

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com



March 2024 — Alba Gu Brath — Scotland Forever

The Highland Society of Harford County was incorporated for the preservation of the spirit, lore, poetry, art, dress, welfare, and history of the Scottish people dedicated to the promotion of these traditions among those of Scottish ancestry within Harford County and its environs.

March 19 -
OUR MARCH
GATHERING
6:30 to 8:30-ish pm
State Theater,
Havre de Grace



Theme: Celebration of All Things Irish, a presentation from our own Dave Ray, AND an Irish potluck supper - please bring an Irish food to share.



WELCOME NEW MEMBER
GLEN SCHMIESING

Glen is a native of Minnesota and a chemical engineering graduate of the University of Minnesota. He worked for Hercules Incorporated at Rocket Center, West Virginia, (doing rocket engineering) and the corporate office in Wilmington, DE (doing environmental remediation).



He has a Paralegal Studies Certificate from Widener University and worked as a paralegal for the 300-person biomedical device development and manufacturing company, Kensey Nash (which was acquired by the 25,000-person European company DSM).

Glen retired in 2015. Glen lives in Newark, DE, and is the husband of HSHC member Nancy Plummer of Clan Forsythe. He has no children, but does have siblings in California, Minnesota, and Virginia.

He has attended several HSHC events, has his own German heritage kilt, and has competed in the bony (bonnie??) knee contest.

May the Good
Lord take a
liking to you,
but not too soon.



Laird's Letter



My Highland Society Fellows,

Since Punxsutawney Phil did NOT see his shadow, spring will be fast upon us this year! We had a great February meeting inducting new member Glen Schmiesing and enjoying a foray into the world of whisky tasting. Since our planned whisky connoisseur, Katie Noe, had to cancel we were fortunate to have our own John Polk step up and be joined by Susan and Ray Buchanan's son, Han Shan, who has served as the Hudson Whiskey Ambassador for William Grant & Sons.

Our March 19 Gathering will be a celebration of all things Irish as it will be just two days after St. Patrick's Day. We will have an Irish potluck meal at the State Theater and be regaled by our own Dave Ray on the Scots migration to Northern Ireland. Please wear your green and bring your favorite Irish dish. The cost will be \$10 to cover whisky and venue. The cash bar opens at 6:30pm.

Here's a look at plans for the next few months...

- March meeting – Irish potluck and celebration with Dave Ray's talk on the Scots migration to Northern Ireland
- April meeting – Charter member of the Society, Todd Holden, will tell us tales of the history of the Society
- May meeting – Nancy Plummer's talk on Gin tasting
- June – the annual Society picnic – date and location TBD
- July – TBD

Here is a list of the upcoming festival events I mentioned at our last meeting...

- April 12,13 – Dills Celtic Festival, Dillsburg, PA, dillscelticfest.com
- May 18 – The 62nd Fair Hill Scottish Games, Elkton, MD, fairhillscottishgames.org
- June 8,9 – Carroll County Celtic Festival, Westminster, MD, carrollcountycelticfestival.com
- June 15 – PennMar Irish Festival, Shrewsbury, PA, penanmaririshfestival.com
- June 22,23 – Celtic Fling and Highland Games, Mt. Hope, PA, www.parenfaire.com/celtic.html
- September 14 – Covenanter Scottish Festival and Highland Games, Quarryville, PA, www.covenanterscottishfestival.com

If you have not paid your membership dues for 2024, be sure to send your payment to John Polk. Your Board of Directors will be meeting again in March so feel free to email me your questions, concerns, and ideas, and we will discuss them at our next meeting. As I mentioned, the Society's website has been revived and revamped! Please check it out, www.highlandsocietyofharfordcounty.com.

I look forward to seeing all of you for our Irish celebration on March 19th.

Alba gu bràth
Laird Keith Reagan



Whisky Tasting 2024



Joanna Reagan

Han Shan, Hudson Whiskey Ambassador & the Buchanan's son



Mark Lyons



Susan Buchanan



Glen Schmiesing

FROM THE SCOTCH WHISKY EXPERIENCE

contributed by Dr. Andrea Bowden, taken from <https://www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk>



WHISKY OR WHISKEY?

The main difference between whisky and whiskey is of course the spelling. This reflects the original Scots and Gaelic derivations of the word 'Uisce beatha', meaning Water of Life, with each variation being carried through to modern use. Irish immigration to America in the 18th Century means that we also refer to American 'whiskey' spelled with an e. But 'whisky' and 'whiskey' are just two varieties of a wide family of spirits and alcohol - understanding what makes each one different key to unlocking a spectrum of flavours and experiences... Did you know that the only countries that use WHISKY as a spelling are Scotland, England, Canada, Japan, and India?

SCOTCH WHISKY

Scotch Whisky is always spelled without the e. In order to be officially called Scotch whisky:

The spirit needs to mature in oak for at least three years

Production and maturation must take place in Scotland.

Single malt Scotch whisky must be made from 100% malted barley.

IRISH WHISKEY

Irish whiskey is always spelled with an e – this is a key difference between Irish whiskey and Scotch whisky. Irish whiskey uses little or no peat, so there is usually no smokiness in these whiskeys. Irish whiskey may contain a distillate of malt, a barley distillate and a portion of grain spirit. Irish whiskey is distilled three times. Like Scotch whisky, Irish whiskey must be matured for a legal minimum of three years.



BOURBON

Bourbon is American whiskey that has been made from a minimum of 51% corn with rye and malted barley. Examples of bourbon include Jim Beam and Wild Turkey whiskey. Bourbon is a very small area of Kentucky where bourbons were originally produced, but since 1964 American law has stated bourbon can be made anywhere in the USA. In Bourbon whiskey, the residue from the pot still is mixed with the mash to create a 'sour mash' whiskey. Distillation of bourbon usually takes place in a column still and then a pot still, but sometimes only column stills are used – Woodford Reserve operate a triple distillation in pot stills. Bourbon spirit is always matured in fresh oak casks, which are charred to yield more flavour.

RYE WHISKEY

Rye whiskey is made in the same way as bourbon but is made up of 51% rye. Examples of rye whiskey include Wild Turkey Rye and Jim Beam Rye. Rye whiskeys tend to be spicier in character. Tennessee whiskey is made in the same way as bourbon, but it is charcoal mellowed before maturation.

JAPANESE WHISKY

Japanese whisky came into being in the 1920s. It was inspired by Scotch whisky – Scottish academic institutions trained the first whisky makers of Japan. This means that the process of making Japanese whisky is very similar to Scotch whisky production, however, Japanese whisky has no legal minimal maturation period. Most blended Japanese whiskeys do use an amount of Scotch malt whisky in their composition – usually this is aged over five years old.

BRANDY

Brandy is a wine made from grapes which is then distilled and matured. The term 'brandy' comes from the Dutch 'Brandjewijn', meaning 'burnt wine'. *Cognac* is a type of brandy which can only be made from wine produced in designated growing regions of western France. It must be matured for at least 2½ years, and the age on a bottle of Cognac represents the youngest Cognac used in the blend. VSOP stands for Very Superior Old Pale – it appears on the label of a bottle of Cognac is the youngest Cognac is between 4½ and 6½ years old.

RUM

Rum is a spirit produced from fermented and distilled sugar cane products – most commonly molasses. Its origins are

the Caribbean, on islands such as Jamaica, Trinidad, and Cuba. Rum is colourless to begin with and is known as white, or light, rum. Colour for dark rum is acquired by adding caramel, followed by aging in casks.

VODKA

Traditional vodka was made from potatoes in Russia, however it is now more common to produce it from cereals such as wheat and maize, and it is made all over the world. Often the spirit is produced in a grain whisky distillery by slightly modifying the way that the Coffey Still is set. The spirit is passed over a bed of charcoal to mellow before being reduced to bottling strength.

GIN

To produce gin, a neutral spirit, such as that used for vodka, is required. The spirit is then redistilled in a Gin Still, often using botanicals such as juniper berries, angelica, liquorice and cinnamon. Grappa is mainly made in Italy and Austria. It is produced from the fermented and distilled 'must' left over from wine extraction. The 'must' is the non-liquid pulp of the grape.

SCHNAPPS

Schnapps is a generic term for a flavourful alcoholic beverage made from grain or potato spirit, and flavoured with various herbs or fruits such as apple, cinnamon, vanilla or peach. Denmark and Germany are the main producers of schnapps. (SJ's note: peppermint schnapps is a dandy tummy calmer.)

THE SCOTCH IRISH

by Dr. Andrea R. Bowden

There are millions of people who proudly claim to be of SCOTCH IRISH ancestry. Originally called Ulster-Scots, the term is mainly used in the United States for people whose ancestors came from what is today called Northern Ireland. American descendants of Ulster Protestants who immigrated from northern Ireland to America during the 1600's, 1700's, and 1800's whose ancestors had originally migrated mainly from the Scottish Lowlands and Northern England (and sometimes from the Anglo-Scottish border) to Ulster, Northern Ireland. In the 2017 American community Survey, 5.39 million (1.7% of the population) reported Scottish ancestry, an additional 3 million (0.9% of the population) identified more specifically with Scotch-Irish ancestry.

Nearly 250,000 Scottish Presbyterians settled in Ireland in the 1600's to escape control of the Church of England. These Ulster Scots people and their descendants emigrated again to the American colonies in the late 1600's and 1700's where freedom of religion was available. These emigres included not only Presbyterians, but Baptists, Methodists and other denominations.

Many of these Ulster-Scots were merchants, skilled craftspeople and had some education and wealth. They were successful in the north east and the next generation plus immigrants in the 1700s eagerly moved west to interior cities and the Appalachian region where land was cheaper. Modern Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee have the largest Scotch-Irish populations.

Early frontier life was extremely challenging, and poverty and hardship was common. Unfortunately, the term hillbilly has often been applied to their descendants in the mountains, carrying connotations of poverty, backwardness and violence. Scholars argue that the term "hillbilly" originated from Scottish dialect. The term "hill-folk" referred to people who preferred isolation from the greater society, and "billy" meant "comrade" or "companion."

Initially, the Ulster-Scots identified as Irish, but began calling themselves Scotch-Irish to distinguish themselves from the huge surge of Irish immigrants beginning in the 1840's fleeing the potato famine. The nearly one million emigres were largely poor, Catholic tenant farmers, evicted from their land. They settled in port cities in the northeast and south and spread out from there. They were often discriminated against, but formed a major labor pool for the building of railroads and canals and mining coal in the Appalachian region. Interestingly, it was the Scotch-Irish introduced the potato to North America and it became a major crop in Maine.

Ulster-Scots were prominent in the American Revolution and prized for their fighting prowess. The United States Declaration of Independence contained 56 delegates



signatures. Of the signers, eight were of Irish descent. Two signers, George Taylor and James Smith (both Pennsylvanians), were born in Ulster. The remaining five Irish-Americans, George Read, Thomas McKean, Thomas Lynch, Jr., Edward Rutledge and Charles Carroll, were the sons or grandsons of Irish immigrants, and at least McKean (Delaware) had Ulster heritage. By 1800, there were over 5 million people in the United States with Scotch-Irish ancestry.

Many Presidents of the United States have ancestral links to Ulster, including three whose parents were born in Ulster: Jackson, Buchanan, Arthur and Polk. More than one-third of all U.S. Presidents had substantial ancestral origins in the northern province of Ireland (Ulster).

Modern examples are Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Ronald Regan, Jimmy Carter, George Bush Sr. and Jr. and Bill Clinton. While many of the Presidents have typically Ulster-Scots surnames – Jackson, Johnson, McKinley, Wilson – others, such as Roosevelt and Cleveland, have links which are less obvious.

There are other modern presidents with Irish and Scottish ancestry. John Kennedy, the first Irish Catholic president, paternal O’Kennedy ancestors hailed from county Wexford, while his maternal ancestors, the Fitzgeralds, were from county Limerick. Barack Obama’s maternal great, great grandfather Kearney was from County Offlay. His paternal Obama lineage is from Kenya. Donald Trump’s mother, Mary MacLoud, came from the Hebridean Isle of Lewis, off the west coast of Scotland. His paternal Trump ancestry is German. Joseph Biden’s Irish Catholic maternal Finnigan forebears were from County Mayo and emigrated because of the potato famine. His paternal Biden ancestors were from England.

Maryland Ulster-Scots have been documented by Dr. John Polk, treasurer of the Highland Society of Harford County. In a 2007 paper he wrote:

“What is not so well recognized is the smaller precursor group of Ulster-Scots that arrived in the Chesapeake region in the late 1600s and provided a vanguard which helped guide the later wave of immigrants when it began to arrive a quarter century afterwards. This earlier group was largely from the Laggan, the eastern part of Donegal, particularly the area of Lifford, and settled in Somerset County, Maryland, in the decade of the 1680’s. They were following the lead of Presbyterian ministers Francis Makemie and William Trail who arrived in Somerset in 1683. Makemie is the acknowledged founder and patriarch of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Ulster-Scots began to appear in Somerset at this time. In the ensuing decade there was a steady influx of these people, both ministers and laity, as can be seen in the land and court records of Somerset, and from contemporary accounts. The transplanted Scots in Ulster had struggled through the Plantation, the Catholic uprising of 1641, the devastation of Ireland and invasion of Scotland by Cromwell, the restoration of Charles II, and faced the prospect of an outright Catholic restoration under James II, who did ascend the throne in 1685.

Like his father in Scotland, William Trail found himself frequently at odds with authorities in Ireland. It is certain that a number of the Ulster-Scot families of Donegal elected to cast their lot in the new world at this time. Among these were such families as Wallace, Knox, McKnitt, Alexander, Gray, Caldwell, Wilson, White, Galbraith, Owens, Miller, Johnson, Emmett, Polk, and many others. All of these names are found in Somerset records but are also prominent in the 1665 Hearth Rolls for Donegal, within the Barony of Raphoe.

The motivation to leave Ireland was greatly reduced after the lifting of the siege of Derry in 1689 and the victory of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The removal of the Catholic Stewarts and the ascension of a confirmed Calvinist to the English throne totally reversed the prospects of the Presbyterians in Ireland. This was a watershed moment in their history and the emigrations to Maryland probably slowed to a trickle.

All the same, the Scotch-Irish community now in Somerset had a growing impact on the wider Chesapeake region. Some of the Ulster-Scot families of Somerset moved northward to the Newcastle, Delaware, area and adjacent Cecil County, Maryland, where Makemie was establishing additional churches. By 1706 sufficiently many churches were established in the Chesapeake region that Makemie was able to establish the first Presbytery in America at a meeting held that year in Philadelphia. Newcastle and Philadelphia became the major ports of entry when the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration from Ulster commenced about a decade later. This was not a matter of chance. The Scotch-Irish already in the area and the Presbyterian network created by Makemie were in place to welcome, lead, and enliven these new immigrants. In this way, the subsequent Scotch-Irish impact on the American frontier as it pushed through Pennsylvania, down the great wagon road into the valley of Virginia and the Carolinas, and afterwards west beyond the Appalachians, can trace its roots to the precursor arrival of the Laggan Presbyterians some thirty years earlier in Somerset.”

The Scotch Irish in America have a distinguished history and have made numerous contributions to our state and country.

Were they:

- A. The group of ancient people with darker features who settled in Ireland
- B. Descendants of shipwrecked sailors from the Spanish Armada
- C. Descendants of hated invaders like the Vikings
- D. Despised English and Scots who "occupied" the northern provinces
- E. Irish who emigrated, fleeing the Potato Famine that turned the plants black

There are a number of different claims as to the origin of the term Black Irish, none of which are possible to entirely prove or disprove. The term "Black Irish" has been in circulation among Irish emigrants and their descendants for centuries. Yet, as a subject of historical discussion, it is almost never referred to in Ireland.

Ireland has been a melting pot for many cultures. Gaels arrived first from Europe and established settlements in Ireland thousands of years ago. These Celtic speaking people were probably dark haired. Romans ruled Britain from 43-410 AD. These soldiers could have come from Italy, Spain, or any of the areas that the Romans conquered.

Pagan Germanic tribes and Saxons moved in next during the 6th Century and were mostly dark haired. Next around 795 AD there were invasions by the Vikings from Scandinavian countries. These people contributed genes for blonde and red hair, but were considered "dark invaders".

The defeat of the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf in the year 1014 AD by Brian Boru marked the end of the struggle with the invaders and saw the subsequent integration of the Vikings into Irish society. The migrants became 'Gaelicized' and formed septs (a kind of clan) along Gaelic lines.

Normans were the next invaders 1070-1072. These Christian people were from the coast of France, but had Scandinavian ancestry. William the Conqueror who became King of England, is depicted with blonde hair.

Another theory of the origin of the term "Black Irish" is that these

Who were the Black Irish?

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

people were descendants of Spanish traders who settled in Ireland and even descendants of the few Spanish sailors who were washed up on the west coast of Ireland after the disaster of the Spanish Armada of 1588. It is claimed that the Spanish married into Irish society and created a new class of Irish who were immediately recognizable by their dark hair and complexion. There is little evidence to support this theory and it is unlikely that any significant number of Spanish soldiers would have survived long in the war-torn place.

It is striking, though, how this tale is very similar to the ancient Irish legend of the Milesians who settled in Ireland having traveled from Spain. The theory that the "Black Irish" are descendants of any small foreign group that integrated with the Irish and survived is unlikely. However, recent genetic analysis in Ireland shows influences from the Basque region of Spain, which would have contributed dark hair, eyes and darker complexion.

It seems more likely that "Black Irish" is a descriptive term rather than an inherited characteristic that has been applied to various categories of Irish people over the centuries. It is possible that the term "Black Irish" may have referred to some of these immigrant groups as a way of distinguishing them from the "Gaels," the people of ultimately Celtic origin.

The Vikings were often referred to as the "dark invaders" or "black foreigners." The Gaelic word for foreigner is "gall" and for black (or dark) is "dubh." Many Irish names refer to "black or dark". Many of the invaders' families took Gaelic names that utilized these two descriptive

words. The name Doyle is in Irish "O'Dubhghaill" which literally means "dark foreigner" which reveals their heritage as an invading force with dark intentions. In the early 1600s, the Plantation of Ulster was established by King James I and thousands of Protestants from England and Scotland occupied what is now Northern Ireland, subjugating the Catholic Irish population. "Black Irish" was also used in Ireland by Catholics in Ulster Province as a derogatory term to describe the Protestant Planters.

The term "Black Irish" has also been applied to the descendants of Irish emigrants (usually rebels) who were forced to settle in the West Indies. Sometimes these convicts were treated the same as enslaved Africans.

Yet another interpretation is that the name derived from the hundreds of thousands of Irish peasants who emigrated to America after the Great Famine of 1845 to 1849. 1847 was known as "black 47." The potato blight which destroyed the main source of sustenance turned the vital food black. It is possible that the arrival of large numbers of Irish after the famine into America, Canada, Australia, and beyond resulted in their being labeled as "black" in that they escaped from this new kind of black death.

So, the term "Black Irish" does not really refer to a race or ethnic group. It doesn't seem to apply to physical characteristics. It has more to do with "dark/evil" conquering groups and/or their descendants. Colors are often used as descriptors: green for envy, yellow for cowardice, blue for sadness. A parallel example in the United States might be the use of the term "Reds" to refer to people who are Communist and perceived as evil, but are not physically the color red.

The exact origin of the term "Black Irish" will likely never be known. It remains a descriptive term, usually derogatory, used for many purposes. So the answer to the quiz is ALL of the above.

The Falkirk Boat Lift – A Must See in Scotland

Dr. John Polk

The Scots have long been famed for their engineering prowess. There is a long history in Scotland of inventions and innovations that powered textile mills in the 1700s, steel forges, factories and railways of the industrial revolution and mammoth shipbuilding yards in the 1800s and afterwards. Perhaps the best-known Scottish invention is James Watt's steam engine which gave birth to the railroad and steam powered shipping.

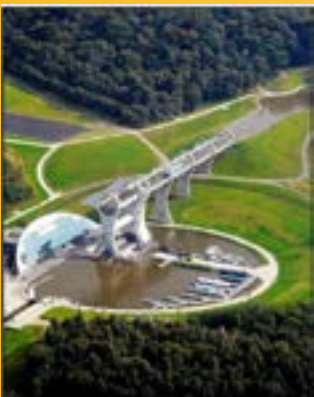


The tradition continues in Scotland to this day and one of the most unique recent examples is the Falkirk Wheel, initiated as a Millennial project, completed in 2002, and inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II.

Located in the heart of Scotland, south of Sterling, the Falkirk Wheel is the world's only rotating boat lift. It connects the Forth and Clyde Canal with the Union Canal running from Edinburgh, a link formerly made through a series of 11 conventional canal locks which had fallen into disuse and abandoned almost a century ago. The new link bypasses the old locks and connects the two canal systems by raising and lowering canal boats 80 feet between the two systems. Apart from its functional purpose, the Falkirk Wheel is a stunning work of industrial art in its own right and a lasting testament to the Scots' engineering ingenuity. The design of the rotating lifting arms was chosen to reflect the shape of a double-headed Scottish battle axe.



The wheel functions by simultaneously lifting and lowering balanced weights, amounting to about 500 tons at either end, kept in perfect equilibrium throughout, and thereby requires very little power to operate. A single lift only requires about 1.5 kilowatt hours of power, equivalent to boiling eight kettles of water. Each caisson, or gondola, holding water and boats, remains level as it rotates upwards or downwards through the operational cycle. Loading and offloading is accomplished through a computercontrolled system of watertight doors, locking mechanisms, and hydraulic valves. Time taken for a single lift is about 5 minutes. The system operates mainly for tourists and recreational vessels, not for serious transportation as of old, before the railroads took over their business. Visitors can take rides which include a short trip up the canal and return back. They leave about every forty minutes during the season but are popular, so book your ride in advance. There is also an excellent visitors center with extensive information about the history canal systems in Scotland. Here is an excellent video describing the wheel - [Falkirk Wheel](#) (8 minutes) or [Falkirk Wheel](#) (2 minutes).



Put the Falkirk Wheel on your list of must-see sights on your visit to Scotland. It's not all about castles and distilleries. This architectural and mechanical masterpiece blends the past with the present, a marvelous symbol of Scotland's engineering prowess.

WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOTLAND

compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden



ESCAPED MONKEY CAUGHT IN HIGHLAND GARDEN — from BBCNEWS

A seven-year-old male Japanese macaque - called Honshu - escaped from the Highland Wildlife Park at Kincaig, near Aviemore, but was recaptured after five days. Stephanie Bunyan, who lives nearby, spotted the monkey in her garden on Thursday morning and contacted the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) after she saw it under her bird feeder eating a Yorkshire pudding! A drone team observed the animal until he was shot with a tranquilizer dart and taken back to the park. The Japanese macaque, also known as a snow monkey - is about the size of a medium-sized dog and is part of a troop of 37 animals. The RZSS said the escapee may have been trying to avoid a fight with others in the group. The troop is in the midst of its breeding season and keepers said tensions could sometimes run high.

INVASIVE ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE FOUND IN CUMBRIA

— from BBC NEWS

An invasive alligator snapping turtle has been pulled from a Cumbrian lake. Dog walker found the exotic creature resembling a dinosaur, which is native to swamps and rivers in the southern Mississippi Valley of the US, in Urswick Tarn, near Ulverston. Councillor Denise Chamberlain fished it out of the water with a shopping basket and took it to a vet. Ms Chamberlain, who has lived in Florida, saw a social media post about the turtle and “immediately recognized the species. She wore three pairs of builder’s gloves and used a shopping basket to scoop the turtle out, where she transported it to a large container with water from the tarn. Dr Moule, a veterinary surgeon from Wild Side Vets in Barrow-in-Furness, described the discovery as “extremely surprising”. “At 40 pounds, it could give you a nasty bite but when they get bigger, up to 175 pounds. It would likely have eaten through everything in the lake if it had not been rescued,” he said.



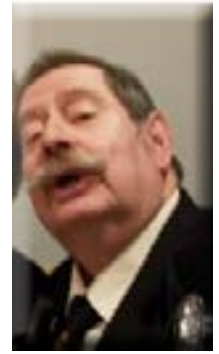
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS ISN'T GOING TO PLAN – HERE'S WHY — from The Conversation

Peatlands store twice as much carbon as all the world’s forests. Scotland is endowed with vast areas of these wetland ecosystems. An estimated 20% of the Scottish landscape is covered in peat soils, but 80% of these are degraded and instead release stored carbon into the atmosphere. The Scottish government estimates that the carbon stored in its peatlands is equivalent to 120 years’ worth of the country’s emissions. Keeping it locked away is essential for moderating the climate crisis. The Scottish

government has pledged to spend £250 million between 2020 and 2030 to restore 25,000 hectares of peatland a year. This funding pays for Peatland Action, Scottish Water and other bodies to block drains, install small dams and other interventions that prevent these wetlands from drying out. But fewer than 6,000 hectares of peatland were restored each year in 2021 and 2022 – far below the annual target. One manager at NatureScot, the government agency responsible for the environment, described the shortfall as a “national emergency” caused primarily by a “funding gap”. This is despite the government’s pledged budget not yet having been used up. He argued that for Scotland to meet its net-zero commitments, there must be large injections of private finance into peatland restoration. Research we conducted with people who have managed peatlands for centuries tells a different story. Nearly one-third of Scotland’s peatlands are held in crofting tenure. Crofts, unique to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, are tenancies that include a right to graze and extract peat (as fuel) on areas of common land which amount to 550,000 hectares nationwide. These rights are protected by laws dating from 1886, are administered by the Scottish Land Court and managed by elected committees.

The Myths of Saint Patrick Dispelled

By Jim "Ski" Schiaffino



There are many stories floating around about St. Patrick. There are many societies and authors who for whatever reasons want to claim certain "facts" about him. Most of these "facts" are based on hearsay, translation errors, or local legend. To learn the truth one must deal with written first level sources. So here are the facts about St. Patrick as recorded by several reputable sources.

Saint Patrick was born in Kilpatrick, Dumbarton in AD 385 (or maybe 392). Kilpatrick as in Caledonia, the Roman name for present day Scotland. It was also part of what later scholars referred to as Roman Britain. Even as late as the 1960's many folks south of the Border referred to Scotland as "North Britain". This led to the confusion about Patrick being British or Welsh. It was simply a case of poor scholarship on their part.



His real name was Maewyn Succat. His parents were Calphurnius and Conchessa Succat. His father belonged to a Roman family of high rank and held the office of Decurion. (A decurion {Latin:decurio, plural decuriones} was a Roman cavalry officer in command of a squadron (turma) of cavalrymen in the Roman army.) Calphurnius Succat was decurion stationed at The Antonine Wall in Scotland. Conchessa Succat was a near relative of the patron saint of Gaul, (France) St. Martin of Tours.

When he was sixteen, Maewyn (Patrick) was kidnapped and carried off into captivity by Irish marauders and was sold as a slave to a chieftain named Milchu in Dalriada, a territory in the present county of Antrim in Ireland. For six years he laboured for his new master. One source claims he tended his master's flocks; another refers to him as a swineherd. They both agree it was in the valley of The Braid and on the slopes of Slemish, near the modern town of Ballymena.

Following his escape, he joined the priesthood and changed his name to Patricus. At age forty-three he became a bishop and asked to be sent to Ireland. Upon his arrival he sought out his former master and paid him the amount of money that was required for a replacement. The town of Kilpatrick still retains many memorials of Saint Patrick. At Kilpatrick frequent pilgrimages were held far into the Middle Ages to perpetuate the fame of his sanctity and miracles.



Now that we have the facts about St. Patrick straight, you might be interested to know that:

- * "saint" Patrick isn't a real saint; he was never Canonized by the Pope.
- * St. Patrick's Day was first celebrated by the Church of England. It was a religious Holiday.
- * In Ireland, it was a dry holiday until AD1970.
- * The modern St. Patrick's Day was entirely an Irish-American creation. Which explains a lot.
- * The first St. Patrick's Day parade was held in Boston in AD1737 by Irish soldiers fighting for the British.
- * The symbol of Ireland is the Celtic Harp, not the shamrock.
- * He did not preach using a shamrock (Gael for young clover.)
- * The shamrock, has three leaves and was associated with three, a sacred number in the Celtic (Druid) religion. It was also the symbol of "The Triple Goddesses". There many forms of the Triad or Triple Goddesses and gods in the Celtic Religion (Three distinct personalities in one person. For example, in ancient Ireland: The Morrigan Triad of Brigid, Ériu, and Morrigan. The similarity between the Celtic Triad and the Trinity was not lost on either Patrick or the Irish.
- * St. Patrick did not chase the snakes from Ireland. There never were snakes there to begin with, at least not the reptilian kind. Along with Ireland there are no snakes in New Zealand, Iceland, Greenland or Antarctica. You may hold that tidbit in one hand and a dollar in the other and buy a doughnut.

- * The original color associated with st. Patrick is blue.
- * "Corned" beef and cabbage, a traditional St.

Patrick's Day staple, doesn't have anything to do with the grain corn. (It didn't arrive in Europe until the 15th century and it was referred to as maize). Instead, it's a nod to the large grains of salt that were historically used to cure meats, which were also known as "corns."

- * There are no female Leprechauns. Leprechauns were cobblers (shoemakers).
- * With all that said, it would be quite appropriate of us, on March the 17th, to say "Alba Gu Brath" Scotland Forever. Unless, of course, you are Italian, then it would be "Italia Per Sempre"; instead of Erin Gu Brath (Ireland Forever) He was afterall Scottish with Roman parents.

MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

General Membership Meeting & Whisky Tasting

Greetings and Welcome to all were given by Laird Keith. Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm with a few opening announcements: Our scheduled whisky presenter Katie Noe called in sick and could not be with us, so John Polk graciously stepped up in her absence; 1st Aide-de-Laird Crystal was also under the weather and was not present, as well as 2nd Aide-de-Laird Erin who was scheduled to be out for a medical procedure.



Jeanie Nesbit

Pledge of Allegiance- Laird Keith Reagan

Toast to the Presidency - Andrea Bowden

Toast to the Monarchy - Nancy Plummer

Toast to Scotland - John Polk ... for 5 years Keith has been wondering what Jim Wasson has been saying!!

Birthdays / Anniversaries / Milestones / Noteworthy Occasions -

Birthdays: Anita Polk, February 4th; Joe Garrett, February 6th

Anniversary: Jeanie & Brian Nesbit, 3rd Anniversary of Handfasting February 26th

We raised a toast in memory of SJ's sister, who passed away this last month

Dinner was catered by Abbey Burger of Havre de Grace; Grace by John Polk.

Announcements -

- Laird Keith polled those in attendance to ensure that everyone is receiving the Sporan via email and if everyone had received the amended Bylaws. By a show of hands, our email list needs a bit of updating. Laird Keith has been updating the membership email addresses to bring them current so that everyone is included on Society correspondence. Anyone not receiving monthly newsletters or other Society notifications, were asked to reach out to Keith to be added to the email roster.
- Members in attendance were open to the idea to expand our meeting location to MacGregor's banquet facilities on a potential intermittent basis throughout the season with the State Theatre. MacGregor's could offer either a buffet or seated menu options for an additional cost by members, and would give us different aesthetics and atmosphere for our meeting setting.

Upcoming Events -

Dillsburg Celtic Festival, April 13 & 14

Fairhill Scottish Games May 18

Carroll County Celtic Festival June 8 & 9

PenMar Irish Festival June 15 & 16

Celtic Fling PA June 22 & 23

Induction and Welcome to the Highland Society of Harford County, Glen Schmiesing! Laird Keith Reagan led the induction with the pledge to the Society, and welcome by all members in attendance. Welcome Glen!

Laird Keith in his capacity as Chair of the By-Law Review Committee, presented the amended By-Laws for approval. Keith explained that the items that were removed from the previous By-Laws have been placed in a new document, "Policies & Procedures" that is under the operational control of the Board of Directors. To approve the amended By-Laws as presented to the membership, Joanna Reagan motioned to approve; Susan Buchanan 2nd the motion - all were in favor; none were opposed.

The Highland Society website has been updated. Laird Keith invited everyone to view the site often for updates and upcoming events. www.highlandsocietyofharfordcounty.com

The Society membership application has also been updated in its wording and is ready to be distributed to any individuals interested in becoming active members of our organization!

Words from our Mistress of Revels, Andrea Bowden:

- The Kirken of the Tartan is traditionally held in April. In 2023 it was held at Fairview Methodist Church. This year we would like to explore possibly having it at a new location and we are open to suggestions. As Anne is a member of the Society and Pastor at Fairview, we are of course welcome back there. SJ recommended Harts UM Church in North East, MD; Steve Anderson thought a church here in Havre de Grace. Please forward your thoughts to Andrea soon and a decision will be made by our next Society meeting in March.
- The Society Picnic is held in June. We have traditionally done an Outlander theme the last few years, but as this is the final year of the TV series, do we want to continue that theme or go with another theme, or with a standard American picnic? A vote was held and seemed to be split three ways among those in attendance. We also discussed the location of the picnic - some ideas that came up were the 4H Center again, Susky Brewing (would be a more public setting) and Jerusalem Mill. Again, please submit any thoughts and ideas for locations and themes to Andrea soon so they can be discussed at the upcoming meetings and a location secured!

PROGRAM - WHISKY TASTING

John Polk gave an informative slide presentation and talk on the making of malt scotch from grain to cask to bottle. Following that presentation, Han Shan (the Buchanan's son) spoke on the three scotch whisky's we tasted - and one Irish whiskey! Those were:

- Aberfeldy 12 year: Speyside (bourbon cask smooth, honey notes, sweet)
- Highland Park 12 year: Highlands (peat forward, heather, sherry, oak)
- Scapa: Islands (tropical fruit, lemon, orange, American oak, heather)
- Bushmills: Irish (triple distilled, sherry cask)

Laird Keith called the meeting to close: 9:20pm



ADVICE FROM THE IRISH

compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden

When we drink, we get drunk.
When we get drunk, we fall asleep.
When we fall asleep, we commit no sin.
When we commit no sin, we go to heaven.
So, let's all get drunk, and go to heaven!

Always remember to forget
The things that made you sad.
But never forget to remember
The things that made you glad.

A friend's eye is a good mirror.

Treasurer's Report Dr. John Polk

Period: 1-29 February 2024



OLD BALANCE	\$4550.36
Expenses:	
Bank Fee	3.00
Whisky supply, tasting & toasting	116.71
Venue & catering fee, State Theatre	300.00
Meeting supplies	9.28
Income:	
Meals, Jan meeting	\$430.00
Dues collected	75.00
NEW BALANCE	\$3418.19

Scottish Recipe of the Month

SWEET SCONES

Contributed by Dr. Andrea Bowden



Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar (white or light brown)
1 Tbsp. baking powder
½ tsp salt
Can add ½ cup of any of these: raisins, currants, fresh fruit- apples, pears, dried fruit- cherries, cranberries, apricots, orange zest, nuts- walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts
½ cup cold butter (cut into ½ inch cubes)
1 cup whipping cream



Directions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt in bowl.
Cut butter into dry ingredients one cube at a time until the mixture is crumbly.
Refrigerate for 5 minutes. Add all but 2 Tbs. of whipping cream, stirring until moistened.
Turn dough onto floured board or waxed paper and pat dough into 7 inch round about ½ inch thick. Cut into 8 wedges and place on baking sheet 2 inches apart.
Brush tops with 2 Tbs. cream or butter and bake 13-14 minutes until bottoms are golden.
(Alternate is to drop tablespoons of batter onto sheet and bake.)

SAVORY SCONES

Use the same recipe, but omit sugar For savory flavor you can add ½ cup of any of these:
shredded cheese: cheddar, asiago, or swiss,
finely chopped onion or chives, parsley,
crumbled bacon or chopped ham.



Scone Fun Facts

compiled by SJ Anderson

Soooo, I went spelunking for scone tidbits and found these - enjoy!

Did you know that how you spread your clotted cream and jam on your scone is very important. If you follow the proper Cornish tradition, then the jam always has to be spread first. However, if you come from Devon in England, then the cream is applied first followed by jam on top. There exists a big rivalry to this day between Devon and Cornwall in England about this seemingly insignificant difference!

Scones originate from the Scottish 'bannock', which is derived from the Gaelic for cake and made using a thin, round, flat combination of oats and wheat flour.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term 'scones' was first used in 1513.