

Is It True About Scotch New Year?

Maybe some of our readers of Scotch descent can tell us if this is true—they say that nobody goes to bed in Scotland on December 31—there's too much else to do!

It is a great night for the youths who, reminiscent of ancient-superstitions, go about switching the trunks of fruit trees and petitioning the gods of fertility for a "good howling crop," they tell us.

Before the advent of modern plumbing, teen-agers made quite a fuss about the "cream of the year" which was the first draught drawn from the nearest spring immediately after midnight and supposedly entitled the drinker to anticipate a "lucky" year.

The Wassail Bowl is, of course, the center of adult festivities. Its origin is lost in antiquity, but tradition has endowed the Wassail Bowl with legendary romance. It is ornamental in design and decorated with branches of greenery. The mixture within is warm and sweet, and wine is sometimes added to the ale and sugar and spices.

After having enjoyed the concoction within the home among intimates at the stroke of midnight, the Scots pile into wagons or sleighs with kettles full of the Wassail and other food and set out to tour the community. The party stops at various houses and the refreshments go "round at each stop." Nobody pays the least attention to the approaching dawn, because nobody goes to bed on New Year's Eve anyway.

A good story—is it true?

Much of the lack of success in growing house plants arises from too high temperature, too low humidity and insufficient light. Over-feeding is also responsible for a great deal of failure. Illuminating gas or coal gas from the furnace, in quantities barely noticeable to humans, can be deadly to the house plants.

LETTER TO EDITOR

New Zealanders Have Canada Night

Dec. 4, 1951
Cross-Line, Greytown, New Zealand.

Dear Mr. Dills (I like Arlof better). Just a note to wish you and yours and all the folk of Acton a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year from Mrs. Montgomerie (Gertie Walters) and myself. I still like "Old Acton" and spent some happy if wild times there.

Mrs. Montgomerie and I often have a Canadian night. When we are alone, we will reckon out the time—and say what they will be doing in Acton now. We are approximately 16 hours ahead of you Central time. We talk of the folk we knew, and in fact are right there only 40 years ago—I saw a photo of you in the "Free Press." "Coop" sent me, and you have not altered a lot—slightly older looking but the features the same. I would know you, I reckon.

This envelope enclosing letter is an official one for the Health Stamps affixed. They come out every year, and the extra revenue is kept to establish Health Camps, where any child who needs it can go into Camp for 2 or 3 weeks free and is looked after and well fed by trained nurses and others. It is a great thing here and they collect a large sum of money every year.

It is spring time here now and everything is green and looks well. I dug the first new potatoes in my garden (and dist. also) on 1st November and I am going to pick strawberries this week. I have a good garden, as that is my hobby, having no other work to do. I don't get up until 7 a.m. and go to bed at 9 p.m. Well, Arlof, I would like to go to Acton for a trip but my wife won't go as she said there is very few we would know, but you might remember us to old friends we knew through your paper. I will now close with best wishes to you and your Wife and Family although I don't know them.

I remain, Your Sincerely,
"Mont".
J. E. Montgomerie.

Miss Bennett Host To Friendly Circle

Mrs. M. Z. Bennett was hostess on Wednesday evening of last week to the Friendly Circle, on the occasion of their last meeting of the year and their closing Christmas party.

Mrs. C. Rognvaldson presided over the business session. Homes were offered for all meetings to be held in 1952. It was carried unanimously that the W.M.S. be given the same donation of \$50 as last year.

It was also decided that the group should help the W.A. of the church to purchase a complete set of new dishes; \$50 was also voted to this purpose.

Mrs. O. Johnston and Mrs. R. Bean's group was in charge for the remainder of the evening. A record attendance of 55 was registered.

Scripture was read by Mrs. J. Stewart followed by prayer by Mrs. R. Bean and a reading by Mrs. Ralph McKeown. The group joined in singing a number of Christmas carols.

Mrs. J. Stewart then gave a humorous monologue entitled "Giggling Lizzy." Mrs. Heller entertained with two much appreciated piano solos.

Following this a play entitled "Father reads the Christmas Carols" was given by a group of members with the following cast: Father, Mrs. Len Lovell; Mother, Mrs. M. Nellis; A Mischievous Son, Mrs. G. McKenzie; Daughter, Mrs. Mac Symon; Grown Up Son, Mrs. D. Bean; Daughter's Boy Friend, Mrs. H. Bittorf; Son's Girl Friend, Mrs. W. Waterhouse.

This was well presented and was a hilarious hit from start to finish. Santa Claus, in the person of Mrs. Herb Cook then made his appearance and distributed gifts to everyone present from an overloaded tree.

Mrs. L. Lovell, on behalf of the class, presented Miss Bennett with a gift of appreciation.

A delicious lunch including all the Christmas good things brought the evening to a close. Two former members were present for the occasion, Mrs. Norman Baird, of Toronto and Mrs. Helen Cullen of Guelph.

Apt for a province which boasts the Canadian Rockies, British Columbia has as its motto, "Splendor Without Diminishment."

Chronicles of Ginger Farm

Written Specially for the Acton Free Press by Gwendolyn F. Clarke

So quickly the days, the weeks and months go by; so soon the time comes round again when friends greet friends with cheery Christmas wishes. Ah yes, and at Christmas parties and community concerts Old Times and New Canadians greet each other without reserve. In the Christmas spirit of loving and giving there is no distinction of race or creed; age or social standing. And so from Ginger Farm to all the homes where these Chronicles are read comes my sincere wish that each one of you will have a very happy Christmas season.

To homes where there is no cloud in the sky; where youngsters are carefree and gay, it is also my wish that Christmas may add to that same happiness and joy. But in homes where hearts are troubled—where perhaps, for the first time, the family circle is incomplete, I hope the Christmas message will bring new faith and a quiet sense of healing and peace.

Christmas, we know, has a different meaning to different people and, as with many other things in life, it is—what we make it. The choice is our own. As Christmas is so will our memories be, of this and of every Christmas.

Last week there was a Santa Claus parade in our small town and I don't think it was only the children who enjoyed it! Unfortunately I was unable to get down to see the actual parade but an hour later I felt its influence. It was there in the happy, laughing faces of the children; it was in Mother's voice as she shared Tommy's enthusiasm. It was in Daddy's hearty laugh as he carried the littlest one home on his shoulder and parried the curious questions of Miss Eight-year-old.

It was in the stores behind the counter, and in front of it. It was in the policeman's good-humoured Irish grin. It was behind the post-office wicket, and at every service station it flowed as freely as the gas from the pumps. People jostled each other good humoredly along the sidewalk or stood talking in little groups. Nobody hurried, nobody minded waiting in the crowded stores. This was children's day and the grown-ups enjoyed it.

As I write the weather is very cold, zero, but before this column gets into print the weather may have changed again. One way or another it doesn't really matter—imagination makes up for the weatherman's vagaries. Christmas carols ring out just as cheerily whether we walk in mud or in snow. Neither wind nor storm can silence our Christmas carols nor destroy the message of hope that began long

years ago with the Christ-Child's birth. Even in Soviet Russia, where Christmas celebrations are forbidden, one can be reasonably sure that well-loved Christmas carols are still softly sung in the hearts of the oppressed.

Christmas carols have always been a source of comfort and hope—even to the Huron Indians, who would gather together to sing the hymns to the Christ-Child, after first building a chapel of cedar and fir to honour the infant Jesus. In fact, the first Christmas carol ever sung in old Canada was probably the one that was written in the Huron language by Father Jean de Brebeuf. It was written in simple language so that it might be easily understood by the Huron Indians. Its beauty lies in its simplicity. Here is the hymn. It is called "Pesona Ahntonhia" — (Jesus is born).

"Twas in the moon of winter when all the birds had fled That the mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead. Before their light the stars grew dim And wandering hunters heard—the hymn Jesus, your King, is born; Jesus is born; in Excelsis Gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark, the tender Babe was found A ragged robe of rabbit skin his beauty wrapped around. And as the hunter braves drew nigh The angel sang loud and high Jesus, your King, is born; Jesus is born; in Excelsis Gloria.

The earliest moon of winter time is not so round and fair, As was the ring of Glory on the helpless infant there. While chiefs from far before him knelt With gifts of fox and beaver pel't Jesus, your King, is born; Jesus is born; in Excelsis Gloria.

O, children of the forest free; O, sons of Manitou, The Holy Child of earth and Heaven is born today for you. Come kneel before the radiant Boy Who brings you beauty, peace and joy. Jesus, your King, is born; Jesus is born; in Excelsis Gloria."

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