



# ST. ANDREW'S

## NOBLE ORDER OF ROYAL SCOTS



Guild Newsletter

[www.saintandrewsguild.org](http://www.saintandrewsguild.org)

December 2017




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Below is the calendar from November 26th until official 2018 events post. Stay tuned to our web calendar at...

<http://www.saintandrewsguild.org/calendar/>

Date	Event	Location	Time
Until Next We Meet		Your Den of Choice	TBD

However, if you're feeling full of energy and holiday spirit, join other members of St. A's as they make their way to 19th century England. This is not an official St. A's event but rather another opportunity to enjoy more historical adventures and see other guild family during our hiatus.

<https://dickensfair.com/>

**NOV 18-DEC 17, 2017, 10AM-7PM**  
**COW PALACE EXHIBITION HALLS, SAN FRANCISCO**



### DISCOVER A ONE-OF-A-KIND ADVENTURE

Visit London - at the historic Cow Palace Exhibition Halls! Enter the winding lanes of Victorian London and immerse yourself in a world of music halls, theatres, pubs, dance parties, and charming shops overflowing with hand-made holiday treasures. Enticing aromas of roasted chestnuts and hearty foods fill the air. Discover holiday revelry in this lamp-lit city brimming with over 800 lively and colorful characters from the imagination of Charles Dickens, the pages of history, and the sometimes saucy world of the Victorian stage.



# POTPOURRI

THE SCROLL, DECEMBER 2017

## Winter's Feast 2017



Much merriment was  
had by one and all.  
Grand Merci to Dame  
Mary Fleming for putting in the  
hard work to make this, and all  
other 2017 non-faire events, possible  
for Saint Andrew's!



# MONTHLY MISSIVE

THE SCROLL, DECEMBER 2017

## A Tale of Yule

### How Scotland refined a holiday



Scots put little emphasis on Christmas, favoring instead that most exuberant of celebrations, Hogmanay—New Years to we Americans. But festive celebrations have been growing in Scotland. Why the slow embrace of Santa Claus, eggnog and candy canes? Because Christmas was essentially banned in Scotland for 400 years.

In reality it was banned for a total of 68 years. Two Acts of the Estates of Parliament in 1640 and again in 1690 'dischairing the Yule vacance', or Christmas break, were passed in the century's Puritan zeal. The second Act was partly repealed in 1712, but the Church continued to frown upon the observance, viewing it as, at best, a remnant of pagan mid-winter feasting and, at worst, akin to Catholic worship – 'Christ's mass'. Christmas Day didn't become a public holiday in Scotland until 1958. Until then people normally worked December 25th. Even today, the traditional Christmas celebration is usually a low-key affair, as the Church of Scotland is not especially enthusiastic about the festival.

Before the Protestant Reformation of 1560, Christmas, or Yule as it was then called, was held with all the joy and bright cheer of other European countries. It was often celebrated not just on one day, but over 12 – 'the Daft Days', a solstice season of making merry and, often, of misrule. (This is why Christmas decorations are traditionally not taken down until January 5th.)

As in Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*, traditional roles were reversed and rules relaxed. Boys took on the roles of bishops, holding sermons and blessing people in the streets. Masters took on the duties of their servants, and servants wore the robes of their masters.

James IV stayed at Arbroath Abbey over Yule 1502/03. Royal Christmases were times of decadence and indulgence. There was feasting, games, music and dancing.



During the 12 days, the king lost a total of £143 at cards, heard stories told by 'Widdirspune, the taleteller', listened to the music of 'four trumpeters, three luters, four harpers, two taubronars and three fiddlers', and watched a mummings', or guisers', play – a traditional performance given by a troop of actors.

### Vacation Legislation

A 1640 Act of the Parliament of Scotland abolished the "Yule vacation and all observation thereof in time coming".

The 1640 Act stated (in Middle Scots)

"... the kirke within this kingdome is now purged of all superstitious observacione of dayes... thairfor the saidis estatis have dischairged and simply dischairges the foirsaid Yule vacance and all observacione thairof in tyme comeing, and rescindis and annullis all acts, statutis and warrandis and ordinaunces whatsoever granted at any tyme heirtofoir for keeping of the said Yule vacance, with all custome of observacione thairof, and findis and declaires the samene to be extinct, voyd and of no force nor effect in tyme comeing."

(English translation: "... the kirk within this kingdom is now purged of all superstitious observation of days... therefore the said estates have discharged and simply discharge the foresaid Yule vacation and all observation thereof in time coming, and rescind and annul all acts, statutes and warrants and ordinances whatsoever granted at any time heretofore for keeping of the said Yule vacation, with all custom of observation thereof, and find and declare the same to be extinct, void and of no force nor effect in time coming.")



YULE  
FROM PAGE 3

These entertainments were gifts from the king to his courtiers, though physical gifts were also given – usually on New Year’s Day, rather than Christmas Day. They also attended services, and made offerings to the church.

After the Protestant Reformation of 1560 there was a growing disapproval of Christmas, and motions against it were often taken. Five men were brought up on charges before Glasgow’s Kirk Session in 1583 because they ‘kept the superstitious day called Yule’.



Royalty, however, clung to their Christmas festivities. In 1600, three years before also becoming king of England, the Scottish king James VI insisted on celebrating Christmas and it was ‘solemnlie keepit’ with merriment and cannon-fire from Edinburgh Castle.

After 1640, when Christmas was officially banned, Scots adapted. It seems a human need to have light cheer to brighten winter’s dark days. The country’s many Yule customs weren’t necessarily lost, but were often just moved to a few days later, and became attached to the New Year instead. The banishment of Christmas meant that the Scots would focus their celebration around New Year’s Eve (Hogmanay) and the two days that followed, making

Pagan Roots

Where does this turbulent history of Christmas in Scotland begin? Celtic pagans who were kicking about in Western Europe between 500 BCE and 500 CE held celebrations around the time of winter solstice (usually around the 21st or 22nd of December). The festivities were in part to brighten the dark winter days, and to appease the Gods to allow the sun to return. Traditions included the burning of the Yule log, with the charred remains being used to protect the house



throughout the year, and kissing under mistletoe (a fertility rite). It is the pagans too who have been credited with the early tradition of decorating a tree. It is thought that they hung shapes from an evergreen brought into the house to symbolize life.

**The ritual of oak and mistletoe**  
A white robe and gold sickle were an essential part of the mistletoe harvesting process

Hogmanay the large and exciting festival they celebrate today.

Traditions which are now firmly on the schedule for Hogmanay were once performed on Christmas Day. First footing – that the first person to enter a house must be a tall, dark man bearing gifts (fair-haired males were considered unlucky. This attitude towards light-haired individuals may reflect an unwanted Viking entering a household) and toasting the company’s health, may both have originated in Christmas rituals.

Today, many of Scotland’s oldest traditions are still seen at Christmas. The lighting of fires and decorating of homes with holly and mistletoe – pagan customs from before Christianity came to these shores. And of course no holiday would be complete without short-bread and dumplings on the table.



Clooatie dumpling

And as in times long past, Scotland treats this time of year as a holiday season, rather than a single day. Christmas flows into Hogmanay in a glow of family, friends, fun and feasts.

*Nollaig Chrìdheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ur!*

(Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!)





# MEMBER RECOGNITION

THE SCROLL, DECEMBER 2017



## Winner of the 2017 Dragon Thor's Hammer

For always saying "yes", for Noble's Tea, 'Cards Against England', herding cats (Nobles and grandkids) at each faire, and much, much more, congratulations to Dame Morna MacGregor on this well-deserved award!



*Hip, hip Gle Mbatb!*



*Well met!*



### The holidays are almost here!



Make your shopping count for St. A's. Sign up for eScrip <http://www.escrip.com/>

Group name: St. Andrew's Noble Order of Royal Scots  
Group ID: 500824991 (if needed)

Find the 'sign up' link in the tool bar – upper right side. Click it. After you complete your personal info, choose an organization to support. Use the 'Advanced Search' feature and fill in info as follows:

- SMEA - (Save Mart Employee Association)  
2937 Veneman Ave Suite A115 Modesto 95354
- St. Andrews Noble Order Of Royal Scots  
22791 Alaire Ln Pioneer 95666
- St. Vincent De Paul - SKD  
16237 Emigrant St. Volcano 95689

salnt

pioneer

Search

95666

Search

5 Miles

UPDATE

CANCEL



*In the hustle and bustle of the season, remember the less fortunate.*

Love **amazon** ? Simply use:

<http://www.amazon.com/?tag=saintandrewsguild-20>

