



## The Desert Scene

***I happened to leave Palm Springs very early on "Black Friday". Yes there was a fair amount of traffic out there and I had...for a second or two!!!...considered a quick dash to the stores prior to boarding my flight. It seems to be a peculiarly American phenomena this Black Friday panic to buy. I don't know of anywhere else that it exists. Usually "Black Friday" is marked as something bad had happened on a Friday in historical terms...maybe everyone going "broke" is bad enough!***



***I have been sharply reminded that Christmas is a winter time of year as there was a snowfall today in Ottawa. It is probably a good thing for me and a reality check as I was having a hard time listening to "Jingle Bells", "White Christmas" and "Let it snow" when I was attired in a T shirt and shorts and enjoying 75 degrees sunshine!***

***Best wishes to all for a joyous Christmas season and a prosperous New Year....see you all soon!!***

Note from the President.....

***I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our St. Andrew's dinner on December 5<sup>th</sup>. This is a busy time of year for all, and the Society really appreciates you taking time out of your busy schedule to attend our functions.***

***The Board is busy organizing our Burns Supper which I'm sure will be one of our best yet. We have a great line-up of entertainment this year. We will have the award winning Nicholson Pipe Band, the Palm Springs Pipe Band, Highland Dancers, The Pipes and Strums (a Canadian group), and a special appearance by the US solo piping champion.***

***This year we will also have a DJ for those who would like to stay after the ceremonies and dance and have a little fun.***

***Our Burns Supper will be held at the beautiful Hotel Zoso in Palm Springs on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010.***

***December 2009***



***My term as President will end this year. We are in need of a few members to volunteer to be on our nominating committee for next year. Anyone interested on serving on this committee please contact me.***

***I wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a happy healthy New Year.***

***Ina Gibbons***

It isn't too late for the St Andrew's Dinner !!



The Scottish Society of the Desert & The Palm Springs Pipe Band

Cordially invite you to join them for their annual St. Andrew's dinner

**On Saturday December 5, 2009, 6pm**

At

The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa  
71333 Dinah Shore Drive  
Rancho Mirage

Cost is \$50 per person which includes tax and gratuity

Meal includes Arugula salad with apple, fennel, walnuts and  
Gorgonzola cheese

Choice of Chicken or Salmon with cheese and mushroom risotto,  
and seasonal vegetables

Chocolate mousse divine cake and Coffee Service

***December 2009***



## Christmas in Scotland

***What is Christmas in Scotland really like? The following article was written by a young Scotswoman (name unknown) willing to share with Americans how the Scots celebrate Christmas.***

### ***A Real Scottish Christmas***

***Dear Americans.***

***I have entitled this article "A Real Scottish Christmas" and I hope that it gives interested people some insight into how the average Scot spends the festive season. Personally, I'm spending this year snowboarding in France, but for the majority of Scots stuck with it, here's how it goes:***

***Christmas shopping in Scotland: Apart from the supermarket "Christmas Savings Stamps", which start earlier, this now starts just before Hallowe'en, when the shops start filling up with a variety of gift ideas. The big out of town shopping centres tend to start their decorations earliest, but keen to attract shoppers to town centres, which are losing business to the out of town centres, local councils light up the streets and encourage shops to stay open later in competition. The bigger cities are now attempting a more classy look by putting fairy lights into the trees that are there all year round, while smaller towns tend to get multicoloured light bulbs into a big fir tree in the town centre. These get gradually smashed by young people in the run up to Christmas leaving one or two at the top by December 24th.***

***The advertising also gets into full swing round about Hallowe'en so that the children have plenty of time to drive their parents mad asking for the latest toys. Also in shopping centres Santa's Grottos appear, where children queue up to go in and ask Santa for what they want at Christmas, and get given a small toy.***

***Letters to Santa: Children at this time often start to make Christmas lists, which are lists of the presents they want. Some children send this list to 'Santa' in Lapland by one means or another. I was told that you could burn this on the fire and the list would go up the chimney and get to Santa that***

***December 2009***



**way. However my parents "living flame" fire was behind glass so that never really worked.**

**Decorating Houses: The next exciting thing that happens is that people start to decorate their houses. These decorations are getting gradually more outrageous as the years go by with the humble plastic tree and bits of tinsel strung across the ceiling being replaced by light up musical Santas climbing into windows and fake snow being rolled out across roofs. We don't tend to get real snow any more due to global warming (hence going to France). Children can join in the countdown by using advent calendars, which have little doors that you can open for every day in December with a little picture behind, ending on Christmas Eve.**

**On Christmas Eve: The children are in a frenzy of excitement waiting for their presents. Practice at this point varies; I used to have big presents put under the Christmas tree to find in the morning as well as a stocking for smaller presents at the end of the bed for Santa to come and fill in the night ready for me to find in the morning. Some families used pillow cases instead of stockings, and some don't see the point of stockings at all and just go for the big presents. We eat ordinary food on Christmas Eve.**

**On Christmas day: Usually families will get together to open their presents and have a big Christmas lunch. Everyone looks hopefully out of the window to see if it will snow, and I remember it did once. Presents are unwrapped carefully so that the wrapping paper can be used again. Often dads and grandpas get socks. Lunch is usually turkey with all the trimmings and one or two glasses of wine or champagne. Pudding is usually a Christmas cake - some people who don't like fruit cake may have a Yule log, which is a chocolate cake from Sweden. Most people have Christmas crackers and eat their dinner wearing a paper crown. Following this the whole family get together in front of the TV and fall asleep in front of either:**

- 1. "The Wizard of Oz" or**
- 2. "The Sound of Music" or**
- 3. "The Queen's Speech" (always at 3pm).**

**At tea time, our family liked to have a light supper of bread and butter and smoked salmon, and more crackers if there are any left.**

**Thus ends Christmas and we all wait for a few days until [Hogmanay](#). (Ed. note: Hogmanay is New Year's)**

**December 2009**



**Hogmanay is the time of year when children get to stay up until 12:00 am. It goes like this:**

- 1. Sit up watching 'hoochter choochter' music on the telly and trying not to fall asleep. For many years a comedy show called 'Scotch and Wry' was shown, even for several years after the death of the main character. Now we have pictures of the tourists in the streets of Edinburgh.**
- 2. Just before midnight, go to your neighbour's across the road, where they will be waiting with bowls of mixed nuts and a glass of wine. Some (generally older) people may at this point drink whiskey. Remember to take a lump of stone symbolising a piece of coal for good luck. This is called "First Footing".**
- 3. At "the bells" (on the telly), everyone stands up and stands in a circle with their hands crossed, holding hands with the people on either side of them, and sings 'Auld Lang Syne' while feeling slightly embarrassed.**
- 4. Stay for a bit to make an effort and then go home and climb gratefully into bed.**

**The younger and more adventurous may go round to more than one person's house and take them all a lump of stone, and will get drunk. If there are a lot of people about in the streets, everyone will wish each other a happy new year and kiss each other on the (usually) cheek. This is what used to happen in Edinburgh but can no longer because the whole town is full of tourists who don't know what to do and the people who live in Edinburgh aren't allowed across town without a ticket.**

**January the 2nd is also a Scottish holiday. However we have two less public holidays than England throughout the rest of the year to make up for it.**

**I hope you have enjoyed this little slice of Scottish life, and you have my best wishes for recreating it in America.**

**Merry Christmas!**

**Well, there you have it! Sounds like Americans and Scots don't differ too much in our ways of celebrating that most commercial of holidays - but as we say in America: "It's for the children."**

**December 2009**



The Executive Team

***President: Ina Gibbons***

***Vice President: Roberta Guy***

***Treasurer: David Whitaker***

***Secretary: Joyce McHattie***

***Historian:***

***Membership: Dwight Fine***

***Fundraising: Lois McAttee and Carolyn Sullivan***

***Newsletter: Alec Norrie***

Mark your Calendars

***Dec 5, 2009 St. Andrew's dinner at the Westin Hotel Rancho Mirage***

***Jan 23, 2010 Burns Supper at the Hotel Zoso, Palm Springs***

***Feb. 13-14, 2010 Queen Mary Highland Games, Long Beach CA***

***Feb 20, 2010 Monthly luncheon and guest speaker (TBA)***

***Mar 1, 2010 Pipes and Drums of the Royal Regiment of Scotland  
(McCallum Theatre)***

***Mar, 13 2010 Monthly luncheon and guest speaker (TBA)***

***April 3, 2010 Monthly luncheon and guest speaker (TBA)***

***May 8, 2010 Monthly luncheon and guest speaker (TBA)***

***May 29-30, 2010 Costa Mesa Highland Games***

***June 26-27, 2010 Vista Highland Games, Vista CA***

***December 2009***



Who we are and where we are from.....

Anybody out there??

***I would like to get this started again. Please consider sending me a little bit about oneself which can be shared with others with Scottish backgrounds.***

This month in History

**December 4 1214**

***The death of King William the Lion at Stirling. He received his nickname from later historians due to his adoption of the lion (lyon) rather than the traditional boar for his standard. Born in 1143, the second son of Henry, Scottish Earl of Northumberland, whose title he inherited in 1152, he was forced to surrender it five years later to King Henry II of England (reigned 1154-1189). Note this is the origins of the Scottish Lion Rampart Royal Standard flag***

**December 6 1768**

***The first publication of The Encyclopedia Britannica, the oldest and largest English language general encyclopedia, in Edinburgh. Conceived by printers Andrew Bell and Colin MacFarquhar and edited chiefly by the antiquary William Smellie, the entire first edition was completed in 1771***

**December 8 1542**

***The birth of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Linlithgow. The only surviving child of King James V (reigned 1513-1542) and Mary of Guise, the infant Queen was a pawn between pro-English and pro-French factions.***

***December 2009***



**December 21 1988**

*The destruction of a Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The 747 commercial airliner was en route from London's Heathrow Airport to JFK in New York when it blew up in mid-air and fell to the ground near the Scottish Borders. All 259 passengers and crew were killed with a total of eleven local people on the ground when the plane crashed. **Note the Libyan accused of this crime was recently released from a Scottish prison and sent back to Libya.***

**December 25 1950**

*The Stone of Scone, otherwise known as the Stone of Destiny, taken from Westminster Abbey by four Nationalist students: Kay Matheson, Ian Hamilton, Gavin Vernon, and Alan Stuart. This block of Sandstone has been revered for centuries as a holy relic and had been used from at least the 9<sup>th</sup> century as part of the enthronement ceremony of Dalriadic, Scottish, English, and British sovereigns.*

***\*\*\* The movie "Stone of Destiny" was first shown at the 2009 Palm Springs film festival. This is a MUST see movie\*\*\****

**December 28 1879**

*The Tay Bridge disaster occurred in which 75 people were killed when the structure collapsed under the train they were riding on during a storm.*

**December 31, Every Year**

*Hogmany, an important day in the Scottish calendar to 'clear out the old' and get ready for the 'new'. Every home in Scotland is cleaned thoroughly, the larder filled, the beds changed, and the people put on their best clothes to bring in the New Year.*

**December 31 1720**

*The birth of Charles Edward Louis Philip Casimir Stuart, otherwise known to history as '**Bonnie Prince Charlie**' or '**the Young Pretender**', in Rome. A grandson of the exiled Roman Catholic King James II and VII (reigned 1685-1688) and son of James Edward, 'the Old Pretender,'*

**December 2009**



Membership

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Contact us

***Any short pieces of interesting and relevant articles for future newsletters will be most welcome. Please contact us on topics with a Scottish connection and we will do our best to publish in future editions. Your newsletter contact is Alec Norrie at [anorrie@radarinteractive.com](mailto:anorrie@radarinteractive.com).***

***December 2009***