

***Chief's Christmas Letter***

When does Christmas really start?

As we get closer to Christmas day and all of the celebrations that come with it, this time frame seems to expand with each year.

The introduction of the Advent calendar, suggests that Christmas starts on December 1st, as there are only 25 chocolates! For many, Christmas starts with the posting of the overseas Christmas cards, to get the reliable Christmas delivery on time.

For others it is the writing of the annual "year's activity" as a summary of what has happened for the year, for inclusion with the Christmas card or wish. These are a great way of recalling what you have achieved for the year if you thought that little was accomplished.

For the shops, Christmas could never start early enough and each year the commercial world offers more for less, early, as they scramble for market share.



All this comes undone on the Boxing Day sale programme!

Of course all of the Christmas decorations have to go up in good time or early, to remind all, of their obligations and expectations. Granny always told us to make the Christmas pudding and cake well in advance, months before, to allow for maturing and alcoholic fortification.

Sadly for many, Christmas can be a very sad and lonely time, missing out on the time that is well depicted by presents, great food, friends and family. From a personal perspective, this will be the first Christmas without my mother who has obviously been part of our Christmas children, grandchildren and other many relations, for all our life.

Those on the Isle of Raasay will be saddened as they see all of the work on Raasay House cease due to contractual problems with the rebuilding of Raasay House. This interruption in activity has an impact on the life and future for the Island at a time when they are experiencing more dreadful weather than usual.

From a Christian perspective, Christmas is the time to rejoice and celebrate in the birth of Jesus, often forgotten in commercial nature of today's life, but fundamental for the true celebration for this time of the year. We understand that Advent is Latin for the coming, or arrival, and the period of Advent is the season for preparation for that celebration.

Christmas provides new hope brought by a new child born; thus, this is the very nature for Christmas being child orientated, or those young at heart.

With this in mind, perhaps it is not when Christmas starts each year, (seemingly earlier and earlier), but in fact it has not really stopped since the original start over 2000 years ago.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.  
John Macleod of Raasay  
*Luceo Non Uro*