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## World Party



### The World Welcomes the Millennium

#### Never mind Maxey – from John O'Groats to Land's End, Britain becomes one big party zone

By Jack Sullivan - Alta Vista Web Site Reporter

As hangovers gripped the nation this morning, Edinburgh was still partying on, and hundreds were planning to cure their headaches with an early dip in the waters beside the Forth Rail Bridge.



A husky sled race beside the Palace of Holyroodhouse was another of a series of events, including traditional "first footing" throughout Scotland's capital, meant to prove that

Edinburgh can out-Hogmanay the world by partying for a full week.

Last night, a sea of Loch Ness monster, Alice in Wonderland and "See you Jimmy" hats filled the city's streets in preparation for the four tons of fireworks primed to explode within four minutes from midnight at Edinburgh castle.

The free tickets for the vast street party are normally easy to come by but demand was so great this year that some of the 180,000 tickets available were trading for £500 each on the Internet. Bridget Mudford, 24, from Wellington, New Zealand, was part of a big influx from overseas. "I'd heard so much about Hogmanay here," she said, "that I had to come to experience it because it seemed the best place to come".

"I've never kissed so many Australian women in my life," said Duncan Lamont, 38, a solicitor from London. "I decided to come here because in London my friends from the



office were going to stay at home. They reckoned it was just too much effort and the whole thing was just for the tourists. Whereas here everything is going on in one place and the atmosphere is terrific."

Charlotte Culling, 35, a market researcher, also from London, was among a large contingent from south of the border. "We got here on Thursday night and ten minutes after we arrived, there were hundreds of bagpipers marching down the road. It was brilliant."

Nicky Gibson, 26, a secretary from Northampton, was among many planning to take the plunge this morning in "the loony dook". "The atmosphere is great here," she said. "I wouldn't do this at home," she said, wearing a huge blue Madhatter's hat.

The band Texas were the prime attraction, playing beside Edinburgh Castle, but Del Amitri, the Mavericks and the reunited Bay City Rollers also gained top billing. For the more contemplative, a candlelit service at St Giles' Cathedral, attended by Prince Charles, preceded the big party, and St Mary's Cathedral offered the alternative of "three hours of stillness".



Elsewhere in Scotland, not everything went to plan. Possibly the most bizarre millennium spectacle anywhere – a plan to throw 400lb of molten metal into the North Sea at the town of Port Soya in

Aberdeenshire to mark the end of the Iron Age – had to be abandoned after the huge catapult collapsed during tests.

On the remote Ardnamurchan peninsula in Argyll, at the westernmost point in mainland Britain, local people took pride in being later than everyone else in celebrating the new millennium. They timed their fireworks to go off at 24 minutes past midnight, marking the fact that they are nearly six degrees west of Greenwich, each degree representing four minutes.

Meanwhile, at Gretna Green, Melanie Maddison and Grant Bloomfield-Gibbons, were due to seal their union as the clocks struck midnight at the town's famous Blacksmith's Shop.

Carrbridge Curling Club in the Highlands was due to hold a friendly game starting around 10.30pm and finishing at 12.30am, making it Britain's only sports match to straddle the year, the club believes.

In Stirling, controversial plans to burn the effigy of William Wallace were replaced with a 50ft sculpture of a wolf, the town's symbol, to be set alight as fireworks were fired from the castle.

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<http://www0.bbc.co.uk/millennium/webguide/index.shtml>

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