



**The Sovereign Military Order of
the Temple of Jerusalem**

**Priory of St. James, Toronto,
Canada.**

**Newsletter
December 2010**

**Prior:
H.E. the Rev'd Dame Nola Crewe, GOTJ**



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



And

Happy New Year

Greetings to the Dames, Knights, Postulants and Friends of the St James Priory:

We present for your edification and entertainment, our December Newsletter.

nnDnn
Nola, Alastair, William & Harold
Your Scribes

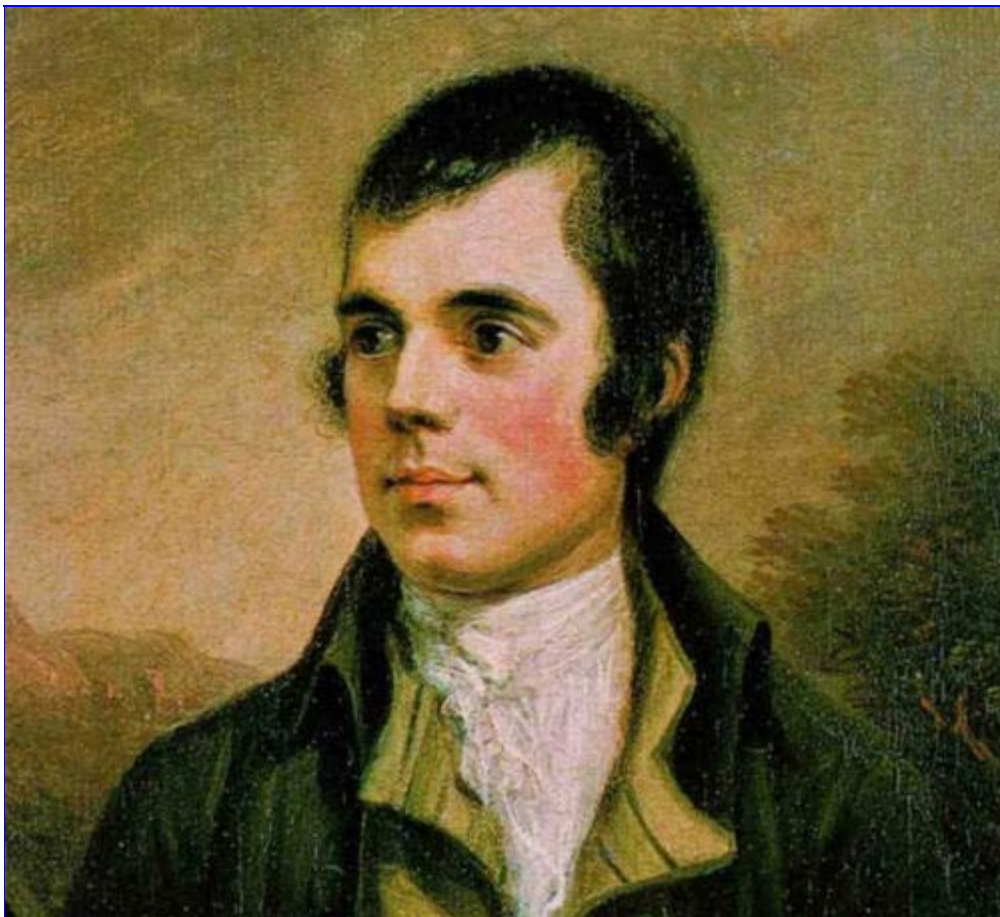
Auld Lang Syne

By Alastair McIntyre

As this song is always sung to see in the New Year wherever you are in the world I thought I'd give you some background on it so you'll be knowledgeable for your friends when you bring in the New Year...

Burns' name is not affixed to this world-famous song, and yet there can be no doubt it is chiefly his own. He admitted to Johnson that the two verses beginning respectively, "We tae hae ran about the braes," and "We twa hae paidl'd in the burn," are his own, although in sending the song to Mrs. Dunlop in December, 1788, and also is writing about it to Thomson, in September, 1793, he speaks of it as ancient. "Light be the turf," he says, "on the breast of the heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment! There is more of the fire of native genius in it than half-a-dozen of modern English Bacchanalians." "Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase Auld Lang Syne exceedingly expressive? This old song and tune has often thrilled through my soul." To Thomson he writes thus: - "The air is but mediocre; but the song of itself - the song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing - is enough to recommend any air."

This is certainly the most famous song to come from the pen of Robert Burns, the inspiration coming from an old Scots ballad. Sung at gatherings throughout the world, particularly at the beginning of each New Year, Auld Lang Syne has become the International Anthem of the world as people of all creeds and colours join hands in celebration. However, unfortunately very few people actually know the words they are singing, and fewer still understand the meaning and relevance of these words. I can only hope that when you have read the words and understand what Burns was really saying, that you will give the song the respect that it truly deserves.



Chorus

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered mony a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne..

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right guid-willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.

The message is that we should never forget old friends.

auld = old; *min'* = mind; *o' lang syne* = of long ago

Let us raise our glasses to toast their memories.

stowp = drinking vessel; *tak* = take

We played together, but grew up and went our independent ways.

twa = two; *hae* = have; *braes* = hills; *pu'd the gowans* = pulled the daisies; *mony a weary fit* = travelled great distances

As children, we paddled in the stream, but since then have been separated by the width of the oceans.

paidl't 'i the burn paddled in the burn; *frae mornin' sun till dine* = all day; *braid* = broad

Shake my hand my trusted friend and let us share a goodwill drink to the memory of these happy days.

fiere = friend; *a right guid-willie waught* = a goodwill drink

The Templars in Italy



The Castello della Magione (also Magione di San Giovanni al Ponte or Spedale di San Giovanni in Gerusalemme alla Magione) is a medieval castle in Poggibonsi (province of Siena, central Italy). It is an example of a medieval "Mansio" (residence) that belonged to the Knights Templar. The castle includes the ancient church and the "spedale" (hotel) for the pilgrims in transit to Rome on the Via Francigena. The complex is near the ancient crossing of the Via Francigena over the Staggia River, near the Bonizio bridge, now destroyed.

The castle dates from the 11th century. On 5 September 1140, it was donated by Gottifredo di Arnolfo and Arnolfino di Cristofano, heirs of the founders, to the Monks of the Saint Michael Abbey in Poggio Marturi. The monks entrusted it to the Knights of the Temple,

becoming one of the numerous "Mansiones" or "Domus Templi" on the Via Francigena.

In 1312, as the Order of the Templars was abolished by Pope Clement V, the Magione was given to the Knights Hospitaller.

The castle, downgraded to a farm, was bought by several people, among whom were the Princes Corsini. In 1979 it was acquired by Count Marcello Alberto Cristofani della Magione, who donated it to the Militia Templi, which was just being founded, as the Magistral See. After the donation, restoration of the entire complex began.

The castle maintains signs of its Romanesque origins, in spite of some changes made during the ensuing centuries.

Some places with a Templar connection in the Middle East

Temple Mount, Dome of the Rock, and the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

In 1867, a team from the Royal Engineers, led by Lieutenant Charles Warren (later the London police commissioner of Jack the Ripper fame) and financed by the Palestine Exploration Fund (P.E.F.), discovered a series of tunnels beneath Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, some of which were directly underneath the Templar headquarters. Various small artifacts were found which indicated that Templars had used some of the tunnels, though it is unclear who exactly first dug them. Some of the ruins which Warren discovered came from centuries earlier, and other tunnels which his team discovered had evidently been used for a water system, as they led to a series of cisterns.

Athlit, Pilgrims Castle/Château Pèlerin.

Château Pèlerin, also known as Athlit Castle and Castle Pilgrim, is located on the northern coast of Israel about 13 kilometres (8.1 mi) south of Haifa. The Knights Templar began building it in 1218 during the Fifth Crusade. One of the major Crusader fortresses, it could support up to 4,000 troops in siege conditions. It was lost to the Mamluks in August 1291, shortly after the Fall of Acre. It remained intact for several hundred years, until being damaged in the Galilee earthquake of 1837. In modern times, the castle is part of a training zone for Israeli Naval commandos.

Construction began in early spring 1218 during the period of the Fifth Crusade by the Knights Templar, replacing the earlier castle of Le Destroit which was situated slightly back from the coast. The castle was built on a promontory, with two main walls cutting the citadel off from the land. The outer wall was approximately 15 metres high and 6 metres thick, with three square towers situated about 44 metres apart, projecting out by 12 metres with a level

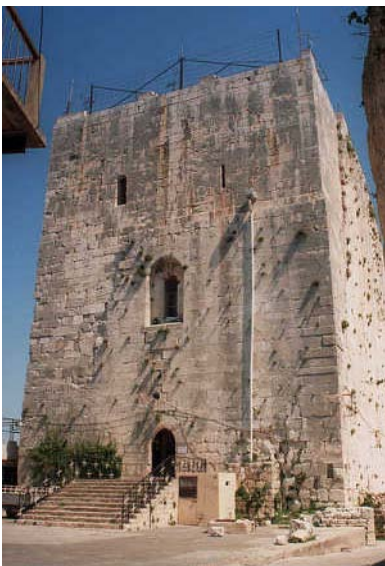
platform on the roof probably for artillery. In front ran a shallow ditch dug at sea level cut into the bedrock. The inner wall was approximately 30 metres high by 12 metres, with two square towers, the north and south each approximately 34 metres tall. As the inner wall was taller than the outer wall, defenders were able to shoot at targets over the first wall allowing greater protection from return fire by the besiegers. Part of the design of the castle included a protected harbour on the south side of the promontory. It also had three fresh water wells within its enclosure. The castle was capable of supporting up to 4000 troops during a siege, as it did in 1220. The settlement of Atlit developed outside the castle's outer wall and was later fortified. The castle's position dominated the north-south coastal route, and surrounding countryside allowing it to draw revenue from tolls and rents, going some way to pay for the running costs of the castle; as well as providing protection for pilgrims. The castle probably got its name from pilgrims who volunteered their labour during its construction.



The castle was under the control of the Knights Templar and was never taken in siege due to its excellent location and design and its ability to be resupplied by sea. It was besieged in 1220 by the Ayyubids, under the command of al-Malik al-Mu'azzam. It came under siege by the Mamluks under Sultan Baybars in 1265, during which the settlement of 'Atlit was destroyed. With the fall of Acre and collapse of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by the Mamluks under Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, the Knights Templar lost their main roles of defence of the Holy Land and security of pilgrims to the Holy Sites. The castle could now only be resupplied by sea, so the castle was evacuated between 3 and 14 August 1291, the last crusader outpost in the Holy Land.

Chastel Blanc, Syria

The port city and fortress of Tartous (called Tortosa by Crusaders), Syria.



Chastel Blanc (called by natives, 'Burj Safita' which means Safita Tower) was built by the Knights Templar during the Crusades upon prior fortifications. Constructed on the middle hill of Safita's three hills, it offers a commanding view of the surrounding countryside, and was a major part of the network of Crusader fortifications in the area. From the roof, one can see from the Mediterranean Sea to the snow-covered mountains of Lebanon, and Tripoli. From Chastel Blanc it would have been possible to see the Templar strongholds at Tartus and Ruad Island to the northwest, Chastel Rouge on the coastline to the southwest, Akkar to the south, and Krak des Chevaliers (the headquarters of the Syrian Knights Hospitallers) to the southeast. The tower is the remaining keep of the original castle. It has a height of 28 meters, a width of 18 meters, and a length of 31 meters. A large bell is on the western wall, and its sound can be heard up to 5 kilometers from Safita. The castle had to be restored in 1170 and 1202 following damages due to earthquakes. The keep in

its current shape probably dates from the reconstruction after 1202.

Considering the time of its construction during the Crusades, the tower served two purposes, as both a chapel and a fortress, with 3 meter-thick walls constructed of massive and carefully-fitted limestone blocks. The ground floor still contains a chapel, dedicated to St. Michael and used by the Greek Orthodox community of Safita. The second floor, which can be reached by a flight of partially destroyed stairs, served as a dormitory, and contains many small angled windows that were used by archers to defend the tower. Cut into the rock below the tower is a water cistern, an essential element in case of siege.

From the other fortifications of the castle, only a portal at 45 meters to the East of the keep can still be seen today. During French colonialism, efforts were made to restore the tower, causing great discomfort to the villagers that lived very close to it.

The Templars in Scotland

In 1128 the cousin of St Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugues de Payens, who served on the First Crusade with Henri St Clair, 2nd Baron of Roslin, and is sometimes connected to Catherine St Clair, met King David I in Scotland. The Order established a seat at Balantrodach, now Temple, Midlothian on the South Esk (River Esk, Lothian). In 1189 Alan FitzWalter, the 2nd Lord High Steward of Scotland was a benefactor of The Order.

In about the year 1187, William the Lion granted part of the Culter lands on the south bank of the River Dee, Aberdeenshire, to the Knights Templar and between 1221 and 1236 Walter Bisset of Aboyne founded a Preceptory for the Knights Templar. In 1287 and 1288 they built a Chapel dedicated to Mary the Mother of Christ, known as St Mary's Chapel and in November 1309, the names of a William Middleton of the "Tempill House of Culter" was recorded.

It has been claimed that in 1309 during the trial of the Templars in Scotland Bishop Lambertson of St Andrews, Guardian of Scotland 1299-1301 gave the Templars his protection, though there is no evidence to support this. It should also be recorded that John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation a major Scottish mediaeval source makes no mention of the Templars at all.

The Knight Templars had considerable possessions in the County of Nairn, or Moray, in 1296. The following extract is taken from The History of Nairn: "...There is a writ extant granted in their [the Knight Templars] favour at Berwick, addressed to the Sheriff of Invernairn to put them in possession of their lands, they having made submission to Edward I. This was no doubt done. From the deed of conveyance of the Temple lands in the North from Lord Torpichen, the last Master of the Order, it appears that the following were the lands held here "Those two roods of arable land lying within the territory of the Burgh of Nairn, in that part thereof called [blank] possessed by John Rose, burgess of Nairn, and his sub-tenants; those two roods of arable temple land and house lying within the said territory of Nairn, possessed by Hew Rose of Kilravock and his sub-tenants; all and haill those our temple lands called the lands of Pitfundie lying in the said Sheriffdom of Nairn, betwixt the stryep that conies from the lands of Brodie on the east, the fludder or myre upon the south side of the common muir called the Hardmuir Map on the south side, the lands of Penick Map and wood of Lochloy Map on the west, and the Euchcarse of Culbyn on the north, for the most part possessed by the lairds of Brodie, and their sub-tenants." They had also lands at Ardersier Map, which are designated in old charters as Temple Land, Temple Cruik, Temple Bank, Bogschand. They lay partly in the vicinity of the town of Ardersier, between Connage Map and the sea, and between Flemington and the sea. A charter granted at Nairn refers to the locus trialis at Ardersier, doubtless an ancient place of trial by "wager of battle." The Temple lands of Ardersier were held by Davidsons and Mackays as portioners. They were acquired by Cawdor in 1626. The Temple lands at Brodie and elsewhere appear to have been disposed of about the same time, as in a Brodie, charter of date 1626 the lands of Pitfundie are included in the Brodie estate. The Templars were a religious and military order of Knights who escorted pilgrims to Jerusalem at a time when such pilgrimages were attended by dangers from robbers. They wore a white robe with a red Maltese cross on the breast, and at first were all of noble birth, The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem also had lands in Nairnshire. It is

impossible now to identify them. When the Knights Templars were suppressed by Edward II, their property was given to the Knights of St. John."

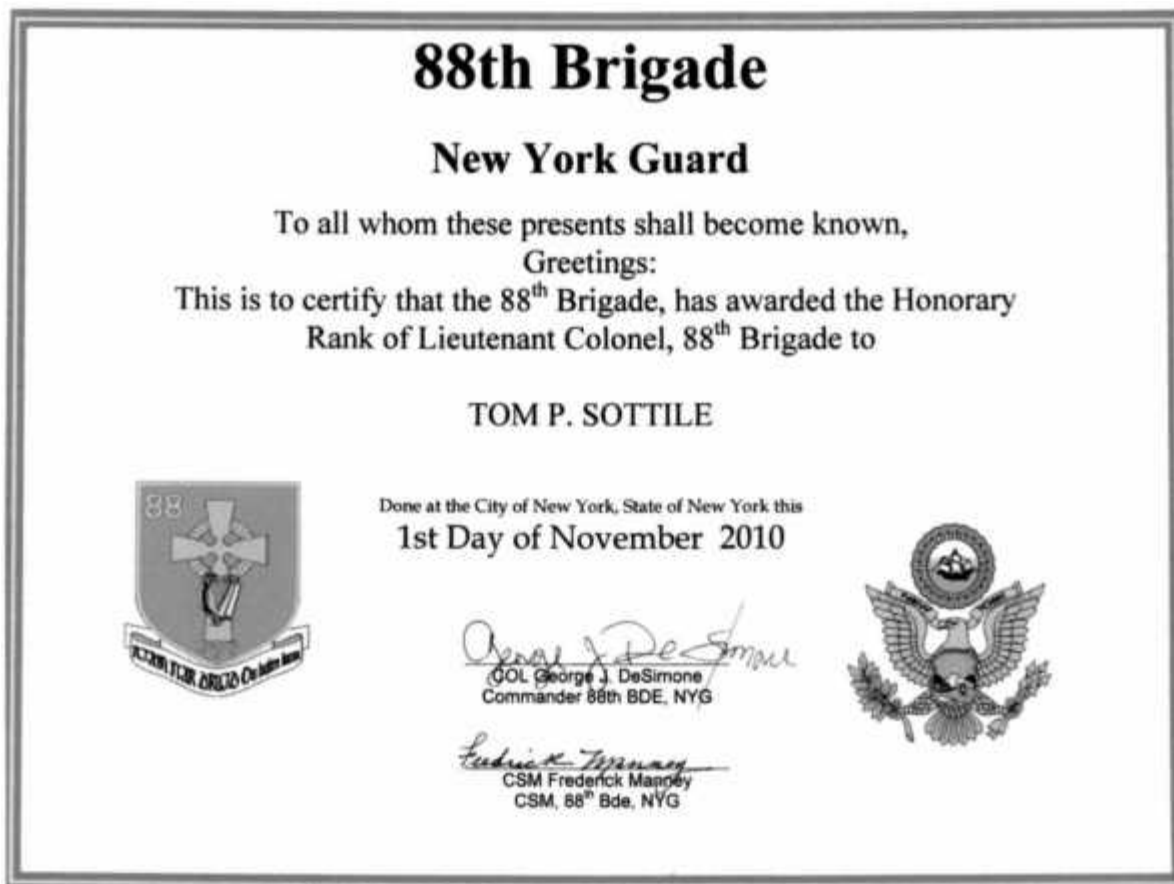
In 1312 by the Papal Bull "Ad Providam" all assets of the Order of the Temple were given to Knights Hospitaller or Order of St. John except for Spain where they were succeeded by the Order of Montesa the Order of Calatrava, from which its first recruits were drawn, and Portugal where they became the Order of Christ and it has been claimed that in Scotland the Order combined with the Hospitallers and continued as The Order of St John and the Temple until the reformation, though there is no evidence to that effect. When Sir James Sandilands, Preceptor of the Order converted to Protestantism in 1553, the Order is thought to have ceased.



The Scottish Knights Templar of OSMTH International have their own tartan. It was ratified and approved by the Grand Conclave of Militi Scotia S.M.O.J in Perth 28 March 1998. The original name was "Scottish Knights Templar of Militi Templi Scotia International." but it was changed to "Scottish Knights Templar of OSMTH International" in 2006. OSMTH stands for; "Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani".

LT. Colonel Tom P. Sottile

Congratulations to Sir Tom on his new rank with the 88th Brigade of the New York Guard.



Reflections

"I had a very special teacher in high school many years ago whose husband died suddenly of a heart attack. About a week after his death, she shared some of her insight with a classroom of students. As the late afternoon sunlight came streaming in through the classroom windows and the class was nearly over, she moved a few things aside on the edge of her desk and sat down there.

"With a gentle look of reflection on her face, she paused and said, 'Class is over, I would like to share with all of you, a thought that is unrelated to class, but which I feel is very important. Each of us is put here on earth to learn, share, love, appreciate and give of ourselves. None of us knows when this fantastic experience will end. It can be taken away at any moment.

"Perhaps this is The Power's way of telling us that we must make the most out of every single day. Her eyes, beginning to water, she went on, 'So I would like you all to make me a promise. From now on, on your way to school, or on your way home, find something beautiful to notice.

"It doesn't have to be something you see, it could be a scent, perhaps of freshly baked bread wafting out of someone's house, or it could be the sound of the breeze slightly rustling the leaves in the trees, or the way the morning light catches one autumn leaf as it falls gently to the ground. Please look for these things, and cherish them. For, although it may sound trite to some, these things are the "stuff" of life.

"The little things we are put here on earth to enjoy.

"The things we often take for granted.

The class was completely quiet. We all picked up our books and filed out of the room silently. That afternoon, I noticed more things on my way home from school than I had that whole semester. Every once in a while, I think of that teacher and remember what an impression she made on all of us, and I try to appreciate all of those things that sometimes we all overlook.

Take notice of something special you see on your lunch hour today. Go barefoot. Or walk on the beach at sunset. Stop off on the way home tonight to get a double dip ice cream cone. For as we get older, it is not the things we did that we often regret, but the things we didn't do.

Lisa Beamer on Good Morning America - If you remember, she's the wife of Todd Beamer who said 'Let's Roll!' and helped take down the plane over Pennsylvania that was heading for Washington DC back on 9/11. She said it's the little things that she misses most about Todd, such as hearing the garage door open as he came home, and her children running to meet him. She's now the Mom of a beautiful little girl, Mary

What Love means to a 4-8 year old...

Slow down for three minutes to read this. It is so worth it.

Touching words from the mouth of babes..

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, 'What does love mean?' The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.'
Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

'When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore.

So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.' Rebecca - age 8

'When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.' Billy - age 4

'Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.' Karl - age 5

'Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.' Chrissy - age 6

'Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.' Terri - age 4

'Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.' Danny - age 7

'Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss' Emily - age 8

'If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.' Nikka - age 6
(we need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

'Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday.' Noelle - age 7

'Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.' Tommy - age 6

'During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.' Cindy - age 8

'My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.' Clare - age 6

'Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.' Elaine - age 5

'Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.' Mary Ann - age 4

'I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.' Lauren - age 4

'When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.' (what an image) Karen - age 7

'You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.' Jessica - age 8

And the final one

The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, 'Nothing, I just helped him cry'

What's On My List For Christmas

By Bill Upper

Christmas these days seem to prove an expensive trial of not only money but also strength: where the only satisfaction comes from surviving the onslaught of family, friends and in-laws. Buying gifts descends to a decision as to the true worth of the relationship and in the purchase of the suitable gift. I once purchased an ice cream maker for my girlfriend on our first Christmas together, an unusual match that managed to captivate both of us.



However, it is said that even the Greed god Jupiter himself was won over and fully appeased by gifts. So back to the mall and what to buy for your Mother (and if that's not difficult enough, what about your Father)? They have enough hats, ties, socks, cooking books and picture frames to start up their own corner store. Kids, fortunately, are easy to buy for: they tell you what they want, while adults respond, "I don't need anything", "I've got everything I need".... But just try not to buy something for your wife, husband, lover, mother or father... just try... and see what happens.

I don't have the answer you're hoping to find, as I've already pointed out, I never have gotten it right, not once...my wife once got a sculptured face of a person from a tree stump... looks good in the back porch... so I can't recommend that you look for advice on what to buy from me.

Except this year, I've put a little more thought into what might be an appropriate gift. Knowing that we are an educated population, and knowing that upon retirement most people like to learn something new to do with their leisure time I've decided on books. But for what books should my saving account be depleted?

Here two books for you to think about, if the person you're buying for deserves a very special gift. After 100 years he's back on the Best Seller's List . . . the Autobiography of non other than Mark Twain. This 500,000 word true story cannot be kept on the store shelves as they run out as soon as they arrive, over 275,000 copies thus far. I see it as the Dad's book but I could be wrong. Mark Twain ordered this book to be published 100 years after his death: and he died in 1910. This is Twain's best. It's political, frank, funny, angry and constantly revealing the true Mark Twain. There are countless recollections of his childhood – whose influence can be seen in his novel's characters, such as "Huckleberry Finn" and Tom Sawyer. Travel back in time with Mark Twain for a memorable Christmas read.

The second book I'd suggest is The Leader's Way – Dalai Lama, by Laurens Van Den Muyzenberg. Perhaps a strange choice for Christian Templars: but if you are looking for the secret of happiness, this might just be for you. If you are questioning the purpose of life? or Compassion, than this unique insight into the art (according to His Holiness the Dalai Lama) of "Making the Right Decisions in our Careers, Your Companies and the World at Large". If nothing else this book makes you think. So enjoy your Christmas Holiday and I hope you find the right gift for the right person. And they find one for you, too . . .

The Importance of Old Photographs

By Alastair McIntyre

I remember when I was a lot younger I was going through a lot of old black and white pictures of family snap shots. I remember saying to my father at the time that as I hardly knew who any of the people were in the photographs and that I'd likely just throw them out.

Well he must have taken this to heart as after his death and when I was preparing to move from Scotland to Canada I came across a number of photo albums. And lo and behold there were all those black and white pictures all neatly put into these albums with notes about where they were taken and the names of the people in the pictures. I can only conclude that he was going to present these to me as there were very few left to add to the albums but of course he died before he could complete the task.

I very much appreciated his efforts to document the family in this way as if he hadn't done that then I would have just thrown them out.

There are photographs from his time in Aden, Iran, Malta, Kuwait, Italy and Australia as well as pictures from Scotland.



Should your family have old pictures like these this would be a great time to talk to your grand parents and parents and get them documented before details are lost for all time.

Christians under Threat

By Chev. Harold Nelson

[**Editor's Note:** Two articles from Harold in this issue and they have to make us think about what we as Templar's might do to help our Christian brothers and sisters. We have already seen a previous article on the plight of Christians in Turkey and in fact there was a BBC documentary about them. I would guess there is not too much we as a Priory can do, although we should certainly consider what we might do, but perhaps this might be a call to action to the Templars of the world? Might this not be something we could raise at the United Nations? Alastair]

Baghdad Christians

The recent massacre of Christians in Baghdad is expected to result in the exodus of even more Christians from an area which has some of the oldest churches in the world. Our Lady of salvation, a Syrian Catholic church, had been bombed before, yet on November 10th, 2010 a brave congregation of over one hundred people were attending mass when the terrorists struck. They held the congregation hostage for over four hours. When the soldiers attacked some of the terrorists set off bombs and sixty people including two priests died in this action.

Baghdad is a city of violence: just as many people were killed by other bombs on the same day. What makes these attacks on Christians different from other sectarian violence is that the Christians do not have a militia, do not bomb their enemies and continue to try to live in peace with all their neighbours.

The British carved Iraq out of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. The land contained Christians, Kurds and several Islamic groups: none of whom got along well at that time. Violence was avoided then, and after Iraq got its independence, by strong rulers.

Following the most recent incident, a Christian woman pointed out that they were safer under Saddam Hussein, with a Christian Deputy Prime Minister and the Baath socialist party than they have been ever since. When the allies invaded Iraq they disbanded the army and outlawed the Baath party: thereby removing the two groups that could control the country and prevent sectarian fighting and the slaughter of those weak in numbers and peaceful in their adherence to their faith.

Twenty years ago there were strong Christian communities in the Mideast, with roughly 800,000 in Iraq alone. The numbers today show only a shadow of the past populations and the only country to show an increase in the Christian population is Israel: largely because of Russian immigrants.

Although the Iraqi government has condemned the violence, the exodus of Christians fleeing and seeking safety in exile from the lands they have occupied for two millennia will continue. Given the events of 10 November, more Christians in Iraq will see the only way to provide safety for their families and themselves will be as refugees on distant shores.

Templars are called upon to defend the rights of all faiths to peacefully follow the traditions of their faiths, live in harmony with those of other beliefs and to be free to live and worship in the Holy Land. How we are to do this presents a challenge we should all be prepared to explore.

[And it's not only in the Holy Land that Christians are under threat as Harold brings us this next article]

Christians in North Korea

Most sources agree that North Korea has the largest number of persecuted Christians but Christians are only 3 – 10% of those being persecuted: where the numbers could exceed 100,000. President George W. Bush claimed that the prison camps are the size of cities.

Religious groups are able to exist only if they practice *juche*, the cult of the country's leaders which places them above Christ. This is similar to Nazi Germany in the 1930's where Lutheran ministers were sent to concentration camps for opposing the Nazi's control of the churches.

Before the Second World War, Christians made up a sixth of the population of Pyongyang, after 160 years of missions. There were several hundred churches at that time, now there are four: two Protestant, one priestless Roman Catholic and a new Orthodox center of worship. The pastor of a protestant church in Pyongyang says there are now 10,000 Protestants and 1,000 Roman Catholics in North Korea. However, in being able to speak publicly would suggest that he has submitted to the *juche* expectations. This would be in line with the government's desire to give an illusion of religious freedom for foreign consumption: rather than disclosing the reality of the faithful of North Korea.

The indigenous native Shamanists and Buddhists are subject to the same discrimination and persecution as the Christians in a country where all religions are suspect of disloyalty to the Supreme Ruler, Kim Jung-II.

12 Days of Christmas

By Ronald R. Caseby, Chichester

Origin of "The Twelve Days of Christmas"

The above song to most people is just a nonsense rhyme set to music. But it is more than just a repetitious melody and had quite a serious purpose when it was written. Roman Catholics in England during the period 1558 to 1829 were prohibited from any practice of their faith by law in private or in public. It was in fact a crime to be a Roman Catholic.

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written in England as one of the "Catechism Songs" to help secret young Roman Catholics learn the tenets of their faith. The poem was a memory aid for those unenlightened times when to be caught with anything in writing indicating adherence to the Roman Catholic faith could not only get you transported to a nasty place such as America, but also imprisoned, beheaded or hanged.

The song's gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The "true love" mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptised person. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ and the two turtle doves are the old and new Testaments.

The other verses represent the following:

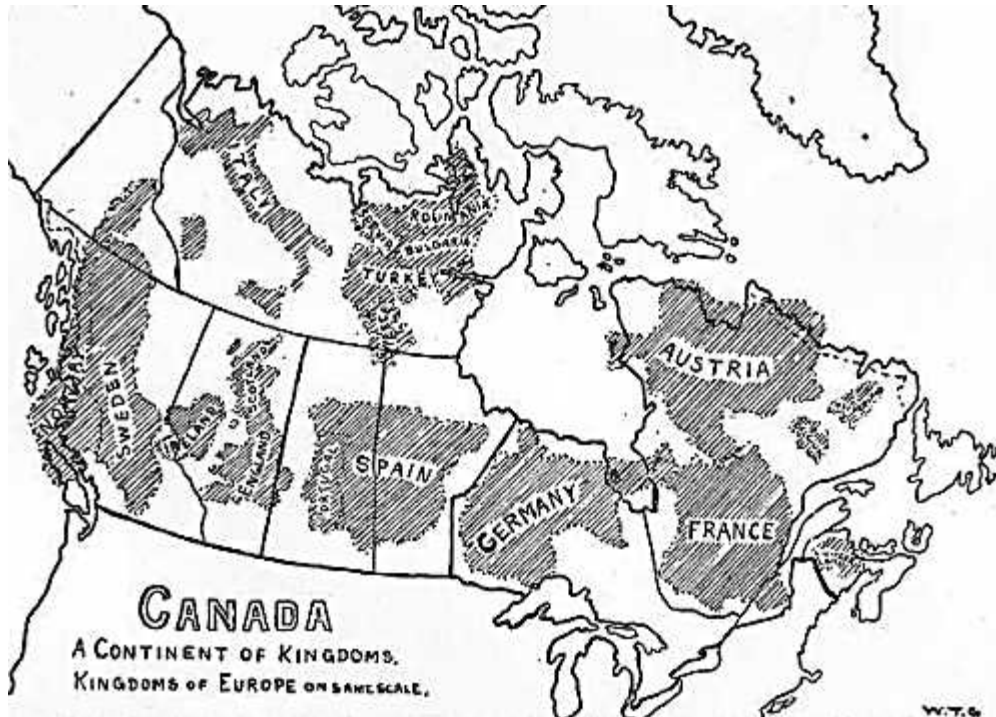
- 3 French Hens are Faith, Hope and Charity,
- 4 Calling Bird are The Four Gospels,
- 5 Golden Rings are the first five books of the Old Testament,
- 6 Geese A-Laying are the six days of creation,
- 7 Swans A-Swimming are the seven gifts of The Holy Spirit,
- 8 Maids A-Milking are the eight beatitudes,
- 9 Ladies Dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit,
- 10 Lords A-Leaping are the Ten Commandments,
- 11 Pipers Piping are the eleven faithful apostles,
- 12 Drummers Drumming are the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.

The Twelve days of Christmas start the day after Christmas Day, and end twelve days later on the 6th January with the Feast of Epiphany. Epiphany being from the Greek word for "manifestation," it being both a celebration of the Christ's Baptism (later reduced by the Church authorities to the solemn blessing of the Baptismal water) and of the revelation to the Three Wise Men, or Kings, or Magi. Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night" makes the old reckoning of dates clear and also of the belief that the Christmas decorations should come down, and the tree removed from the house, 12 days after Christmas Day. Many Roman Catholic and high Anglican Churches in the UK would not sing Christmas Carols before Christmas Day. Even the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols Service was not held before the Sunday after Christmas Day. It was also normal when I was a child in the 1940s for all the family to help put up the decorations on Christmas Eve and sing all but the last verse (reserved for Christmas Day) of "The Holly and the Ivy" as we worked. This jolly time would end with Evening Prayers after which we children would hang one of our socks (usually the largest we could find) by an unlit fireplace and go to bed very tired for it was by then much later than our usual bedtime. On these occasions "The Holly and the Ivy" was called a Carol but was a lesson for us on how the ancient heathen religions of our country were replaced by Christian worship. Many of these old traditions seemed to break down during World War II and have all but vanished. But there are still some diehards. An elderly lady admonished me less than six days before Christmas Day 2002 for humming Carols in our Public Swimming Pool as I did my daily exercises. She said she objected not to my happiness but to the tunes being those for Carols which should not be voiced until Christmas Day. The day after Christmas Day in the UK is known as Boxing Day when we are supposed to open our Christmas "Boxes" (just another word for wrapped goods) which Santa brought to us in the early hours of Christmas Day morning and left in our stockings. So the 26th of December is called Boxing Day and marks the first of the 12 days of Christmas.

Thus, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" starts off with "On the first day of Christmas . . ." because it was thought wrong when it was written for Christians to sing Carols outside of Church before Boxing Day. So, being a very proper young lass, the subject of the Carol would open the first gift that her true love had sent on Boxing Day. That "true love" represented God who had sent Jesus to be born the day before, and all the gifts sent on the subsequent days of Christmas were gifts disguised in the words of the song that came to all believers from God through his son Jesus Christ.

So you would be correct to publish the facts about the Carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas" at any time between 26th December 2002 and 6th January 2003 according to these ancient facts and standards.

Have you ever considered just how large Canada is?



CALENDAR

Send your news of upcoming events for inclusion in the next issue to Sir Alastair at alastairi@electricscotland.com

A number of committees were established at the November meeting (the minutes of which you should have received -- let us know if you have not). Dates for those meetings are expected to be set up only weeks in advance (which doesn't work for a publication coming out every two months!). Agendas and meeting notices will go out to Committee members, so make sure you sign up with the Champions (our term for the Chair) for the ones you are interested in.

The Fund Raising and Events Committee are working on an exciting night in Woodbridge in early February: more to follow.

In 2011, Ottawa's Investiture will be in May, ours in September and Windsor's in November. Attending other Pories' events is a great way to extend friendships and share new ideas.

Our Annual Meeting will be in late February or early March: depending on the availability of our year end financial statements.

And finally...

T'was the night before Christmas,
He lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house,
Made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney,
With presents to give,
And to see just who,
In this home did live.

I looked all about,
A strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents,
Not even a tree.

No stocking by the mantle,
Just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures,
Of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,
Awards of all kinds,
A sober thought,
Came through my mind.

For this house was different,
It was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
Once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,
Silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor,
In this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
The room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured,
A Canadian soldier.

Was this the hero,
Of whom I'd just read?,
Curled up on a poncho,
The floor for a bed?

I realized the families,
That I saw this night,
Owed their lives to these soldiers,
Who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world,
The children would play,
And grown-ups would celebrate,
A bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoy freedom,
Each month of the year,
Because of the soldiers,

Like the one lying here.

I couldn't help but wonder,
How many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas Eve,
In a land far from home.

The very thought brought
A tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees,
And started to cry.

The soldier awakened,
And I heard a rough voice,
'Santa, don't cry.
This life is my choice.

I fight for freedom,
I don't ask for more,
My life is my God,
My country, my corps.'

The soldier rolled over,
And drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
So silent and still,
And we both shivered,
From the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave,
On that cold, dark night,
This guardian of honor,
So willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over,
With a voice, soft and pure,
Whispered, 'Carry on Santa,
It's Christmas Day, all is secure.'

One look at my watch,
And I knew he was right,
'Merry Christmas my friend,
And to all a good night.'

This poem was written by a Canadian soldier, one of our peace keepers stationed overseas. He asked that it be passed along to anyone who would appreciate it. If you know other like-minded souls, please respect his request and send it on.