

THE BAY STATE THISTLE



Newsletter of the St. Andrew's Society of Massachusetts WINTER 2015-2016

The St. Andrew's Society of Massachusetts is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating our Scottish Cultural Heritage, including the History & Traditions, Music & Dance, Arts & Crafts, and the Literature & Celtic Language of the Scottish People.

Dear Members,

Things have been busy here with the Society as we come to the end of the year. By now you should have all received the membership renewal materials. Please take a moment to return your completed renewal form and your dues for the coming year. We have some great things in store for 2016 and we would not want you to miss any of it.

Last month we held a concert featuring Scottish Troubadour Charlie Zahm to raise funds for our scholarship fund. About 80 people came to the concert held at the First Congregational Church in Brimfield Massachusetts and had a wonderful time. As of this writing plans are being finalized for another concert next year so look for updates in the coming months.

The Annual Kirking of the Tartans will take place on Sunday, April 3rd at 3:30 pm. The service will be held at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Taunton Massachusetts. This is a wonderful event and has always been well attended. We hope to see many of you there.

Speaking of Tartan Day, we are considering participating in the New York City Tartan Day Parade this year will be held on Saturday, April 9th. The Parade starts at 2:00pm at West 45th Street and marches up 6th Avenue to 55th Street. I understand the distance is about ¼ of a mile. There are no plans to travel as a group but if you are interested in attending and marching with us, drop me an email (rev.peter.preble@gmail.com) so we have an idea of how many will be attending.

By the time you receive this the St. Andrew's Day celebrations will be completed. I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you cordial greetings on St. Andrew's Day from the Board and the membership of the Society and wish you well in the coming year.

As I close out this letter I also want to take the time to wish you all the happiest of holiday seasons, and that we don't get too much snow this winter. This truly is the most wonderful time of the year and it is my sincere wish that all of you find much peace and happiness during the holiday season and the coming new year.

Yours Aye,

Rev. Peter-Michael Preble, FSA Scot
President

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**SASMA WEB SITE
www.st-andrews-of-mass.org**

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

Cambridge Class at the Canadian-American club
Sponsored by the RSCDS, Boston Branch
Live music (fiddle, piano, accordion). New dancers welcome. We provide certified teachers with a strong sense of fun. No partner necessary-just bring yourself, a love of music and dance and soft soled shoes!

When: 7:45—10:15 Every Monday (including most holidays) classes for new and experienced dancers, 8:00-9:00 social dancing for all 9:15-10:15

Where: Canadian-American Club
202 Arlington St., Watertown MA

Fee: \$9:00 adults, \$5.00 students
Season pass available

For more info: <http://rscdsboston.org/classes-camb.html>

Or contact us at
CambridgeClass@rscdsboston.org

Radio Programs

Nova Scotia Kitchen Party
11:00am Saturdays

WUMB 91.9 FM—1170AM

BBC Radio Scotland

Pipeline— I hour broadcast
Sundays

1700UTC (noon EST eastern USA)

The Atholl Brose
Scottish Imports

For Kilts, Kilt alterations, Ladies' Kilt skirts, Tartan Fabric, Ties, Scarves, SCD ghillies & pumps,
Write: 37 Blanchard Road
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: 1-617-661-5899

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Applications are available on our web site or by contacting:

Dan Johnson
Phone: 781-337-7966
E-mail: danjohnbarra@hotmail.com



Now in its second decade of concerts around New England, *A Christmas Celtic Sojourn* with *Brian O'Donovan* is returning to stages in Boston, Worcester, New Bedford, and Rockport, MA.

Brian O'Donovan's *A Celtic Sojourn* has thrilled radio audiences for 28 years. For the last thirteen, the Christmas-time live version of the show has drawn on Celtic, Pagan, and Christian traditions to celebrate the music of this season. First launched in 2003, *A Christmas Celtic Sojourn* reflects the compelling and diverse offerings of the weekly national radio program.

For the past two years, in celebration of the second decade of the concert series, one of the shows at the beautiful Cutler Majestic Theatre in downtown Boston has been radio broadcast nationally. This year will see a new Public Radio International-distributed special featuring the 2014 program.

With legends of music, song, and dance from the Celtic world and beyond poised to take the stage together, this year's show promises to be one of the most dynamic.

2015 Performance Dates and Venue Information

Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston

Friday, Dec. 11, 2015 at 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015 at 3pm and 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015 at 1pm and 5pm

Friday, Dec. 18, 2015 at 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 19, 2015 at 3pm and 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015 at 1pm and 5pm

Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport, MA

(SOLD OUT.)

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015 at 4:30pm and 8pm

Hanover Theatre, Worcester, MA

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 at 7:30pm

The Zeiterion Theatre, New Bedford, MA

Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015 at 7:30pm

THE 12TH ANNUAL KIRKIN O' THE TARTANS IN CELEBRATION OF TARTAN DAY SUNDAY

April 3, 2016

3:30 p.m.

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
ST. THOMAS
111 HIGH STREET
TAUNTON, MA**



THE SAINT ANDREW'S SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS BELT BUCKLE

The St. Andrew's Society of Massachusetts is proud to present their own belt buckle. This heavy pewter buckle made by the Caledonia Fine Arts Company of Connecticut is available for \$60.00 and may be purchased at any Games and Festival that we have a tent or by mail. Checks should be made out to:

SASMA

and sent to:

SASMA

P.O. Box 204

Weymouth, MA 02191

**Sir John Thompson
Canadian Prime Minister**

John David Sparrow Thompson was the fourth Canadian Prime Minister, the first Prime Minister from Nova Scotia and the first Roman Catholic to hold that office.

Thompson was born in Halifax Nova Scotia on November 10, 1845. He was the son of John Sparrow Thompson and Charlotte Pottinger. Thompson's father had emigrated from Waterford Ireland but was of Scottish background.

John Thompson was educated in local Halifax schools and went to work as a reporter in Nova Scotia House of Assembly. John Thompson was called to the bar in 1865. He practiced law and served as an alderman in Halifax.

Thompson married Annie Affleck in 1870 and had nine children, five of whom survived infancy. Annie Affleck was also from Halifax but the Thompsons were married in Portland, Maine. Annie Affleck was a Catholic and at that time John Thompson was a Protestant. In the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church required an episcopal dispensation for Catholics to marry Non Catholics. The Catholic archbishop of Halifax was away at that time. The closest bishop was in Portland, Maine, hence the trip to the United States. John Thompson subsequently became a Roman Catholic.

John Thompson entered provincial politics as a Conservative, though his family was more in the Reform camp. In the beginning both John Thompson and his father were in the anti confederation group lead by Joseph Howe in Nova Scotia. However, Howe eventually came to support Canadian confederation and served in the federal cabinet lead by Sir John MacDonald, the first Canadian Prime Minister. John Thompson followed Joseph Howe in his support for Confederation and was elected to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly representing Antigonish.

As a member of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Thompson rose to become the Attorney General of the Province of Nova Scotia and then briefly the Premier of Nova Scotia. Following the defeat of his party at the polls, John Thompson was appointed to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia by Sir John MacDonald, the federal Prime Minister.

John Thompson served as a provincial Supreme Court Justice for three years. During that time, Thompson was instrumental in the founding of the Dalhousie University Law School.

In 1885, Thompson was recruited to serve in the federal cabinet by Sir John MacDonald as the Justice Minister. While Justice Minister, the Louis Reil question came to a head. Reil was sentenced to death for leading the 1885 North West Rebellion. Thompson supported Riel's sentence and subsequent execution. As Justice Minister, Thompson was responsible for the first Criminal Code, a consolidation of Canadian criminal law.

In 1891, Sir John MacDonald became ill and died in office. The Governor General initially asked John Thompson to become Prime Minister, but he declined on religious grounds, thinking that people would not accept a Catholic as Prime Minister. John Abbot served as Prime Minister for one year before retiring.

Thompson accepted the position of Prime Minister of Canada in 1892. As Prime Minister, he was responsible for Canada's success in the Bering Sea seal harvesting issue.

He also helped settle the North West Territories school issue. Thompson worked on the Manitoba school issue but did not live to see it resolved.

In October 1894, John Thompson traveled to England to be sworn in as a member of the British Privy Council and to be knighted by Queen Victoria. Thompson also went to England to consult English doctors as he was extremely overweight and had several health issues. Thompson was knighted by Queen Victoria on December 12th but collapsed and died shortly after the ceremony. Thompson's body was transported back to Canada on HMS Blenheim and he was given a state funeral in Halifax Nova Scotia. Sir John Thompson is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery in Halifax.

Thompson left a very small estate so money was raised to support his widow and children.

John Thompson died at age 49 and was only Prime Minister for a short time. Today he is largely forgotten. Who knows had he lived longer, he might have left a larger legacy.

**Submitted by:
Dan Johnson
Vice President
SASMA**

BOOOK REVIEW

Now that autumn is upon us with cooler temperatures and much shorter daylight hours you might feel so much less guilty about spending time reading. The Shetland Island series written by Ann Cleeves, a prolific British crime-writer, will certainly help you while away the time when darkness falls so early. I was drawn to these stories because of the location. The author paints a memorable portrait of island life among people in this remote but starkly beautiful area where families have lived for many generations. The Shetland Islands are an archipelago approximately 100 miles north of mainland Scotland. Of the one hundred or so islands in this harsh, barren landscape, only fifteen are inhabited. It is here that Inspector Jimmy Perez, a Native of Fair Isle, is the main character of the series. All the characters are well developed, interesting and very human. In order the titles are: Raven Black, White Nights, Red Bones, Blue Lightning, Dead Water, and Thin Air.

Raven Black begins on New Year's Eve with a lonely outcast named Magnus Tait who stays home waiting for visitors who never come. But the next morning the body of a murdered teenager is discovered and Magnus is the prime suspect. Inspector Jimmy Perez finds himself in an investigation that leads deep into the past of the secrets of the Shetland Island bringing up another murder eight years prior.

White Nights is set in midsummer when the sun never sets on the Shetland Islands and birds sing all night long. Artist Bella Sinclair throws a party to launch her latest exhibition at her art gallery on the beach. A bizarre party guest causes the party to end abruptly when he has an emotional breakdown. Unfortunately for him he is found murdered the next day. A second murder occurs and Jimmy Perez is second guessing himself during this crazy time of year when day blurs into night and nothing is what it seems.

In Red Bones human remains are discovered at an archaeological dig site. Many people on the island of Whalsay are caught up on the intrigue. Are they ancient bones or those of a much more modern source? The death of an elderly woman, shot in the middle of the night, brings Jimmy Perez into the story. While the spring mists shroud the island a young archaeology student is murdered. Inspector Perez must look to feuding families and old secrets to stop the killer from striking again.

Blue Lightning brings Jimmy Perez to his home, Fair Isle, to introduce his fiancé to his parents. This island is the home of a bird center bringing avid bird watchers from far and wide. The director is found murdered and a severe storm isolates the tiny island. As Jimmy investigates and uncovers a nest of complicated relationships stormy weather adds to the gloom and more bodies pile up.

The sixth book in the series is Thin Air, once again set in mid-summer time of light nights and mysterious mists. A group of friends are visiting Shetland when one of them disappears, as if into thin air, only to be found dead in a loch nearby. Prior to her death she had claimed to have seen the ghost of a local child who was drowned in the 1920s. Eleanor's friends feel she was suffering from mental illness and must have drowned herself, but Jimmy Perez suspects that things are not as they seem. Of course there is a secret behind the myth of the ghost; one that someone might kill to protect. These are well-written books that convey a clear sense of life in the Shetland Islands. They are very much worth reading on that basis alone. But the deeply real, believable characters make reading these books worth so much more.

Submitted by
Avis Leary
Member at large
SASMA

THE MYSTICAL UNICORN OF SCOTLAND

What says magic more loudly than choosing the mystical and powerful Unicorn of Scotland as the country's National Animal?

A country's National Animal should represent the best, and defining, qualities of the nation who chose it. Scots have a strong sentimental streak under that practical and reserved exterior and Scottish culture is rich in superstitions, myths and legends. So, choosing a heraldic symbol as awe inspiring as the unicorn make perfect sense!

The stories and legends surrounding the Unicorn go about as far back in history as the human race. These beautiful creatures were worshiped by the ancient Babylonians, and written descriptions of them appear throughout ancient history and as early as the first century AD.

Unicorns were seen by the early writings and drawings of many different countries and cultures, including Greece, Persia (now Iran), Egypt, India and Africa.

The Persians, the Romans, the Greek philosophers and even ancient Jewish scholars, all describe a horse-like creature whose single horn had magical properties that could heal any disease or illness.

Unicorns were considered to be very rare and precious, a lunar symbol (i.e. symbolized the moon), and they were given differing characteristics depending on the culture and country that was describing them, these included: innocence, purity, boldness, pride, healing powers, joy, intelligence, virility, nurturing powers.

Although they're often thought of as imaginary or purely mythical animals, the appearance of Unicorns in the history and writings of so many different countries over many centuries seems to be more than imagination or coincidence.

Even today, fantasy fiction and art is full of unicorn imagery, so that fascination continues.

There are many weird and wonderful animals alive in the world today and many that have become extinct. So, how hard is it to imagine a horse with a single horn?

Unicorns have been associated with Royalty and heraldry since at least the time of the Romans and over the centuries their appearance and personality traits have had more than a few upgrades!

They grew to become an exotic creature, a magnificent horse with cloven hooves, the tail of a lion and a perfect spiraled horn in the middle of their foreheads. In Celtic Mythology the Unicorn of Scotland symbolized innocence and purity, healing powers, joy and even life itself.

It was also seen as a symbol of masculinity and power. Two sides of the same coin as it were, a blend of male virility and female nurturing, perhaps the perfect mix! It was seen as a wild, freedom-loving creature, fierce, bold, proud and intelligent, beautiful and courageous. Dangerous if running free and impossible to capture alive, except if lured into an ambush by a virgin.

To a country as bold, fierce and proud as Scotland, one that was fighting for its independence from oppressors this was the perfect choice as the National Animal that would appear on heraldic symbols.

It would seem that the Scottish people believed in the reality of the unicorn.

It's not quite clear exactly when the unicorn first appeared in Scottish heraldry, but one of the earliest examples is seen in the Royal Coat of Arms at Rothesay Castle which is believed to have been carved sometime before the 15th century. Before England and Scotland came under joint rule, Scotland's Coat of Arms featured two unicorns supporting a shield.



In 1603 the reigning King of Scotland, King James VI, also succeeded Queen Elizabeth 1st of England and became the King James the 1st of England. This was known as the Union of the Crowns.

Although the new country of Great Britain did not legally exist for another century, this union seemed to require a new Royal Coat of Arms, and work began on creating the design you see today which features the Unicorn of Scotland on the right and the English Lion on the left. This was supposed to symbolize the accepted union of the two countries.



So now you can see why this mythical creature is actually the perfect National Animal for Scotland.

Traditional Scottish Recipes
- Bread and Butter Pudding



A recipe for using up stale bread. Unlike bread pudding, with which this is sometimes confused, this is better made with stale white bread. This is a tangy version and quite a bit richer than the frugal original which was probably Mrs Beeton's bread and butter pudding.

Ingredients:

50 g (2 oz) butter
8 slices of stale white bread from a smallish loaf
50 g (2 oz) currants
10 g (1/2 oz) mixed candied peel
grated zest from half a lemon
3 large eggs, beaten
60 ml (2.5 fl oz) double cream
275 ml (10 fl oz) full cream milk
50 g (2 oz) caster sugar
Freshly grated nutmeg to personal taste

Method:

Pre-heat the oven to 180° C (350° F - gas 4)
Lightly grease a baking tray with butter.
Leaving the crusts on, butter each slice of bread and cut into eight pieces. Arrange a layer of bread and sprinkle with half of the currants and candied peel.
Arrange the remaining bread and sprinkle with the remaining currants and peel.
Add the double-cream, milk, sugar, lemon zest and beaten eggs to a bowl and whisk together well. Pour this mixture over the layered bread, sprinkle with a little freshly grated nutmeg and bake for 40 minutes.
Serve warm

Shipping-
Tartan tie, Scarf, Sash & Tam....\$2.50 per item
Belt Buckle.....\$4.00

St. Andrew—Quick Facts

St. Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland. St. Andrew was credited with spreading the gospel to Romania, Greece and Russia, and is also their patron saint. Scotland is one of the few countries to have one of Christ's disciples as their patron saint.

The Apostle

St. Andrew as one of the Twelve Apostles (disciples of Jesus) and brother of St. Peter, St. Andrew is believed to have died on a diagonally transverse cross which the Romans sometimes used for executions and which, therefore, came to be called St. Andrew's cross.

St. Andrew's Day is connected with Advent, which begins on the first Sunday after November 26th.

St. Andrew's Day marks the opening of Christmas Markets, and many Midwinter customs and folk superstitions are also connected to this day.

St. Andrew-Folklore

Around midnight on November 29th, it was traditional for girls to pray to St. Andrew for a husband. They would make a wish and look for a sign that they had been heard.

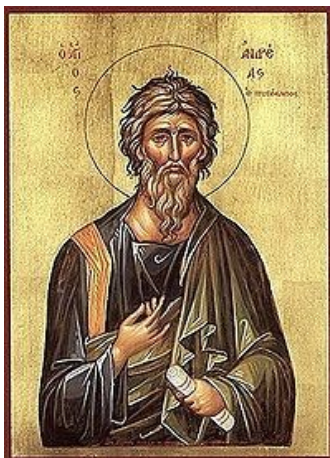
A girl wishing to marry could:

Throw a shoe at a door. If the toe of the shoe pointed in the direction of the exit, then she would marry and leave her parents house within a year.

Peel a whole apple without breaking the peel and throw the peel over the shoulder. If the peel formed a letter of the alphabet, then this suggested the name of her future groom.

German folklore advised single women who wish to marry to ask for St. Andrew's help. The night before the 30th, if they sleep naked, they will see their future husbands in their dreams. Young women should also note the location of barking dogs on St. Andrew's Eve, as their future husbands will come from that direction.

St. Andrew is also expected to look after gout, singers, sore throats, still necks, unmarried women, women who wish to become mothers, fish dealers, fishmongers, fishermen, old maids-and more!



The Christmas Revels: In Celebration of the Winter Solstice

17 Performances December 11-27, 2015

Set in a village not too different than the one described in Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales* this year's *Christmas Revels* takes a leap into the past to access the world of Celtic legend and song. We'll spin tales of shape-changers and dragons, of ghostly white horses and of the little wren — king of the birds, enjoy rich Welsh anthems, wild border Morris, a traditional mummers play, and lots of audience participation — a Revels hallmark.

Please join us at Sanders Theatre this winter as we celebrate Christmas in Wales!

Sanders Theatre, Harvard University
45 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
Harvard box office 617-496-2222
Tuesday-Sunday 12:00-6:00PM



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR
from
THE BOARD OF ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY
OF MASSACHUSETTS**

The **Boston Christmas Tree** is the [City of Boston, Massachusetts's](#) official [Christmas tree](#). A tree has been lit each year since 1941,^[1] and since 1942 has been given to the people of Boston by the people of [Nova Scotia](#) in thanks for their assistance during the 1917 [Halifax Explosion](#). The tree is on display at the [Boston Common](#) throughout the Christmas season.

Contents

[\[hide\]](#)

[1 Halifax explosion](#)

[2 Donation](#)

[3 Tree selection](#)

[3.1 Specifications](#)

[3.2 Christmas Tree Specialist](#)

[4 Tree cutting and ceremony](#)

[5 Transporting the tree](#)

[6 Tree arrival and lighting](#)

[7 See also](#)

[8 References](#)

[9 External links](#)

Halifax explosion[\[edit\]](#)

On December 6, 1917 at 9 am, the [Halifax Explosion](#) severely destroyed much of the city. Boston authorities learned of the disaster by telegram and quickly organized and dispatched a relief train around 10 pm to assist survivors. A blizzard delayed the train, which finally arrived in the early morning of December 8, and immediately began distributing food, water, and medical supplies. Numerous personnel on the train were able to relieve the Nova Scotia medical staff, most of whom had worked without rest since the explosion occurred. Nova Scotian children study the explosion in schools and know "Boston was one of the first responders, and really a lifesaver."^{[2][3]}

Donation[\[edit\]](#)

THE BOSTON CHRISTMAS TREE

The Boston Christmas tree is the city of Boston Massachusetts's official Christmas tree. A tree has been lit each year since 1941.. And since 1971 it has been given to the people of Boston by the people of Nova Scotia in thanks for their assistance during the 1917 Halifax explosion. The tree is lit in the Boston Common throughout the Christmas season.

In 1918, the year after the explosion, [Nova Scotia](#) donated a large [Christmas tree](#) to the city of [Boston](#) in thanks and remembrance for the help the Boston [Red Cross](#) and the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee provided immediately after the Halifax Explosion. Another tree was sent in 1971, and every year since. The annual gift was started by the [Lunenburg County](#) Christmas Tree Producers Association to promote Christmas tree exports as well as acknowledge the Boston support after the explosion. The gift was later taken over by the Nova Scotia Government to continue the goodwill gesture and to promote trade and tourism. It is so important to the people of Nova Scotia that "people have cried over it, argued about it, even penned song lyrics in its honor." Joseph Slauenwhite donated the first two trees. The tree typically comes from the southern half of the province, but in 2014 the tree came from [Antigonish County](#), in the north.¹

The province also donates smaller trees to [Rosie's Place](#) and the [Pine Street Inn](#), homeless shelters in Boston. The Christmas Tree Extension Specialist whose responsibility it is to select a tree is "always looking" for trees, and keeps a list of trees for years. Most donors are "honored to give up their trees... [and] most will gladly watch their towering trees fall" since everyone knows the reason it is being sent to Boston. Owners often would not normally "have dreamed of cutting down the big spruce Grandpa planted" but will "gladly part with it" when told it is going to Boston. They "consider it a great honor" and say, 'Oh, my God, how can I refuse?'" It is sometimes donated in memory of a family member who died in the explosion. The process can be political as families vie to have their tree chosen.

Knowing its symbolic importance to both cities, the [Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources](#) has specific guidelines for selecting the tree. It must be an attractive [balsam fir](#), [white spruce](#) or [red spruce](#), 12 to 16 meters (40 to 50 feet) tall, healthy with good color, medium to heavy density, uniform and symmetrical and easy to access. The trees do not usually come from [tree farms](#), but from open land where they can grow tall and full.

The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources Christmas Tree Specialist has the responsibility for selecting the tree each year. For the specialist the "tree can be elusive, the demands excessive, and the job requires remembering the locations of the best specimens in the province and persuading the people who own them to give them up for a pittance."¹ The first Specialist was Tom Ernst, and he was followed in the 1990s by Peter Romkey. As of 2014¹, the Christmas Tree Extension Specialist responsible for selecting the Boston tree is [Ross H. Pentz](#), a position he has held since 2001.

Before the tree is cut, each branch is individually tied to the trunk. It takes two men a day and a half to prepare the tree to be cut down. A crane holds the tree at the top while it is cut at the base by a chainsaw.

The tree cutting ceremony has been described as "quite the local spectacle for Nova Scotians," and features representatives from the province, the United States Consulate in Halifax, the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia, hundreds of local school children, a [town crier](#), [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#), Nova Scotia conservation officers, an Antigonish bagpiper, and [Santa Claus](#). The "regional media coverage [of the ceremony is] huge."

In 2014, students and staff in the environmental technologies program at the [Nova Scotia Community College](#) Strait Area Campus cut down that year's tree.

The tree travels over 750 miles (1,200 km) to Boston, with a stop at the [Grand Parade in Halifax](#) for a public send-off ceremony featuring a live musical performance by [The Stanfields](#). Attendees are also invited to sign a thank you book for Boston. The tree travels by truck across Nova Scotia, then cruises on a ferry across the [Bay of Fundy](#), continuing by truck through Maine and New Hampshire to Boston. In 2013, the tree was led out of Halifax by a group of runners in honor of victims of the [Boston Marathon bombings](#).¹

The tree arrives in Boston under police escort. In the same way that schoolchildren see the tree off in Nova Scotia, schoolchildren from Boston are on hand to welcome it to the [Boston Common](#).

The tree lighting takes place on the Common in late November or early December. The event is broadcast on [WCVB](#) and attracts about 20,000 people. The 1998 tree required more than 3,200 man hours to decorate, as well as 4 ½ miles (7 km) of wire and 17,000 multi-colored lights. The 2006 tree was covered in 8,000 bulbs. The tree donated by Nova Scotia was placed at the [Prudential Center](#) from 1971 until 2002, when it was moved to the Boston Common because of planned development.

