

Hogmanay in Stonehaven

Activity 1

Complete these sentences with the correct option.

1. Stonehaven is on the _____ coast of Scotland.
north east south
2. The town was originally a centre for _____.
tourism iron fishing
3. The fishing industry collapsed because of _____.
pollution too much fishing new legislation
4. Hogmanay probably has its origins in _____.
pagan religion the giving of gifts root vegetables
5. As many as _____ people swing the fireballs through the streets of the town
6 16 60
6. The people who swing the fireballs _____.
are all men are all residents of the town have three feet
7. The local tradition states that this event started _____.
because it was always dark in the Dark Ages after dark

Activity 2

Answer these questions:

1. When did the fishing industry eventually fail?

2. How is the residential area described?

3. What time does the fireballs celebration start?

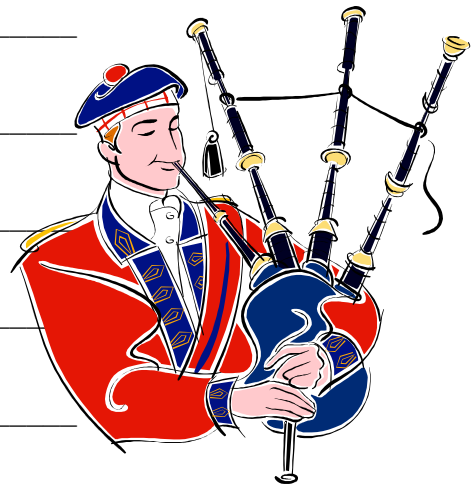
4. How much does it weigh?

5. What is it made of?

6. How does it end?

7. What does it have in common with Halloween?

8. How many people come to the event?



Activity 3

Listen and complete the gaps

Today I'm in Stonehaven, on the east coast of the country in the _____ of Aberdeenshire. It grew up originally as an iron-age fishing village, and remained an important fishing centre until the last century. However, over-fishing of the local _____ meant that the catches were ever declining and now only supports the local population. Instead, it has become a centre for tourism and marine services as well as an upmarket residential area thanks to the _____ from North Sea oil.

The reason I'm here is to witness one of Scotland's more _____ Hogmanay traditions. What is Hogmanay, I hear you ask? Well, it's the New Year's celebration. There is some dispute as to the origins of the word, but most accept that it has its roots in the concept of 'gift giving' to bring _____ for the new year. All over Scotland people have parties, go to organised events and generally have a good time late into the night or indeed right _____ the following day too.

The Hogmanay celebration in Stonehaven is the Ancient Fireballs Ceremony, and it's certainly one of the most spectacular. When the town _____ strikes midnight, up to sixty people walk through the streets swinging fireballs around their heads. A fireball is a wire mesh stuffed with combustible material such as tar, oil, wood and coal and then soaked in paraffin to make sure it burns well. Each ball is made as big as the individual can _____, usually up to 15 pounds, or 7 kilos in weight and as large as 3 feet across, or approximately 1 metre. As the 'swingers', who by the way are all residents of the town, make their way through the streets they are accompanied by a _____ and _____ band all the way to the harbour where the fireballs are tossed into the sea.

So what does it all mean? Well, some say that the fireballs represent the sun as it coincides with the winter _____. Others believe the fire is to ward off the evil spirits, an idea common to Halloween too. Local tradition states that in the Dark Ages the sighting of a shooting star over the town was followed by a particularly good harvest, so the fireballs are supposed to bring _____ to the town once more.

In any case, it's a _____ event and one which attracts up to 14,000 visitors each year. If you're ever lucky enough to be in the area at the end of the year make sure you pay a visit and you too can experience this most peculiar Scottish Hogmanay tradition.

Transcript

Today I'm in Stonehaven, on the east coast of the country in the county of Aberdeenshire. It grew up originally as an iron-age fishing village, and remained an important fishing centre until the last century. However, over-fishing of the local waters meant that the catches were ever declining and now only supports the local population. Instead, it has become a centre for tourism and marine services as well as an upmarket residential area thanks to the boom from North Sea oil.

The reason I'm here is to witness one of Scotland's more peculiar Hogmanay traditions. What is Hogmanay, I hear you ask? Well, it's the New Year's celebration. There is some dispute as to the origins of the word, but most accept that it has its roots in the concept of 'gift giving' to bring luck for the new year. All over Scotland people have parties, go to organised events and generally have a good time late into the night or indeed right through the following day too.

The Hogmanay celebration in Stonehaven is the Ancient Fireballs Ceremony, and it's certainly one of the most spectacular. When the town clock strikes midnight, up to sixty people walk through the streets swinging fireballs around their heads. A fireball is a wire mesh stuffed with combustible material such as tar, oil, wood and coal and then soaked in paraffin to make sure it burns well. Each ball is made as big as the individual can carry, usually up to 15 pounds, or 7 kilos in weight and as large as 3 feet across, or approximately 1 metre. As the 'swingers', who by the way are all residents of the town, make their way through the streets they are accompanied by a pipes and drums band all the way to the harbour where the fireballs are tossed into the sea.

So what does it all mean? Well, some say that the fireballs represent the sun as it coincides with the winter solstice. Others believe the fire is to ward off the evil spirits, a idea common to Halloween too. Local tradition states that in the Dark Ages the sighting of a shooting star over the town was followed by a particularly good harvest, so the fireballs are supposed to bring prosperity to the town once more.

In any case, it's a delightful event and one which attracts up to 14,000 visitors each year. If you're ever lucky enough to be in the area at the end of the year make sure you pay a visit and you too can experience this most peculiar Scottish Hogmanay tradition.