Scots

Hogmanay (Scots)

Hogmanay is the Scots term fir New Year's Eve. This is celebratit across Scotland, an o coorse the rest o the warld, oan the 31st o December ilka year.

Some o the traditions hae meltit awa noo, but when I was a wee lassie they were still goin strang.

Yin o the traditions I ken o, an experienced a lot when I was a wean, is first-footin. First-footin refers tae the practice o welcomin a visitor intae yer hoose efter midnight. Sae, traditionallly, the first-footer is literally the first body tae set foot in yer hoose oan New Year's Day. The tradition is that yer first-footer maun be a tall man wi daurk hair. Sae, when I was wee, we wid bide in the hoose tae efter 'the bells' - which is whit we cried the ringin of the bells o Big Ben in London, which we watched oan the telly - an then we wid head oot tae visit freens an neebors. In ither wirds, we widnae wait fir a body tae first-foot us, we wid gang oot first-footin oorsels. Ma faither, bein the ainly man o ma hoosehold, wid be the first body tae chap oan the door o oor neebor an he wid also be the first body tae step ower the threshold intae their hoose.

Another hing aboot first-footin is that the body wha goes intae yer hoose first wid usually bring ye a wee present. Some folk wid bring a lump o coal, said tae mean that yer hoose wis tae be kept warm the full year roon. Bit, when I was growin up in the 1980s, maist folk had awready done awa wi their coal fires, an had gas yins or electric yins. Sae we wid tak food or drink tae help folk welcome in the New Year. If ye were really traditional ye would tak some black bun, or some clootie dumplin, but we wid normally tak somethin gey easier tae get a haud o, like shortbreid. Ma mither wisnae yin fir spendin a lot o time in the scullery, ye see, sae she widnae had hud the time nor the inclination tae make somethin like clootie dumplin.

An it has tae be said that ma faither widnae hae dreamt o goin first-footin athoot a drink fir folk. Sae - he wid tak his ain boattil - at least yin boattil - o whitever he was drinkin, like whisky or rum, an he wid make sure that his freen or neebor had at least yin guid measure oot his boattil afore he wid tak yin.

An finally - yin hing tae be aware o is the tradition o singin 'Auld Lang Syne'. While we wid aye watch folk singin this oan the telly, an we were aw familiar wi the sang - at least the first verse, onywey - we widnae link airms an sing it oorsels. I've never been at onybody's hoose that *does* dae that at the bells, or jist efter thaim. The ainly time I've ever done that tae merk the beginnin o New Year is when I've been oot at a bar or restaurant.

English

Hogmanay (English)

Hogmanay is the Scots term for New Year's Eve. This is celebrated across Scotland, and of course the rest of the world, on the 31st of December each year.

Some of the traditions have melted away now, but when I was a little girl they were still going strong.

One of the traditions I know of, and experienced a lot when I was a child, is first-footing. First-footing refers to the practice of welcoming a visitor into your house after midnight. So, technically, the first-footer is literally the first person to set foot in your house on New Year's Day. The tradition is that your first-footer should be a tall man with dark hair. So, when I was little, we would stay in the house until after 'the bells' - which is what we called the ringing of the bells of Big Ben in London, which we watched on the television - and then we would head out to visit friends and neighbours. In other words, we wouldn't wait for someone to first-foot us, we would go out first-footing ourselves. My father, being the only man within my household, would be the first person to knock on our neighbour's door and he would also be the first person to step over their threshold into their house.

Another thing about first-footing is that the person who goes into your house first would usually bring you a small present. Some people would bring a lump of coal, said to mean that your house would be kept warm all year round. But, when I was growing up in the 1980s, most people had already done away with their coal fires and had gas or electric ones. So we would take food or drink to help welcome in the New Year. If you were really traditional you would take some black bun, or some clootie dumpling, but we would normally take something much easier to get, like shortbread. My mother was not one for spending a lot of time in the kitchen, you see, so she would not have had the time nor the inclination to make something like clootie dumpling.

And it has to be said that my father would not have dreamt of going first-footing without providing a drink for people. So - he would take his own bottle - at least one bottle - of whatever he was drinking, like whisky or rum, and he would make sure that his friend or neighbour had at least one good measure out of his bottle before he would take one.

And finally - one thing to be aware of is the tradition of singing 'Auld Lang Syne'. While we would always watch people singing this on the television, and we were all familiar with the song - at least the first verse, anyway - we would not link arms and sing it ourselves. I've never been at anybody's house that *does* do that at the bells, or just after them. The only time I've ever done that to celebrate the beginning of New Year is when I've been out at a bar or restaurant.