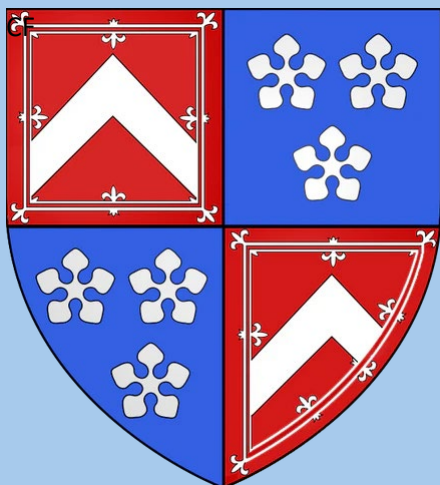


# THE DEED

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 4 APRIL 2025



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## IN EVERY ISSUE

Letter from the President

Editor's Note

Bairn's Neuk

Culinary Experience: Bridie

Fleming Marketplace

## IN THIS ISSUE

We have a Winner!

Robert Fleming of Wardhouse: Was He Flemish, Norman, or Scottish?

Battle of Melrose

The Spring Equinox: Ostara's Balance

Let the Games Begin

Athletics at the Games

The Brief History of Dance & The Importance in Scottish Culture

Can Ye Hear the Pipes an' Drums Playin'?

Mead, Ale or Scotch Whiskey? Choose Your Poison

Clan Fleming Convenes at the Games

COSCA Guides to Convening at Scottish Games

**Letters and Comments** can be sent to [cfss.info@gmail.com](mailto:cfss.info@gmail.com)



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Friends of Clan Fleming Scottish Society

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another season of Highland games & gatherings fast approaches. They serve as an opportunity for us to come together & celebrate our shared heritage. My first exposure to Heavy Athletics (these are what the collective of competitions are called, such as the Caber Toss, Stone throw & Weight for Height) was in the film, "Braveheart." Although the film is fraught with historical inaccuracies it does show the characters Wallace & his childhood friend, Hamish, throwing Stone. After dropping a stone at Wallace's feet, Hamish explains, "Call it a test of soldiery then. The English won't let us train with weapons, so we train with stones." This is one explanation that is given today for how the games evolved. Our editor & treasurer, Tammy, delves deeper in this issue about the history of the games.

In this issue we are announcing the winner of the Tartan contest! Drum roll & it is.... the **South Lanarkshire District Tartan**. We appreciate Lindsay & Jim for submitting a tartan entry into the contest. I find it necessary to clarify what this means, so there is no confusion. Guidance from the Scottish Registry of Tartans (created by the Scottish government with the Tartan Act in 2008) states: "Traditionally people wear the tartan (if any) which relates to their surname. **If there is no appropriate name tartan, look for a district tartan connected to the area where your ancestors lived.** There are also a number of tartans which have been designed for anyone to wear – ask your outfitter to show you the range."

Since the District Tartan was voted to represent the Society for the interim, we as a board are going to either commission someone to design an official tartan or get guidance from a respected weaver on how to design one ourselves properly. There are conventions and symbolism in the selection of thread count, patterns and heraldic tinctures used and it isn't necessarily based on what is the most striking. Scottish Kilts did share with us a Clan Fleming Ancient Tartan. Supposedly, this tartan has "deep roots in Scottish history and is believed to date back to the 16th century." Although this is the approximate time that our clan was at its height, the historical truth behind this is questionable. However, it is a choice that directly represents Clan Fleming if the others that are currently out there don't appeal to you. Stay tuned, though, we will have a tartan that we will register that will represent us and our clan's rich history.

Another topic I wanted to touch on, that harkens back to my mention of the movie Braveheart and the historic inaccuracies that are promulgated. Yes, the sweeping scenes of the Highlands, the pipes in the musical score and the bravado exhibited by the main characters are inspiring, however how Scots are portrayed is a disservice to their martial prowess. What we are presented with, historians claim, is what the Romans would have experienced when fighting the Pictish tribes, whom they considered barbarians, beyond Hadrian's Wall. This was in the 2nd century CE (Hadrian's Wall was constructed in 122 CE) and was over a millennia before the Battle of Bannockburn!

An important aspect of our Society is to strive for historical facts. Another "truth" that is misleading is the association of lowland Scots with Celtic culture. The "Celts", a name given to peoples by the Greeks and Romans, never knew themselves as such. Much like Indigenous peoples in the Americas, each group was a separate tribe with its own oral traditions. They did share similar cultural traits. However, the last vestige of what many consider "Celtic" came to an end in the 5th century, after the last of the Brythonic tribes were absorbed into Roman society. Yes, there is a rich tradition of Celtic art, Gaelic place names and Gaelic languages still spoken today. But Celtic culture ceased to exist over 1400 years ago, first under Roman rule, then Anglo Saxon settlement and then

Viking invasions. The closest to what many romanticize as Celtic today held out the longest in the Highlands and Ireland in the Gaelic language. We are a lowland clan with Germanic roots but became Scots after time. To truly celebrate and preserve what is considered "Celtic" today is to learn Scottish Gaelic. It is how we as a Scottish Clan society can promote what lingers of the original inhabitants of northern Britain.



*Reginald Chambers is a paraeducator and a head coach. As a young man he was an amateur athlete having played Rugby Union and other combat sports. He is married and has three sons. Besides coaching, his passions are history and genealogy.*

*Reggie Chambers*



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Some of us are experiencing springtime and some are getting ready for fall. But in Scotland it's all about spring...flowers blooming, warmer weather, and the beginning of Scottish Games Season. In this issue of *The Deed*, we have some amazing articles on Scottish history and the role that the Flemings may or may not have had. Read L. Lawrence Fleming's article about the origin of Robert Fleming provides insight into one perspective of Robert Fleming and Clan Fleming. Clint Edwards gives us the fascinating history of the Battle of Melrose and whether Clan Fleming was there. It's a cliff hanger! Once again, Bill Zima provides us with a beautiful mystical look into ancient history with his story about the spring equinox. In honor of our Scottish heritage, we have several articles about Scottish Games, including the history of dance, music and athletic games, and how you can get involved. Jess tried out a Scottish recipe you can find at the games called bridie. I've tried it at games and it's pretty tasty.

Jim Fleming, CFSS historian, recently attended the Bundanoon Scottish Games in Australia and his photos are so fun. My family loves going to games and we set up a display about Clan Fleming and our history. Come visit us at the Ohio Scottish Games and Celtic Festival in June and Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in July. We would love to see you and talk to you about setting up at your local Scottish games.

*Earrach Sona*  
*Tammy Schakett-Fleming*



"The mark of a Scot of all classes [is that] he ... remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation."

Robert Burns



## WE HAVE A WINNER!

CFSS would like to thank James Fleming, our historian, and Lyndsay Fleming, our secretary, for entering their beautiful tartan designs. They were a close race for second. When all the votes were tallied from all the various sites it became quickly apparent that the **South Lanarkshire** tartan was a winner!

Scottish Kilts (<https://scottishkiltshop.com/>) has access to both tartans and will be working with CFSS to make this happen for anyone interested in purchasing a kilt or other tartan clothing products and accessories. They took the time to offer CFSS an alternative called Clan Fleming Ancient tartan. Until such time as funds is available to have our own CFSS tartan, the Board is recommending either the South Lanarkshire or Clan Fleming Ancient as our unofficial tartans.



**SOUTH LANARKSHIRE TARTAN**



**CLAN FLEMING ANCIENT TARTAN**

AND THE  
**WINNER**  
IS

# ROBERT FLEMING OF WARDHOUSE CASTLE: WAS HE FLEMISH, NORMAN, OR SCOTTISH?

BY F. LAWRENCE FLEMING

A pivotal event in Scottish history is undoubtedly the meeting between Robert the Bruce, later Robert I of Scotland, and his rival for the throne, John Comyn, in 1305 at Greyfriars Kirk in the town of Dumfries; a meeting which culminated in the murders of John Comyn and his uncle, Sir Robert Comyn. An early account of this event was given in 1447 in the *Scotichronicon* by the historian Walter Bower (c. 1385-1449):

Robert came upon John in the choir of the friars of Dumfries in front of the high altar. After an animated greeting, and an exchange of remarks for a time on lesser topics, the missive letters of the same John were produced, and the same John was attacked for his betrayal and breach of faith. But soon the reply was given: "You lie!" A fatal blow was dealt in the same church on this slanderer; and on being wounded by the said Sir Robert, John was carried behind the altar by the friars. When this happened, Robert Bruce, like a man beyond endurance and beside himself, made for his horses at the entrance to the cemetery. His kinsmen, Sir James de Lindsay and Sir Roger de Kirkpatrick, ran up to help him as had been arranged at Lochmaben; and as they attended Robert, faint and beside himself as it were, they asked him how it was gone with him. "Badly," he said, "for I think I have killed John the Red Comyn." "Should so vital an assumption be left in doubt?" said Sir James de Lindsay. And Lindsay himself, entering the vestry with Kirkpatrick, asked if Comyn might live. At once the reply came from Comyn himself. "I can if I can have a doctor." A second wound was dealt him by these questioners, when the knight Sir Robert Comyn also fell wounded in the defense of his kinsman Sir John Comyn and along with him. And so, on 10 February 1305 they were removed from this life, and Edward King of England, it is believed, was cheated of his desire both marvelously and wonderfully.

That Robert Fleming is not mentioned by Walter Bower as a companion of Robert the Bruce at the church of the Greyfriars in 1305 will probably come as a surprise, not to say a disappointment, to anyone interested in the history of the Clan Fleming. In recompense, however, allow me to say that a certain Sir Robert Fleming was indeed a very close confidant of Robert the Bruce. He is mentioned in the works of both Hector Boece (1465-1536) and Raphael Holinshed (c. 1525-1582) in connection with the murders of John Comyn and his uncle in 1305, although neither of these chroniclers have anything to say concerning Sir Robert's alleged decapitation of John Comyn's corpse and the reputed origin of the clan motto of the Flemings of Scotland, "Let the Deid Shaw!"

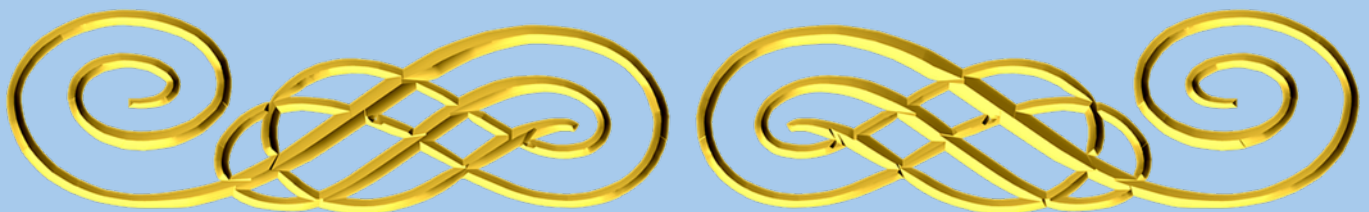
The first account in print of the Fleming family tradition of Sir Robert's gruesome role in the murders at Dumfries is to be found in William Hunter's *Biggar and the House of Fleming*, published in 1862, which is repeated—and not for the last time—with minor editorial alteration in J. Arnold Fleming's *The Flemish Influence in Scotland*, published in 1930:

Bruce, agitated and horrified at his murderous deed, rushed to the entrance of the church and informed Fleming and Kirkpatrick, who were on guard at the door, "I doubt that I have slain Comyn." "Doubt!" exclaimed Kirkpatrick. "Then I'll (I'se) mak' siccar!"—words which became the well-known and renowned motto of the Kirkpatricks. Their crest is a hand holding a dagger distilling drops of blood. Kirkpatrick rushed into the kirk and was immediately followed by Fleming. They quickly dispatched Sir Robert Comyn, who stoutly defended the body of his murdered brother; and on reaching the body of Red Comyn they plunged their weapons into the dead man. Fleming hacked off his head as well, and bringing with him the ghastly trophy of his success exposed it on the threshold, holding it aloft the while he shouted, "Let the deed (deid)

What makes the Fleming family tradition apocryphal is the fact that a decapitation of John Comyn's dead body, which would have been a second and very grave dishonour and sacrilege to follow so hard upon the initial murder of Comyn before the high altar of the church of the Greyfriars, is not referred to in any of the various dispatches that were sent from the government of Edward I of England during the weeks immediately following the incident. John Comyn, Senior Guardian of Scotland, had been infamously murdered at Dumfries, but it does not seem likely that his corpse had been desecrated.

Nevertheless, I think it should be considered an established fact that Robert Fleming was indeed one of Robert the Bruce's companions at the meeting in the church of the Greyfriars, whatever part he may actually have played in the debacle. Who was he? Actually, there is no lack of twelfth- and thirteenth-century documents ascertaining who he was. (For full documentation of Robert Fleming's ancestry, please see my book: *Exploring the True Heritage of the Fleming Family Name*, F. Lawrence Fleming, published 2018, pp. 241-257.)

Sir Robert le Flemyng of Weredors (Wardhouse), uncontested progenitor of the so-called "House of Fleming," that is to say, the Lords Fleming of Scotland and the Earls of Wigton, was born in Aberdeenshire in about 1260. (Weredors was a massive, early thirteenth-century tower house that was located a few miles west of Inch in Aberdeenshire. The ruined remains of this castle were still extant in the early nineteenth century, but were entirely demolished in 1842, leaving only traces in a farmer's field. The site was excavated and documented in 1988.) Sir Robert died in 1314, and his eldest son, Malcolm, succeeded to the baronies of Lenzie and Cumbernauld, which had been confiscated from the Comyn family by Robert I of Scotland and afterwards awarded to Robert Fleming. Sir Robert had two younger brothers, Michael and William. His father was Sir Bartholomew Flamang (Latin: Bartholomeus Flandrensis) of Weredors; his grandfather was Sir Simon Flamang (Simonis Flandrensis), who probably built Weredors Castle at some point between 1210 and 1220. Sir Simon's father was Jordan le Flamang (Jordanus Flandrensis), who first came to Scotland from Cumbria in the service of Prince Henry during the reign of David I. (Jordan was captured by the English forces at the siege of Alnwick in 1174, along with his cousin, Waldeve, son of Baldwin Flamang of Biggar, and even the king of Scotland himself, William the Lion.) Jordan's father was Reinerus Flandrensis, steward in the household of William le Meschin in Cumberland. Reiner's father was Willelmus Flandrensis, who was killed by a stray arrow in 1145 during the siege of Arques in Normandy. William was a younger son of Erkenbaldus Flandrensis of Rouen in Normandy, who had accompanied Duke William of Normandy during the invasion of England in 1066. Interestingly, it is not until we get as far back in this lineage as Erkenbaldus *vicecomes*, the father of Erkenbald Flandrensis, that we get an explanation of the Fleming-family connection to Flanders. Erkenbald *vicecomes* served as an officer in the household of Richard I of Normandy, but an entry in *Piperoll* 31 Henry I (1130) can be convincingly interpreted to indicate that Erkenbald *vicecomes* had first come to Normandy from Saint-Omer in Flanders during the reign of Richard I of Normandy. So, I suppose the question is: The earliest members of the Fleming family lineage (detailed above) who lived in Scotland, were they Flemings or were they Normans? I would like to contend that the children, grandchildren, and certainly the great-grandchildren of the cousins Baldwin Flamang and Jordan Flamang, who first came to Scotland in the service of David I, King of Scots, considered themselves Scottish, and nothing else. I seriously doubt that they felt they owed any allegiance whatsoever to Flanders, merely because of the eye-catching coincidence of their surname.



# THE BATTLE OF MELROSE BY CLINT EDWARDS



## The Backstory

James V became king of Scotland when he was but one year old when his father went down in a blaze of glory at the Battle of Flodden. It was the custom for one or more regents to be appointed until a young king reached adulthood (or in James V's case, 16 years of age) and could begin running state affairs in person. The first regent for young James V was his mother, Margaret Tudor, the daughter of the English king Henry VII. When she remarried Archibald Douglas, sixth Earl of Angus, the regency was taken by John Stewart, Duke of Albany.

The custody of James V was the friction that led to a conflict known as the Battle of Melrose. Despite the order of James IV that Margaret would be regent until she remarried, she didn't seem quite ready to hand over custody of her son to Albany, nor did her new Douglas in-laws. The struggle went much deeper than politics as we can imagine the anguish of a mother being forced to give up custody of her son. On the other hand, Albany would never be seen as the actual voice of the king if he didn't actually have custody of him. This is especially true as Queen Margaret may have had more than motherly interests in her son, having become accustomed to her royal position with her first husband.

The next several years saw the many shifts in loyalty and affection, with Albany and Margaret becoming reconciled while Margaret and her husband, the Earl of Angus, becoming estranged. Archibald Douglas eventually became part of a council that was to rotate custody of the young king, even becoming the first to take a turn. When the time came to hand James V over, Douglas refused, and despite his best efforts to win over his royal prisoner, James came to hate him. In 1526, during his three-year captivity, James was able to sneak out a message for help to Walter Scott of Buccleuch.

## The Battle

Scott knew the country well. He knew the royal party would be heading for a bridge to cross the River Tweed as they returned to Edinburgh from Jedburgh. Aside from his royal hostage, the Earl of Angus' party consisted of a large number of Kerrs from the Middle March as well as some Maxwells from the West March. Scott, on the other hand, had a force of around 1,000 men coming from a combination of his own Scotts and the Elliots. On the way to the bridge, Douglas' group was ambushed by Scott's.

As this was a battle fought primarily by Border Reivers, cavalry would have likely been the main effort on both sides. The Borders provided some of the finest light cavalry in Europe and the sixteenth century was their heyday. Upon seeing Scott's force, those under the Earl of Angus charged violently. The Scotts held firm. Each side strove aggressively against the other and it was touch-and-go which would gain the upper hand. At the peak of the battle, Lord Hume arrived with reinforcements: 80 riders from the Kerrs. That was enough to turn the tide. The Scotts and Elliots could see their chances of victory slipping and fell back. Despite losing 100 of his men to Scott's 80, victory was with Douglas.

Not content with the defeat, an Elliot man who apparently still had a lot of fight left in him turned as his men were entering a wood, pursued by none other than Kerr of Cessford himself. The Elliot warrior slew Kerr of Cessford, igniting a feud - not between the Kerrs and Elliots but between the Scotts and Kerrs. As far as the Kerrs were concerned, the death of their heidsman had Walter Scott's name on it.



## Epilogue

The attempted liberation of James V was a failure, as was the following Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. It wasn't until May 1528 that the young king was able to slip from Douglas' grasp while in disguise and make it to Stirling and his mother. Archibald Douglas was forced to flee to exile in England. As irony would have it, Buccleuch and Angus would fight on the same side against the English to victory at Ancrum Moor in 1544 and in defeat at Pinkie in 1547. Walter Buccleuch's life is the epitome of the saying, "Beware the wrath of a patient man." A group of Kerrs, including sons of the chief killed at Melrose, who possessed both patience and wrath found Scott on the High Street in Edinburgh in 1552. 26 years after their chief and father was killed by one of Scott's fighting men, they stabbed him to death.

Were Flemings present with Douglas at the Battle of Melrose? I couldn't find any evidence of this despite previous associations between the Fleming and Douglas kindreds. One reason this might be was the fact that the Douglas clan was split into two main factions: the Black Douglasses (the Earls of Douglas) and their cadet branches, and the Red Douglasses (the Earls of Angus), who did indeed spring from the former but often found themselves in an antagonistic position to them. The power of the Black Douglas clan was broken in 1455 at the Battle of Arkinholm. It was this branch that the Flemings were connected to, making their involvement in Melrose doubtful in lieu of strong historical evidence.

**Next Question: Were there Flemings on the side of the Earl of Douglas at the Battle of Arkinholm?**

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My name is Clint Edwards. I graduated from Utah State University with a BA in history and from American Military University with an MA in Ancient and Classical History. To me, learning history is learning stories. I love good stories. I especially love studying history that I have a personal connection with. I wrote my graduate thesis about the Scottish Clans and this lit a fire within me that I haven't been able to put out. That's why I created this podcast, The Scottish Clans.

For those of you who want to discover the wild and colorful history of the Scottish clans without the Victorian era romanticism, this is the place for you. Riveting stories and scholarly information fuel this podcast, enabling listeners to learn the truth about their ancestors or discover the real story behind award-winning films such as Outlander, Outlaw King, and Braveheart.



## THE SPRING EQUINOX - OSTARA'S BALANCE BY BILL ZIMA

In a land where the whisper of the leaves spoke of ancient magic and the rhythm of the seasons dictated the dance of life, the Spring Equinox, known as Ostara, heralded a time of perfect balance and renewal. It was the moment when day and night stood as equals, promising the resurgence of warmth, the awakening of the earth, and the blossoming of life in all its myriad forms.



In a village nestled among the rolling hills, where streams sang lullabies and the earth cradled secrets of old, lived Brenna, a young woman whose heart beat in harmony with the land. As the guardian of Ostara's rites, Brenna felt the stirring of the earth deep in her bones, the call to awaken from winter's slumber and embrace the renewal promised by the equinox.

With the dawn of Ostara, Brenna led her people to the sacred grove, a place where the veil between the worlds was thin, and the ancient stones whispered tales of cycles past and those yet to come. The air was alive with anticipation, charged with the potential of new beginnings, as the villagers gathered to pay homage to the balance of light and dark, and to welcome the return of life.

At the heart of the grove stood the Altar of Renewal, draped in greenery and adorned with the first blooms of spring. Here, Brenna lit the ceremonial fire, its flames a beacon of hope and a symbol of the sun's growing strength. Around the fire, the people joined hands, forming a circle that represented the unbroken cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Brenna raised her voice, clear and strong, invoking the spirit of Ostara, goddess of dawn and renewal. She spoke of the balance between light and dark, of the earth's awakening and the promise held in the seed that breaks through the soil to seek the sun. Her words were an offering, a prayer for growth, fertility, and the flourishing of all living things.

As the ritual unfolded, the villagers presented offerings of seeds and flowers, placing them upon the altar as symbols of their desires for the coming year. Each seed was a wish for abundance, each flower a testament to the beauty of life reborn. Together, they wove a tapestry of hope and intention, their collective will focused on the fertile potential of the future.

The celebration of Ostara was marked by song and dance, by feasting and laughter, as the community rejoiced in the return of life. The children played among the flowers, their joy a reflection of the earth's jubilation, while the elders shared stories of Ostara's past, reminders of the enduring cycle that guided their lives.

As the day gave way to night, and the fire burned down to embers, Brenna stood before the Altar of Renewal, her heart full of gratitude for the balance and bounty bestowed by the Spring Equinox. In the quiet of the grove, beneath a sky strewn with stars, she felt the deep connection to the earth and to the cycle of seasons that was the heartbeat of her world.



The celebration of Ostara, as led by Brenna and her village, captured the essence of the Spring Equinox—a time of balance, renewal, and the promise of new beginnings. It served as a reminder that in the dance of light and darkness, there is a moment of perfect harmony, a fleeting equilibrium from which life springs forth, renewed and resplendent. In honoring, Ostara, they embraced the awakening of nature, the fertile potential of life, and the eternal cycle that weaves the fabric of existence.

# LET THE GAMES BEGIN

BY TAMMY SCHAKETT-FLEMING

As spring approaches in Scotland, men and women look to the outdoors for adventure and sport. No more than the Scots of old. It is suggested the games started in Ireland as far back as 2000 BC. The Scotti brought the games to Scotland around the 4th and 5th centuries. The Highland games started as a means of selecting the best men for battle. The first mention of Highland games was by Malcom III, King of Scotland. In search of a royal messenger, King Malcom summoned his men to Braemar and required the men to run up Craig Coinnich to determine who was the fittest and fastest. Many similar events happened throughout history to judge the men for strength and bravery in combat. After the Battle of Culloden, the 1746 Act of Proscription crushed the soul and culture of Scotland. However, the games persisted. History suggests that it was the endorsement by Queen Victoria of England that prompted the immense popularity and growth of the Highland games. As Scots moved from Scotland and settled in all parts of the world, they took the Highland games with them as a means of keeping their culture and their sense of family and community intact.



Much has changed since then, but the popularity of the Highland games has only grown with the first US Highland Games being held in New York in 1836. Today, in addition to the Games across Scotland itself, there are more than 200 annual games and gatherings across the US and Canada. You can also discover games in Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Bermuda, Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Switzerland. You can take a Scot out of Scotland, but you never take the Scotland soul out of a Scot

Today the games include athletic events, piping and dance competitions, and massed band field programs. Many have jousting and mock battles. If you love animals, you can watch the dog herding demonstrations as they corral sheep and ducks on the field. You many even get a chance to pet an adorable shaggy coo. You can learn about the clans, join a Ceilidh full of dance and music; observe the calling of the clans and torch lighting ceremony; be present at the kirkin of the tartans; be invited to participate in the parade of tartans with your clan; and attend gatherings of the individual clans. Traditional Scottish wares are plentiful, including haggis, bridies, pasties, Scottish pies, Scottish tablet, and deep-fried Mars Bars. Usually, you will be able to get a dram of stout or whisky; if you are adventuresome, definitely visit the whisky tasting tents. And of course, there is no shortage of merchandise to purchase from kilts and accessories to anything you can put a clan name on. Gather your family and go!



Photos courtesy of Jim Fleming.



# Athletics at the games

Originally, Scottish Highland games revolved around athletic competitions. There are certainly other competitions and festivities, but many believe that the athletic contests are the games, while all of the other activities are just entertainment. The musicians, dancers and herders may take exception to this sentiment; however, it remains true today that the athletic competitions are a fundamental part of the events.

## Heavy Stone Throw



Similar to the modern-day shot put, instead of a steel shot, a large stone of variable weight is often used today. There are two versions. One, the *Braemar Stone* uses a 20–30 lb (9.1–13.6 kg) stone for men (13–18 lb or 6–8 kg for women) and does not allow any run up to the toeboard or "trig" to deliver the stone. Second, the *Open Stone* using a 16–25 lb (7.3–11.4 kg) stone for men (8–12 lb or 3.5–5.5 kg for women), the thrower is allowed to use any throwing style so long as the stone is put with one hand with the stone resting cradled in the neck until the moment of release.

## Scottish Hammer Throw



Similar to the modern hammer throw, the Highland Games version has some differences. In the Scottish event, a round metal ball weighing 16 or 22 lb (7.25 or 10 kg) for men, or 12 or 16 lb (5.5 or 7.25 kg) for women, is attached to the end of a shaft about 4 feet (1.2 meters) in length and made out of wood, bamboo, rattan or plastic. With the feet in a fixed position, the hammer is whirled about one's head and thrown for distance over the shoulder.

## Weight Throw for Distance



This event has two variations to it, (usually considered two separate events) depending on the weight of what is thrown. One uses a light weight for men of 28 lbs. (13 kg) and 14 lbs. (6.4 kg). for women. The other uses a heavy weight of 56 lbs. (25 kg) for men and 28 lbs. (13 kg) for women. The weights are made of metal and are attached to a handle either directly or by a chain. The implement is thrown using one hand only but otherwise using any technique and the winner is the one who throws the furthest.

## Weight Over Bar for Height



In this event, the athletes toss either a 25.4 kg (56 lbs.) weight for men and 12 kg (28 lbs.) for women. The weight has an attached handle and using only one hand is thrown over a horizontal bar. The weight must be kept between the legs before swinging it up in a pendulum manner. It is then released when it is at its apex overhead. Each athlete is allowed three attempts at increasing heights. The competitor must clear the bar to move to the next height. The winner has the highest successful toss.

## Keg Toss



This event, which has evolved from Irish Highland games, involves the heaving of a standard half-barrel beer keg over a horizontal bar using both hands. Keg for maximum height is also a staple Highland games event with 12.5 kg, 15 kg and 25 kg being the most common weights used. The keg is completely empty for better stability and to avoid injuries (at least that's what they claim). The basic technique involves swinging the keg in a pendulum like manner and releasing when it is at its apex.



### **Caber Toss**



In this fan favorite, competitors toss a large, tapered pole called a "caber" usually made from larch trees. Typically, it is between 16–20 feet (5–6 meters) tall and weighs 90–150 pounds (40–70 kilograms). The primary objective is to toss the caber so that it turns end over end, falling away from the tosser. Ideally it should fall directly away from the tosser in the "12 o'clock" position. The judging of the caber toss is quite complicated. The straightest end-over-end toss scores highest. If the caber lands on its end but falls back towards the thrower, the score is lower but is based upon the maximum vertical angle that the caber achieved (side-judging may involve a second judge). End-over-end tosses are scored according to the hours on a clock, with a 12 o'clock score being highest (falling directly away from the thrower), down to a 9 or 3 for cabers that reach a vertical, before falling to the side. Hard to judge who wins but cheer your favorite on.

### **Sheaf Toss**



After the caber toss there is another crowd favorite. A bundle of straw (the sheaf) weighing 20 pounds (9.1 kg) for the men and 10 pounds (4.5 kg) for the women is wrapped in a burlap bag. The athletes toss the sheaf vertically with a pitchfork over a raised bar. The winner is determined by how high the sheaf is tossed over the bar.

### **Maide-leisg**



Maide-leisg (Gaelic for 'lazy stick') is a trial of strength performed by two competitors sitting on the ground with the soles of their feet pressing against each other. Thus seated, they hold a stick between their hands which they pull against each other until one of them is raised from the ground. Even the kids can compete at the Highland Games.

### **Tug O' War**



Right up there with the caber toss and sheaf toss, tug o'war is one of the funniest athletic events to watch while cheering on your favorite team. A team of eight men and women pulling on an heavy rope against another team of eight coached by an additional member of the team who shouts encouragement and instructions to spur them on to pull their opposite number across the line. It's even more fun to watch after a rain shower.

Have you thought about competing at a Scottish Highland Games event? Have a chat with our president, Reggie Chambers, to see what it's all about. You can reach him at [cfss.president@gmail.com](mailto:cfss.president@gmail.com). Read more about competing at Highland Games on these websites:

<http://www.highlandgames-sga.com>  
<http://www.nasgaweb.com/about.asp>



# BRIEF HISTORY OF DANCES & THE IMPORTANCE OF DANCING AT SCOTTISH GAMES

BY LYNDSEY FLEMING



The roots of Celtic dance date back centuries, with influences from ancient Celtic rituals, medieval court dances, and folk traditions. In Ireland, early forms of dance were influenced by the Druids, who performed ritualistic movements during religious ceremonies. The Celts were sun worshippers who practiced a pagan dance within a circular formation of stones which has some commonality to the circular formation of Irish set dancing. Celts were also said to have danced clockwise in circles on happy occasions and anticlockwise when mourning. They often included movements which involved repeated tapping of the feet on one spot – shades of Sean Nós – and modern solo dancing as well as setting steps in Irish and Scottish group dances.

Celtic dance is a vibrant and energetic form of dance that originated from the Celtic regions of Ireland and Scotland. These traditional dances have been passed down through generations, evolving over time while maintaining their deep cultural roots. Whether performed socially or competitively, Celtic dance is known for its rhythmic footwork, lively music, and elaborate costumes. Today, it remains an important part of cultural festivals, performances, and competitions worldwide, bringing people together in celebration of their heritage. As the centuries progressed, Irish dance evolved into structured forms, incorporating elements of French and English court dances. By the 18th and 19th centuries, traveling dance masters helped standardize and spread Irish dance styles across Ireland, leading to the development of modern Irish step dancing. These dance masters played a crucial role in preserving and refining the art form, ensuring that techniques and steps were passed down accurately.

Similarly, Scottish dance traditions trace back to the Gaelic-speaking clans of the Highlands. These dances were performed at gatherings, celebrations, and military events. Highland dancing, a well-known form of Scottish dance, was originally performed by men to demonstrate strength and agility but has since become popular among both men and women. During the 20th century, Celtic dance gained international recognition, especially with the rise of stage productions like Riverdance and Lord of the Dance. Today, Celtic dance continues to thrive in competitions, festivals, and cultural celebrations, drawing dancers of all ages who appreciate its rich history and energetic performance style.

Celtic dance includes a variety of styles, each with its own characteristics and purpose. The two main categories are Irish and Scottish dance, both of which have solo and group forms. These dances often take years of practice to master, and many dancers start training at a young age to develop the agility and precision needed for performance. Irish dance has several distinct styles. Step dancing is known for its fast-paced footwork and rigid upper body. It can be performed solo or in groups and gained international fame through productions like Riverdance. Ceili dancing is a social form performed in groups, featuring structured patterns that make it popular at parties and celebrations. And set dancing, which resembles square dancing, involves four couples performing intricate sequences, often accompanied by traditional Irish music played by live bands.

Scottish dance also includes a variety of styles. Highland dancing is a solo dance that was traditionally performed by men in competitions but is now enjoyed by dancers of all genders. Well-known dances in this style include the Sword Dance and the Highland Fling. Scottish country dancing is a lively social dance performed in groups, similar to Ceilí dancing but with its own formations and steps. And Cape Breton step dancing, originating in Nova Scotia, is a percussive style influenced by both Scottish and Irish traditions. It requires strong footwork and precise coordination with the music.

Music plays a crucial role in Celtic dance, setting the rhythm and mood for each performance. Traditional instruments like fiddles, bagpipes, accordions, and tin whistles provide the fast-paced, energetic tunes that

drive the dancers' movements. Different types of dances require specific musical tempos, from the rapid beats of a reel to the slower, more graceful rhythms of a waltz. The combination of intricate footwork and lively music creates an electrifying atmosphere for both dancers and audiences.



Costumes in Celtic dance are not only visually striking but also reflect cultural heritage and tradition. Female Irish step dancers wear elaborate dresses adorned with Celtic embroidery along with curly wigs and tiaras. Male dancers typically wear shirts and vests with trousers or kilts. Male Scottish Highland dancers wear kilts with tartan patterns representing their clan heritage, while women may wear dresses with sashes. Footwear varies based on the dance style. Soft shoes called ghillies are used for lighter movements, while hard shoes create rhythmic sounds on the floor, enhancing the percussive elements of the dance. Each costume element is carefully chosen to align with the history and aesthetic of the dance style.

The overall history of the Celtic dance has marked the histories and cultures of each region with individuality. The earliest reference to dance in Irish history details a visit between the Mayor of Waterford and Mayor of Baltimore. A processional combination of singing and dancing took place called carolling which originated from European folk dance histories and was thought to be introduced to the Irish by the Normans when they arrived in 1169. It is also said that Scottish mercenaries performed a sword dance before the Swedish King John III at a banquet held at Stockholm Castle in 1573. The dance was apparently part of a plot to assassinate the king, the weapons necessary to complete the dastardly deed 'just happened' to be a natural prop for the festivities. Luckily for the king the signal was never given to implement the plan. By the year 1598, dance reels begin to be published in a work entitled *News from Scotland*. The reel which is thought to be mostly Scottish in origin was said to be named after the Swedish ragla, which means to stagger, incline or move while walking, first to one side and then the other. A reception given in honor of Anne of Denmark at Edinburgh in 1589 included a "Sword dance and Hieland Danses", and in 1617 a sword dance was performed before James VI. Still later in 1633, the Incorporation of Skinners and Glovers of Perth performed their version of the sword dance for Charles I whilst floating on a raft in the middle of the River Tay. The Irish Jig is widely accepted as Irish in origin and was likely to have originated from an Irish Clan marching tune, which was first published by John Playford, a music publisher and choirmaster of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1686. The dance of the hornpipe is first mentioned in the time of Henry VIII by Chappell. This dance, in particular, is generally excepted by most as being of English origin and is believed to have arrived in Ireland around the 18th century.



It was after the Battle of Culloden in 1746 that the government in London attempted to purge the Highlands of all unlawful elements by seeking to crush the rebellious clan system. An Act of Parliament was passed which made the carrying of weapons and the wearing of kilts a penal offence. The Act was rigorously enforced. So much so it seems that by the time the Act was repealed in 1785, Highlanders had lost all enthusiasm for their tartan garb and lacked the main prop required to perform their sword dances. The revival of Highland culture was greatly boosted when Queen Victoria discovered the road north and recognized first-hand, the magnificence of Scotland for herself. This revival saw the beginnings of the modern Highland games, with of course, Highland dancing forming an integral part.

Primarily to make judging easier, however, the selection of dances being performed was gradually narrowed down over the years and decades that followed. The result of this was that many traditional dances simply got lost, as they were no longer required for competition purposes. In addition, over the years Highland dancing has moved from being an exclusively male pursuit, to one that today includes more than 95% of female dancers.





The Gaelic League was founded in 1893. After centuries of British rule in Ireland, the aim of the League was to recreate a separate cultural Irish nation where the use of all English language, culture, games, dress, literature, music and dance was eliminated. While its aims were admirable, the order banned many dances which were popular at the time including round and country dances as well as quadrilles. However, by 1897, the first ever public Ceílí which took place ironically, in London's Bloomsbury Hall, organized by the Gaelic league, at which sets, quadrilles and waltzes were danced to Irish music.

A meeting held at the Athenaeum in Glasgow in 1923 marked the formation of the Scottish Country Dance Society. Attendees included Miss Lillian Ross, Mr. Michael Diack, Mr. F. H. Bisset and most importantly, Mrs. Ysobel Stewart and Miss Jean Milligan. These two women were the driving force behind the establishment of the Society and its evolution into the organization we know today. Ysobel Stewart and Jean Milligan were from very different dance backgrounds. Stewart had been taught the country dances as a young girl, participating in dances and events across the Argyllshire social scene. Milligan's interest lay in traditional dance, music and movement - the country dances were a major feature of her work at Jordanhill Training College. They both lived extraordinary lives; Mrs. Stewart as the first secretary of the Society built a solid administrative foundation on which the Society grew, and Miss Milligan laid down the principles of teaching, technique and style for the dance which continue to the present day.

In 1929 The formation of the Gaelic Dancing League which endeavored to resurrect some of the dances they had caused to disappear. When this was not possible, they composed others in their place. These included the Walls of Limerick and the famous Siege of Ennis. As far as competitive Highland dancing is concerned, until 1986 only four standard dances remained – The Sword Dance (Gille Chaluim), The Seann Triubhas, The Highland Fling and The Reel of Tulloch. Like many other dance traditions, Highland dancing has changed and evolved over the years, integrating elements that may have their roots set in centuries old tradition with elements that are much more modern.



The Highland and Celtic Dances have played an important role in culture for centuries, and they continue to be an important part of the country's cultural heritage. From their origins in foot races to their modern incarnation as a celebration of Celtic culture and tradition, the various dances are a testament to the resilience and enduring spirit of its people. Whether you have a dancer competing or just enjoy cheering on the dancers, go applaud and maybe dance along.

# CHEER THEM ON!





# CAN YE HEAR THE PIPES AN' DRUMS PLAYIN'?

Scotland has a rich musical culture and heritage. While there are many instruments used to play Irish and Scottish music, generally you will see the bagpipe, drums, fiddle and harp competitions at the games. All through the day you will hear the pipes and drums playing on the field. For a real thrill, watch for the massed bands that gather to entertain the crowds. Soon you will hear Scotland of old speaking to you saying, "You are home."



## Bagpipes

When they think of Scotland, you automatically hear the bagpipes. Nothing is more moving than hearing the *Flower of Scotland*, Scotland's anthem, or *Amazing Grace*. Like haggis, the kilt, or ceilidh dancing, bagpipes are at the heart of Scottish culture. The bagpipe reaches back across Europe and even Africa, but what the Scots did with this incredible instrument was to use it in war to frighten their enemies. During the Act of Proscriptions, the bagpipe was outlawed in 1745 as much of the Scottish culture was. But the bagpipe endured, and once the Act was rescinded, it re-emerged in all its beauty. Now that their enemies are gone, players are more attentive to pitch and tone.



## Celtic Harp

The Clarsach or the Celtic Harp, was for years an important part of the music culture before the popularity of the bagpipes. It was so essential to clan life that the best players were granted high status as musicians as the traveled from place to place across Scotland. As old as the history is, much like other Scottish culture, the clarsach was lost during the Highland Clearances and modern musicians rely on the modern harp.



## Bodhran

The Bodhran is another instrument associated with Scotland but is Irish, and it's believed that this percussion instrument best resembles the early Celtic version of a tambourine. Many are perplexed as people assumed it is related to the drum. Unlike the drum, the bodhran can be played on both sides of the skin with either sticks or hands, which allows it to harmonize with other musicians.



## Fiddle

What is the difference between Fiddles and Violins? The fiddle lends itself to be more fluid and has the ability to play faster dance tunes. Additionally, the fiddle has a flat-arched bridge which allows the fiddler to quickly change music and playing styles. Listen for the strathspey, hornpipes, reels, marches, polkas and jigs while at a Heritage Game. Feel free to get up and dance.



Click on photo to follow link.



### Tin Whistle

The tin whistle, also known as the penny whistle, is a popular woodwind instrument with children because it's inexpensive and easy to play. I might take exception to this, I am currently learning to play a penny whistle...neither cheap nor easy to play at my age. The tin whistle has a long history & was most popular in the 1800s. It has a whistle-shaped mouthpiece and 6 holes that players cover in different combinations & different breath to produce the various scales of music. The tin whistle is also called the 'fipple flutes' because of the way the air wobbles with an inhalation of air.



### Scottish Tenor Drum

The Scottish tenor drum, next to the bagpipe, is a popular instrument that stirs the Scottish soul. The tenor drum is played with sticks on the top of the skin only, though you will sometimes see the players drumming out a beat on the edges. Similar to the bodhran, the tenor drum can be tuned to match the bagpipes' drone or pitch. Because of the Scottish tenor drum's long tenure as a military instrument, players typically tune it to match either the drone or chanter pitches of the bagpipes in the pipe band.



### Guitar

The guitar is another stringed instrument similar to the fiddle & Celtic harp. However, the guitar is recognized more readily by music fans. The Scottish use the guitar in a very distinctive manner creating a Medieval and classic Celtic sound all its own. The guitarist plays perfect fifths & bends the strings to give it that exceptional sound.



### Military Tattoo

The spectacle of seeing and hearing massed pipes and drums on the field is nothing short of inspiring! To see the variety of clan bands come together to play the *Flower of Scotland* exemplifies brotherhood and honor. To witness the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a once in a life time experience. It is an annual event during August as part of the Edinburgh Festivals. The military tattoo is performed by the British Armed Forces, Commonwealth and international military bands, along with artistic team performances, such as Scottish dancers every night.

Whether you go to watch the bagpipe, fiddle or harp competitions or just to enjoy the beauty of Irish and Scottish music, listen carefully as the sounds draw you in while imagining you are back with your Irish and Scottish ancestors.

*"[Scottish songs] are, I own, frequently wild, & unreduceable to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect."*  
Robert Burns



Click on photo to follow link.

# SCOTCH WHISKY, ALE OR MEAD? CHOOSE YOUR POISON

One last conversation about Scottish Games and perhaps the most important for some. Will you partake of mead, ale or Scotch whisky? Such a dilemma and luckily you don't have to choose because you most likely will find all three at the games. And you most assuredly will find a whisky tasting tent to quench your thirst.

## Mead

First let's talk about mead. Mead, also called honey wine, is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages to still be found today and is gaining in popularity. Mead was produced in ancient times and played an important role in the mythology of the times, sometimes attributing magical powers to the drink. Another story tells that Prince Charles II was served metheglin when he was just 12-years old during a visit to Wales in 1642. It was served as a symbol of the Welsh presence in the emerging British identity.

Mead is made by fermenting honey mixed with water, and sometimes fruits, spices, grains and hops were added. Mead that contains spices is called metheglin while mead with fruit is referred to as melomel. The majority of the sugar in mead is derived primarily from honey, which is the defining character of any mead.

Meads often ferment at the same temperatures as wine, and the yeast used is often identical to that used in wines, particularly white wines. By measuring the gravity of the mead before and during fermentation, mead makers can determine the proportion of alcohol to volume. The alcoholic content ranges from 3.5% to more than 20%. There are different styles of mead, and a variety of processes used, including racking into another keg for a second round of fermentation. Racking allows the dead yeast cells to settle and allows the mead to clear. The first fermentation usually takes 28 to 56 days, after which the mead goes through its second fermentation which takes 6 to 9 months to age. It is then bottled and distributed.

## Ale

If you prefer a lighter alcohol content, consider having a mug of ale. Ale was an important source of nutrition during the medieval period. Scholars believe that grains made up 80% of the calorie intake for most workers and 75% for soldiers. Even nobles' calories came from 65% grains. Brewing ale in the Middle Ages was a local and bustling industry. For women it became secondary family income and was allowed as a primary income for widows.

There are as many variations of ale as there are countries, but Scotch ale, also called "wee heavy" has an exceptional malty flavor accented by sweet malty undertones due to the heavy concentration of esters. Ale is brewed using a warm fermentation process. Generally lower in bitterness than beer, ale exhibits a deep caramel color, the hue depending on the brewing technique. In medieval times, the term ale referred to a drink brewed without hops. Chamber's Cyclopaedia of 1741 states, "Ales is chiefly distinguished from beer...by the quantity of hops used therein, which is greater in beer, and therefore renders the liquor bitterer, and fitter to keep." As with most beers, ale typically has a bittering agent added to balance the sweetness of the malt. Ale was bittered using gruit, a mixture of spices or herbs, providing a sweet infusion boiled in the wort (mash) before fermentation.

Modern ale is typically fermented at temperatures between 15-24 C (59 – 75 F). Temperatures above these the yeast produces esters that give ale its aroma and slightly fruity taste. The yeast produces two types of compounds depending on how concentrated it is and how quickly it is produced. To create the highest quality, the yeast has to survive the wort process to ensure that the sugars create a sweeter taste and overall lightness. In comparison to mead, alcohol content falls between 6.6% to 8.5%.

## Scotch Whisky

Not to leave the best for last, but who doesn't love a good dram of whisky? The first known mention of Scotch whisky is in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland of 1494. Scotch whisky or simply Scotch, is either a malt whisky, grain whisky,

or a blend of the two only distilled in Scotland. All Scotch was originally made with malted barley. Commercial distilleries began introducing whisky made from wheat and rye in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. As of May 2024, there are over 151 distilleries, with more being added this year, operating in Scotland, making Scotch whisky one of the revered symbols of Scotland.

Dozens of compounds contribute to Scotch flavor and aroma, including higher oils added during fermentation. 13 distinct flavor characteristics were established depending on the mixture of compounds, including sugar, sweet, grainy and florals. Some distilleries use a peat fire to dry the barley giving it a distinct smoky flavor. It is then found to make the mash. The Scotch is then aged using oak cask previously used for bourbon, whiskey, sherry, and wines. Any age statement on a label of Scotch whisky must include the age of the youngest whisky used.

On November 23, 2009, the Scotch Whisky Regulations were instituted. The SWR defines and regulates the production, labeling, packaging, and advertising of whisky. The whisky must be produced at a distillery in Scotland from water and malted barley (to which only whole grains may be added) that have been processed at that distillery into the mash and fermented by only adding yeast. In addition, the Scotch must be distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% (190 proof) and has a minimum of 40% (80 proof).

Scotch whisky is divided into distinct categories: single malt. Single grain or blended:

- Single malt whisky must be distilled at a single distillery as a batch process using a pot still distillation and made from a mash of 100% malted barley.
- Single grain whisky is distilled at a single distillery but may add whole grains of other malted or unmalted grains using continuous stills or column stills.
- Excluded from these two, is any spirit that is a blend of whiskies. Nearly 90% of the bottles sold per year are blended whiskies. Two or more single malt whiskies from different distilleries are used in the blended malt whisky while grain whisky is a blend of two or more grain whiskies also from different distilleries.

Does your head hurt yet? We've barely touched on the history of mead, ale and Scotch whisky. Or maybe you had a dram or two too many? Whichever poison you choose, you will find it at most Scottish Games. Slainte Mhath!



# CLAN FLEMING CONVENES AT THE GAMES



We also participate in the Calling of The Clans at Ohio Scottish Games. They call your clan. Jay Fleming, our great nephew, shouts out our clan motto "Let the deed shaw!" and held up poor red Comyn's head.

Scottish Heritage Games is an important way for people to learn about their ancestors, culture and history. While Clan Fleming Scottish Society is new to the games, we are gaining recognition each time we participate in a game or event. Many have approached my family's tent at games saying, "I've never heard of Clan Fleming. Tell me about it." Others are pleasantly surprised when they see us, "Fleming?! That's my family! Can I join?" One Fleming even cried when she saw us. There is nothing more thrilling than meeting other Flemings, particularly when they didn't expect to see us. So many questions!

This is why convening at local games are so important to the growth of Clan Fleming Scottish Society. Some games are expensive, some only a small fee, and some free. Almost always they include 2+ entry tickets and parking. Some you need to bring your own set up, such as awnings, tables and chairs. Others provide these items for a nominal cost. We bring our own display package, which my husband groans about every year because it grows and grows. We can't help ourselves...it is quite addicting to hunt for items or create items to display.

My family have been attending the Ohio Scottish Games, Grandfather Mountain Heritage Games and, last year for the first time, the Stone Mountain Highland Games. Each time we convene at the games, usually under an awning outside, we meet amazing people. We connect with people who are truly interested in their Fleming ancestor's history.



Our first attempt at the Central Florida Games. We learned so much at this game.



Stone Mountain Scottish Games. We made backdrops for the awning. We bought shower curtains online. If you look closely, you may spot a bottle of Abellour Scotch. We strongly believe in sharing with neighbors and visitors. Flemings always get a second round.



Our banner may not be as nice as other clans. But to save money I made it. I am not a professional seamstress. The badge we had made for us. We have more items on other tables. We have a life size mannequin of Lord Robert Fleming and this year we're adding another, Lady Margaret Fleming. Stay tuned for additional photos from the 2025 Games on our Facebook page.

# COSCA GUIDES TO CONVENING AT SCOTTISH GAMES

BY BOB FORBES JUNE 30, 2022

Highland Gatherings and Games are traditional events that members of a clan use to renew their family bonds and compare feats of prowess. Clan conveners sponsor and host tents celebrating their heritage and encouraging society membership.

COSCA has compiled advice and examples from many clan societies to provide the ultimate clan convener guide. The planning covers suggestions for researching the local event's requirements, confirming your participation, and understanding your and your society's liability. Ideas for the materials to bring include your tent, tables, chairs, carpet, tent banners, membership materials, internet devices, table top displays, name tags, stamps or stickers, and hospitality supplies. The guide provides ideas for both banner displays and tent layouts. Tips for hosting a tent include dress, general hospitality, clan and society information, opportunities for selfies and posting on social media, and the march of the clans. A sample checklist includes the basic convener kit, event materials, tent set-up supplies, displays, hospitality items, personal items, and other useful supplies. Examples of guides are included from Clan Forbes Society, Clan Davidson, Clan Wallace Society Worldwide, Clan Hay, and Clan MacLaren Society of North America.

Learn more here: <https://www.cosca.scot/convener-guide>



The Council of Scottish Clans and Associations (Council) is a registered IRS Section 501c3 public charity incorporated in the state of Delaware, USA. The organization was founded in 1976 by Dr. Herbert MacNeal and others to support Scottish Clan organizations and preserving Scottish heritage. The initial meeting was held at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina. Today, the Council welcomes all organizations and individuals to join us in our work to strengthen and energize the efforts of all Scottish Heritage Societies.

Reprinted from COSCA website: <https://www.cosca.scot/post/convener-guide>

## CULINARY EXPLORATION: THE BRIDIE BY JESSICA FLEMING



In homage to the Irish and Scottish Heritage Games, Jessica Fleming gives us a traditional Scottish dish you will find at all the games. A warm, fresh bridie fulfils the need for a sense of comfort food that we all crave. This simple and delicious handheld meat pie is wrapped in a flaky crust and served hot from the oven. If this hardy staple has one hole poked in the top crust to vent, the ground meat filling has no onion in the mix. However, if there are two holes in the top that means there are onions in the seasoned ground meat. Bridies are traditionally made with lamb or beef, but you can use turkey to suit your dietary needs.

### Ingredients

#### Meat filling:

1 tablespoon (14g) vegetable oil  
1 1/4 pounds (567g) ground lean lamb (traditional), beef, or turkey 1 cup (142g) onion or shallot, minced  
1 1/4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce 1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/3 cup (30g) old-fashioned rolled oats 1/2 cup (113g) beef stock or gravy  
Salt and pepper, to taste

#### Pastry:

3 cups (360g) Unbleached All-Purpose Flour 1/2 teaspoon table salt  
6 tablespoons (85g) unsalted butter, lard, or melted beef suet 3/4 cup (170g) water

#### Egg wash:

1 large egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon water





## To make the filling:

1. Place the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the meat and onion and cook, stirring occasionally to break up the lumps, until the meat is cooked through, and the onions are translucent.
2. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, thyme, nutmeg, oats, and stock or gravy. Cook for 3 more minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then remove from the heat and set aside to cool while you make the pastry.

## To make the pastry:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. Make a well in the center. Bring the fat and water to a boil in a small saucepan, then pour into the well in the flour mixture. Stir together until the mixture is evenly moistened and still warm, but cool enough to handle comfortably.
2. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, knead it a few times, then cut off one-third and place it under the mixing bowl to keep warm. Making smaller batches keeps the pastry dough from drying out or getting over worked.
3. Pat the remaining dough flat and gently roll it 1/4" thick. Using a small plate or saucer as a template, cut out six 6" circles of dough, gathering the scraps and re-rolling as necessary.

## To assemble:

1. Lightly grease a baking sheet, or line it with parchment. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place 1/4 cup of the cooled filling inside each of the circles of dough, placing the filling off center so you can fold over the other half.
2. Brush the edge of the dough and fold over the pastry, you can pinch to seal them, or you can use a tool (i.e. fork). Use a knife to poke holes in the top to vent (see intro for traditional markings).
3. Brush the tops with the egg wash and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until internal temperature reaches 165°F or 74° Cand tops are golden brown. Remove the pies from the oven and cool; serve warm.





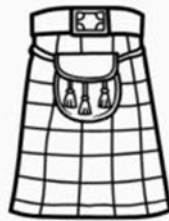
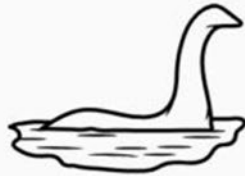
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*Alexander*



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