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*December 2012*

**Serving the Celtic Communities of: Wales, Isle of Man, Cornwall (England), Galicia (Spain), Brittany (France), Scotland and Ireland**



Mark those calendars

## Upcoming Events

- December 29<sup>th</sup> Hogmanay hosted by Kevin Queen. Time and location in the body of the newsletter.
- January 8<sup>th</sup> 2013. Board Meeting 7pm Dr. Jim Byrne's office on Canyon Lake Blvd.
- January 15, 2013. Membership meeting. Location to be announced.
- January 26<sup>th</sup> Robert Burn's Dinner Celts Hall. Much more information to follow.



**President Gary Hamilton**

President's Letter

December 2012

Well, it is December! I trust that you enjoyed your family Thanksgiving Holiday. Now Christmas and the New Year lie ahead. For SIS the month of December also brings the end of our financial year (pay your dues!), nomination of officers and Hogmanay.

Carole Conrad has solicited the help of Winnie Balster and Nancy Burke to form a slate of officers and board members for the 2013 term.



Please consider running for office when they call you.

Speaking of Hogmanay, the Scots take the celebration of the New Year very seriously. Some articles that I have read suggest that because Scottish religious law prohibited public celebrations of Christmas for many years the New Year became a very important substitute. It is a time to visit with friends and family. New Years Eve in Edinburgh is said to rival that in New York City. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a nice description of a Hogmanay celebration at home written by Kevin Queen. Kevin has graciously agreed to host our 2012 Hogmanay celebration on December 29. Please plan to attend. This is a chance to dress in your finest Celtic garb.

On January 26, 2013, we will celebrate the birth of Scotland's Poet Laureate, Robert Burns. This year we have the privilege of co-sponsoring a joint celebration with the Dakota Celts. It will be at Celts Hall on the fairgrounds. This will be another opportunity to mix and visit between our two groups. As always we need volunteers to clean, cook and conduct the evening's events. More information on how you can help will follow next month.

Here's wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Yours aye,  
Gary Hamilton*

# Celtic Triva



## Hogmanay top facts

1. Hogmanay is the Scots word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year in the Scottish manner.
2. Nobody knows for sure where the word 'Hogmanay' came from. It may have originated from Gaelic or from Norman-French
3. Historically, Christmas was not observed as a festival and Hogmanay was the more traditional celebration in Scotland. The winter solstice holiday tended to be at New Year when family and friends gathered for a party and exchange presents, especially for the children.
4. 'The Bells' is the phrase used to describe the midnight hour when New Year's Eve becomes New Year's Day.
5. Burns' 'Auld Lang Syne' is sung to celebrate the start of the New Year at the stroke of midnight, not just in Scotland but in many English-speaking countries.
6. The Guinness Book of World Records lists 'Auld Lang Syne' as

one of the most frequently sung songs in English. The song is sung or played in many movies, from 'It's a Wonderful Life' to 'When Harry Met Sally.'

7. To sing 'Auld Lang Syne' a circle is created and hands are joined with the person on each side of you. At the beginning of the last verse, everyone crosses their arms across their breast, so that the right hand reaches out to the neighbour on the left and vice versa. When the tune ends, everyone rushes to the middle, while still holding hands.
8. An important element of Hogmanay celebrations is to welcome friends and strangers, with warm hospitality and of course a kiss to wish everyone a 'Guid New Year'. The underlying belief is to clear out the vestiges of the old year, have a clean break and welcome in a young, New Year on a happy note.
9. 'First Footing' – the 'first foot' in the house after midnight is still very common in Scotland. To ensure good luck, a first footer should be a dark-haired male. Fair-haired first footers were not particularly welcome after the Viking invasions of ancient times. Traditional gifts include a lump of coal to lovingly place on the host's fire, along with shortbread, a black bun and whisky to toast to a Happy New Year.
10. To first foot a household empty-handed is considered grossly discourteous, never mind unlucky!

**Barrowed from Scotland.com:**  
<http://www.scotland.org/celebrate-scotland/hogmanay>

## Welcome to HOGMANY 2012

It's that time of the year...Send out the old year and welcome in the new. What better way, than to celebrate as the Scots do with a Hogmanay (*HOG-mə-NAY*). Tradition states that this celebration lasts through the night of the 31<sup>st</sup> until the morning of New Year's Day, or in some cases the second of January which is a Scottish Bank Holiday. Due to many people potentially having other plans or other obligations we will be celebrating on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December and if you so choose into the 30<sup>th</sup>.

So what actually happens at a Hogmanay? There are many customs, both national and local. The most widespread national custom is the practice of 'first-footing' which starts immediately after midnight. This involves being the first person to cross the threshold of a friend or neighbor and involves the giving of symbolic gifts such as salt (less common today), coal, shortbread, whisky, and black bun (a rich fruit cake). This is intended to bring different kinds of luck to the householder. Since salt is not a common gift these days you can forget about that one. Coal will already be well stocked in my stocking, having received a significant amount from Santa this year. That leaves shortbread, whisky or black bun. I have already taken care of the latter. Hope it is tasty. So shortbread or whiskey would be good options to bring. Or any number of other wonderful items would be

appreciated as well.....Just kidding. Do, however, bring a tasty dish to share. If you've nae idea then check oot a few ideas below. Here are some suggestions.

Haggis

Colcannon

Arbroath Smokie

Bannocks

Hotch-Potch

Crowdie

Scottish Salmon

Forfar Brides

Stovied Tatties

Or any other tasty item you might want to create.

As a side note, the first-foot is supposed to set the luck for the rest of the year.

Traditionally, tall dark men are preferred as the first-foot.

Just a word of caution about 'first footing' unlucky first footers, are those who come empty handed with no gift. Such a person will bring bad luck to the household for the rest of the year. This might sound daft in modern times but Scots have always been superstitious and do not want to suffer 12-months bad luck until the next first footer arrives. Scottish hospitality means that the unlucky first footer cannot be turned away and must come in for some refreshment. To overcome this bad luck that person will be requested to sing a song or two.

Now for directions to this little shanty on the hill. Take Jackson Blvd until you come to Canyon Lake. Take a left as though you were going to turn into the Chophouse.

Follow the road up toward Stav Kirk.

"Those lily white Scandinavians!" Make sure you take the left fork in the road and turn left before you get to the tennis courts. You will follow the road around and end in a cul-de-sac. Follow the merriment sounds and you will be there.

3212 Kirkwood Dr.

430-4501 if you get lost.

Kevin Queen

**MEMBERSHIP  
RENEWAL IS DUE BY  
JANUARY 1. PLEASE  
CONTACT CAROLE  
CONRAD TO PAY YOUR  
2013 DUES OR MAIL  
THEM TO SIS AT PO  
BOX 765, RAPID CITY,  
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**\$30 FAMILY AND \$20  
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