



BRING OUT YOUR BAUBLES

YES, THERE'S BRINGING HOME THE TREE OR STIRRING THE PUDDING, BUT IT'S THE MOMENT THE BAUBLES COME OUT OF HIBERNATION THAT CHRISTMAS REALLY STARTS. WE CELEBRATE THEIR ROLE IN CHRISTMASES PAST, PRESENT AND MANY MORE INTO THE FUTURE

Words: CLARE GOGERTY



HISTORY OF BAUBLES

There's nothing like unearthing a box of baubles from a tangle of tinsel to dispel gloomy winter days. Not only do they sprinkle twinkling light where things are matt and dull, but each one comes trailing happy memories of Christmas past: the bell-shaped glass bauble with glittery stripes that was handed down from an elderly relative, the sole survivor of a box of six; a wonky cardboard Santa handcrafted by a junior member of the household; a tin soldier, a survivor from childhood, battered but intact.

From that joyful moment of rediscovery to the fun of hanging them on the tree, baubles are so much a part of Christmas that it is hard to imagine it without them. Over the years, we've grown accustomed to a massive and increasingly varied choice of baubles, but they're actually a relatively recent addition to the canon of Christmas traditions. Baubles first appeared in Britain in 1848 when a picture of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert standing beside a fir tree decorated with lights, ornaments and presents prompted the nation to do likewise. German-born Albert brought his country's yuletide traditions to the marriage, including making the tree the focus of celebrations.

Little surprise then, that the bauble was created in Germany,

specifically in the small, snow-topped-mountain town of Lauscha. Already known for glass making – glass eyes, barometers and marbles were manufactured here – it was a small step to produce mouth-blown glass ornaments.

By the 1840s, practically the whole town was involved in Christmas bauble manufacture and by the 1870s they were exported to Britain in significant numbers.

Initially these were garlands of small globes, and ornaments in the shape of animals, fruit and nuts: spherical baubles with a silvered nitrate inner, topped a cap and a hook, were developed in the 1850s. There are still 20 small glass-blowing companies in Lauscha and, every Christmas, the town holds a market, the Kugelmarkt, a glittering celebration of the bauble.

These days most UK baubles are manufactured in the Czech Republic, Japan and Mexico, though some are still made in Germany. Although there are many plastic options, the fragility and translucency of glass baubles makes those that survive each Christmas even more precious as they are brought down from the attic and unwrapped year after year. »



1 Eden wool wrapped bauble, £12, habitat.co.uk 2 Slogan bauble (pack of 4), £8, next.co.uk 3 Llama Presents decoration, £6, paperchase.co.uk 4 Pot Plant bauble, £10, anthropologie.com/en-gb 5 Purple Pine bauble, £2, george.com 6 Paper Straw bauble, £10, raientclub.com 7 Hand-painted baubles (set of 4), £17.95, decoratorsnotebook.co.uk 8 Glitter Lollipop tree decorations (set of four), £20, amara.com 9 Large bauble by Rice DK, £9.99, fig1.co.uk 10 London Icon baubles (set of 4), £19.50, marksandspencer.com





MARbled
TREE BAUBLES

GIVE BAUBLES A QUICK
MARBLE MAKEOVER
COURTESY OF BRIGHT
NAIL VARNISH

You will need:
Colourful thread or string
Scissors
White Christmas tree baubles in
various sizes (try hobbycraft.co.uk)
Large bowl
Nail varnish in two colours, here
orange and lilac

- 1 Attach a piece of string to a Christmas tree bauble. Fill a large bowl with enough lukewarm water to completely submerge the bauble (leaving room for displacement).
- 2 Add a few drops from each of the bottles of nail varnish to the water. The nail varnish will form a thin, colourful film on the surface.
- 3 Now immerse the bauble completely in the bowl, holding the cap and ring to push it underwater.
- 4 A thin layer of nail varnish will coat the bauble. Hang it up to dry for a couple of hours.

Taken from *Supercraft Christmas* by Sophie Pester and Catharina Bruns, (Dorling Kindersley). Photography by Anne Deppe.



Give your baubles a
manicure ready for
the party season



This one is special to me because I made it when our family did a glass-blowing bauble workshop. The kids had so much fun. It just reminds me of a really lovely day. *Anneliese Klos*



This little angel and her friends belonged to my mum – a gift from her sister in Germany. She gave them to me the first Christmas after I moved out. *Jennifer Williamson*



These were my grandparents'. As a kid it was the glitter that made them so appealing. Now, I love their mid-century style. In fact, these baubles may have triggered that obsession... *Frances Ambler*



Sometimes we spend Christmas in New Zealand with my husband's family, but for when we don't, we have this sparkly kiwi to remind him of home. *Kate Pettifer*

WHAT I
TREASURE

YOUR AND OUR
FAVOURITE
BAUBLES AND WHY
WE LOVE THEM



My friend Sian gave me this bauble attached to a present one year. I like it because it is simply a big old heart full of love. *Clare Gogerty*



Merry Christmas from Seattle, Washington, US. I'm a sucker for all felt ornaments. This one reminds me of the ones Grammie used to make. *Serret Salles*



This belonged to my late mother-in-law. I reckon it has probably seen around 50 Christmases. This time of year is all about family: it isn't Christmas until this bauble goes up. *Louise Gorrod*



Since I had kids my mum's given them a bauble each year (this was the first). My once chic and minimalist tree is now a riot of naff colour but I'm probably a better person for it. *Iona Bower*