



Bitty Bull wishes all of his readers a wonderful Christmas and a Happy Hogmanay! He is off to rest, fill up on yummy treats and discover more interesting things about our Scottish heritage.

History of Hogmanay

Celebrations of Christ's birth around the world can often last most of the month of December, but in Scotland the real celebrations come after a quiet Christmas at the end of the year. Hogmanay, the Scottish New Year's Eve celebration, became a time of rollicking festivals after Christmas celebrations were banned in the late 1500's. The Scottish Reformation took a strong stand against both Catholic and pagan celebrations. For over four hundred years Christmas was a day much like any other. The midwinter festivals were based on pagan celebrations and many of the Highland Scots remained Catholic so the clever Scotsmen transferred much of their rituals from Christmas to Hogmanay in the 1600's by changing the date of their New Year in March to that of January 1st. Some of the rituals included burning a yule log, eating special foods, and decorating with mistletoe and juniper. The ban was finally lifted in 1958.

Today, Hogmanay is a two day celebration filled with parties, bonfires, and fireworks. A midnight mass is performed on New Year's Eve in many parts of Scotland. Many of the old traditions still continue such as cleaning the house on December 31st for good luck, welcoming friends and strangers into your home, and sometimes carrying out "first footing." To ensure good luck in the upcoming year, a dark headed male visitor, carrying coal and bread and whiskey, should be the first to set foot in a home in the New Year. (This was most likely a throw back to Viking days when blond strangers arriving at your doorstep meant trouble). Another tradition carried out today is that of singing Robert Burns' "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight.

The word Hogmanay has several possibilities for it's origin. The Scandinavian word for the feast preceding Christmas or Yule was *Hoggo-nott*. The Flemish word *hoog min dag* means "great love day". The Anglo-Saxon word *Haleg monath* means "Holy Month" and the Gaelic word *oge maidne* means "new morning". The French *Homme est ne* means "Man is born" and is a celebration on the last day of the year with a gift exchange. Normandy gift giving celebration was *hoguignetes*. Take your pick of where Hogmanay actually came from!



Auld Lang Syne

(English translation)

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.



Robert Burns (1759-1796) after staying up past midnight on Hogmanay

Mad About Plaid

Ornament idea taken from www.allyou.com



- Scissors
- Plaid wrapping paper or Turnbull plaid paper (available at www.totallyturnbull.com)
- pencil
- card stock
- glue stick
- holiday metal cookie cutter
- twine or narrow ribbon
- craft glue

1. If using plaid wrapping paper: cover back side of wrapping paper with glue stick and adhere to a stiffer piece of card stock and let dry.
2. Lay plaid paper on table and using cookie cutter, trace carefully with pencil around the outside of the shape.
3. Cut out shape.
4. Cut 12" of twine or ribbon. Join ends together and knot. String cookie cutter onto twine or ribbon, holding knotted end in one hand and looped in other. Pull knotted end through looped end to create ornament hanger.
5. Run a line of craft glue along the edge of the cutter and then lightly press onto the cut out shape and let dry.

Simple Rolled Sugar Cookies

1 1/2 cups softened butter
2 cups white sugar
4 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
5 cups all purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt

- In large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until smooth.
- Beat in eggs and vanilla.
- Stir in the flour, baking powder, and salt.
- Cover, and chill dough for at least one hour.
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
- Roll out dough on floured surface 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick.
- Cut into shapes with cookie cutter and place on ungreased cookie sheet.
- Bake 6 to 8 minutes in preheated oven.
- Cool completely before icing.



Check out this darling idea from www.homemadeinterest.com for these plaid sugar cookies. Turnbull cookies would be the talk of the party!