed in the United States, and (7) _____ 1950s and '60s saw the mass production of aluminum and PVC plastic trees. Artificial trees gained significant popularity, particularly in countries (8) _____ fresh trees were hard to procure.

In the UK there is the tradition of decorating a giant spruce that comes all the way from Norway (9) _____ a thank you present for the city's support during WWII.

(10) _____ Norway was invaded in 1940, the King of Norway, Haakon VII, sought refuge in Britain and the Norwegian government-in-exile was established in London.

To most Norwegians, London represented the spirit of freedom during these difficult war years. From London, news broadcasts were made in Norwegian, inspiring the people of Norway and keeping their hope of freedom alive.

