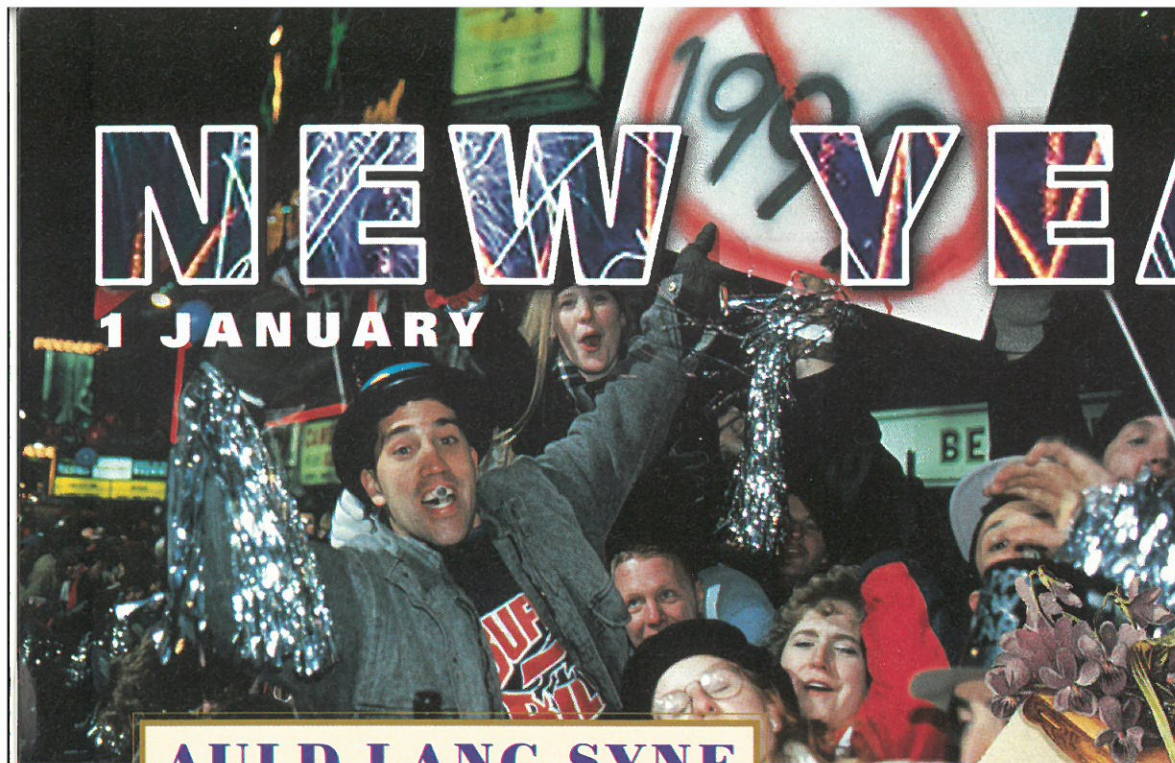


# NEW YEAR

1 JANUARY



## AULD LANG SYNE

In the UK many people sing a song called *Auld Lang Syne* at midnight:

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot (auld old)  
And never brought to mind?*

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot (forgot forgotten)  
And the days of Auld Lang Syne? (Auld Lang Syne long ago)*

*For Auld Lang Syne, my dear,  
For Auld Lang Syne,  
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet, (o' of)  
For the sake of Auld Lang Syne.*



## SCOTTISH CELEBRATIONS

New Year is a big celebration in Scotland. Bigger than Christmas! The Scots have their own word for New Year's Eve - Hogmanay.

There is an old Scottish custom called "first footing". The first foot to come inside your house on 1st January can bring you luck for the whole year. After midnight there will be a knock at your door. Outside

you'll see a man with dark hair and a piece of coal. Let him in! He's a very important man! Dark hair and coal are lucky in Scotland. So men with dark hair are very busy at New Year. They go "first footing" to all their friends.

I don't think it will catch on in blond-haired Finland.

## FUN AT MIDNIGHT

New Year's Eve is the last day of the year. It's party time all over Europe. Millions of people go to discos, pubs, restaurants, and parties to "see the New Year in" with their friends. When the clock strikes twelve people kiss and hug and cheer. It's a great way to start the year.



## New Year's resolutions

To get the year off to a good start many Europeans make New Year's resolutions. Here are some resolutions British children have made:

I will change my socks at least once a week. (Wayne, 9)

If there is only one biscuit left I won't take it. (Cath, 13)

When I borrow my sister's clothes I will remember to ask first. (Barbara, 15)

I will stop singing aloud when I listen to my Walkman. (Rob, 16)

I will think of better excuses for not doing my homework. (Karim, 14)

I'll stop pulling the legs off my sister's Barbie dolls. (Jimmy, 8)

I'll be nice to my little brother for at least one hour a day. (Steve, 15)

I won't spend ages in the bathroom every morning when the family are in a hurry. (Karen, 14)

I will take the dog for a walk every day even if it is raining. (Janet, 11)

I won't stick chewing gum under my school desk. (Rachel, 12)

I'll stop using my sister's toothbrush. (Gary, 13)



## FEAR IN FINLAND

Hi! I'm Jenny. I was an Australian exchange student in Finland last year. Finns have this strange custom on New Year's Eve. They cast tin. You melt the tin in a little saucepan and then pour it into a bowl of water. The shape of the tin tells you something about the coming year.

Sounds fun? Not always! I had a real shock when I did it. I celebrated New Year with my host family. We were in the kitchen casting tin. Everybody got things like flowers and angels and money. Then it was my turn. I poured the tin in the water and lifted the shape out.

"A plane crash!" said my six-year-old host brother. "Shhhhhhh!" said my host parents. But that's exactly what it looked like. You could see the tail part of the plane sticking up into the air. The rest of the plane was all smashed.

"It's ... er... a tree," said my host mother. "A sausage?" suggested my host father hopefully. It was a plane crash. There was no other way of looking at it. And guess who had to fly back to Australia in August?

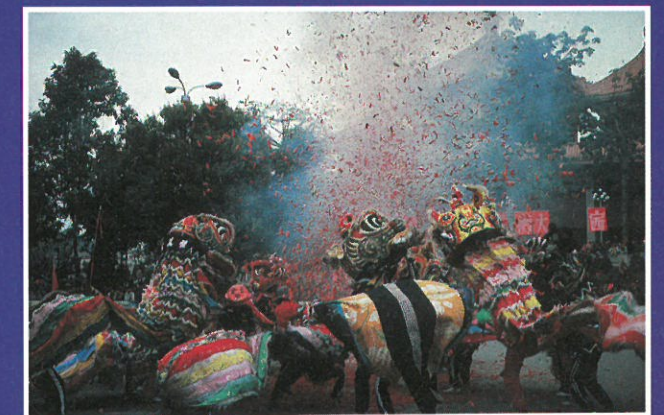
For seven months I kept remembering the New Year tin. My Finnish friends told me not to worry. Casting tin is only a bit of fun, they said. It doesn't mean anything.

They were right. I'm now back in Australia. The flight was fine. Nothing terrible happened. I'm still alive.

But I won't be casting tin this New Year's Eve.

## A TOTALLY UNIMPORTANT DAY! Did you know that there is nothing special about January 1st?

There is no good reason to start the year on that day. It isn't the shortest day. It isn't the coldest day. There is no important religious event on that day. Farmers don't do anything special then. There is absolutely no reason to celebrate the start of the year on that day.



The Chinese celebrate New Year's Day between January 10 and February 19. And the Jewish New Year is in September. New Year doesn't have to be on January 1st.

So if you want to have a New Year's party in summer time when the weather is better - go right ahead!