

ISSUE No 05
AUTUMN 2025

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CLAN V HOUSE

PLUS

**GRANDFATHER
MOUNTAIN**

Heritage Games 2025

BRIGADOON

The Bundanoon

44th Annual Highland
Gathering

PLUS

The Last Grove of Alba

Paganism and Everyday Life

Death of Paganism in Scotland



Clan Fleming Scottish Society

SEPARATED BY OCEANS - UNITED BY HERITAGE

THE DEED

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COVER IMAGE

*Illustration for the Death
of Paganism in Scotland
of the Callanish Stones*

DEED DESIGN

Ian Fleming

Let the deed shaw...

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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.

Let
the
deed
shaw



Clan Fleming
SCOTTISH SOCIETY
UNITED BY HERITAGE

A NOTE FROM OUR CFSS PRESIDENT

We are dead center in another Highland Games and Gathering season in the US. It's dry and hot in the west and muggy everywhere else that's not in a desert or higher than 5000'. Tammy, our vice president and treasurer has been leading the charge and going to events, representing our society and Clan Fleming. She and her husband Larry actually visited Scotland! Catch up with her at one of the events she attends and I'm sure she'll love to share her experiences with you.

We are gaining traction. Our membership is growing, especially on our Facebook page. It's wonderful to see so many folks with Fleming heritage interested in their ancestry. They are from all over the world, almost every continent and a bunch of different nationalities. It's amazing all the different places Flemings are from.

This issue of the **DEED** is themed around if the Flemings were a family or a clan. One of our chief writers, Clint Edwards, host and owner of the Youtube channel/podcast, **The Scottish Clans** is a big proponent of clans existing in the lowlands. Check out his videos & podcast. He goes into depth why he thinks they were and has highly respected guests from the academic community on his shows.

It can be an emotional subject for some people. Traditionalists believe that clans only existed in the highlands, and they have a valid argument. However, there is evidence that counters this opinion, to which I and our clan historian, Jim Fleming believe, helps support our claim that the Flemings of Cumbernauld, Fulwood and Lenzie and their cadet branches were a clan. Jim makes a sound argument based on anthropological criteria that identifies what a clan is, that is not influenced by ethno-centric attitudes. Clans exist and have existed all around the world, not just in the highlands. They may be referred to as something else, but they have the elements of a clan. The American Psychology Association defines a clan as:

“in Scotland and Ireland, a kinship group and former social unit based on traditional patterns of land tenure and the concept of loyalty to a clan chief. Clan members often took the name of the supposed clan founder prefaced by Mac (Scotland) or O’ (Ireland) but were not necessarily linked by common ancestry.” (APA, 2018) In my particular instance this is true. My ancestors were not Flemish, but likely from Strathclyde or Northumbria. They adopted the Fleming name somewhere along the line.

However, is it even important that we were a clan or a family? Does that make our Scottish ancestry less significant? I emphatically say, no. The lowlands played a significant role in the formation and continuation of the Scottish identity. I speculate more in many ways. The lowlands were and are the confluence of diverse cultures. From the earliest times, before the arrival of the Romans, the lowlands were prized for their fertile land. No wonder why Rome built the Antonine and Hadrian’s walls where they did. When the Romans withdrew, the Bryton’s would reclaim it but were pushed out again by the Angles. After the demise of the Anglo-Saxons, new kingdoms of the Welsh Hen Ogledd arose. These were Elmet, Gododdin, Rheged and Strathclyde. These too, would succumb to the Dal Riata’s power play into the south western lowlands. All of these assumptions of new identity were all for not, though, with incursions of both the Normans and Scandinavian tribes that “vikinged.” Later the English would give it a try, but we know how that story turned out.

All of this excludes the constant ebb and flow of different nationalities as time moves forward. The Dutch, French, Spanish and a plethora of other peoples, Scotland is truly a bottle of Heinz on a diner table. It doesn’t matter what’s for dinner, we’re all on the same plate.

Let the deed shaw...

Reginald S Chambers
President: **Clan Fleming Scottish Society**

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EDITORS CORNER

by **Tammy Schakett-Fleming**

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Clan Fleming Scottish Society’s The **DEED** periodical - it’s full of exciting stories from Scottish heritage games to a beautiful family wedding. Of course, we have the Kid’s Corner and a perfectly delicious recipe from Jess Fleming. Jim Fleming provides an in depth discussion on whether we are a clan or a family. I think we all agree, based on the Facebook poll, that we are Clan Fleming!

Bill Zima, once again, writes an ethereal story for your imagination. A new guest writer, Mike Nicol, explains how Scotland turned from its pagan beginnings. Make sure you find his blogs on the web! Lyndsay Fleming follows with a tongue in cheek piece about how even to this day we unknowingly follow ancient pagan rites. Kevin Fleming, from Kentucky, writes a lovely story about his family and how they spent their summers. This one made me laugh and remember my own childhood summers.

Starting October 1st, I will be the next president for Clan Fleming. I want to thank Reggie for his hard work getting CFSS established and his continued support. CFSS would not exist without his inspiration and dedication. Watch out for some big changes later this and next year - starting with the fall issue, The **DEED** will be available to all Flemings... FREE! You can find past issues and the current issue on the our website, www.clanflemingintl.org and the **Friends of CFSS Facebook group**. Ian Fleming, our Media Director/graphic designer, will be taking the roll of editor for The Deed in the winter issue.

We would love to hear from you with your family stories, and we want to hear your comments and suggestions about The **DEED**. Please feel free to contact me at cfss.tschakett@gmail.com with your stories or recommendations for topics that you would like to see in The **DEED**.



NEW TITLES & DEEDS

The Clan Fleming Scottish Society Executive Board is excited to announce an important change in our leadership structure at Clan Fleming Scottish Society effective 09.30.2025. Reggie Chambers will be stepping down from his role as President, and Tammy Schakett-Fleming will be assuming the position.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to Reggie for his vision and inspiration in establishing Clan Fleming Scottish Society a little over two years ago. Reggie isn't going far but will continue on the Executive Board as Emeritus President. CFSS can't afford to lose such a valuable asset or Reggie's insights...watch for him in a new column in The Deed, Ponderings of a Past President. Reggie has decided to pursue an advanced degree in history and is remodeling his home. Both require his entire attention...at least that's what his professors and family are telling him. We totally support his decision and thank him for all that he has done and will continue to do for CFSS.

As we welcome Tammy Schakett-Fleming, we are confident that her vision and leadership will guide CFSS toward continued success. Tammy brings years of business & academic experience, and we are excited about the fresh perspectives she and her team will bring.

We remain committed to ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining open communication throughout this process. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to Tammy at cfss.tschakett@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Clan Fleming Scottish Society
Executive Board

CLAN V HOUSE

Clan Fleming versus the House of Fleming

by **Jim Fleming**

Some members of the Scottish diaspora take the view that there is no Clan Fleming because the Flemings were a lowland family while the clan tradition was concentrated in the highlands. They propose that our society should promote itself as “House of Fleming” or something similar rather than “Clan Fleming”.

Proponents of this view argue that the ancestral lands of highland clans were owned collectively with the clan chief responsible for preserving them for future generations and contrast this with the noble houses where an hereditary lord held title in the land and members of his family were basically vassals. They hold that clanship is restricted to those that were listed in the Parliamentary Acts of 1587 and 1594 as detailed on a map that depicts the “Possessions of Highland Proprietors”. Some proponents nevertheless concede that clanship extends to Borders families that organised and behaved as clans.

**Not all chiefs are
the head of a clan
Some are heads
of a ‘family’**

The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs

The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs asserts this position, defining a chief as a person who has been recorded by the Lord Lyon King of Arms as being in right of the undifferenced arms of the name while noting that not all chiefs are the head of a clan; some are the heads of a “family”.

But there are others who see this as an unnecessarily hardline interpretation.

They point out that the meaning of the word clan has widened since it was incorporated into English from its Gaelic origins centuries ago.

The latest Macquarie Dictionary provides a typical modern definition: a group of families or households, as among the Scots, the heads of which claim descent from a common ancestor; a group of people of common descent. This suggests that the application of the word clan is not restricted to Scotland, let alone to the Scottish Highlands.



The word originates in the Gaelic word *clann*, meaning children or kindred. But its use has spread from these Scottish origins and has been adopted worldwide to describe social groups of people who share a common ancestry or kinship. Sociologists give the following as examples of clan systems: Scottish clans; the Indian caste system (where clans are called “gotras”); some African societies that trace ancestry through the female line; Native American tribes. The word is also used by Aboriginal Australians to describe groups that could otherwise be called a tribe or sub-tribe.

Sociologists use the word to describe an extended family structure where members are connected through blood relations or marriage. They describe several clan characteristics: common ancestry; kinship (blood relationships and marriage ties); shared identity (such as traditions); group solidarity (where the group identity is reinforced through rituals, ceremonies, mottos, insignia, etc); internal organisation (a hierarchy or system of elders and decision-makers). They note that clans can serve several important functions: social support; preservation of traditions; provision of a sense of identity and belonging; conflict resolution through mediation within the group; resource sharing.

Based on the traditionalist viewpoint, the Fleming family would not qualify as a clan because all of its traditional seats (Biggar,

Cumbernauld and Wigtown) were in the lowlands. It has also been argued that the Lords Fleming would have been horrified to be considered as clan chieftains; that their family didn't exhibit clan behaviour; and that they should be primarily viewed as loyal to the crown rather than to a clan system.



THE FLEMING FAMILY,

whose motto emphasises loyalty and whose crest (the goat) is emblematic of persistence and strength, were certainly very loyal to the crown through many centuries. But its leaders did turn against the crown to preserve their own interests on occasion. For example, Malcolm 3rd Lord Fleming was given respite in 1526 by King James V for treasonable conversing with Alexander Forrest and several other Englishmen in time of war.

Scottish clans are renowned as “tribal” organisations often characterised by inter-clan feuds where loyalty to the clan ranks above other loyalties. The Fleming family's feud with the Tweedie clan is famous because it led to the assassination of John 2nd Lord Fleming in 1524. But the Fleming family also had another major feud with the Kennedy family that came very close to blows before being ultimately resolved through long-running legal processes. Furthermore, the Lords Fleming entered into bonds of manrent (legally recorded written oaths affirming mutual support in times of trouble) with several other lords, a classic clan strategy.

So, the Fleming family walked like a clan and quacked like a clan. So did a lot of other lowland families whose heritage is nowadays promoted by a society like ours. For example, all of the following lowland families have society websites that refer to them as a clan: Baird, Boyd, Cunningham, Douglas, Duncan, Fergusson, Forbes, Hamilton, Hay, Innes, Johnston, Keith, Kerr, Leslie, Livingstone,



*An image typical of Lowland Border Reivers from **Clint Edward's** YouTube video 'Highland Clans vs Border Clans', which ties in neatly with many aspects of this article by Jim Fleming about **Clan V Family**.*

*Click on the image or on the following link which will take you to out of the **DEED** Newsletter and into Youtube where you can view the **Highland Clans vs Border Clans** video*

Montgomerie, Napier and Wallace. The Fleming family was linked by marriage to several of these. The only family societies that don't use the word clan are the Stewart Society and the Family of Bruce, both royal houses. This is despite the fact that there were several Stewart clans listed in the 1587 Parliamentary Act.

Our society's mission is to enlighten the Fleming diaspora on the significance of our family in Scottish history as well as to promote and celebrate Scottish cultural traditions. We could probably do this as well as the “House of Fleming Society” as under our current name. It is doubtful, however, whether our target audience is aware of or cares much about arcane arguments about Clan versus Family.

Scottish Lowland Family Clans

Baird

Boyd

Cunningham

Douglas

Duncan

Fergusson

Forbes

Hamilton

Hay

Innes

Johnston

Keith

Kerr

Leslie

Livingstone

Montgomerie

Napier

Wallace

Our society now has a choice between conforming to a hidebound and outdated orthodoxy or taking a pragmatic decision based on the modern understanding of the word clan. The other Lowland families have already voted and the results are in!



Jim Fleming is a retired Customs Director 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 Secretary and Historian of the Clan Fleming Scottish Society. e: cfss.historian@gmail.com

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THE LAST GROVE OF ALBA

by **Bill Zima**

In the ancient hills of Alba — what we now call Scotland — there lived a Druid named Maela, a woman whose eyes mirrored the grey skies and whose voice could still a restless wind. She was a Lorekeeper, guardian of stories and seasons, and the last of her grove.

The people of her village, tucked in a green fold between loch and mountain, still practiced the old ways, but fewer each year remembered why. The gods had grown silent, or so it seemed, and the sacred groves were more often places for sheep than spirits.

But Maela remembered.

She remembered the festivals — Beltane's fires burning high to honor the fertility of land and kin, and Samhain, when the veil to the Otherworld thinned and ancestors whispered through the trees. She remembered the chants, the rituals, the sacred stones that hummed when the stars aligned. And she remembered the stories, passed mouth to mouth, heart to heart, for generations unbroken.

One day, as Imbolc approached and snow still crusted the heather, Maela received a visitor. A boy, perhaps twelve, arrived at the grove, clutching a bundle of wildflowers and a question.

"Are the gods real?" he asked, his voice trembling like the branches under frost.

Maela studied him. He had the look of the old blood — freckles like scattered stars and hair the color of bracken in the sun. "What makes you ask?"

"I heard you speak to the trees," he said. "And they... answered."

She smiled, not unkindly. "The gods are real. But not like kings and queens on thrones of cloud. They are in the stones and rivers, in the fire and fog. They are in you, if you know where to listen."

"Can you show me?"

That night, Maela took the boy — whose name was Eoin — to the Standing Circle, the heart of the grove. The trees surrounding it were ancient rowans, red berries clinging like drops of blood to bare branches. In the center stood a flat stone, carved with spirals and forgotten names.

Maela knelt and traced the glyphs. "This is where we remember. Where we call to the Otherworld. Not because we need miracles, but because we need to feel the thread between our hearts and the soil."

She gave Eoin a sprig of mistletoe and asked him to speak aloud a memory of someone he loved.

"My gran," he whispered. "She used to sing to the moon."

The wind stirred. The rowans rustled, though there was no breeze.

Maela smiled. "Then she is here now."

And in that moment, something shifted. Not in the earth, but in the boy. His gaze lost its doubt. His breath slowed. He reached out, palm against the ancient stone, and closed his eyes. He stayed like that for a long time.

In the weeks that followed, Eoin returned every day. He learned to gather herbs, to watch the stars, to feel the pull of the sun on the solstice and the hush of twilight prayers. Maela taught him the old stories — of Brigid who brought healing and poetry, of the Dagda with his cauldron of plenty, and of the spirits of the glen who guarded the land when men forgot to.

The village noticed. Small things changed. The Beltane fires were built again. Songs returned. At Samhain, children dressed as the Sidhe, carrying lanterns made from turnips, not to scare but to honor.



Maela grew older, her steps slower,
her hair white as hoarfrost.

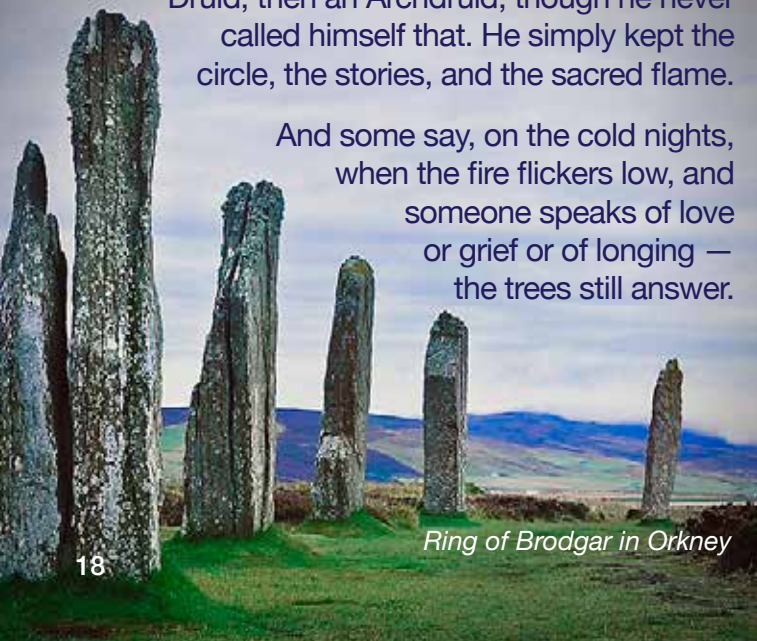


On her final Imbolc, she called Eoin — now nearly grown and gave him her staff, carved from rowan and wrapped in copper runes.

“You are the grove now,” she said. “The gods do not need temples. They need remembrance. Tell the stories. Walk the land. Teach them that the sacred was never lost — just waiting.” And then she was gone, her spirit slipping like mist into the trees.

But the grove did not fade. Under Eoin, the grove bloomed again. He became a High Druid, then an Archdruid, though he never called himself that. He simply kept the circle, the stories, and the sacred flame.

And some say, on the cold nights, when the fire flickers low, and someone speaks of love or grief or of longing — the trees still answer.



Ring of Brodgar in Orkney

The grove, fire, rowan berry and moon photos in this article were taken by Ian Fleming in Co. Cavan, Ireland.

The grove was planted to commemorate the Ulster/Scots Fleming family who farmed there for several generations.

Because the gods of Alba never left.

**They just wait
for someone
to remember**

BILL ZIMA

The Contemporary Druid

Bill Zima is an autistic author/artist whose work is a blend of speculative fiction and mythology, inspired by traditional stories and shaped by his imagination.

The stories aren't meant

to be a faithful retelling or reinterpretation of any specific myth or particular narrative. Instead, they reflect his own creative vision and they do diverge from established myths and legends.

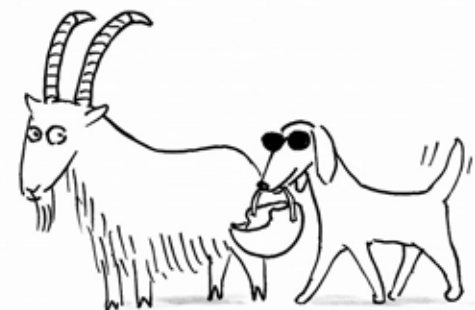
Bill writes primarily for himself, and this piece is shared for those who enjoy exploring imaginative interpretations - please do read it as a creative exploration, not an authoritative account of myth.

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**You can usually tell when a
Clan Fleming Scottish Society
member is having acting out
a bit of mid-life crisis**

Easy riders tend to act the goat



THE DEATH OF PAGANISM IN SCOTLAND

A Cultural Transformation

by **Mark Nicol**

The old Druid, pagan cultures of Scotland began to die out in the Borders before anywhere else... but where and why?

Scotland's cultural landscape underwent a profound shift during the early Medieval period, as the once-dominant Paganism gave way to the rise of Christianity. The conversion of the Scottish people from Celtic pagan traditions to Christianity was not a sudden event, but rather a slow and sometimes violent process, spanning centuries. This transformation shaped the cultural, religious, and social fabric of Scotland, influencing everything from the country's art, architecture, and rituals to its literature and mythology.

In this article, we explore the decline of Paganism in Scotland, how Christianity took root, and the cultural impact of this religious shift.

The Pagan Landscape of Early Scotland

Before the arrival of Christianity, Scotland was home to a diverse range of Pagan beliefs and spiritual practices. The Celtic tribes that inhabited the region worshipped a variety of deities, often associated with nature, fertility, and the elements. Sacred sites were scattered across the landscape, from stone circles and standing stones to ritualistic groves and wells, all of which held deep spiritual significance.

The Celtic peoples believed in a polytheistic pantheon, with gods and goddesses tied to natural forces like the sun, moon, earth, and water. Druids, the priestly class of the Celts, played a central role in Pagan society, acting as spiritual leaders, healers, and advisors to the ruling chiefs. They conducted sacred rituals, often held in remote locations such as hilltops, caves, and forests, where they could commune with the divine.

In Scotland, many ancient Pagan sites are still visible today, such as the Callanish Stones on the Isle of Lewis, the Ring of Brodgar in Orkney, and the remnants of sacred places dotted throughout the Highlands. These sites stand as silent witnesses to a time when the land was deeply entwined with spiritual meaning and when the natural world was revered as sacred.

The Spread of Christianity

Christianity began to make its way into Scotland during the 5th century AD, brought by missionaries like St. Ninian, St. Columba, and St. Andrew. St. Ninian, who established the first Christian church in Scotland at Whithorn in Galloway, was one of the first to introduce Christian teachings to the southern parts of the country. However, it wasn't until St. Columba arrived on the island of Iona in the 6th century that Christianity truly began to take root in the Highlands and Western Isles.

St. Columba, a monk from Ireland, founded the Abbey of Iona, which became a major center for Christian missionary work. Over time, Christianity spread northward, replacing the old Pagan traditions with the Christian faith. The early Christian missionaries didn't just preach to the population; they also integrated elements of the old Pagan beliefs into Christian rituals to ease the transition.

One example of this is the adoption of the Celtic Cross, which combined Christian symbols with the circular shapes common in Pagan religious iconography, such as the wheel of the sun.

The Decline of Paganism and the Rise of Christianity

The transition from Paganism to Christianity in Scotland was a gradual process, but it was not without conflict. As Christianity spread, Pagan temples and sacred sites were repurposed for Christian use. Druids and Pagan priests were often seen as enemies of the Church and were sometimes targeted by Christian leaders who sought to eliminate the old ways of worship. Paganism was increasingly portrayed as a primitive and heathen religion in Christian texts, which further marginalized it.

Many of the old Pagan festivals, which celebrated the cycles of the year — such as Beltane (a celebration of fertility and fire) and Samhain (a festival marking the end of the harvest) — were incorporated into Christian holidays. All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day eventually replaced Samhain, while Christmas and Easter became the dominant celebrations in place of older Pagan solstice and equinox festivals.

By the 8th century, Christianity had firmly established itself in Scotland, and Paganism began to fade. The Viking invasions, which brought further contact with Christian cultures from the continent, also contributed to the decline of Paganism. The Vikings, many of whom had been Pagan, eventually converted to Christianity themselves, thus further consolidating the spread of the Christian faith.

The images of Callanish on the Isle of Lewis in this article and the front cover, feature the dancer Charley Fleming and were taken by Ian Fleming

Cultural Transformation: The Legacy of Paganism

The death of Paganism and the rise of Christianity in Scotland was more than just a religious transformation—it was a cultural one as well. The shift in religious beliefs led to significant changes in art, architecture, and rituals.

St. Columba of Iona, also known as Colmcille at work in the Scriptorium



• **Art** Early Christian art in Scotland, such as the Pictish stone carvings, blended Christian iconography with traditional Pagan motifs, creating a unique Celtic Christian style. The Pictish Cross is a prime example of this fusion.

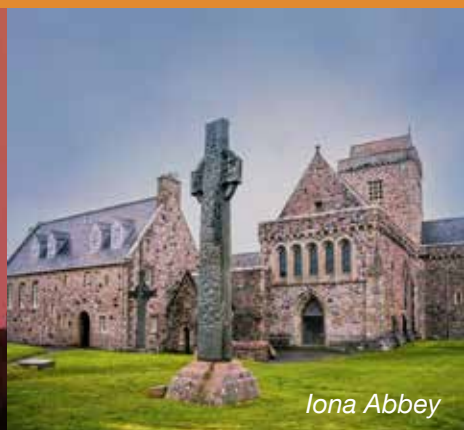
• **Architecture** The rise of Christianity in Scotland brought the construction of churches, monasteries, and cathedrals, replacing Pagan sites of worship. Iona Abbey became one of the most important spiritual centers in the region, influencing the design of Christian places of worship across Scotland and beyond.

• **Rituals and Beliefs** Many of the old Pagan beliefs were reinterpreted and absorbed into Christian practices. Holy wells, once associated with Pagan deities, became sacred sites for Christian pilgrims. Similarly, ancient trees, such as the yew tree, which had been sacred to Pagans, continued to hold spiritual significance but were reimagined within the context of Christianity.

The Enduring Influence of Paganism in Scotland

Despite the decline of Paganism, its influence is still felt in Scotland today. The Pagan festivals that were reimagined as Christian holidays continue to be celebrated, and ancient Pagan symbols can be found in the art and landscapes of Scotland. Sites like Callanish and Brodgar still evoke a sense of mystery and connection to the past, offering glimpses into Scotland's Pagan heritage.

The Celtic spirituality that arose from the fusion of Pagan and Christian traditions continues to influence modern Paganism, and many people today are drawn to the ancient rituals, beliefs, and myths of the Celtic and Pagan cultures.



Iona Abbey



Callanish Stone circle, Isle of Lewis

A Journey Through History

Visiting Pagan & Christian Sites in Scotland

For those interested in exploring the intersection of Paganism and Christianity in Scotland, the country offers numerous historic sites that reflect the cultural transformation that took place over the centuries.

- **Iona Abbey** The birthplace of Christianity in Scotland, this stunning site offers a glimpse into the history of Christian conversion.
- **Callanish Stones** The ancient stone circle on the Isle of Lewis remains one of Scotland's most important Pagan sites.
- **Brodgar and the Orkney Islands** These sites contain some of the most significant megalithic remains, blending ancient rituals with the changing tides of religion.

The Death of Paganism

A Continuing Legacy

While the death of Paganism marked a turning point in Scotland's history, its cultural and spiritual legacies continue to shape the nation today. The fusion of Celtic Paganism and Christianity gave rise to a unique and enduring spiritual tradition that continues to inspire modern Pagans, historians, and adventurers alike.

Mark Nicol
Historian | Filmmaker | Blogger
Guided Tours | Group Speaker

www.DiscoverScottishBorders



PAGANISM AND EVERYDAY LIFE

by **Lyndsay Fleming**

When we say something is “pagan,” we often think of the distant past. But the truth is, pagan traditions live on in everyday life. From how we celebrate love and death to what we wear and how we decorate, we carry forward the ideas of ancient cultures – often without even realizing it.

Paganism wasn’t a single religion, but a way of understanding the world through nature, ritual, and spiritual connection. And it turns out, we’re not so different from those old villagers after all.

What is Paganism? Here’s the basics. Pagans may be trained in particular traditions, or they may follow their own inspiration. Paganism is not dogmatic. Pagans pursue their own vision of the Divine as a direct and personal experience.

Images from the “Wilder Mann” series by French photographer Charles Fréger who travelled all over Europe documenting pagan rituals which still survive.



Pagan defined:

A follower of a polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religion.

Paganism defined:

A polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religion.

Paganism (from Latin *paganus* ‘rural, rustic’, later ‘civilian’) is a term first used in the fourth century by early Christians for people in the Roman Empire who practiced polytheism, or ethnic religions other than Christianity, Judaism, and Samaritanism. In the time of the Roman Empire, individuals fell into the pagan class either because they were increasingly rural and provincial relative to the Christian population, or because they were not *milites Christi* (soldiers of Christ). Alternative terms used in Christian texts were *hellene*, *gentile*, and *heathen*.

During and after the Middle Ages, the term paganism was applied to any non-Christian religion, and the term presumed a belief in false gods. The origin of the application of the term “pagan” to polytheism is debated. In the 19th century, paganism was adopted as a self-descriptor by members of various artistic groups inspired by the ancient world. In the 20th century, it came to be applied as a self-descriptor by practitioners of modern paganism, modern pagan movements and polytheistic reconstructionist. Modern pagan traditions often incorporate beliefs or practices, such as nature worship, which are different from those of the largest world religions.

Paganism is the ancestral religion of the whole of humanity. This ancient religious outlook remains active throughout much of the



world today, both in complex civilizations such as Japan and India, and in less complex tribal societies world-wide. It was the outlook of the European religions of classical antiquity – Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome – as well as of their “**BARBARIAN**” neighbors on the northern fringes, and its European form is re-emerging into

explicit awareness in the modern West as the articulation of urgent contemporary religious priorities. The Pagan outlook can be seen as threefold. Its adherents venerate Nature and worship many deities, both goddesses and gods. So, not all Pagan religion is public religion; much is domestic. And not all Pagan deities are humanoid super-persons; many are elemental or collective. We are looking at a religion which pervades the whole of everyday life.

Many of the things we do every day don't seem to have any connection to religion at all, but they still got their start in the world of polytheism. Even more surprising, there are traditions that we associate with specific religions (like Christianity) that most definitely got their start in other religions.

So just how 'everyday' pagan are you...?



Covering Your Mouth to Yawn

Covering your mouth to yawn is just a common courtesy, right? No one wants your warm breath on them! Turns out, that's not entirely true—even covering your mouth to yawn has pagan origins. In pagan Rome, doctors had a clever (but completely wrong) theory about yawning and infant mortality. They noticed that lots of children died young, and they also noticed that babies were unable to cover their mouth when they yawned. Their diagnosis? Yawning allowed a person's vital life essence to escape their body. And apparently covering your mouth with your hand was the only way to stop an untimely death.

Wedding Rings

While wedding rings themselves are not explicitly pagan, the fact that we place them on our ring fingers most certainly is. In traditional Greek and Roman beliefs, your fourth or "ring" finger was thought to have a vein that ran directly to your heart. By placing your wedding ring here, you were making a strong and eternal commitment to love. Ancient Egyptians exchanged rings made from braided reeds and hemp, believing circles represented eternity. As often seen in Scottish weddings, Pagan handfasting ceremonies, where couples' hands were bound together, also influenced modern wedding traditions including "tying the knot."

Fingers Crossed

When we cross our fingers, we're wishing for luck (or we're telling a lie). But this practice is a far cry from the pagan tradition that it originated from. In ancient times, it wasn't one person who would cross their fingers. Rather, two people would use their index fingers to make a cross. This was done as an attempt to harness



Wedding Ring made in Scotland by Sarah Fleming Jeweller

Charley Fleming 'Tying the Knot' with Pete in a forest in Northumbria, which is nearly in Scotland



the power of any good spirits that might be hiding nearby. Some historians believe crossing fingers while making a wish has stronger ties to Christianity. In its early days, Christianity was outlawed by the Romans and when subversive Christians met one another, they shared hand symbols and gestures to identify and support one another. Crossing fingers, again in a way that involved two people, is thought to have involved the thumb and index fingers, shaped in an “L” and positioned into a fish symbol called an ichthys. The ichthys remains a common symbol in the Christian tradition. As for crossing your fingers to get out of telling a lie, that may be of Christian origin as well. Some scholars believe the sign of the cross, formed by fingers over one another, was meant to protect a person from God’s wrath when they broke one of the Ten Commandments.

Flower Crowns

You’re most likely to see flower crowns at Coachella these days, but in ancient Greece, they helped bring worshippers closer to specific deities. Different plants were associated with different gods, so wearing a specific kind of flower wreath would help bring you favor with a specific deity.



Flower Crowns - one of the slightly lesser known Greek myths about Zeus involves being the father of one of the greatest memes of all time, but you can also see the oak leaves in his flower crown.

For example, Zeus was associated with oak, while Aphrodite was associated with myrtle.

Bridesmaids

We’ve all heard nightmare stories about the difficulties of being a bridesmaid. There’s usually a pushy bride and a hideous dress involved. But in pagan times, it’s a surprise that anyone agreed to be a bridesmaid! In ancient times, bridesmaids wore



Charley Fleming’s a-typical array of Bridesmaids which unusually included a BridesMan and a BridesDog... in the hope that all the evil spirits would make a bee line for them, leaving all the girls to look on and laugh.

identical dresses and veils to that of the bride—so at least you didn’t have to worry about a tacky bridesmaid’s dress. But all this matchiness had a purpose, and that purpose was to trick evil spirits into attacking a bridesmaid instead of the bride herself.

Gift Giving

Gift giving is a practice that has been around forever and is nearly universal. But that doesn’t mean pagans didn’t put their own unique spin on it! There are all sorts of superstitions surrounding gifts—including things like not giving knives, shoes, or opal as presents.

Our Obsession with Cats

When we ooh and ahh over our temperamental and adorable furry friends, we’re taking place in a tradition that stretches back to ancient Egypt. Although cats have known it since the beginning of time, it was the Egyptians who elevated felines to the status of gods in their religion. In fact, the goddess Bastet was depicted as having the head of cat. But don’t worry dog lovers, there’s plenty of pagan fun for you too in the dog-headed Egyptian god, Anubis.



Groundhog Day

Groundhog Day is a modern tradition that didn't evolve from paganism—it's just straight-up pagan itself if you think about it. According to the laws of Groundhog Day, if the groundhog sees his shadow on February 2nd, that means we're in for another six weeks of winter. Obviously, this is done in jest, but what else would you describe this process as other than a form of divination?

Knocking on Wood

These days, knocking on wood is a way to ward off bad luck. But for the ancient Celts, there was a deeper meaning. In traditional Celtic religion, there was the belief that trees were home to spirits, fairies, or other supernatural beings. Knocking on wood was a way to curry favor with good spirits or distract bad spirits from foiling your plans. Another possible purpose of knocking on wood was to show respect and thanks to the spirits in trees. One more theory is that knocking on wood sent evil spirits away or created noise to keep evil spirits from overhearing the plans, thoughts, and wishes of humans. Even after the introduction of Christianity, the practice of keeping evil spirits away never abated. It has been adapted to include activities like ear pulling in Turkey and unique phrases like “touching iron” in Italy.

Easter eggs

Powerful representations of new life emerging from seemingly dead objects...

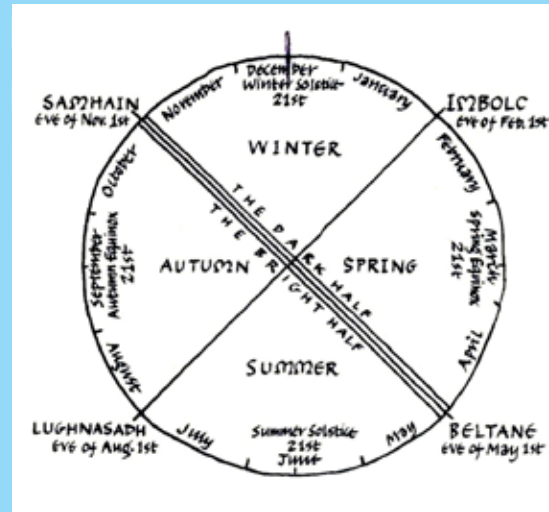


Easter

Easter is an important Christian holiday when believers celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. That's just good Christian fun, right? Nope, sorry. It's pagan. First up is the name. Cracking open that colorful Easter egg? You're holding a symbol that predates Christianity by centuries. Ancient pagans saw eggs

as powerful representations of new life emerging from seemingly dead objects. The goddess Eostre (whose name gave us “Easter”) was celebrated during spring festivals with eggs as sacred symbols. Decorating them was a ritual honoring fertility and rebirth. Christians later adopted these egg traditions to represent Jesus breaking free from his tomb—a beautiful example of how spiritual symbols evolve across cultures.

Ancient Celtic Calendar



by ghosts, and carved frightening faces into turnips to ward off malevolent entities. Food offerings left outside homes appeased wandering spirits—an early version of our modern “treat” tradition.

Halloween

Halloween—a pagan holiday? Who would have thought? The pagan holiday of Samhain also occurs on the 31st, and it is a time for honoring the dead. It's also considered to be a time when the boundary between our world and the next is at its weakest. Slowly over time, this festival sparked the interest of non-pagans as well, and now we have Halloween as we know it today. People wore disguises to avoid being recognized

Christmas

Considering that Christmas is a time when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, it may seem a little odd that it has connections to paganism, but those links are there. Because the date of the birth of Jesus is not given in the Christian Bible, December 25th seems



like a random pick. But some have theorized that this was done so that the holiday corresponded with the pagan winter solstice—to wean new Christians from the festivities.

Long before Santa and presents, ancient Germanic tribes brought evergreen branches indoors during winter solstice. These green survivors amid winter's death represented eternal life and the promise of spring's return. When Christian missionaries encountered these customs, they didn't eliminate them — they incorporated them. Rather than fighting beloved traditions, they gave them new meaning. By the 16th century, decorated trees had become associated with Christmas celebrations, though many church

leaders initially objected to this “pagan relic.”



The Mistletoe Fairy

That decorative Christmas log cake continues a tradition from when people burned massive tree trunks indoors. Nordic pagans selected a special oak log for Yule, their midwinter solstice celebration. This wasn't ordinary firewood—it was carefully chosen to burn for twelve days straight. Its flames symbolically strengthened the weakened sun during the darkest days of the year, encouraging its return. Families kept unburned pieces to protect their homes from lightning and fire throughout the year—a practical insurance policy wrapped in spiritual significance.

In Norse mythology, Frigga, the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, wept after her son Balder was killed by a mistletoe arrow. Frigga's tears turned the red berries white and resurrected her lost son,

bestowing vitality and love connotations to this plant. Also, Druids used to cut mistletoe with a sickle during the first new moon after the winter solstice. Sprigs of mistletoe were to be hung in doorways as a means of protection from evil spirits. Additionally, mistletoe was thought to contain the sperm of the gods because of the white substance from the mistletoe berries. Mistletoe was considered an aphrodisiac and fertility treatment. Be careful who you kiss under that mistletoe, you might end up bonded for life.

Days of the Week

So, it turns out that we're all pagans seven days a week—at least if we're going by day names. For example, Tuesday comes from Tiu (or Tyr), the Norse god of war and justice. Wednesday honors Woden (Odin), the one-eyed chief of gods. Thursday celebrates Thor, the thunder god with his mighty hammer. Friday belongs to Frigg, goddess of marriage and motherhood. Even Saturday through Monday have pagan connections—to Saturn (Roman), the Sun, and Moon respectively. These divine names survived centuries of religious changes, embedding mythology into our modern timekeeping.

Months of the Year

Just like the names for the days of the week have pagan origins, so do our names for the 12 months on the calendar. For example, June is named after Juno—Roman queen of the gods and wife to Jupiter. These naming conventions apparently troubled the early Christian church enough to attempt to replace them with more “wholesome” names, but we all know how hard it is to get people to try something new. They ultimately failed in this attempt, and we've kept the



FRIDAY
the word comes from the Old English *Frigedag* meaning the “day of Frigg”

Frigg was said to be the wife of *Odin* - foremost among the goddesses



This mysterious two-faced Janus figure rests in a graveyard on Boa Island, Co. Fermanagh

traditional names ever since. January is for Janus, the two-faced Roman god of beginnings. March is for Mars, the god of war. May comes from Maia, goddess of growth, and June from Juno, goddess of marriage. Many of our months honor deities from Roman polytheism, which shows just how embedded paganism still is in our calendar.

Nike

These days Nike may be a giant sportswear company, but none of their success would have been possible without paganism in ancient Greece. The goddess Nike was worshipped in ancient Greece as the goddess of victory. She would often be worshipped after a successful military win. So, it makes sense why the company would use her name to promote their brand.

Lady Justice

In courthouses across the world, you can see depictions of lady justice with her blindfold and scales. These days, it's meant to represent the impartiality of the law. But actually, these statues have a pagan origin. Whether we realize it or not, these are depictions of the ancient Roman goddess of justice, Justitia. Although the name may have changed over the years, her personification and meaning these days is nearly identical to those in Roman times.

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is yet another Christian holiday that just happens to “conveniently” fall near a pagan holiday. While these days Mardi Gras may mark the day before Lent begins, in ancient times, it was associated with festivals for Saturn – the Roman god of agriculture. Both celebrations involve wild parties, so it's not hard to see how the two became associated.



Mother Earth

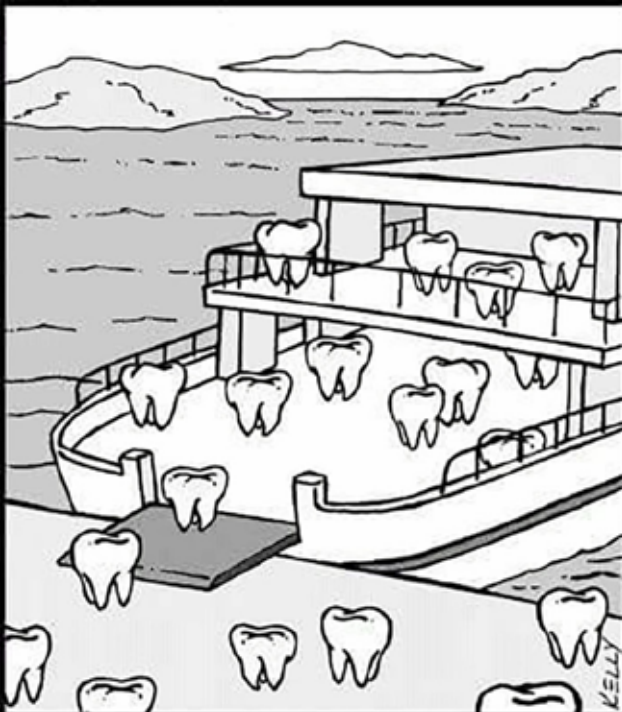
In modern times, we use “Mother Earth” as a way to personify the environment—usually in the context of protecting it. But pagan cultures have had a Mother Earth for millennia. When you look at polytheistic religions, you're likely to find some kind of earth goddess personified as a maternal figure. The Greeks had Gaia, Hindus have Prithvi, and some Native American traditions have the Spider Grandmother.

US Medal of Honor

In the United States military, the Medal of Honor is the highest honor a soldier can achieve. They can be given for various acts of valor, and if you look closely, you might just notice something a little pagan about them. While the design varies depending on the military branch, the Roman goddess Minerva almost always makes an appearance. Considering that she is the goddess of war, this connection makes sense.

Minerva giving arms to her followers





The Tooth Fairy

Although the tooth fairy is generally a fun fictional character for kids, children's teeth were a much bigger deal in ancient times than they are now. In medieval Europe, baby teeth were buried or burned to keep them out of the hands of evil witches.

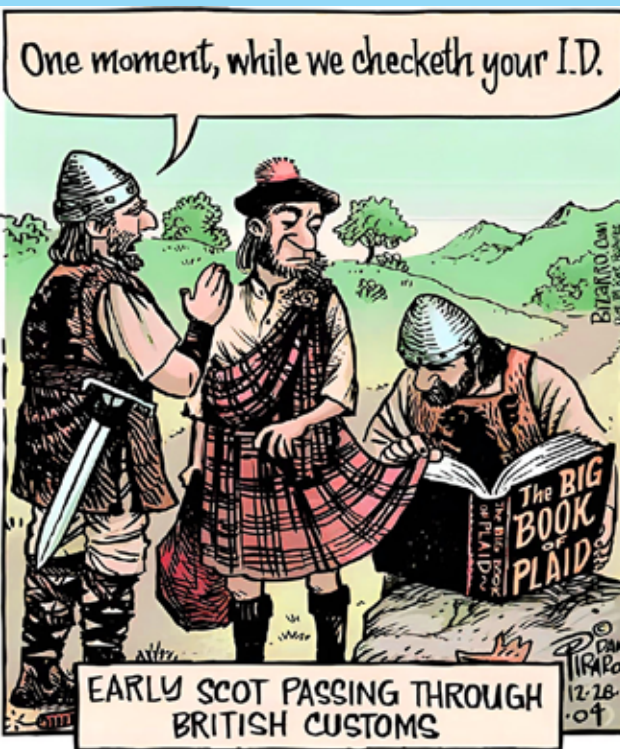
...NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

*The Tooth Ferry...
HaHaHaHa*



OH SORRY...

I'll get my coat



Lyndsay Fleming

is the CFSS Secretary and Membership director. She is also an aspiring writer and musician. If you need to know anything about Vikings, paganism and anime, she is the go to person.

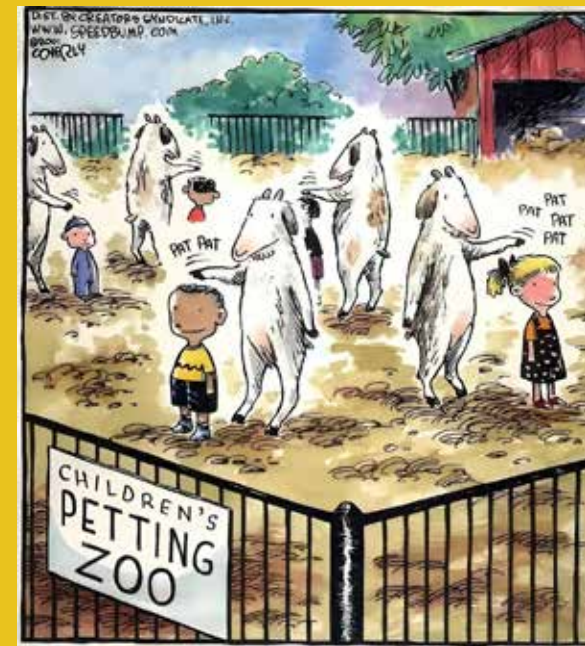
THE BAIRN'S NEUK

**KIDS
CORNER**

Who was flora McDonald?

In 1746, Flora MacDonald helped Bonnie Prince Charlie escape across the sea from the Outer Hebrides to the Isle of Skye in a small, open boat, likely a skiff or a fishing vessel. Prince Charles was disguised as her Irish spinning maid, "Betty Burke," during the famous crossing.

Would you have done the same to help a prince?



Bonnie Prince Charlie and Flora MacDonald



Flora MacDonald dressed Bonnie Prince Charlie in funny clothes meant for ladies, and he pretended to be her maid. Can you imagine that? A prince pretending to be a maid! They set off on an exciting journey to the Isle of Skye, a magical island. Flora and **“Betty Burke”** faced tough challenges and had to be very sneaky to avoid being caught.

After lots of adventures, they finally reached the Isle of Skye. From there, Bonnie Prince Charlie could find a boat to take him safely to France! Hooray! Flora’s clever plan worked, and she helped the prince escape from all the people hunting for him.

And so, with a mix of bravery and cleverness, Flora MacDonald and Bonnie Prince Charlie had an amazing adventure together, showing everyone that even in tough times, friends can help each other and make things better. **The end!**

**WHAT 3
WORDS YOU
WOULD USE
TO DESCRIBE
FLORA!**

*Adapted from material by the
Scottish Cultural Outreach
Foundation*

SCOTTISH STEAK PIE

By **Jess Fleming**



Looking for a Scottish staple to warm your tummy this fall? Or maybe you're looking for a hearty meal to celebrate your loved one?

TRAQUAIR ARMS
HOTEL RESTAURANT
Innerleithen, UK

Lamb pie over sautéed greens and a bed of mashed potatoes.

Either way you definitely won't want to miss this melt-in-your-mouth beef stew topped with flaky puff pastry. The great thing about this recipe is that you can make the filling in advance and give it time to thicken up. This preparation will save time and leave you to pop it in the oven to serve.

Things you'll need

- Large pot/pan
- Mixing bowl
- Pie dish (we use a round 8.5 inch tin)

Ingredients

- 2lbs diced stewing beef steak (or lamb, or add 4-6 pork sausages for added flavor)
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp olive oil/butter
- 2 large roughly chopped onions (feel free to add carrots and/or mushrooms)
- 2 cups beef stock
- 5 to 6 hard dashes of Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp Dijon Mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 package ready rolled puff pastry (approx 13.2oz)
- 2 tbsp melted butter

Step by step instructions

1. In the mixing bowl toss the meat and flour, this will help to insulate the meat while browning as well as help to thicken the sauce. Seasoning the flour gives an extra depth of flavor
2. Heat the pan with oil/butter, adding the onions once hot. Cook the onions until they are soft, then add the meat. Browning should only take a few minutes, just enough to caramelize the surface of the meat.
3. Once the meat is browned add the stock, Worcestershire Sauce, Tomato paste, Dijon Mustard and seasonings. Slowly bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and allow to gently simmer for 2.5 hrs. Stir occasionally. (If you're adding sausages then you can chop and add them halfway through cooking. If they have a high fat content you may want to cook them separately, so the pie won't get too greasy.)
4. Once the sauce is good and thick and the meat breaks apart nicely, pour into the pie dish, it should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Preheat oven to 355°F.
5. Cover the top of the pie dish with the puff pastry. Use a fork or your thumb to push down or crimp the edges. Make a hole in the center to allow steam to escape. Brush the top with melted butter and place pie into the preheated oven for 30 – 35 minutes or until the pastry has risen and is golden brown.



JOURNEY TO GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN HERITAGE GAMES

by **Tammy Schakett-Fleming**

This past July, we attended the world's largest Scottish Games at Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina, USA. It is a four day event that includes athletic and artistic performances. Of course there was plenty of traditional Scottish food. If you couldn't find a tartan you liked or other Scottish merchandise it was because you were not looking.

Our trip from Ohio down to North Carolina included a stop in Fleming-Neon, Kentucky. We were thrilled to meet so many of our Fleming clan at a light lunch provided by Gwen Brown, sort of the local family leader of her branch of the clan. We gave them a brief talk about our branch of the Fleming clan and discovered we were only a couple of generations apart! They had so many questions and have now started their own family Message Board, which Lyndsay and I were kindly invited. Next year they hope to join us in Grandfather Mountain for a clan gathering.



Grandfather Mountain Heritage Games started with the traditional Calling of the Clans. We missed it! Russ Fleming planned on representing Clan Fleming, but due to severe weather, they started early, and he missed it as well. Next year!

The next day started out hot and humid, but everyone was excited for the athletes and performers. Our tent was close to where the dance and pipe competitors showed their stuff. There is nothing more beautiful than a bagpipe. And to watch the talented dancers was amazing.

Much like Scotland, it poured rain that afternoon. Unlike Scotland, it was accompanied by lightening and thunder. You would think that would have cleared out the crowd of people but instead they gathered under clan and merchant tents for almost two hours. Rain stopped and the sun came out and everything



Jess and Lyndsay in full psychological preparation mode

Some very fine examples of Fleming flesh and blood on show for the tug of war

started up again. The best part of the storm was watching a group of youngsters practicing their wrestling skills in the rain and mud...until the lightening started.

The last day included more competitions, including a tug-of-war. Sadly, Clan Fleming along with a couple of other "volunteers" were wiped out by the Campbells, which in turn lost to the Buchanan's. Not with standing being drug in the mud, rope burns and humiliation (twice!), they had a lot of fun. We will be looking for more Flemings to help with this event next year.

The Closing Ceremonies are always melancholy. We marched in the Clan Parade and while we weren't the smallest clan we were a proud clan and shouted, "Let the Deed Shaw!"

We shared stories with Flemings we had met the year before and met new Flemings, who were so happy to see us at there - they promised to come next year for our clan gathering. Hope to see you there!

5 APRIL 2025

Brigadoon



Bundanoon Oval, Erith Street,
Bundanoon, NSW 2578, Australia



BUNDANOON'S 44TH ANNUAL HIGHLAND GATHERING

by **Jim Fleming**

A large crowd flocked to the 2025 Bundanoon Highland Gathering on 5 April in the New South Wales Southern Highlands, the 44th time that the town has transformed into the legendary Brigadoon for this one day of the year.

At 9am the 800-metre route along Erith Street was lined three and four deep on both sides for the traditional Street Parade featuring nearly thirty bands of pipes and drums interspersed between sixteen clan societies. Several thousand people then streamed into the town's main sporting complex for the massed band display led by Drum Major Chloe Cusack of the Manly Warringah Pipe Band.

This year's Chieftain of the Day officially opened the Gathering.

**Sir Michael Grant
of Grant, Lord
Strathspey,
Baronet Nova
Scotia and
34th Chief
of Clan Grant**

spoke about the importance of promoting Clan traditions throughout the world, thus strengthening bonds for this generation and the next. His pride in Clan Grant history was recently demonstrated with the reintroduction of the Grant 1714 tartan, one of the earliest on record.





Image courtesy of Bundanoon Highland Gathering Inc. Photo by Meg Nurse

The organizing committee, led by President Peter Rocca, curated a diverse program of events throughout the day. They were blessed with favourable Autumn weather, a much-appreciated change after two recent cancellations due to COVID-19 and two more due to prolonged periods of inclement weather. Spectators enjoyed displays of Scottish Country Dancing and traditional Highland Games such as the caber toss, hammer throw, and stone put for both serious athletes and those seeking a fun challenge. In addition, there were numerous participants in less traditional games such as the wellie wang, brigaball, water toss, hay toss and the kilted dash.

The Manly Warringah Pipe Band won the traditional Band of the Day award, its Pipe Major (Russell King) won the inaugural solo pipers competition and Flynn O'B won the inaugural solo drumming award. In the field events, Rob Melin was crowned as the 2025 Australian Heavyweight Champion. Younger clan members participated in activities including a bonnie bairns highland dress competition, grannies' story-telling, and theatrical swordplay.

The grounds featured displays by the Scottish Australian Heritage Council and sixteen clan societies (but, sadly, no Clan Fleming), while the crowd browsed through over seventy merchandise and food stalls.

Most spectators remained throughout the day until Lord Strathspey presented the winners' awards, followed by another massed bands display and closing ceremony. The stayers kicked on that evening at the ceilidh hosted by the Bundanoon Community Association in the Soldiers Memorial Hall.

forthcoming highland gatherings in Australia

05 Jul 2025 Aberdeen Highland Games, NSW

23 Aug 2025 Hunter Valley Highland Games, NSW

01 Jan 2026 163rd Maryborough Highland Gathering, Qld

29 Mar 2026 Melbourne Highland Games & Celtic Festival, Vic

Apr 2026 121st McLean Highland Gathering, McLean NSW

Image courtesy of Bundanoon Highland Gathering Inc. Photo by Meg Nurse





MAMAW'S HOUSE FOR SUNDAY SUPPER

by **Kevin Fleming**

Got an unexpected message from my first cousin Brandon Fleming today & it brought back a flood of childhood memories. He and I were within a year of age as kids & my mamaw Loris' house was beside his. He lived in the house where my dad grew up.

A tradition that I wish more families had continued is every Sunday, my family gathered at mamaw's for Sunday "supper" after church. The long table would be covered in heapings of everyone's favorite dishes. My favorite was "breakfast for supper", which meant brown gravy, biscuits, fried chicken, chocolate gravy, & all the other fixins. Mamaw would prepare this one from time to time & let me know it was just for me.

The meal & family time was always special, but as soon as Brandon & I were full as a tick, we were out the door. My mamaw's house was tucked in a holler that had mountains so high on each side that when I brought my college roommate back home, he said it was claustrophobic.

Those mountains were our playground. Me & my cousins built a "hut" on one side of

**People say their goal is
to give their kids things
they didn't have, but
how many of us are
making sure our kids
have things we did?**

the mountain & it was our Sunday meeting place. Not too far from it was our favorite grapevine that swung out over a perilous drop. An early life lesson about the importance of holding on.

One of those Sundays, a mutt dog made our company. She was black coated, with some splashes of brown on the undercoat. Not sure which of us named her, but she became “Pooch”. Maybe the best dog I’ve ever known. Her introduction was both hilarious and telling about how smart she was. She came to us limping, a paw in the air. Of course, we were worried about her, so we gave her all the petting & assurances young kids will give at that age. Then she followed us everywhere. If we were in the hut, she was there. If we walked down the road to our great-aunt Lessie’s, Pooch was in tow.

How did this clever Pooch win us all over? She used that paw limp expertly. If we were looking at her, paw pulled up & three-legged gate. We began noticing that if everyone looked away, she could four-legged gallop just fine.

She didn’t just show up for affection either. She took on her role of protector from the beginning. My favorite was watching her resolutely keep my cousin Aftan Fleming safe. He was still in diapers while the rest of us were old enough to be in the road throwing football or playing tag. Aftan would toddle to the sidewalk wanting to join us. The sidewalk had a good foot+ drop to the road. Pooch would broadside his approach & stand firm. I still laugh remembering him grab two handfuls of her backside in anger & yelling “Move Pooch!!!” She would have none of it. If he walked another foot to the side, she matched it. He never made it to that perilous drop.



*Much as we would like to say
this is a photo of the real Pooch
- it isn't, but you get the idea*

I share all this to drive home something Brandon & I agreed upon during our messaging. So many people say their goal is to give their kids things they didn’t have, but how many of us are making sure our kids have things we did?

Kevin Fleming

is a native of Fleming-Neon, **Kentucky** and currently lives in Martha, **Kentucky**. Kevin works in Paintsville, **Kentucky** as Federal Program Manager at **Kentucky** Protection & Advocacy - P&A. His background is in Health Administration and he was formerly the Rural Project Manager at **Kentucky** Office of Rural Health... You may notice a strong ‘**Kentucky**’ theme here.

Not a lot of non-Scots know about the peace pact Robert the Bruce negotiated with the Midges in 1313.



Under the pact the midges agreed to only feed on sassenach blood. This would have given the Scots a massive advantage when fighting on their home turf.

Unfortunately the pact was short lived when Jimmy McCludgie accidentally killed the son of the midges leader in a caber related incident only three months later. The midges have refused to accept apologies to this day.

A NEW MRS FLEMING

As Charles Edward Stuart disembarked from the French frigate *Du Teillay* at a spot now known as *Coilleag a' Phrionnsa*, he probably wasn't thinking about the events that might take place there in the summer of 2025...

Of course the events of **1745** probably weren't front and centre in the minds of the wedding guests who gathered at the beach on the shores of Bonnie Prince Charlie's Bay on Eriskay to celebrate the union of **William Connor Fleming** with **Roshine MacSween**.

We could write a long article about the events, but instead we will allow the photographs to do the talking.

Images by Clickybox Photography | Words by Ian Fleming





Gallop to the Horizon

Galloping along the shoreline —
sun on your back, salt in the air,
the sound of hooves steady on wet
sand —
there's freedom in the motion,
and trust in every stride.
That's what true love feels like.

Love, like this, doesn't demand
control.
It asks for balance —
the give and take of reins,
the quiet rhythm of two hearts
learning the same beat,
like music shared through movement,
like breath falling into sync.

There will be tides that shift beneath you,
skies that turn without warning.
But it teaches us that love
is leaning together, braving the waves,
and finding joy not in certainty,
but in the strength of who you face the
tide with.

Sometimes the journey runs on hooves.
Sometimes on horsepower.
But whatever the pace, whatever the road,
may you always find in each other
the one who rides beside you —
steady, joyful,
and moving with you towards the wide,
open horizon.

*Hector McSween, Roshine's father
leading her on her horse Pridey
across the bay to her wedding*

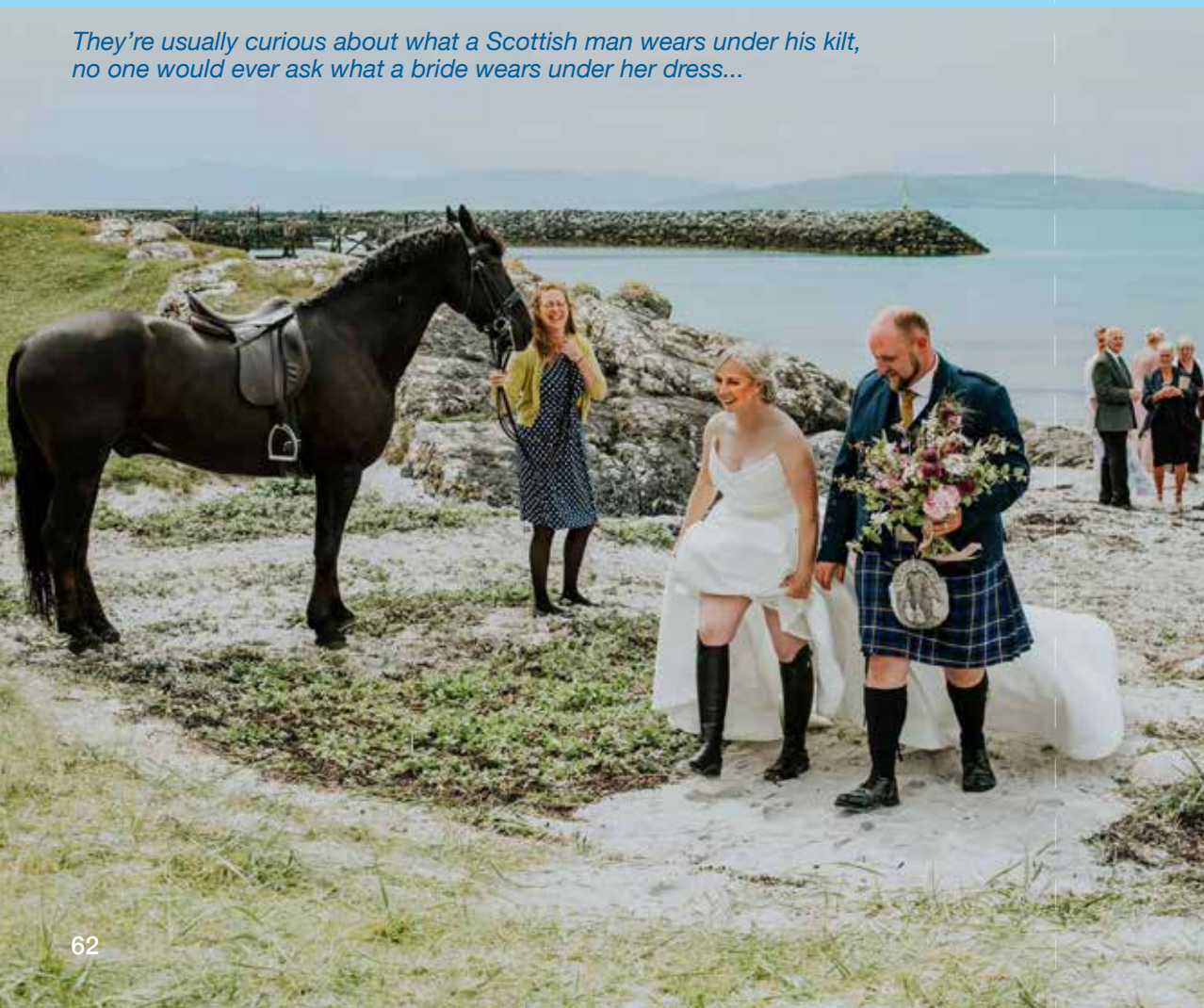
*Connor's sister Charley reads her poem
'Gallop to the Horizon' to the couple
and the assembled guests*







They're usually curious about what a Scottish man wears under his kilt, no one would ever ask what a bride wears under her dress...



Right son..., I've done my part, it's up to you now...









So there you have it...

Wedding on the beach, reception at the world famous pub **The Politician**, named after the ship that sank off Eriskay, the inspiration for not one, but two feature films called **Whiskey Galore**. (You'll have to google that yourself)

Then led by a piper to the Eriskay Hall where drink and dancing ensued... and not just for one night, because the traditional '**Banais Taighe**', the house wedding also took place in the hall. (but as you can see from the above photo, precautions were in hand just incase they might run short of Whiskey)

Traditionally marriages were arranged between clans to create alliances and ensure peace - job done...!



and finally, when the torrential rain came Pridey decided to escape his field and the whole Bridal party went searching for him and were absolutely soaked through to the skin, including the bride in her wedding dress

so if this isn't love we don't know what is.

THE DEED



Clan Fleming Scottish Society SEPARATED BY OCEANS - UNITED BY HERITAGE



Clan Fleming
SCOTTISH SOCIETY
UNITED BY HERITAGE

**GET IN
TOUCH**

e: cfss.info@gmail.com

JOIN US

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www.clanflemingintl.org