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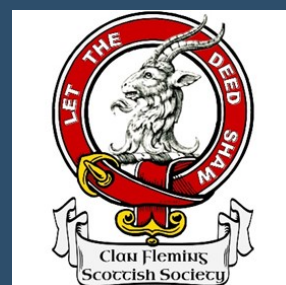


The Newsletter of the Clan Fleming Scottish Society

THE DEED

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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.

A Note from Our CFSS President

Halloween is soon coming upon us. It is one of the last vestiges of our ancient ancestors that still survives today. Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man are credited as the birthplace of Halloween then and today called Samhain. This was a time when our world crossed with a shadowy realm called Tir nan Og or "Land of the Young." Tir nan Og allowed mysterious creatures into our own world, such as the aos si (fairies), who did not always have the greatest of intentions. There were many ways to deter these beings from entering our realm, such as dressing up, Scottish forebears called this guising. They also celebrated by holding great mumming events, and carving turnips, much like modern pumpkins, lit within by a candle. Bonfires were set ablaze, autumn feasts celebrated, and gifts given to usher in the darker half of the year.

Biggar, the small town that plays such a large part in the history of our clan, celebrates the ancient customs of Halloween each year at the haunted Wiston Lodge with face painting, apple dooking, spine-tingling storytelling, spooky trails, and tons of pumpkins, <https://wistonlodge.com>. Samhain was not exclusive to Celtic peoples and was celebrated by cultures around the world in their own way. Flanders, where our surname derives, was once occupied by Germanic peoples such as the Franks and the Belgae (a confederation of Celtic tribes). Ancient cultures each celebrated the end of fall and start of winter in different ways. Today Halloween is more widely celebrated, but Austria continues those traditions by leaving bread, water and a lighted lamp to welcome the dead souls of ancestors. Belgium celebrates Halloween and All Saints' Day by lighting a candle to honor dead relatives. Germans celebrate later in November with Matinstag where they wear costumes and have a lantern procession.

It's important that we do not forget the old ways. Again and again, through the centuries, there have been attempts to stamp out the memory of our primordial beginnings. More so than the rest of Europe it falls upon us to do so. It could be argued that the Scottish clan system is a remnant of when our ancestors lived in tribal societies that looked upon the natural world around them in awe and reverence. Meadows, springs and wells, the seasons and the trees are just a few of the places that they held special. Invite your family and friends to build a bonfire, wear costumes, sing and dance, carve a pumpkin, and eat all that Halloween food and candy. Celebrate this autumn as many of our ancestors did and our cousins do today in our ancestral homeland.

Oidhche Shamhna sona dhuibd uile!

Letter from the Editor



As you can see, Halloween is one of my favorite holidays. After all, I am an October baby. Growing up I thought all the Halloween parties were my birthday parties. We had so much fun dressing up, carving pumpkins, bobbing for apples, listening to scary stories and watching creepy movies. Who doesn't like Vincent Price? The photo on the left is me with my boys, Remmy and Monty, dressed as the *Beagle Boys in Company B*. Yes, I had to

explain to the younger members of my classes. The one on the right is my attempt at looking like Indiana Jones...this one they got.



This issue of **The Deed** is a mix of historic education and tongue-in-cheek Halloween fun. James Fleming has provided our members with two excellent articles on Fleming history, *Fleming Titles Part II* and *Cumbernauld Castle: Yesterday and Today*. Lauren Alexandra Bisplinghoff did a scary piece, the *Witches of Biggar*, and Scotland's role in the witch hunts. Bill Zima wrote a fantasy piece, *The Enchanted Talisman of Cumbernauld Castle*. While not historically accurate, it is a beautiful, magical, and tragic story of loss. Lyndsay Fleming gave us a story about Lady Margaret Fleming and her abilities as a healer. Did you know that Lady Margaret was accused of witchcraft? Political intrigue at its best. I could not help myself but to include bits and pieces about Scottish Halloween traditions.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Make sure to watch for the January issue about Highland and Lowland clans. It will be an interesting discussion among the experts. Watch for future details about the Clan Fleming Tartan Contest!

Happy Halloween!



**"There's a little witch in all of us."
Aunt Jet Owens
Practical Magic**

Clan Fleming Titles

By James Fleming

In our previous edition, Jim Fleming viewed the clan's history through its titles (Baron, Lord, Earl) and occupations (knight, sheriff, governor and tutor). In this issue he continues with more occupations including baillie, burgess, chamberlain, commendator, prior, commissioner, justiciary, usher and Privy Councillor.

Both Biggar and Oliver Castle frequently played host to royalty because they boasted ample game and were therefore perfectly suited to the family's favorite pastime, hawking (the hunting of wild animals by means of a trained bird of prey).

In 1524, 8th chief (John) headed a hawking party that was ambushed by a rival clan, enraged by the recent engagement of Lord Fleming's oldest son Malcolm to heiress Catherine Fraser. The Tweedie clan was determined to secure her estates for themselves, so they assassinated Lord Fleming, kidnapped his son Malcolm and demanded that Catherine be relinquished.

While the kidnapped Malcolm was the late Lord Fleming's eldest son, his birth had been illegitimate so he could not inherit clan leadership. Instead, his younger half-brother (also named Malcolm) became our 9th chief and 3rd Lord Fleming. He was forced to surrender Catherine who was then forcibly married to James Tweedie.

These events so traumatised her fiancé Malcolm that he retired to Whithorn Priory in Wigtownshire and became a priest. This priory, founded three centuries earlier, had grown rich on generous gifts bestowed by

several Scottish sovereigns during repeated pilgrimages. Accordingly, it had recently been placed under the rule of a **Commendator** (a person who holds the priory's estates in trust). Fifteen years later, Malcolm Fleming was Commendator and, later still, he was Prior (the Superior of the religious order that occupied the priory).

Malcolm Fleming was the last Catholic prior at Whithorn. During the Reformation he was imprisoned for the crime of saying Mass and the priory's property was vested in the Crown by the annexation act of 1587. Malcolm died a year later.

Walter Fleming of Biggar (who must have been a close relative of the clan's 5th chief, Malcolm Fleming of Biggar) served as Chamberlain of Scotland between 1359 and 1376. This role was later filled by the 7th chief (Robert 1454), the 8th (John 1517-24), the 9th (Malcolm 1524-1547), the 10th (James 1547-1558) and the 11th (John 1565-1572).



Whithorn Priory and Seal



The **chamberlain** (also known as “Master of the King’s household”, “Great Chamberlain” or “Lord High Chamberlain”) managed the king’s household and was ranked by King Malcolm as the third great Officer of State. His responsibilities included collection and disbursement of all Crown revenues; judging all crimes committed within burghs; and setting prices and wages within burghs. He was a supreme judge whose decisions bound inferior courts. In 1454 the 7th chief was also appointed to the allied role of auditor of accounts in Exchequer.

The **burghs** were incorporated bodies set up in cities and towns so that commerce could flourish there outside the anachronistic restrictions of the feudal system. They had grown out of a modernisation movement originating in Flanders, Scotland’s long-term ally and business partner. In a very early form of European democracy, each burgh was governed by a council of privileged citizens known as **burghers** or **burgesses**.

The chamberlain’s judicial decisions were enforced by the **baillies** of the burghs. This role was analogous to the bailiff (who enforced decisions of manorial courts within a barony) and the sheriff (who enforced decisions of shire-level courts within a shire). James Fleming (10th clan chief) had a son named Thomas who was the baillie at Perth in the late 16th century while the 12th chief was later a burgess there. The 13th chief was a burgess at Lanark while the 14th and 16th were burgesses at Edinburgh.

In 1556 the 10th chief (James) was appointed guardian of the East and Middle Marches with power of justiciary within

those lands. The Marches were buffer zones on the Scotland-England border where local lords had special responsibilities to work with their cross-border counterparts to keep the peace. A **guardian** exercised administrative control in a jurisdiction during a period while the incumbent was unable to fulfil this duty. **Justiciary** was the power to make legal judgements in court. So, this appointment must have been a temporary arrangement to fill a void in the usual leadership of this important area or to provide an arbitrator to resolve a dispute between rival lords.



In 1565 Mary Queen of Scots appointed the 11th chief (John) as Master Usher of Her Majesty’s Chambers for life (also occasionally referred to as the Master Janitor). He was succeeded in this lucrative position by his son (John) the 12th chief, also appointed for life from 1583. After a long period of contention between the Fleming clan and the Cockburn family of Langton, the 14th chief (John) consented to resign from the post in 1661 in exchange for compensation of 20,000 merks (about 13,000 pounds) paid by Parliament. Nevertheless, his brother Sir William Fleming served Kings Charles I and II as Gentleman Usher of the Privy Chamber from 1648 until 1670.

Gentleman **Ushers** were responsible for overseeing the work of the monarch's servants "above stairs", particularly those who cooked, cleaned or waited on the royal family, as well as for overseeing a range of other work (such as care of the chapel and bedchamber). The duties were similar to those performed by a butler in later years. Monarchs retained several ushers, so the Master Usher must have been the senior usher. The current royal family still employs ushers, although their duties have changed over the years and the modern positions are usually occupied by retired service men and women. Current Parliaments in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Cook Islands also employ ushers, such as the Usher of the Black Rod.

Our 10th chief (James) was elected by Parliament in 1558 as one of eight commissioners to represent Scotland in negotiating and overseeing the nuptials of Mary Queen of Scots and the French Dauphin. A **commissioner** is a person nominated Parliament to undertake a special and highly challenging task. When nominated by a monarch, the task is known as a royal commission.

The 12th chief (John) must have been particularly skilled in the law, religious doctrine and in arbitration because he was appointed commissioner on at least five occasions. In 1608 he was assessor to the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and a year later was commissioner representing the king at the clerical conferences at Falkland. The following year he was one of the Ecclesiastical High Commissioners and a commissioner of the Exchequer.

He had been admitted to the Privy Council in 1598 and was reappointed in 1610, as was his descendant, the 16th chief (William) in 1677. Until it was abolished in 1708, the **Privy Council** advised the monarch on legal matters; the regulation of trade and shipping; plus irregular issues such as emergency measures against the plague and how to deal with beggars, gypsies, witches, recusants, Coventers and Jacobites.



Jim Fleming is a retired Customs Manager and lives on Sydney's lower north shore. He began researching his family history in 1983 and has been a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists since then. Aside from genealogy he enjoys travelling and singing baritone in two choirs. He is the Historian of the Clan Fleming Scottish Society.

Scottish Halloween Tradition

On Hallow's Eve the children of Scotland go guising. They dress in fantastic costumes going to door-to-door entertaining neighbors with songs, jokes, and poems. They are applauded and given fruits and sweets.



The Enchanted Talisman of Cumbernauld Castle By Bill Zima

In the shadowy mists of medieval Scotland, Cumbernauld Castle stood as a proud bastion of Clan Fleming. Perched atop a rugged hill, its towering stone walls were said to be as unyielding as the resolve of its inhabitants. Lady Fleming, the matriarch of the clan, watched over the castle with a fierce and protective spirit, especially during the tumultuous years of the Wars of Scottish Independence. As English forces pressed ever closer, Lady Fleming sought a way to protect her people and her home from inevitable siege and destruction.



Desperation drove her to seek help beyond the natural world. One evening, under the light of a crescent moon, she rode alone into the dense, whispering woods surrounding the castle, guided only by tales of an ancient witch who dwelled deep within. The witch, known as Ailsa the Wise, was feared and revered by locals for her knowledge of the arcane and her ability to commune with spirits that roamed the land long before the Norman invaders arrived.

Lady Fleming approached the witch's secluded hut with trepidation. Ailsa, with her hair as white as frost and eyes like burning coals, greeted her with an enigmatic smile, as if she had been expecting her. Lady Fleming explained the dire situation: English forces threatened to overwhelm the clan's defenses, and with no aid forthcoming from the other Scottish nobles, they faced certain defeat.



The witch listened carefully and then spoke in a voice that seemed to resonate with the very air around them. "There is a way," she murmured, reaching into the shadows of her hut. From within a small wooden chest, she produced a smooth, oval-shaped stone engraved with ancient runes that glowed faintly in the dim light. "This is the Talisman of Protection, infused with the power of the earth and sky, the blood of the land itself. As long as this stone remains within your castle's walls, no enemy shall breach its defenses. But beware, for if it is lost or stolen, the protection will vanish, and your stronghold will crumble."

Grateful but wary, Lady Fleming accepted the talisman, feeling its latent power pulse in her hand. She returned to Cumbernauld Castle and had the stone concealed in a hidden chamber deep within the castle's foundation. True to the witch's words, the English forces that marched upon Cumbernauld found themselves confounded. No siege engine or battering ram could crack the castle's walls, and arrows seemed to deflect harmlessly against its battlements. Rumors spread among the English soldiers that the castle was protected by dark magic, causing many to abandon their posts in fear.



For a time, the Flemings thrived, their home unassailable. But envy and treachery lurked close by. A rival Scottish clan, jealous of the Flemings' newfound strength, schemed to uncover the source of the castle's power. One fateful night, a spy infiltrated Cumbernauld, guided by whispers of the talisman's existence. He found the hidden chamber and, with stealthy hands, took the rune-engraved stone.

The very next day, as dawn broke over the castle, its walls seemed less solid, the air within its courtyard less vibrant. When the English returned for another assault, they found the once impenetrable stronghold vulnerable. The walls, now devoid of the talisman's protection, splintered under the blows of their siege weapons. Cumbernauld Castle fell in a matter of hours, its mighty defenses crumbling like dry sand.

Lady Fleming, devastated by the loss, searched desperately for the stolen talisman, but it was never recovered. Some say the rival clan hid it away in a forgotten glen, where it lies buried beneath layers of earth and time. Others believe the stone's power faded when it left Cumbernauld's grounds, turning it into nothing more than a lifeless rock.

The loss of the talisman marked the decline of Clan Fleming's fortunes. Cumbernauld Castle, once a symbol of their strength and resilience, fell into disrepair, its ruins a stark reminder of the supernatural bond that had both protected and cursed the family. To this day, locals claim that on certain nights, if one listens closely at the castle's remains, they can hear Lady Fleming's mournful voice calling out, pleading for the return of the enchanted stone that held her clan's fate in its grip.

Disclaimer:

I am Autistic and my work is a blend of speculative fiction and mythology, inspired by traditional stories but shaped by my personal imagination. It is not meant as a faithful retelling or reinterpretation of any specific myth or culture. Instead, it reflects my own creative vision and may diverge from established narratives.

I write primarily for myself, and this piece is shared for those who enjoy exploring imaginative interpretations. Please read it as a creative exploration, not an authoritative account of myth.

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Cumbernauld Castle: Yesterday and Today

By James Fleming

The earliest surviving record of Fleming ownership of the Cumbernauld estate dates to a 1315 charter whereby King Robert I (the Bruce) granted to Sir Malcolm Fleming *"the Barony of Kirkintilloch ... the lands of Lenzie and Cummernauld"* in return for Malcolm providing a knight for the king's army and for his service as Sheriff of Dunbarton. The Fleming family retained Cumbernauld for over 600 years.

As the charter mentions, the estate had *"formerly belonged to John Comyn, Knight, and which had been granted to William Comyn by King Alexander previous to 1216"*. John Comyn had been in contention for the crown of Scotland before his rival, Robert the Bruce, murdered him in the Greyfriars church at Dumfries in 1306.



The Comyn family had long held vast estates and wielded immense power in Scotland through their ownership of numerous castles, including a motte and bailey castle at Cumbernauld. It was probably never designed as a residence and may have been a ruin when the Fleming ownership began. So, the Flemings continued to live at Fulwood and Biggar for many years.

Malcolm's grandson Thomas Fleming built Cumbernauld Castle in about 1371 as a new residence, but the expense of building

it caused financial difficulties that forced him to take out a mortgage on Cumbernauld and to sell the earldom of Wigtown. Malcolm Fleming of Biggar, as heir to his cousin, paid out the mortgage and the estate was retained by his descendants thereafter.

The earliest part of the castle was probably a very strong, simple and roughly-built stone tower. It would have been L-shaped, comprising a rectangular block with a wing projecting from one end. A few small timber or stone outbuildings would also have been attached. As time went on, and the power and influence of the family grew, the castle would have been enlarged by the addition of other stone structures, such as the great hall that was used for festive occasions.

The family entertained members of Scotland's royal family at Cumbernauld Castle on many occasions over subsequent centuries. For example, John 2nd Lord Fleming was married to Eupheme Drummond whose sister Margaret was a mistress to King James IV. The king made frequent visits to Cumbernauld to woo her and they had a daughter, Lady Margaret Stewart. In 1502 both sisters died of food poisoning at Drummond Castle.

Mary Queen of Scots visited the castle more than once and was present in January 1562 when the roof of the great hall collapsed, killing 7 or 8 people. Eight years later, during the Marian Civil War, the castle was sacked by Mathew Stewart, 4th Earl of Lennox, regent for his grandson King James VI.

In 1640, with religious fervour raging, eighteen Scottish noblemen met at the castle to sign the Cumbernauld Bond, by which they pledged to defend the country against extreme Presbyterians. At a political level it was an agreement to oppose the policies of the Earl of Argyll who controlled the dominant political faction in Scotland. When Argyll found out about the bond, he wanted to have them all (including Lord Fleming) tried for treason but relented when they agreed to burn the bond.

Ten years later, the Earl of Wigtown was ordered to garrison Cumbernauld Castle but it was, nevertheless, largely destroyed a year later following a siege by Cromwell's General Monck. The remnants were burned to the ground during the rebellion of 1715.

John, 6th Earl of Wigtown, built Cumbernauld House on the site of the former castle in 1731. It was designed by William Adam (1689-1748), the foremost architect in Scotland at the time.

Following the death of the last clan Fleming chief, Charles 7th Earl of Wigtown, the house passed to his niece and heiress, Lady Clementina Fleming. After her death on the first day of 1799, it passed to her grandson Charles Elphinstone-Fleming. His son John eventually owned many more large estates when he succeeded as 14th Lord Elphinstone in 1860. After his death, Cumbernauld passed through the marriage of his sister into the Maude family but it was sold in 1875, ending 660 years of association with the Fleming family and its descendants. The house was sold to the government in 1955 for the development of Cumbernauld new town and has since been subdivided into apartments.



Scottish Halloween Tradition

Adults and children enjoy visiting the many haunted castles all around Scotland. If you're looking for a horrifying experience many castles even have ghost tours!

Edinburgh Castle: Known for its rich history and numerous ghost sightings, a visit to Edinburgh Castle promises to thrill. There are plenty of Halloween 'high-jinks' with a Halloween trail, and dark tales told by ghouls and ghosts. Not far from the castle, you'll find the Edinburgh Dungeons, a full-on sensory experience that will take you back through the centuries. To finish off your Halloween experience, with a ghost bus tour of Edinburgh.

Stirling Castle: With its long history of battles, Stirling Castle has more than a few tales to tell during its Halloween Shenanigans weekend. Suitable for families, with kids that love a bit of Halloween fun!



Glamis Castle: Known for its ghostly legends, Halloween brings a mix of family-friendly storytelling and teen-appropriate tours in the castle after-dark on a selection of dates in October.

[Halloween In Scotland With Kids | Activities, Events & Traditions \(trekkingthedream.com\)](https://www.trekkingthedream.com/)

The Witches of Biggar

By Lauren Alexandra Bisplinghoff

While most of those accused of witchcraft were poor old people, politically inspired accusations were occasionally made against aristocrats, including Lady Margaret Fleming, Countess of Atholl, and her daughters.

Since the dawn of humankind, some clan members, primarily women, have specialized as healers within their community. They studied the local botany, developing elixirs and medicines for the treatment of wounds and illness. Over time they built up a deep understanding of their country, its flora and fauna. Within Celtic cultures, learned individuals were recognized as priests, priestesses and druids, attracting deep-seated community respect. Clansmen would come to them for advice and guidance on a wide a variety of issues.

In 313 CE the Roman emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. Seventy years later, his successor Theodosius I convened a council of bishops at Constantinople which confirmed the orthodoxy of Christianity. While appointing some non-Christians to high office, he nevertheless tolerated the destruction of several temples of classical antiquity by Christian zealots, thus beginning the long decline in adherence to paganism in Europe.

By the fifteenth century Christianity was ubiquitous throughout Europe and non-conformity was widely condemned. Anyone who stood outside the orthodox lifestyle risked accusations of adhering to pagan beliefs. Individuals found to be studying or practicing the old ways, using charms or witchcraft, were hunted and tortured to death, thus initiating the term witch-hunt. It is estimated that, between 1450 and 1750, more than 3 million people worldwide were accused of witchcraft.



Approximately 60,000 were tortured and put to death in horrible ways.

In Scotland 3,000 to 4,000 were executed by strangulation or burning at the stake, many more than in England. Ministers in local kirks

often took the lead in identifying, accusing, arresting, trying and condemning these outsiders. Non-attendance at church was viewed as prima facie evidence of witchcraft, as was successfully healing people or animals.

On 15 June 1566, Mary Queen of Scots was in labor with her son, the future King James VI of Scotland and James I of England. She was attended by several ladies-in-waiting including Lady Margaret Fleming, the Countess of Atholl. Margaret was the fourth daughter of Sir Malcolm Fleming (3rd Lord Fleming) and his wife Lady Janet nee Stewart (La Belle Ecosaise, The Deed volume 1). Soon after the birth, a story was circulated by Richard Bannatyne, a secretary of the famous churchman John Knox, that Margaret Fleming had magically transferred the queen's labour pains to another lady-in-waiting, Margaret Beaton. There is no doubt that this was a political attack dressed up as religious righteousness. Bannatyne was an enemy and political opponent of her husband, the Earl of Atholl, whom he described as an "idolator and dependor on witches".

A few years later the queen received the gift of a heart-shaped brooch that depicted her supported by two lions (representing Scotland and England) before a motif of intertwined roses and thistles over an inscription "Fall what may Fall the Lion shall be Lord of All". This was clearly a symbol of the political movement that aimed to unite the crowns of Scotland and England in a single monarch, Mary's son James. This was viewed as treason by many in England's ruling class, who opposed the idea of a Catholic monarch in Protestant England. The jewel was conjectured by them to have been commissioned by the "witches of Atholl", meaning Margaret Fleming and her daughters. Unlike the lower-class accused witches, Margaret Fleming managed to face down these accusations and survived for many more years before dying in 1586 of natural causes, aged 54 years.

The king, whose birth she had witnessed, later became obsessed with the pursuit of witches, participating in witch trials at North Berwick in 1590. Seven years later he published *Daemonologie*, a study of demonology and the methods demons used to bother troubled men. The book endorsed the practice of witch hunting. During his reign, the Witchcraft Act of 1604 was enacted that enforced the death sentence for those practicing enchantment, charming, sorcery or witchcraft. Shakespeare used themes from the king's book and direct quotes from the North Berwick trials in his 1606 play *Macbeth*, which features three malevolent witches whose supernatural activities set an ominous tone throughout the play.

Witch hunts waxed and waned over the years. In 1649, anti-witch zeal once again arose at the behest of the Presbytery of Biggar. Kirk ministers accused a group of elderly people, primarily women, of witchcraft and charming and labelled them The Witches of Biggar. A total of 128 people were put on trial. The most infamous was Janet Bowis who was initially found

innocent, displeasing members of the Privy Council who continued to "investigate" accusations against her. In November she was imprisoned at Peebles and Patrick Fleming of Biggar was commissioned to question her and hear testimony by her accusers. He was also involved in gaining further confessions from the accused and preparing them for their brutal deaths. Not only was Janet Bowis found guilty, but during her torture and incarceration she named many others. This was a sad period of history for Biggar and the Fleming family. Recently, the Scottish courts reversed all the findings of guilt and apologized to the families.

Forty years later came another famous witch hunt that led to the infamous witch trials at Salem in colonial Massachusetts, where more than 200 were accused, thirty found guilty and nineteen executed by hanging while another died under torture.

As we celebrate the harvest months of Samhain, Halloween, All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day and Dia de Los Muertos, it is important to remember that a many of our modern traditions are adapted from ancient pagan traditions. No matter what holiday traditions we celebrate, let us not forget the unfortunate ones who were convicted of witchcraft because of their beliefs and practices.

Lauren Alexandra Bisplinghoff



Mother, Singer/
Songwriter/Guitarist,
Poet, High Priestess and
Chef

Lady Margaret Fleming: Healer

By Lyndsay Fleming

It was June 19, 1566, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, sat next to her shuttered windows reading scripture from her Bible, her belly swollen and her mind anxious. Soon her baby would be here, how she hoped it would be a boy. A son would solidify her claims to the English throne, a male heir would make her line more favorable than Elizabeth's. Named James, like his father. She looked up at the golden cross that hung above her bed. She closed her eyes and prayed. A sudden cramp rumbles in Mary's belly, ending her prayer. She gripped her side and called out for her attendant Lady Margaret Fleming. Margaret was the older sister to Mary Fleming, one of her lady's-in-waiting, and an illegitimate cousin on her father's side. She was also married to John Stewart, a powerful Catholic Earl of Atholl and a close supporter of her rule.



M a r g a r e t rushes in at once and feels Mary's belly. "Bring in the rose oil and my apothecary chest, at once!" She instructed her

assistants. "Move the Queen to her bed."

As Mary's attendants help her into bed, they prepare to massage her back and abdomen with the oil. Margaret opens the chest and takes out her family's grimoire. This book of carefully recorded cures and rituals had been passed down by the Fleming



generations to her. She opens it and carefully thumbs through a few sections, taking note to mark the pages she would need to reference again. Margaret put the book down and reached back into the chest, pulling out a small bundle of dried herbs and a chunk of cold iron. She lit the herbs on fire and blew out the flames, the smoke now poured from the bundle, and she began to walk the room. She made sure to fan the smoke into all corners of the chamber and placed the iron under the bed pillows of Mary.

As Mary laid in her birthing bed and tried to relax, Margaret returned to her grimoire and began pulling herbs from her private store. She turned to one of Mary's bed chamber attendants, "Draw a warm bath for Her Majesty." As they left, Margaret collected barley, fenugreek, mallow and dried juniper berries and placed them into a cloth satchel. After tying it off she set it aside and looked over the other needed ingredients. She retrieved vials of linseed oil and honey, setting them aside as well and next pulled out a special flask of dark liquid. This was her family's own recipe for life water, Fleming whisky.



Margaret began carefully measuring out ingredients and mixing them together in a goblet. *Life water, three count pour. Honey, two spoonful. Crushed wormwood, half a spoonful. Crushed mugwort, half a spoonful. Dried juniper, ground finely, one spoonful. One twig mint.* As she stirred the tonic, Margaret muttered a quiet prayer. She asked her ancestors and God to help guide her hands. Mary's child was moving, but not quickly. Her pains were coming at a steady rate but all in the chamber knew this would not be over quickly. Margaret set aside the goblet and began mixing ointment needed for helping heal the Queen after the child came. She turned and collected a small cup of rose oil from a nearby urn and a pitcher of water from the table. Opening her grimoire once more, Margaret looked over the ingredients and began mixing once more. *Rose oil, two parts. Water, one part. Honey, one part. Dried juniper, ground finely, one part.* Once satisfied with the consistency she set the bowl on the table next to Mary's bed.

Mary's bath was ready, and the attendants helped move her into the waters. Margaret dropped the satchel of herbs into the bath at Mary's feet and handed the goblet to Her. Mary took the goblet and gave a

downward glance at the bitter smelling brew. Closing her eyes she threw back her head and the goblet with it, swallowing the tonic whole. Margaret and the other ladies began to pray aloud as Mary's head began to swim. The churning pain in her belly began to lessen, the smell of the incense and herbs left a thickening fog in Mary's mind. Margaret and her ladies spoke louder with their prayers, filling the room with a roaring chatter. Margaret placed her hand over Mary's head and commanded the pain be gone from her; that it be taken to those who would see her line suffer. An image appeared in Margaret's mind. A woman who had betrayed the Queen, someone who would throw aside years of friendship to support her husband's ambition. The Face of protestant Lady Rires. She recognized the danger that she too faced by helping the young Queen that she loved as a sister. She understood that others would accuse her of witchcraft by using the family charms, but her heart went out to her Queen. Margaret knew her duty and performed well. Within hours the future King of Scotland was born, James IV.



Famous Authors on Halloween

Shakespeare with some certainty celebrated Samhain. This was evident in several pieces of his work with the use of images of ghosts, the devil, evil spirits, and who could forget, the three witches of MacBeth. *"Double double toil and trouble/
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."*

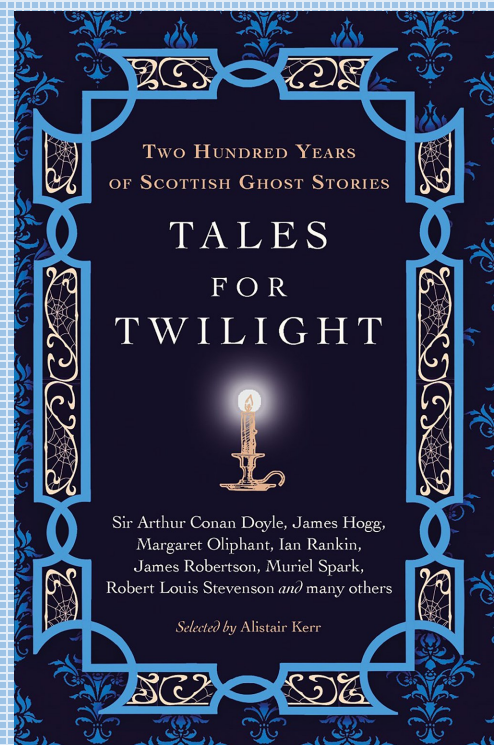


Scotland's favorite author, Robert Burns, wrote many famous pieces, including *Halloween* and *Tam O'shanter*. Both haunting tales that would be a spooky read for Halloween.

If you would like to read more Edwardian and Victorian Scottish ghost stories. Give this book a look.

"Tales for Twilight offers a spine-tingling selection of unnerving tales by writers from James Hogg in the early eighteenth century to James Robertson, very much alive in the twenty-first. Scottish authors have proved to be exceptionally good at writing ghost stories."

[Tales for Twilight: Two Hundred Years of Scottish Ghost Stories by Alistair Kerr | Goodreads](#)



Fuarag: A Traditional Gaelic Treat for Halloween

By Emily MacDonald, Gaelic Director, Colaisde na Gaidhlig

At Halloween-time, you will still find a few houses in Cape Breton that serve the ancient Gaelic dish, *fuarag*. At one time, it was very common to eat a spoonful of fuarag at each house you stopped at on Halloween night. Although all you need to make fuarag is oatmeal and cream, each family and in some cases, each community, had its own special way of preparing and enjoying this dish.

To make fuarag, oatmeal and cream were mixed together in a big bowl and placed on the kitchen table. Each visitor that would enter the home would grab a spoon and eat from the same bowl. I have heard many different stories about fuarag while visiting with people around Cape Breton. Most commonly, people added whipping cream to the oatmeal; however, I have heard of some cases where sour cream was used. Some people would brown the oatmeal in the oven first to bring out the oat flavour. One man I spoke to told of himself and his brothers putting buttermilk on top, and another told of adding a little whiskey to the mix.

Special items were added to the fuarag upon preparation. Most commonly, a button, a coin, a thimble and a ring were hidden in the mixture. If your spoonful of fuarag contained one of these items, it meant good or bad fortune was to come your way within the following year. If you received the ring, you were going to wed; if you received the coin, you were going to come into money; the button meant you were going to live a bachelor's life and if you received the thimble you would become a spinster. One family had a variation of this method, where the mother would add buttons to the fuarag mixture and whichever child would find the most buttons would win the game.

My own father-in-law welcomes each October 31st with great enthusiasm in anticipation of his first feed of fuarag, a dish he has enjoyed since he was a child at Halloween-time. Why don't you make a bowl for your family and friends this year – good fortune might be right around the corner!

Recipe:

2 tbsp raw oatmeal
2 cups whipping cream
1 ring
1 thimble
1 coin
1 button



Mix cream in large bowl. Brown oatmeal on cookie sheet in oven. Add browned oatmeal to cream. Stir in special items. Enjoy!

[Air Ghleus ~ In Tune: Fuarag: A Traditional Gaelic Treat for Halloween](#)

Upcoming Events

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[MS Highlands and Islands Association of Celtic Gatherings](#)

Salado Scottish Gathering & Highland Games November 8-10, 2024

[Scottish Gathering and Highland Games – Salado Museum and College Park](#)

Central Florida Scottish Highland Games January 18 & 19, 2025

[47th Central Florida Scottish Highland Games | Winter Springs, FL](#)

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Scott Fleming

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David Fleming

CFSS Liaison to Lyons Court/Special Council

e: cfss.liasion-lyons-court@gmail.com

Lauren Bisplinghoff

CFSS Events Coordinator

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