

THE QUEENS HALL

Guide to Hogmanay

A Scottish Celebration

Hogmanay is the Scottish celebration of New Year's Eve, where every year, hundreds of thousands of revellers join in celebrations to see in the New Year. The stroke of midnight is played in by a piper, people kiss to the chimes of the bells and sing Auld Lang Syne, the past years troubles are forgotten in the good cheer.

Hogmanay Traditions

First footing: This involves being the first one to cross the threshold of a friend or neighbour's home and the giving of symbolic gifts such as coal, whisky and shortbread. Whoever 'first-foots' your house sets your luck for the rest of the year.

Cleaning: It is considered ill luck to welcome in the New Year in an untidy house. Traditionally, fireplaces would be swept out and some people would read the ashes of the very last fire of the year, to see what the New Year would hold. The act of cleaning the entire house was called the 'redding', i.e. getting ready for the New Year.

Fire: Scottish people have long associated the New Year with fire and a time of new opportunities and cleansing of the old life. Fire ceremonies still play an important part of the Hogmanay tradition, Edinburgh Torchlight Procession is a good example of where this custom still exists today.

Top Céilidh Tips

Nothing beats a good lively céilidh and it's the perfect way to welcome in the year ahead. Some people are nervous when it comes to joining in - dont be! The best way to learn is to throw yourself into it, you'll soon learn that it's easier than it looks. Our top tips for a good céilidh are:

- Wear shoes with good grip, and no stilettos (for your own sake ladies) or else you'll end up dancing in your bare feet
- Never stop in the middle of a dance, if you get lost just keep going and someone will put you right
- If you are new to céilidhing, try to get there at the beginning as the easiest dances are first
- Listen out for the caller
- Don't be afraid to let yourself go and "gi it laldy!"

To ring in 2009, The Queen's Hall is hosting a traditional Scottish Hogmanay party, celebrating one of Scotland's best loved customs.

But have you ever wondered where all this 'Hogmanay' business came from anyway? Why do the Scots call it 'Hogmanay'? The Queen's Hall investigates...

Hogmanay....eh?

No-one really knows for sure the true origins of the word. Various interpretations differ on whether it originated from the Gaelic *oge maidne* ("New Morning"), Anglo-Saxon *Haleg Monath* ("Holy Month"), or Norman French word *hoguinané*, which was derived from the Old French *anguillanneuf* ("gift at New Year"). What we do know, is that nowadays it means a great nights banter!

Did you know?

A céilidh world record was set on Edinburgh's Meadows in June 2005, when 3000 dancers gathered to dance the worlds biggest ever eightsome reel.

Top 5 Dances

We asked the seasoned céilidh musician Ken Gourlay of HLI what his top 5 requested dances are:

1. The Gay Gordons
2. The Dashing White Sergeant
3. The Eightsome Reel
4. Strip the Willow
5. The Virginal Reel

