

Dark Times

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Belles of the Winterball

Dr Robert Douglas Hume

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be able to speak with you once more. I've been absent for some time, although that is a story for another time. For now, I am just glad to be back among my friends and peers. And what a fortuitous moment to have returned, just in time for Prince Carlisle's famous Winterball.

I was lucky enough to receive an invitation, and along with prominent Kindred from around the country, arrived at Palace of Holyroodhouse. As you would expect from Prince Carlisle, no expense was spared and the highly appropriate ice theme was reflected in the abundance of crystals and diamonds utilised in the opulent venue, together with intricately carven ice sculptures and the pure white attire of the mortal servants. The evening was capped by a wondrous fireworks display to rival any seen in the city.

All in all, the visiting Kindred were dressed to match, their formalwear augmented by diamond jewellery contributed by Prince Carlisle himself. Christine, recently of Glasgow, formerly of Paris, was particularly noteworthy, in a dress covered in crystals, complemented by a diamond tiara and

numerous other coloured diamond rings and necklaces. Given the extent to which Christine's outfit blended with the evening's theme, it was questioned whether she had taken advantage of inside knowledge to be so prepared.



But on to the guests, and I am sure you are eager to hear in particular how the visitors from Glasgow acquitted themselves. In that regard, I am happy to say, with all appropriate decorum among the dignitaries from Edinburgh and other domains. As always, the guest list for this exclusive and popular annual event could warrant its own article, but I shall endeavour to list them here.

Attending the evening from Edinburgh were Prince Carlisle, of course, Prince of Edinburgh, childe of

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Madame Guil, the Toreador Justicar, together with his Seneschal, Marienne Sinclair and two Primogen, Samuel Todd and the Brujah Sheriff Laurence Redwood. Some tension was visible between the two Edinburgh Primogen, and they did not speak much over the course of the night.

Inevitably in attendance were Farr the Gangrel and Lady Eleanor Plunkett, the harpies of Edinburgh. From elsewhere in Scotland, Thomas Carmichael, Steward of Dundee and childe of Carlisle was present, as was Reginald Albertson, Seneschal of Aberdeen who owes his life to the Prince of that domain. The son of the Prince of Aberdeen, Prince von Pitt of Inverness, sent his own childe Karlson to attend the evening, while also present was Mairi Chalmers, Primogen of Dundee.

From the English courts, David Stone of York attended, in high spirits after the success of Alexander Drummond's party, together with Mark Sawyer-Sim, traditionalist Sheriff of York. William DeMontfort, Ventrue Primogen represented Severn, while Princes Carter and Dominik Wallace, of Manchester and Birmingham respectively, were the sole representatives of their domains.

From London, as one would expect, Margery Houndsworth-Stone arrived, along with Sir Gillespie Wright, Queen Anne's loyal servant. Marcus Leavenholme, the Malkavian London socialite found himself in his element, while another Malkavian also came from London, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, former Scourge of the Cambridge domain.

And so to Glasgow... Prince Rothschild was missed, but was represented by his Primogen William Chauncey, the only Tremere in attendance, and who spoke with an interesting mix of Prince Wallace, DeMontfort and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Christine was a popular fixture, engaging with all of the guests over the course of the evening, sparkling like the chandeliers. Duc François, recently arrived in Glasgow from Paris, was a likewise well received, if somewhat quiet addition to the evening. Eve and Angus of Clan Gangrel made quite the couple, introducing themselves to all present, although it must be said that Eve did most of the talking!

Jack was unusually elegant, and although she largely kept to those she already knew, she appeared to enjoy the evening. The much anticipated Viscount Aldworth conducted himself with predictable style, nimbly steering discussions away from the topics of Glasgow and its praxis, instead delighting the ball with his quick wit and light hearted anecdotes. Relations between the Viscount and Lady Eleanor Plunkett seemed a little strained, but other than that Aldworth charmed everyone present.

So all together a highly enjoyable evening, with the most interesting collection of guests. A fine opportunity for me to renew some Glasgow acquaintances, and those of you I met for the first time that night, I look forward to seeing you again upon my visit to Glasgow at this month's court. Until then, I bid you adieu my readers, and look forward to my visit to Glasgow.

Glasgow's Burning

Dark Times Staff Writers

Glasgow's arson problem worsened this month, alongside the usual empty buildings we had with two more buildings being targeted, apparently by copycats of the same group. The first to be mentioned is Club Diablo on Bath Street, who was advertised in this very publication. The other was an elderly care home in Govan.

Both buildings were targeted in the usual manner, but the accelerants lacked the sophistication of the original crimes. Both were completely gutted by the flames in a matter of hours. Dealing with these incidents stretched Strathclyde Fire and Rescue to its limits, and it is believed the second fire did not receive the usual level of service for such a sizeable blaze. It was originally classed as a false alarm discovered by the staff as they ushered in the residents after evacuating the building.

The fire at Club Diablo occurred late at night, long after revellers had vacated, and there were no casualties that evening. The fire at the nursing home also occurred in the small hours. Firefighters praised the swift response of staff members, without with

their would certainly have been a death toll. Regardless of the numbers involved, this incident will bring further attention to the city, at a time when it appeared the spotlight was fading.

Prima Ballerina Unseen

Dark Times staff writers

Glasgow appears to be gradually returning to its usual, unstable self over the past few months. After a series of massacres, culminating in last month's shootout in Club Diablo, this month has seen another Kindred disappearance, adding to those earlier this year.

Renée Gordel, the Toreador ballerina renowned in the mortal world appears to have been abducted following her appearance in the opening performance of The Nutcracker at Glasgow's Theatre Royal. After a fantastic performance, to great acclaim, Renée was arrested in her dressing room by two uniformed officers.

While being escorted from the stage door to a waiting police car, the press were already in position to photograph Renée's departure, a fur coat covering the handcuffs, but the manner of her travel unmistakable. Although she displayed upset, Renée made no obvious attempts to break free from her captors, although this may have been in deference to the requirements of the Masquerade.

Since that evening, Strathclyde Police have stated that Ms. Gordel was arrested on false information, and was released on the same evening. Renée has yet to be seen following the incident and has been replaced by her understudy in subsequent ballet performances. Her agent has released a standard statement that she is currently "resting due to exhaustion" but her true status, along with the full details of her arrest remain unknown.

Fraudster vs Mobsters

Dark Times staff writers

Banks were tightening their security this month, after a cashier at the Business Branch of RBS on

Glasgow's Bath Street was able to make off with a sum in excess of £10 million. The money was filtered from across the range of corporate clients and transferred into an offshore account based in the British Virgin Islands.

From there, the money was moved through other offshore accounts and RBS have speculated that it may take weeks to recover the funds, if at all. However in the meantime, the bank has been reimbursed by their insurance and the incident passed with minimal disruption; the only noticeable effect was the branch was closed for a number of hours on a Saturday

However, Vince Graham, the suspected thief, does not appear to have had much opportunity to enjoy his ill-gotten gains. After an international alert was raised with Interpol, Graham's description was passed around local police in a number of suspected destinations. Within a week, his dead body was discovered by local police in Durazno, Uruguay, after being dumped behind a bar notoriously frequented by criminals.

The exact details are not yet clear; it has yet to be determined if Graham was working with the local denizens, or if they found out about his hoard, or even if their presence is a cover for another killer. What is known is that there is now no possibility of questioning Graham, which reduces the chances of recovering the stolen funds.

Great Britain by Night

Margery Houndsworth-Stone, Clan Toreador, Ancilla, Harpy of London

Hello dear readers, the nights were at their longest this past month and it seems only fitting that so much has occurred in December. Before I head towards Carlisle's Winterball or even the mad scramble to deal with the new factor in UK politics, Cruithni, let me first congratulate the honourable Viscount Charles Augustus Aldworth on his spectacular return to both the social scene and his good form.

Several people from the court of Glasgow, including such esteemed company as Villon's very own Christine, have contacted me to let me know that that the Viscount is back in Glasgow making friends and rewarding those worthy with gifts. Then at Carlisle's shindig, I had the opportunity to see him back in action myself and it's as if he was never gone. How he managed to have Rothschild let him have the prime Scottish engagement for himself I don't know, but he made the most of it. Let's hope he starts throwing his parties again in Norfolk.

Meanwhile most of the chit chat currently going round is down to Prince Cruithni and his stark handling of outside interests. It seems he is taking the tradition of domain more serious then most and simply exterminates any interloper in his territory, which if rumour is to be believed will soon include the city of Carlisle. Of course if anyone could gain him as a firm ally in the current struggle he might well be able to tip the balance.

Next I have to discuss the Winterball. A marvellous affair, as always and this year much better attended by Clan Ventrue. Amongst the guest we had Prince Wallace of Birmingham, as well as no less then five Ventrue elders, each from a different domain. The star guest was Prince Carlisle's sire, the current Toreador

Justicar, Madame Guil. I have been told someone else is doing a little more in depth coverage of the event so I will keep myself to a single interesting little bit where we have the former Scourge of Norfolk ask uncomfortable questions about the whereabouts of the former Prince Carter Branch, who has now missed the party twice in two years after more then 60 years of continual attendance.

Before I get to the official section a quick heads up, the offer of Sir John Houblon, childe of Harderstadt, to pay a boon for information about the demise of Geoffrey Hunter, has been rescinded.

Let it be known that Iain Smith of York, ancilla of the Camarilla, is indebted to Heather Jackman, Scourge of Glasgow, ancilla of the Camarilla.

Let is be known that Julius Montgomery, of Glasgow, ancilla of the Camarilla, is indebted to Simon Rubin, of Manchester, ancilla of the Camarilla.

Let is be known that John Houblon, of London, elder of the Camarilla, has paid his debt to Charles Augustus Aldworth, of Glasgow, elder of the Camarilla.

**Dark Times is accepting submissions.
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