

**MÌOSACHAN
'S
LEABHAR NAN LÀITHEAN
2021**



beach, isle of Harris

**Calendar
and
Book of Days**

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Introduction

We hope you find this calendar and book of days fun, entertaining, informative, and useful. In addition to the conventional calendar, we've included several items of import to Gaelic and Scottish culture and history. You'll find references to some of achievements won by Gaels and Scots, as well as our shared tragedies.

But, some might ask, why so glum, chum? Why dwell on the past if that past is tragic or sad?

Perhaps a part of the answer is found in an observation by the American novelist William Faulkner who once said that "The past is not dead. It is not even past." In other words, the past continues to live on in us today; just as individuals, we are a composite of our accumulated experiences, so with us as a people: we are what we have experienced. It's important to recognize that and to remember who we are, to recognize what makes us distinct from other peoples, which is not to say that other peoples aren't wonderful in their own ways – but even as all families are of value and worth, this is *our* family. This is who *we* are.

Accordingly, in this calendar and the *leabhar lathaichean* (book of days) that accompanies it, you'll find a number of different things:

- Conventionally,
 - a picture of a Scottish subject (carefully selected and -- we hope -- one that you will find attractive)
 - and accompanying the picture, a month-by-month calendar, with noteworthy (in the humble estimation of the compiler) days of remembrance noted
- And atypically for a calendar,
 - Gaelic and Scottish "factoids" -- short pieces on events, cultural particulars, and personalities important to the Scottish Gael and sometimes to non-Gaelic Scotland (because as a friend noted to me, very often, the Gaelic experience cannot be separated from non-Gaelic within the broader Scottish context). Sometimes these are serious, sometimes fun. Always, I hope, significant in one way or another.
 - As food is an important element of a culture, each month will feature a Gaelic or Scottish recipe.
 - A suggestion for remembrance and commemoration.

We hope you will find these items of interest. Not only that, but we hope that this slim volume will inspire you: Once in every Gael's lifetime, they should return *home*. Visit the sites sacred to our history, which include (but are not limited to):

- Culloden Moor
- Dunrobin & the Clearances memorial
- Bannockburn
- the Mòd - either the national or one of the regional
- Glenfinnan
- standing stones of Callanish
- Your clan or family homeland
- the Parliament building in Edinburgh

(If you don't find these pages of interest, feel free to just skip to the calendar parts.)

What is Gaelic? A' Gàidhlig -- Gaelic is the original language of Scotland. Beyond that, things get a little fuzzy.

Linguistically, Gaelic is a language that is often categorized as Indo-European, a group of languages that includes German, French, Norwegian, Italian, Spanish, and so on. However, there are significant differences between Gaelic and other Indo-European languages. Some linguists who have analyzed this family of languages have concluded that of nine distinct features that mark the Indo-European language family, Gaelic shares only two. Which means, our heritage language is at the very least, as remarked upon by the linguist Benjamin Whorf, the least "standard average European" language, sharing a distinctness with such language isolates as Basque and Finnish. Gaelic is classified as a Celtic language, one of two major branches of the Celtic language family still extant -- one branch being comprised of Welsh, Breton, Cornish, and perhaps ancient Gaulish (as well, perhaps, as the ancient Pictish and the language of the ancient Britons); the other branch being composed of Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, and Manx.

Historically, Scottish Gaelic was brought to Scotland sometime during the first millennium by the ancestors of the present-day Irish Gaels, who in a series of wars had conquered Ireland and spread their culture to present-day Scotland. The kingdom they established on the West Coast of Scotland formed the nucleus of the original Kingdom of Scots (in fact, these "Irish" were called Scots), and was the seed of the present nation of Scotland.

Beyond that, ultimately, we don't know. One ancient Gaelic legend has it that Gaelic was the language of the Garden of Eden. Another legend says that it was compiled from all the languages of the earth after the destruction of the Tower of Babel. Another has it that Gaelic is the language of the birds and perhaps all of nature. But as they say, *cò aig a fios?* Who knows?

Hatred for the children of the Gael: Socio-culturally, our heritage language has endured many attempts to eradicate it, assaults which stretch back hundreds of years and are a reflection, to Gaels at least, of the *mi-rùn nan Gall airson a' chlann nan Gàidheil* -- *the hatred of the foreigner for the children of the Gael*. As part of the long standing campaign of cultural genocide dating from the 1600s, the children of clan chiefs had to be educated in English, in English-language schools. In addition to removing Gaelic children from their homes, the language itself was driven from the communities. For example, for hundreds of years Gaels were told their native tongue was not suitable for schooling -- an indoctrination so thorough that some native speakers alive today who believe it. Which isn't surprising, since there was a time -- pretty recently, actually, so as to be present in the memories of people still living -- when children were whipped at school for speaking Gaelic, the intent being to literally beat the language and culture out of the children. Many Gaelic speakers used to avoid letting non-Gaels know they spoke their own mother tongue because it was so stigmatized. (Imagine if you were taught -- very forcefully -- from childhood that the language of your childhood, the language in which you first communicated with your mother and father, your brothers and sisters, was shameful, deserving of whipping.) You'll still find remnants of the racial hatred of the *Gall*, the non-Gael, for Gaelic: whenever reports of a new Gaelic school or some other Gaelic initiative hits the news, invariably there will be hate-mongering trolls who complain about "wasting" money and effort on a dead language.

Warriors of the word: However, despite these centuries of efforts to kill our language and with it, our culture, Gaelic is undergoing a revival, partly exemplified by the is a revival of the teaching Gaelic in elementary and high schools, and certain colleges, such as Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Scotland. Which reminds us of a legend about the heroes of the *Feinne* -- protectors of the Gaelic homeland against invaders -- who fell into a long sleep in hidden-away caves and who would rise up when Gaeldom was most threatened. Well, now the children of the Gael are awakening, rising up out of the mists of ancient time and emerging from their "caves" to rescue Gaeldom. Only, now, these heroes are the young people who are learning the language, and the "caves" are the formal educational institutions and the informal *cèilidhean* dedicated to sharing and learning, and from which they emerge, conversant in their heritage language.

And I would add that everybody who reads this, everybody who acquires a bit (or a lot) of our shared language, our culture, our collective heritage -- our *dùthchas* -- is one of those "warriors of the word" (as scholar Michael Newton put it).



Allt na h-Eirbhe (Altnaharra)

2021

am Faoilteach

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
27	28	29	30	31 Oidhche Callain / Oidhche nam Bonnag	1 Latha Bliadhna Ùr Iolaire, 1919	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Latha an t-Urramach Màrtainn L. King (Na Stàitean Aonaichte)	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Oidhche na Taigheise -- Burns' Night	26	27	28	29	30 b. 1736, James Watt, inventor steam engine
31	1	NOTES:				

Robert “Rabbie” Burns - Although Burns was not a Gael, and there is no record of his speaking the language, we may surmise that he was “Gaelic-friendly” if we are to draw inferences from some of his writings. For instance, there is his poem “Highland Mary,” “The Highland Lassie,” and “To Mary in Heaven,” commemorating his brief love affair with Mary Campbell, whose family lived in the southern (Gaelic-speaking) Highlands. As well, as the son of poor farmers and one himself at various points in his life, Burns could not have but sympathized with the poor farmers in his own country who were being thrown off their lands during the clearances. He once wrote a letter to a known sympathizer of the Jacobite cause, “as a common sufferer in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious.” He took part on at least one occasion in a celebration of Bonnie Prince Charlie’s birthday, and on others expressed sympathy for the ruined Stewart dynasty. Some interpretations of his poem “Tae a Mouse, On Turning up in Her Nest with the Plough, November” read it as a veiled expression of sympathy and even solidarity with the Highlanders even then being “cleared” from their ancestral lands. What better evocation of the plight of the “cleared” Highlanders might we have than this stanza:

The original Scots

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
 It’s silly wa’s the win’s are strewin!
 An’ naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O’ foggage green!
 An’ bleak December’s winds ensuin,
 Baith snell an’ keen!

Contemporary English

Your small house, too, in ruin!
 Its feeble walls the winds are scattering!
 And nothing now, to build a new one,
 Of course green foliage!
 And bleak December’s winds coming,
 Both bitter and piercing!

Burns was not a stranger to the Highlands or Highlanders. For a short time he was involved with a young woman by the name of Mary Campbell, about whom he wrote more than one poem, including the touching memorial of “Highland Mary” after her early death, which included the lines:

Original Scots

Wi’ mony a vow, and lock’d embrace,
 Our parting was fu’ tender;
 And, pledging aft to meet again,
 We tore oursel’s asunder;
 But, oh! fell Death’s untimely frost,
 That nipt my flower sae early! -
 Now green’s the sod, and cauld’s the clay,
 That wraps my Highland Mary!

Contemporary English

With many a vow and locked embrace,
 Our parting was fully tender;
 And pledging often to meet again,
 We tore ourselves apart;
 But, oh!, grim Death’s untimely frost,
 That nipped my flower so early! --
 Now green’s the grass and cold the clay,
 That wraps my Highland Mary.

And of course, there is Burn’s anthem and tribute to the Highlands:

My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
 My heart’s in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
 A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
 My heart’s in the Highlands wherever I go.

A sentiment that qualifies Burns, we believe, as an “honorary Gael.”

The sinking of the Iolaire, 1919. A heart-wrenching tragedy in the Outer Isles at the close of WWI. Returning home from fighting in the trenches of the First World War -- that is, after having escaped alive from that most brutal conflict -- at least 205 men died out of a total of 283 crew and passengers about the transport ship Iolaire (which means “eagle” in Gaelic). The ship was 200 yards from shore when she struck the infamous rocks *Biastan Thuilm* (“The



Burns and Highland Mary,
 by Thomas Faed, 1850

Beasts of Holm") outside the harbor of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. The ship was so close to land and safety that those on board would have been able to see the lights of city. Though the number might seem small to us, the fact that so many islanders were lost at one time -- so great a proportion of the population -- devastated the island communities for a generation.

According to Scottish Historian Tom Devine, Scots -- and especially Highlanders -- had disproportionately paid the price in blood for the furtherance of the British empire (some might say, "English empire"), especially during the First World War. Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna, a Highland soldier who served at the Battle of the Somme wrote a beautiful song about his longing for home and his loved one, Magaidh NicLeòid: "An Eala Bhan" (The White Swan):

Gur duilich leam mar tha mi
'S mo chridhe 'n sàs aig bròn
Bhon an uair a dh'fhàg mi
Beanntan àrd a' cheò
Gleanntannan a' mhànrain
Nan loch, nam bàgh 's nan sròn
'S an eala bhàn tha tàmh ann
Gach latha air 'm bheil mi 'n tòir.

Sad I consider my condition
With my heart engaged with sorrow
From the very time that I left
The high bens of the mist
The little glens of dalliance
Of the lochs, the bays and the forelands
And the white swan dwelling there
Whom I daily pursue.

To commemorate the month of January: Partake in a Burns' Night celebration. This can be either an organized event or just something you do at home. Enjoy one of the recipes in this Gaelic Calendar and Book of Days, read a poem by Burns, and top it off with a toast of *uisge-beatha*! A full-fledged Burns' Night celebration calls for the following:

- Piping in the guests.
- Chairperson's welcome: The Chair (host/organizer) warmly welcomes and introduces the assembled guests and the evening's entertainment.
- The Selkirk Grace.
- Piping in the haggis.
- Address to the haggis.
- Toast to the haggis -- a dram of *uisge-beatha*, of course.
- The meal. (Including haggis.)
- After-meal refreshments & entertainment: Readings of Burns' poetry and discussion thereof, and piping, fiddling, and dancing.

Monthly Recipe

After being defeated at the battle of Inverlochy (1431), the Earl of Mar, fleeing and hiding throughout Lochaber, underwent great privations. He encountered a poor woman in Glen Roy and asked her for some food. She gave him all she had, which was but a handful of barley. At the side of a burn, *Allt Acha na Beithich*, he took off one of his shoes, and in it, he mixed the meal with water from the stream. He is said to have composed this short poem:

'S math an còcair an t-acras
'S mairg a ni tàire air biadh.
Fuarag eòrn 'ann' sàil mo bhròige
Biadh a b' fhearr a fhuair mi riamh.

Hunger is a good cook,
Foolish is he who despises any food.
Gruel of barley in the sole of my shoe,
The best meal I ever had.

We're not going to suggest that you to eat raw grain mixed with cold mountain spring water, but as a part of this calendar and yearbook of Gaelic Scotland, we are including a selection of Highland and Scottish recipes here that we hope you will try and enjoy.

Haggis, clapsnot and whisky sauce

And what more appropriate way to celebrate the night when we remember Scotland's national poet -- Burns' Night -- than with a Scotland's national food, haggis, and her national beverage, Scotch!

Preparation time: less than 30 mins

Cooking time: 1 to 2 hours

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 500g/1lb 2oz haggis

For the clapsnot

- 500g/1lb 2oz mashed potatoes
- 500g/1lb 2oz turnips, peeled, chopped
- 50g/2oz butter
- 75ml/2¾fl oz cream
- sea salt and finely ground
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives

For those who don't happen to have an extra haggis wandering around in the yard, the delicacy can be bought either frozen or canned from a British or Scottish import shop or website, or even from an online vender such as Amazon.

For the whisky sauce

- 500ml/17fl oz cream
- 2 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp whisky
- sea salt and fine ground pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives
- ½ lemon, juice only



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F.
2. Wrap the haggis tightly in aluminum foil and place onto a baking tray. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes to one hour, or until cooked through. (This will vary according to whether your haggis comes pre-cooked or not.)

3. Meanwhile, for the clapsnot, boil the potatoes and turnips in separate saucepans of salted water for 15-18 minutes, or until tender. Drain well. Add the drained turnips to the drained potatoes and mash thoroughly. Add the butter and cream and mash again until smooth and well combined. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground white pepper. Stir in the tablespoon of chives. Set aside and keep warm.
4. For the whisky sauce, heat the double cream in a pan over a medium heat. Add the wholegrain mustard, Dijon mustard and whisky and stir to combine. Increase the heat until the mixture is simmering and continue to cook for 1-2 minutes.
5. Remove the pan from the heat and season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground white pepper. Stir in the tablespoon of chives, then whisk in the lemon juice.
6. To serve, divide the clapsnot equally among four serving plates. Place a spoonful of steamed haggis alongside each. Spoon over the warm whisky sauce.



Two Highland ponies

2021

an Gearran

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
31	1 Imbolc / Là Fhèill Brìghde	2	3	4	5 HMS Politician sinks- ("Whisky Galore" ship), 1941; b. John Boyd Dunlop, 1846, inventor inflatable tire	6
7	8 Di-cheannaich Màiri Bànrigh nan Albannach - Mary, Queen of Scots beheaded	9	10	11	12	13 Sgrios Ghleann Comhann, 1692 - Massacre of Glencoe
14 Là Naomh Bhaileintin - Valentine's Day	15 Là Dualchas Alba Nuadh - Nova Scotia Day Là nan Ceann-Suidhe - President's Day (Na Stàitean Aonaichte)	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	NOTES:				

Sgrios Ghleann Comhann -- The Massacre of Glencoe (13 February 1692). John Prebble describes the valley of Glencoe as a rift “eight miles in length ... a deep scar left by the agony of creation.” The sharply rising cliffs on either side of the glen create a kind of wind-tunnel effect, in which the wind chills and accelerates and whips even when the sun is shining but a few miles away. One writer describes traveling to Glencoe on a day that was warm elsewhere in Scotland and experiencing the “coldest winter I ever spent -- a summer afternoon in Glencoe.”



The Massacre of Glencoe
By John Hamilton, 1844

the snow-covered mountains. While the number might seem small to a modern audience -- inured as we are to atrocities even in the thousands, or the tens of thousands -- and while mass violence was not unknown at this time, what was held to be particularly horrific was the violation of Gaelic hospitality and the bond of trust, which had caused the MacDonalds to host even their deadliest enemies in the first place; secondly, that it was a government-ordered, cold-blooded murder. Sir Walter Scott wrote “Glencoe”:

O, TELL me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe
Far down the desert of Glencoe ...

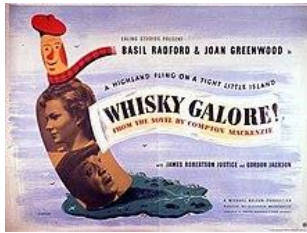
Imbolc, one of the four major Celtic (pre-Christian) celebrations. It marked the time of year that the days grew longer and signified the (eventual, hope-for) coming of spring. The day was associated with **Brigid**, goddess of poetry and prophecy, as well as of crops and herds and was adopted by the Christian Church as St. Brigid’s Day. In the Christian hagiography, St. Brigid retained many of the same functions as a saint as she had had as a goddess, being the patron of art, metalwork, and the birth of babies; in the Hebrides, St. Brigid was held to be the midwife to the Virgin Mary.

The glen was the home of warriors of ancient myths, the *Feinn* -- the ancient tribe of warriors who protected the Gaels against invaders. It was here that Feinn MacCumhail defeated invading Vikings in pitched battle. The Massacre of Glencoe did not take place in mythic times, but rather in recorded history. The short version is that the Highland chiefs were required to pledge allegiance to the reigning monarchs of Scotland and England, whom many Highlanders considered illegitimate. The chief of the MacDonalds was tardy in signing his pledge -- partly because he had confused the location where he was supposed to appear to do so. A contingent of government troops -- mostly other Highlanders of Clan Campbell -- was ordered to Glencoe “to fall upon the rebels, the MacDonalds of Glencoe, and to put all to the sword under seventy.”

The Campbell troops enjoyed Highland the hospitality of the MacDonalds for a number of days, playing *camanachd*, or shinty, a fierce hockey-like game, and other sports; and by night, playing music and reciting tales of Fionn MacCumhail and the heroes of the Feinn. And then, one night, the guests arose and set about their deadly mission. In all, between 30 and 40 MacDonalds were shot or put to the sword, and up to another hundred died of exposure in



St. Bride by John Duncan



Whisky Galore -- In 1941 during the WWII, the SS Politician with a cargo about 28,000 cases of whisky wrecked off the island of Eriskay in the Inner Hebrides. This incident served as the basis for the comic novel *Whisky Galore* by Compton Mackenzie (and two films), in which the inhabitants of the island (who are starved for their much-beloved whisky because of wartime rationing) scramble to salvage the precious cargo.

Latha Dualchais na h-Alba Nuaidh – Nova Scotia Day – The Canadian province boasts a long-standing Gaelic heritage (The name actually means “New Scotland” in Latin; this heritage is reflected in the province’s flag, displaying as it does both the St.

Andrew’s cross and the royal lion rampant.) Nova Scotia was settled by Gaelic Highlanders during the 18th and 19th centuries, many of them fleeing persecution and hardship in Scotland. They brought with them a vibrant Gaelic culture – the language, the music, the folklore. There was a time during the late 1800s and early 1900s when Gaelic was officially discouraged – stigmatized by non-Gaels and as a sign of ignorance and shunned by Gaels themselves as a mark of backwardness. In 1880, the Gaelic poet Am Bàrd Mac Dhiarmaid wrote a humorous song, “An Té a Chaill a' Ghàidhlig” (The Woman who Lost her Gaelic), about Gaels shunning their mother-tongue.



Nova Scotia flag

Chuir mi fàilte oirr' gu càirdeil: "Dé mar a tha thu, seann leannan?" Gun do shìn mi mo làmh dhi, 's thug mi dha dhe na crathadh.	I welcomed her with affection: "How are you, old sweetheart?" I held out my hand, But she ignored it.
... Fhreagair ise gu nàimhdeil: "You're a Scotchman I reckon. I don't know your Gaelic."	... She answered haughtily: "You're a Scotchman I reckon. I don't know your Gaelic,

Currently, however, Gaelic is experiencing a revived interest in Nova Scotia as more and more people embrace their Scottish-Gaelic heritage. The province is home to, among other educational venues, the only full-fledged college in North America with a Gaelic studies department.

Commemoration for the month of February: An Imbolc tradition is the lighting of fires which celebrated not only the Fire Goddess Brigid, but also the returning power of the sun. In the Christian calendar, Imbolc is known as Candlemas, when candles are lit for the Virgin Mary. Lighting a fire is an opportunity to gather with friends and family. Imbolc is also a time of feasting so you might want to make some food you can cook in the fire, and toast some marshmallows! **And/or** -- Traditionally, Imbolc was a time for visiting holy water -- a spring or a well -- to both purify us and bring fertility (actual or figurative). Set off on an adventure to find some water near your home: a river, stream, or well. Splash some over yourself as you set your intention to cleanse and purify. Dip a piece of ribbon in the water and hang it from a nearby tree (trees near water were sacred to the ancient Druids) to carry messages of hope and healing. Remember to thank the spirits of the place you visit and pick up any rubbish you see nearby as an act of gratitude.

What could be better on a cold day than a bowl of warm broth? Especially ...

Scotch Broth

My grandmother used to make this on cold winter days. I'd come in from playing out in the wet and the cold. The smell of the beef and the vegetables simmering could wrap me in warmth and love. Whether for a filling lunch or an afternoon refreshment after play or school -- or even a light meal in itself.

Scotch broth is a meal in itself - with meat and vegetables and healthy helping of barley to round out the meal in a bowl.



Ingredients

1-lb. lamb, cut into bite-sized pieces, (may substitute stew beef)
8oz carrots, peeled, diced
8oz turnips, diced
2 onions, peeled, diced
1 celery stalk, diced
1 leek, white part only, sliced
3-4oz pearl barley
4oz dried peas, soaked in water for 4-5 hours, drained
salt and fine ground black pepper
4 pints beef, lamb, or mutton stock
3oz cabbage, chopped (optional)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

- Heat all of the ingredients, except the cabbage, in a large saucepan until boiling.
- Reduce the heat and simmer gently for a 2-3 hours, or until the peas and pearl barley are soft.
- Stir in the cabbage and cook for a further 20-30 minutes, or until the cabbage is tender.
- Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

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Isle of Skye

2021

am Màirt

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
28	1	2	3 b. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of telephone, 1847	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Co-fhad-thràth an earraich (Spring equinox) b. Donnachadh bàn Mac an t-Saoir, 1724
21	22	23	24	25 Chrùnadh Raibeart Brus Rìgh Albainn, 1306 (Robert the Bruce crowned King of Scots)	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	NOTES:				

Donnachadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir -- Duncan Ban Macintyre -- was a pre-eminent Gaelic poet of the 19th century. “No Gaelic poet excels him in the composition of mellifluous verse,” Angus MacLeod wrote in the introduction to a collection of Macintyre’s verse. The scholar Ronald Black wrote that there were Macintyre stood alone as a great Gaelic poet of the 19th century. Through his life, Macintyre was variously a gamekeeper (a forester), a traveling bard, and for the last half of his life, as a member of the City Guard (a kind of police force) in Edinburgh. But always, his thoughts, his loves, and the inspiration for his most striking poetry returned to the wild mountain forests of his youth such as his extensive ode to Ben Dòbhrain -- Mt. Dobhran:

Bha mi ‘n-dè ‘m Beinn Dòbhrain
‘s na còir cha robh mi aineolach
Chunna mi na gleannan
‘s na beanntaichean a b’ aithne dhomh;
B’ e sin an sealladh èibhinn,
Bhith ‘g imeachd air na slèibhtean
Nuair bhiodh a’ ghrian ag èirigh
‘S a bhiodh na fèidh a’ langanaich.

I was on Ben Dobhran yesterday,
No stranger in her bounds was I;
I looked upon the glens
And the hens that I had known so well;
This was a happy picture --
To be tramping on the hillsides
At the hour the sun was rising,
And the deer would be bellowing.

In this poem, he expresses a love for nature that is very Gaelic in a couple of ways. One, it is very particular: it is not “nature” in the abstract, but a very particular environment or location, one that he knows well, and in which his people, his ancestors lived for a thousand years. It is an environment that fostered him, as he writes in another verse,

‘S togarrach a dh’ fhalbhainn
Gu sealgaireachd nam bealaichean,
Dol mach a dhìreadh garbhlaich,
‘S gum b’ anmoch tighinn gu baile mi;
An t-uisge glan ‘s am fàile
Th’ air mullach nam beann àrda,
Chuidich e gu fàs mi,
‘S e rinn dhomh slàint’ is fallaineachd.

Blithely would I set out
For stalking on the hill passes,
Away to climb rough country,
And late would I be coming home;
The clean rain and the air
On the peaks of the high mountains
Helped me to grow, and gave me
Robustness and vitality.

So, while his relationship with the environment is in part instrumental -- that is, of useful value -- it is not totally so, or exclusively so. Macintyre responds to mother nature with appreciation and love, almost as one would to the mother that gave one life.

This emphasis on living in harmony with nature is reflected throughout Gaelic culture. In many folktales, the hero achieves success because they treat creatures of the non-human world kindly and justly. There’s a series of Gaelic stories with a “Beauty-and-Beast” motif. The difference between the Gaelic stories and the ones many people might be familiar with is that in the more generally known “Beauty and the Beast,” the Beast is a human who is cursed and made to exist as an animal; his redemption is seen in his being allowed to return to the human world. Almost the exact opposite happens in the parallel Gaelic tales. In one typical such tale, a man captures a Selkie woman (a half-seal / half-human creature) by stealing her sealskin, forcing her to live in the human world as his wife. He loves her and marries her, but she still longs to return to her home, the sea. Finally, she finds her skin and is able to revert to her non-human form, which is the opposite of what happens in tale we might be familiar with. Her redemption is being allowed to leave the human world. The human spouse -- the husband in this case -- is not abandoned, for the Selkies provide him good fishing for the rest of his life. Thus the tales emphasize a harmony with nature, rather than its exclusion and a domination of it.

To Commemorate the month of March: Host or attend a *cèilidh*: In honor of poets of all types, hold a poetry reading, or attend one. Go to a concert. Hold a session at home in which you regale yourself (and guests) with Scottish and Gaelic music. Along these lines, we should acquaint ourselves with the *cèilidh*. First, the word refers to a gathering that is part party, part self-entertainment, part visit, for the *cèilidh* is a gathering in somebody's home -- that's the *visit* part. It's festive and fun -- that's the *party* part. During the evening, the participants share stories (personal, funny, exciting, or sad), sing songs, recite poetry, play music -- that's the entertainment part, but which is more than passively enjoyed entertainment produced by a professional artist. It's a sharing of things significant to us, that come from us. So, on the agenda for March is a *cèilidh*.

Selkirk Bannock

There are a number of Gaelic folktales in which a young person (variously, a girl or a boy) is setting off to seek their fortune in the world, and before they leave, the mother says that though she is not able to give much else, she asks the child whether they would prefer “am bloigh mòr le mo bheannachd no am bloigh mòr agus mo mhallachd?” -- *a small bannock with my blessing, or a big bannock with my curse?* In these tales, the question is often put to a series of three children; the two older, selfish ones chose the big bannock, while the good, youngest child chooses the small bannock and the mother’s blessing, which emphasizes the Gaelic virtues of family loyalty, solidarity, and sharing. It stories also demonstrate the kindness of the hero (sometimes a girl, sometimes a boy) towards other creatures; the hero is asked to share his little bit of food, and while the not-successful older siblings have refused, the good (and successful hero) always shares.

It’s not for certain that this is the particular bannock that was intended by the tale, but it would be a blessing that any child (or child-at-heart) would relish at a breakfast table before they head off into the world, to seek their fortune or a day’s instruction at school.

Ingredients:

- 1 lb flour
- 8 oz sultanas (seedless white raisins)
- 4 oz sugar
- 2 oz butter and 2 oz lard
- 2 oz chopped mixed peel
- Quarter pint milk
- Quarter ounce dried yeast
- A tablespoon of milk and sugar for the glaze

Directions:

- Sieve the flour and sugar into a bowl, add the yeast and mix well. Melt the butter and lard in a saucepan on a low heat. Remove as soon as it is melted. Warm the milk in another saucepan and then pour it into the melted fats.
- Create a hole in the middle of the flour, sugar and yeast and mix well into a smooth dough. Cover the bowl with a warm, damp towel (or plastic clingfilm) and leave in a warm location for 45 minutes. The dough will rise, doubling in size.
- Knead the dough (with flour on your hands to stop it sticking) for five minutes. Add the sultanas and mixed peel and knead well again for another five minutes. Place the dough in a loaf tin and cover and leave in a warm place for 20 minutes to allow it to rise again.
- Remove the tin from the bag and bake in a preheated oven at 350F/180C/Gas Mark 4 for an hour. Mix the tablespoon of milk and sugar. Remove the cake tin from the oven and place on a heat-resistant surface. Brush the top with the milk and sugar, using a pastry brush. Return the cake tin to the oven (using oven gloves - it's still hot) and bake for another twenty minutes. Test with a skewer - if it is wet, continue baking for another ten minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before removing. Store in an airtight container.



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A Highland Stream

2021

an Giblean

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
28	29	30	31	1	2 Diahoine na Ceusta (Good Friday)	3
4 a' Chaisg -- Easter	5 b. Joseph Lister, inventor of antiseptic, 1827	6 Foirgheall Obar Bhrothaig (Declaration of Arbroath), 1320; b. James Mill, philosopher, 1773	7 Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h- Alba (Scottish National Party), 1934	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Blàr Chùil Lodair (Battle of Culloden Moor), 1746	17
18	19	20	21 John Muir Day	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	NOTES:				

Blàr Chùil Lodair -- The Battle of Culloden Moor, is generally understood to mark the beginning of the end of the ancient, traditional way of life of the Scottish Gael. Oddly, just as at Bannockburn, everything went right, at Culloden, everything seemed to go wrong. Nevertheless, the battle is an event that intrigues by its “what ifs.”

- What if the “Bonnie Prince” had not been such a drunken mess at this stage in his campaign and had been better able to focus, strategize, and plan, and had been less drunkenly obstinate and better able to heed the advice of his counselors?
- What if Prince Charles had followed the urgings of his generals and chiefs to eschew battle that day and retreat to recoup his army and fight another day.
- What if the attempted night march and surprise attack had been successful, instead of going astray and leaving the Highlanders exhausted after a futile all-night march before facing the Government army?
- What if the Prince had not insisted on fighting on the Moor, which his generals argued, was “not proper for Highlanders,” but had instead moved the battle to more advantageous ground?
- What if the order to attack had been given as the English army (also composed of Scottish government forces and clans loyal to the Hanoverian crown) was preparing for battle, hence giving the Highlanders the advantage before the enemy was prepared.
- What if the Highlanders had not passively stood and received volley after volley of English cannon fire?
- Again, if the Highlanders, with their so-often-before successful charge, had attacked before the English troops had had a chance to set up their cannons?



If *ifs and buts* were candy and nuts, as the saying goes, we’d have a merry Christmas. (Or a successful battle!)

As it was, the outnumbered Highlanders were left vulnerable to their enemy, their vaunted and so-often irresistible charge ineffectual -- too late, too weak, too uncoordinated with it finally did come --, and the “Bonnie Prince Charlie,” by now a drunken mess, fled the battlefield, blaming “his” Highlanders for having failed him.

The battle marked more than a mere military defeat, for it was followed by concerted British government determination to destroy Gaelic culture, efforts which began with the murder of the wounded on the battle field, the chasing down and killing of anyone suspected of having taken part in the battle, and laws that outlawed Gaelic customs such as the wearing of the kilt, the playing of the bagpipe,

The Gaelic poet Iain Ruadh Stiubhart (John Roy Stewart) captured the sense of loss and desolation experienced by the Gaels after Culloden:

Latha Cùil Lodair

Gur mòr mo chùis mhulaid,
'S mi ri coineadh na guin stà 'm thìr; ...
Oirne is làidir Diùc Uilleam,
An rag-mheirleach, tha guin aige dhuinn ...

Culloden Day

Great is the cause of my sorrow,
As I mourn for the wounds of my land; ...
O'er us Duke William is tyrant,
That vile rogue, who has hate for us all ...

The “tyrant” Duke William referenced is the Duke of Cumberland, the English general who commanded the British government forces on the day of the battle and who ordered the pursuit and mass murder of the Highlanders who survived.

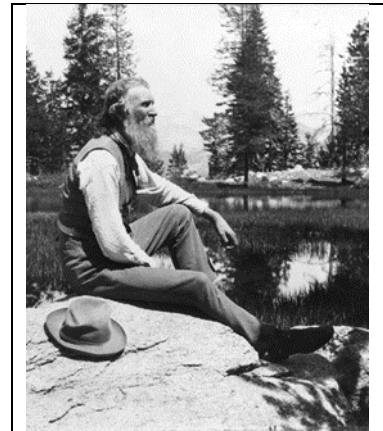
Declaration of Arbroath -- written during the Scottish Wars for Independence, the letter to the then-Pope (written in Latin, by the way), established two important principles: first, that Scotland was a nation with inherent rights as such, and not to be subjected to foreign (English) domination; and second that freedom and independence from oppression are sacred, and are to be valued above all other things:

as long as a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honors that we are fighting, but for freedom alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.

Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba -- Scottish National Party (SNP): A center-left political party expressly committed to Scottish national independence. That is, dedicated to the proposition that Scotland should be an independent nation, and not a part of the United Kingdom (or, as some would say, not subservient to England). The SNP is also the only political party in Scotland that sees Gaelic as an integral part of Scottish culture and is committed to continuing support for the Gaelic language and culture.

John Muir: Continuing the Scottish tradition of reverence for nature, Scottish-born Muir was naturalist, environmental philosopher, and advocate for the preservation of wilderness. Described by a biographer as “one of the patron saints of twentieth-century American environmental activity,” and was instrumental in the creation of the American National Parks.

To Commemorate the month of April: Like the Highlanders at the Battle of Culloden Moor and those who joined in the sentiments of the *Declaration of Arbroath*, declare your personal independence from “total surrender to materialism” by experiencing your own “oneness with the earth.” Follow the advice of John Muir, who wrote, “Keep close to Nature’s heart... and break clear away ... climb a mountain or spend [time] in the woods.” (You could also go to the beach, a field, or a park). But wherever, “Wash your spirit clean.”



John Muir

Salmon

April is the month when salmon first comes into season. With its rushing rivers and swift streams, and its 2,300 miles of loch-incised coastline, Scotland is a fisherman's delight and a fish-eater's paradise. Accordingly, the best salmon in the world is caught in Highland waters. And in a true Scottish manner, the preparation is simple to allow the full elegance of the meat to emerge.

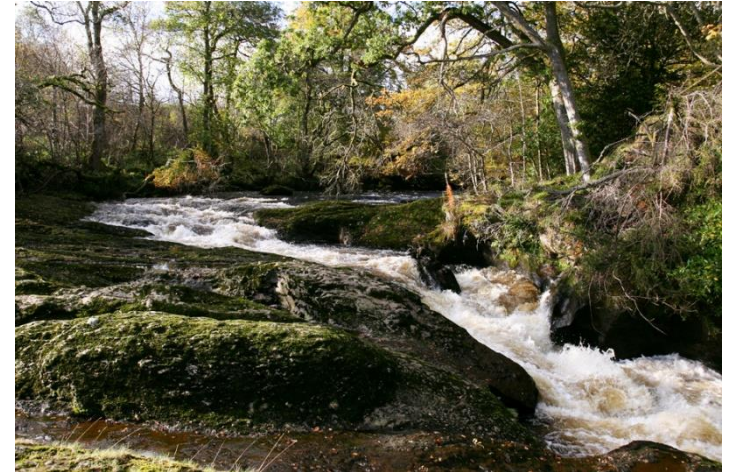
Two methods:

Plain boiled salmon:

Clean and scale the fish with a minimum of handling. Set on a rack in a large kettle, or a deep, covered roasting pan like a Dutch oven. Cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, skim, and add a teaspoon of salt. Cover, and simmer gently, allowing 10 - 12 minutes to the pound.

Salmon should always be put into boiling water as it keeps the color better. Put in salt before the fish; otherwise it breaks the skin.

Very carefully lift out the fish on the rack, and drain. Serve immediately.



Broiled salmon steaks

1 - 2 steaks per person, one-inch thick.

Sprinkle steaks with salt and pepper. Set steaks on pieces of parchment or foil. Dot with butter. Seal steaks in the foil or paper. broil under medium low flame for 10-12 minutes, turning frequently. Remove foil (or parchment) and serve immediately with a curl of butter. Accompany with baby peas or asparagus, and new potatoes or rice.

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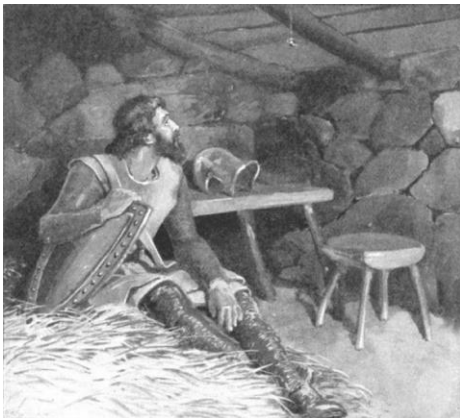
Two Highland Children Fishing, William MacTaggart

2021

an Cèitean

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 Là Buidhe Bealltainn (Beltane) Achd an Aonaidh (The Act of Union), 1707
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Là nam Màthaireachan (Mother's Day)	10	11	12	13	14	15 Dùn Aluinn, 1st Gaelic novel published, 1910
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 b. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1859, creator of Sherlock Holmes
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Là a' Chuimhneachaidh (Memorial Day, U.S.)	NOTES:				

Là Buidhe Bealltainn -- Beltane, or May Day -- was celebrated widely through the end of the 1700s with ceremonies that can be traced back to the days of the Druids. These celebrations were held out in the open, usually on hills with the grandest views of nature and nearest the seat of warmth and order, as the ancient Druids thought it degrading to him whose temple is the universe, to suppose that he would dwell in any house made with hands. Beltaine was considered the beginning of the year as it signified the opening of the year to the season of life, having come out of the darkness of winter. Bonfires were kindled in honor of the day. In some Highland districts, all fires were put out and then *an tein' èiginn* -- the need fire -- was ignited on a hill, and all household fires re-lighted from that; this probably symbolized the fire of the sun having been "put out" over the winter months and its "re-lighting" in the spring. The people frolicked around the fire, dancing and celebrating, and sometimes engaged in leaping over the flames. Sometimes, they led their livestock around the fire to grant them protection and imbue them with fruitfulness for the coming year. The fires no doubt signified the increasing of warmth and sunlight (especially important in northern European agricultural communities which were dependent on the produce of the land and their herds for their very lives). It signified in a sense the beginning of the work year as the agricultural season was just beginning; there was planting to be done, pastoralists moved their herds to summer grazing, and even labor contracts were written -- as signified in



ancient Gaelic "*o belltaini co belltaini*" -- from Beltaine to Beltaine (an association with work that continues even today with May Day celebrations).

Robert the Bruce: The Bruce's signal achievement-- leading the Scottish army to victory at the Battle of Bannockburn -- is treated at much greater length elsewhere. Born of mixed Gaelic and Anglo-Norman stock, the Bruce led the struggle for Scottish independence for more than 20 years. Sometimes, he fought alone but for a small band of followers, including his brothers, hunted as an outlaw and fugitive. In a famous legend, after suffering several defeats, hiding in a cave (or barn), hunted, despairing, the Bruce watched a spider attempting to cast a web. Seven times the creature attempted and seven times it failed. Finally, persisting, it succeeded. From this Bruce drew a lesson and renewed his fight for Scottish liberty, which he and the Scots at his side finally won.

It's a cruel irony that this entry is followed by ...

Achd an Aonaidh -- The Act of Union: 1707, the Act of Union between Scotland and England came into force in spite of opposition by the majority of Scots, many of whom saw the union, which created the United Kingdom, as a betrayal by the leadership of the country and signaled the demise of their national integrity. Riots raged amid accusations of bribery and political chicanery. Scottish church bells played the tune "Why am I so Sad on my Wedding Day?" And Robert Burns wrote:



Stories of na *Sithichean* -- the fairy folk -- are associated with this time, and of humans crossing over into the Other World, sometimes on an adventurous quest, sometimes in romance

Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory;
Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story.

We're bought and sold for English gold-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

Dùn Àluinn (Beautiful Castle) - The first published, full-length Gaelic novel. The story deals with the tragedy of the aftermath of the Highland Clearances. Somewhat symbolic of the plight of Scottish Gaels (Highlanders), Cailean Og, the main character, is disinherited and is cast out upon the world and must struggle to survive before returning to Scotland. The novel features a secondary character in the form of a kirk (church) minister who advocates for social rights in the face of a destructive, rapacious, capitalistic system that empowered the landlords in their oppression of the Gaelic Highlanders.

The novel was the first in a growing trend in Gaelic literature. Although the traditional literary art form in Gaelic was poetry (or, poems written within an oral culture, meant to be recited or song), increasingly (which means nowadays), Gaelic story-tellers are turning to the prose story form -- either the short story, or the novel. That is, when they aren't actually creating for television or film.

To Commemorate the month of May: Beltane celebrates life and light and things that bring us joy. Light a fire for the blossoming new year -- and this might not be only a literal fire, but perhaps a spiritual fire. Inspire yourself. Inspire others. Commit random acts of kindness. Be a light unto yourself, your family, your friends, and strangers. Dance! Sing! Visit the fairies! Celebrate new life! Not to be religiously exclusive, you might want to celebrate Easter this season rather than Beltane; that is fine, for they are actually kind of the same thing (where do we think all the Easter eggs. and bunny rabbits, and blessings of the animals came from?). And if you're so inclined, here's a Gaelic prayer, and typical of many Highland prayers, it's part Christian, part pre-Christian:

Beannaich gach ni, agus gach aon,
Dhen teaghlach bheag ri m' thaobh
A Thi a chruthaich mi air tus,
Èisd is fritheil rium a' lùbadh glùn,
Moch is anmoch mar is iùl
A d' làthair fèin, a Dhe nan dul.

Bless each thing, and each one,
Of the little family by my side,
O, One who created me at the beginning,
Listen and attend to me as I bend my knee,
Morning and evening under thy guiding light,
In your own presence, O God of life.

Spring Lamb

Although nowadays, lamb is generally obtainable year-round (either locally or sourced in off-season months from New Zealand or Australia – well, off-season for the Northern Hemisphere; in-season for those locations), traditionally in Scotland, it was most available during the late spring and summer months. Boneless lamb is not Scottish traditional, but it works much better than leg of lamb in the sense that it is easier to handle, so get boneless or boned lamb. About 4 pounds gives the best value.

Ingredients

- 4 lb boneless lamb
- Sprig or two of rosemary
- 8 small potatoes (red rose or butterling)
- 8 carrots (depending on # of people – about a carrot per person)
- Chicken broth
- 3-4 tablespoons flour
- 1 lb green beans

Directions:

- Unroll lamb. Cut about 10 slits in it. Stick garlic clove in each slit. Sprig or two of rosemary inside the unrolled lamb. Reroll lamb.
- Place lamb in oven at 350°F or on grill in baking pan – (in a pan because you want to save the juice).
- Cut up several small potatoes (such as Red Rose or Butterling) into quarters and slice carrots and spread out around lamb in pan. Or cook separately. If you cook separately, you can salt and pepper them, and rub them with olive oil (but only if separately -- gravy will not thicken if olive oil included in pan with lamb).
- Cook between 2 and 2 ½ hours.
- Cook green beans separately.
- Remove lamb from pan. (Remove rosemary but keep the garlic.) Cover with foil.
- Take the juice in baking pan and pour it into saucepan. Add approximately 3-4 tablespoons of flour (depends on amount of juice). Stir to make a *roux* (really thickened). Add a can (12 oz) of chicken broth, or lamb stock if you have it. Continue stirring until gravy comes to a boil. Turn flame down to simmer while you carve lamb.
- Serve sliced lamb, potatoes, carrots, and green beans. Pour gravy over lamb and potatoes.



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Traditional Highland Village, "Blackhouses," Isle of Lewis

2021

an t-Ògmhios

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 b. Adam Smith, 1723, father of economics	10	11 b. 1811, James Young Simpson, inventor anaesthetics	12
13 d. 597, St. Columba	14	15	16	17 b. James Clerk Maxwell, 1831, father of science of electronics	18	19
20 Là nan Athraichean - Father's Day	21	22 Battle of Waterloo, 1815	23 b. James I & VI, 1566, patron of the King James Bible	24	25 Uair àirde na gréine (Summer solstice)	26
27	28 Blàr Allt a' Bhonnaich (the Battle of Bannockburn), 1314	29 Crofters Holdings Act, 1886	30	1	2	3
4	5	NOTES:				

This month we recognize various kinds of victories over oppression.

Blàr Alt a' Bhonnach - The Battle of Bannockburn: The decisive battle in the Scottish War of Independence. The battle is engraved in Scottish memories as emblematic of the indomitable quest for Scottish freedom. It was truly a David-and-Goliath struggle pitting a small band of Scottish defenders against a massive invading force of would-be English conquerors. Though exact numbers are hard to come by from so long ago, the English army numbered perhaps as many as 20,000 trained and seasoned soldiers; the Scots perhaps a quarter of that. Several Highland clans fought alongside Robert the Bruce at the battle. Although this is most often viewed as a Scottish victory against foreign oppression, in some ways, this was a victory of Celt over non-Celt, or Gael over Gall, for a heavy contingent of Bruce's army was Highland and Gaelic. The 14th century poet, John Barbour, writing his epic poem, *The Bruce*, about 60 years after the actual battle, commemorated the "Irishmen from Argyll" (which was what Gaels were sometimes called) who joined the battle on the side of Robert the Bruce. Besides that, Bruce himself was a Gaelic speaker, his mother being of an old Gaelic family. The Scottish army was in fact multi-cultural, multi-lingual.

Nithear mòran le spionnadh, ach nithear tuilleadh le seòltachd. This Gaelic expression translates loosely as, *much may be done with strength, but more with cunning*. And if we had any doubt that Robert the Bruce was at heart a Gael, the strategy of the Scottish army would lay that doubt to rest. While the English army depended on weight and muscle and the sheer mass of superior numbers, Bruce cunningly layered one stratagem over another to achieve his victory:

- **Selection of the ground** -- We hear that the three keys to success in business is "location, location, location." So it is in warfare, as well. Bruce chose to confront the invading English on a field that gave the Scots a number of advantages. The Scottish army situated itself so it had full possession of the field and so the "burn" or stream (Bannock**burn**, remember?) ran through the part of the field where the English army would line up. Hence, the English army was divided -- one part was not able to fully support the other. The Bruce would situate the Scottish army with the back of his force to a dense wood which was passable by narrow trails only -- thus nature would protect the Scots from surprise attack from the rear. In fact, the wood might have provided a further advantage, for it is reported that the Scots army emerged from it and surprised the English. The ground sloped up to the Scots, hence slowing any English charge. Additionally, the ground was peaty, meaning it was soft and boggy, which would further aid the Scots in slowing the English and diminishing the force of the English cavalry charge, as the Scots knew where the firm ground was and the English didn't.
- **The single combat between Robert and Henry de Bohun** -- although not a part of Bruce's strategy, it provides an exemplum for the battle of the day. Henry de Bohun was a knight in the service of the English king. Before the battle, when the two armies were arrayed before each other -- as armies used to do, lined up in neat rows -- de Bohun noticed the Scottish King inspecting the troops and then riding out alone to survey the battlefield. Thinking he would achieve a quick victory by engaging the Scottish leader in single combat, the English knight charged. Bruce was riding a small pony and was unarmed except for a sword and his battle axe. De Bohun was in full knight battle-array; a massive charger (horse), in full armor; this lethal pike lowered and aimed at the Scot. The sight riveted the two armies. They collectively held their breath as the English knight bore down on the seemingly hapless (and hopeless) Scottish king. At the last moment, just when the knight's lance tip was inches from the Bruce's chest, the Scot gave his pony's side a little kick, and well-trained as it was, it darted out of the way. In that second, Bruce whipped out his battle axe and brought it down on de Bohun's helmeted head, killing the Englishman instantly. Now, you'd think that such a victory would please the friends of the King of Scots -- but instead of being pleased, several of them expressed anger that Robert had put himself in such danger by riding out alone and then by not retreating. And then, in one of those *and-what-do-you-have-to-say-for-yourself* moments, Robert the Bruce held up the shattered haft of his weapon and said, "I've ruined a good axe."

- **The device of woe** -- To defend against the charge of the English heavy cavalry -- the most fearsome weapon of the medieval army, the "armored division" of medieval warfare, analogous to tanks in modern times -- Robert the Bruce directed the digging of ditches and implanting in them long spikes or lances, actually little more than sharpened poles made from the trucks of young trees. One writer of the time described the trap thusly: "A device full of woe [was] formed for the horses' feet, hollow, with spikes, that they [could] not pass without fall. The [Scots dug] ditches that on them the cavalry may trip." The spikes might not have been uniform, but were probably 'thrown together' with whatever impediments were at hand -- old swords, lances, sharpened poles and sticks. When the supposedly irresistible English cavalry charged, they would fall into the ditches, impaling horses and riders. (This tactic is depicted in the film *Braveheart*.)



Bruce slays Sir Henry de Bohun

- **All these elements came into play in the Scottish victory.** On the second and deciding day of the battle, the Scots advanced, in the words of a writer of the period, "from the wood in three battles on foot, and marched stiffly upon the English, The Scots came on in a line in the schiltrom formation [a packed troop of spearmen], and charged upon the brigades of the English, who were crowded together and could not force their way towards them, so much were their horses speared through the bowels. The rearmost English fell back upon the channel of the Bannockburn, tripping over each other. Their brigades thrown into confusion by the thrusts of the spears upon the horses."
- **The finishing touch, the coup de grace: the attack by the camp followers** -- the Bruce had organized the "camp followers' -- the cooks, the servants, & etc. who were armed with little else besides sticks and shovels and brooms -- to come onto the field when he gave the signal. So, when the battle hung in the balance and it looked like the Scots might win, and the English were beginning to fade in their fervor, Bruce ordered this motley assemblage onto the field of battle. They appeared at the top of a distant hill -- too far away to make out clearly -- and advanced. To the flagging English troops, it appeared that the enemy was attacking

with an entirely fresh reinforcements, and the discouraged English soldiers fled.



The Scots drive the English into the Bannockburn

There are two depictions of the battle in film – the climactic battle scene in *Braveheart* is based on Bannockburn (though it was Robert the Bruce who was present, not the Mel Gibson / William Wallace character); and the depiction of the Battle of Bannockburn in the 2018 film *Outlaw King*.

Crofters Holding Act -- Achd na Croitearachd 1886 -- Following on decades of the abusive treatment of Highland crofters by landlords, resistance on the part of Highlanders, and protests by horrified outsiders of the cruelties inflicted during the clearances, this law gave protection to crofters in their tenancy of their crofts (small farms) in Scotland. It was intended in part as a remedy for the abuses by landlords of tenant farmers (the crofters) during the period known as The Highland Clearances. The law provided for the following: security of tenure -- crofters could not be removed from their farms except for cause; rights of inheritance -- crofters could bequeath their tenure to their children upon their death; rent stabilization -- rent could not be changed except by agreement; compensation -- crofters were to be compensated for any removal and for any improvements they made to the land; the establishment of the Crofters Commission, which would serve as a court of arbitration between landowners and crofters. Because it established basic rights of the farming people of the Highlands and freed them from the arbitrary and unchallengeable rule of landlords, the Act became known as the “Magna Carta of Gaeldom.”



Highland crofters

St Columba, born in present-day Donegal, Ireland, died on the island of Iona, Scotland. The man who brought Christianity to Scotland wasn't always a what we might imagine a peaceful man of God to be like. However, after leading his troops into battle against a pagan Irish king, his spiritual father commanded him to perform the penance of bringing as many souls to the Church as he had caused to die in battle. Columba established his mission work in the Gaelic kingdom of Dàl Riata by founding a monastery on the tiny isle of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland in the Inner Hebrides, which monastery was to become one of the leading centers of Christianity in Western Europe, and the base from which he launched his successful mission to convert the Pictish nation.



Iona Abbey

The Celtic form of Christianity was remarkably different from the Roman variety. For one thing, the Celts were not interested in building magnificent edifices to glorify their views of religion; their centers were small monasteries -- and when they grew to 150 people, they split and formed another. Additionally, the early Celtic spirituality did not set the natural world and the spiritual world in opposition as did the variety that rose in Rome.

Summer solstice: summer is, after all, a time of joy, and light, and life. We might expect it to be a season of celebration. The stone temple at Callanais (Callanish) on the Isle of Lewis forms an



Standing Stones of Callanish, Isle of Lewis

astronomical observatory aligned to the solstice sunrises and sunsets, as well as to the equinoxes. It is made of four rows of stones leading into a circle from the four directions, forming a Celtic cross in the landscape. The stones “point to” a

line of three hills situated at the base of the cross -- or, perhaps a figure of the goddess. On the solstice, the moon seems to just skip on three successive nights on the tips of these hills.



Alba gu Brath! -- Scotland Forever!
The Charge of the Scots Greys and the Gordon Highlanders
by Lady Butler

Scotland Forever! -- In the early 1800s, following the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, Britain was locked in a fight for survival against the French armies of Napoleon Bonaparte, who had managed to conquer much of Europe. The threat to Britain was as great as it would be little more than a hundred years later from Adolf Hitler's Germany. On 18 June 1815, the Battle of Waterloo was fought that would decide the fate (and freedom) of Britain. At a crucial point in the battle, a French column with over 4,000 men advanced on the 300 Highlanders, who were under strict orders not to give way and were determined to fight to the death against overwhelming odds. As the situation reached its most critical moment, suddenly the Scots Greys cavalry appeared on the top of the hill. Together, with the Highlanders hanging on to the stirrups of the cavalry horses, they and the Greys charged the French shouting "Scotland Forever," helping the British army achieve a momentous victory that put aside forever the threat of French conquest.

To Commemorate the month of June: For a month with such strikingly dramatic events, we truly have to do *something big!* Since the theme seems



to be struggles against oppression,

- **Re-enact** the battle of Bannockburn,
- **Independence Day!** For American Scots, for the commemoration of this month exchange or add on to one sacred holiday for another: *Appropriate* the 4th of July -- it's not the exact date, but it's close enough (who's going to complain after 700 years?). Give a thought to Scottish Independence!
- With that in mind, seems like a good month to **fly the flag!** (especially on June 24, Bannockburn Day)
- **Host or attend a movie marathon:** watch *Braveheart*, *Outlaw King*, *the Bruce*, *The Outlander*, and any other Scottish- or Highland themed film you can think of.
- **Celebrate the solstice the Gaelic way!** The significance has to do with the celebration of the victory of good and light and life over the forces of dark and evil. Have a party and invite people to celebrate with bonfires, good food and delving

into the Gaelic culture. Or, visit your local Scottish center or Scottish arts center; whip up one of the delicious recipes in this calendar (or elsewhere) and top it off with a *dram of uisge-beatha* or Scottish *leann* -- beer; visit a Scottish pub and listen to Scottish music, Embrace our culture in some other way: how about some Scottish dancing or music lessons?

Custard

I remember walking into my grandmother's home and smelling the custard baking tenderly in the oven, filling the house with the scene of nutmeg and vanilla and sweet egginess. (I was about to say, sweet eagerness -- but that too!)

Ingredients:

- butter for greasing
- 2 ½ cups whole milk
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup powdered sugar (superfine)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- fresh nutmeg
- Scottish chef Shirley Spear of the world-renowned Three Chimneys restaurant in Skye adds 2 tbsp of Drambuie liquor for a little extra zest!

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 275°F and butter a round ovenproof dish (7x2 ½")
- Pour the milk into saucepan and heat until hot but not boiling.
- In a bowl, whisk the eggs, sugar and vanilla, and then while still whisking, pour in hot milk.
- Sit the buttered dish in roasting pan. Strain the custard mixture into dish, and grate nutmeg over the top.
- Pour boiled water into the pan to come up about halfway on the baking dish -- it should not slop over into custard mix.
- Put into oven and cook for 1 ½ hours.
- Remove from oven and let cool. Serve warm, not hot.
- Do not let stand at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Serves 4



Caramel Topping: For that extra yummy touch, top off with 2-3 berries in season, and/or this

Ingredients

- 16 tablespoons unsalted butter (2 sticks)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup packed light-brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Directions:

- In a medium saucepan, combine butter, cream, sugar, and salt. Heat over low, stirring until sugar has dissolved, about 2 minutes. Simmer over medium until reduced to 2 ½ cups, 8 – 12 minutes. Pour over custard.
- Top it all off with fresh berry or two.

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Beach on the Isle of Barra

2021

an t-luchair

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
27	28	29	30	1 Là a' Chanada (Canada Day)	2 Bliadhna nan Caorach 's na Fuadachan (The Year of the Sheep & the Highland Clearances, 1792)	3
4 Latha Neo-eisimeil (Na Stàitean Aonaichte) - Independence Day (U.S.)	5	6 b. John Paul Jones, 1747, "Father of the American Navy"	7	8	9	10
11 b., Robert the Bruce, 1274	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	NOTES:				

Bliadhna nan Caorach -- the Year of the Sheep (1792); Na Fuadaichean -- The Highland Clearances: John Prebble identifies July 27, 1792, as a day on a "warm summer weekend" when kinsmen had gathered for a wedding celebration in the country of Ross in the northern Highlands, where they "danced and they sang and they drank heavily. Angered by the evictions that had been instigated against some in their community and "fired by the crude whisky which they distilled themselves ... inflamed by the warrior challenge of the pipes ... they planned [a] foray that would rid them forever of the Great Sheep and restore to them the home of their ancestors." Thus a number of Highland crofters mounted a protest against what in retrospect became known as the Highland Clearances although that term actually refers to a string of events over a number of years when thousands of Highlanders were evicted from the land their ancestors had inhabited for thousand or more years.

In his book *Culloden*, Prebble links the disastrous battle (of Culloden) in 1746 with the century-long ethnic cleansing of the Scottish Highlands, for it was the destruction of the clan system which led to the devastation ravaged upon the people of the Highlands. "Once the chiefs lost their powers many of them lost also any parental interest in their clansmen. ...they continued the work of Cumberland's battalions. so that they might lease their glens and braes to sheep-farmers from the Lowlands and England, the cleared the crofts of men, women and children." In our day and age, it can hardly be imagined what being evicted meant or how it was experienced by the Highlanders of the 18th century. As Prebble wrote in *The Highland Clearances*, "their attachment to the land was deep and strong. They had peopled it with talking stones, snow-giants, and mythical warriors of mountain granite. Their culture was virile and immediate, their verse flowered on the rich mulching of their history."

But now, the people of the Highlands were caught in a revolution they did not understand. Whereas in ages before, they had been considered children of the chief, now they were merely assets -- property, as it were --of a landowner, and poorly paying assets as that, much less valuable than the sheep that replaced them in the Highland glens. Many landlords -- former chiefs, some of them, some of them non-Gaelic (non-Highland) Lowlanders or English owners -- looked at their rent rolls and balanced those against the prospective gains from farming sheep, and decided that sheep were more profitable than human beings. So flagrant were these evictions that in some cases, the "factor" (henchman, or estate manager) ruled his petty kingdom like a little tyrant. One such man, Donald Munro, was known by the way that he bullied the people around him, in matters great and small: he would shake his walking stick like a cudgel in the face of his target and shout the threat: "*Cuiridh mi às an fhearainn thu!*" (I'll throw you off the land!)

In fact, the year 1792 is named in Gaelic memory as *Bliadhna nan Caorach* -- the year of the sheep -- followed very shortly after by a year burned in Gaelic memory by the name *Bliadhna nan Losgaidhean* -- the Year of the Burnings -- a name derived from the practice of the Lords, landlords, and their agents to burn cottages down, sometimes with their inhabitants still in them. In his book *The History of the Highland Clearances* (a record composed at a time when eye-witnesses were still alive and available to give testimony), Alexander MacKenzie gives this description of the scenes of havoc that took place in one locale.

[A] commencement was made to pull down and set fire to the houses over their heads. The old people, women and others, then began to preserve the timber which was their own ; but the devastators proceeded with the greatest celerity, demolishing all before them, and when they had overthrown all the houses in a large tract of country they set fire to the wreck. Timber, furniture, and every other article that could not be instantly removed was consumed by fire or otherwise utterly destroyed. The proceedings were carried on with the greatest rapidity and the most reckless cruelty. The cries of the victims, the confusion, the despair and horror painted on the countenances of the one party, and the exulting ferocity of the other, beggar all description. ... Many deaths ensued from alarm, from fatigue, and cold, the people having been instantly deprived of shelter, and left to the mercies of the elements. Some old men took to the woods and to the rocks, wandering about in a state approaching to, or of absolute, insanity, and several of them in this situation lived only a few days. Pregnant women were taken in premature labor, and several children did not long survive their sufferings. " To these scenes," says Donald Macleod*, "I was an eye-witness, and am ready to substantiate the truth of my

statements, not only by my own testimony, but by that of many others who were present at the time. In such a scene of general devastation, it is almost useless to particularize the cases of individuals; the suffering was great and universal. I shall, however, notice a very few of the extreme cases of which I was myself an eye-witness. John Mackay's wife, in attempting to pull down her house, the absence of her husband, to preserve the timber, fell through the roof. She was in consequence taken in premature labor, and in that state was exposed to the open air and to the view of all the by-standers. Donald Munro, lying in a fever, was turned out of his house and exposed to the elements. Donald Macbeath, an infirm and bed-ridden old man, had the house unroofed over him, and was in that state exposed to the wind and rain until death put a period to his sufferings. I was present at the pulling down and burning of the house of William Chisholm, in which was lying his wife's mother, an old bed-ridden woman of nearly 100 years of age, none of the family being present. I informed the persons about to set fire to the house of this circumstance, and prevailed on them to wait until Mr. Sellar came. On his arrival, I told him of the poor old woman being in a condition unfit for removal, when he replied, 'Damn her, the old witch, she has lived too long let her burn/ Fire was immediately set to the house, and the blankets in which she was carried out were in flames before she could be got out. She was placed in a little shed, and it was with great difficulty they were prevented from firing it also. The old woman's daughter arrived while the house was on fire and assisted the neighbors in removing her mother out of the flames and smoke, presenting a picture of horror which I shall never forget, but cannot attempt to describe." Within five days she was a corpse.

These scenes were repeated over and over again during the course of the clearing of the Highlands during the late 1700s and early 1800s. One



Elizabeth, Duchess of Sutherland; by George Romney

Gaelic poet raged against the "gentry with no pity." As Mackenzie wrote elsewhere, "The motives of the landlords, generally led by southern factors worse than themselves, were, in most cases, pure self-interest, and they pursued their policy of extermination with a recklessness and remorselessness unparalleled anywhere else." The owners had figured out that sheep were more profitable than people; so they moved to remove all the human beings from the land to make way for the four-footed invaders. Prebble records one prophetic warning: "*Mo thruaighe ort a thir, tha' n caoraich mhòr a' teachd!*" (Woe to thee, oh, land. The great sheep is coming.) However, not all landlords cleared the land to make way for sheep. In at least one case, the human inhabitants were removed to make way for a deer-hunting park.



Dùn Robain (Dunrobin Castle)

A person whose ordering and directing of these evictions was particularly egregious, vicious, and rapacious was Elizabeth, Duchess of Sutherland. In the system of convoluted dynastic acquisition of land and titles, she was not of Gaelic stock. "She was Anglo-Norman by descent," wrote John Prebble in his book *The Highland Clearances*. "She spoke no Gaelic and had inherited her family's contempt for the tongue, manners, and customs of the Highland people.

In order to increase her already prodigious wealth, the Duchess dedicated herself to "improving" the land she owned in the Highlands. In part, this improvement included the eviction of a great number of mere "tenants" to make room for sheep. The other part lay in the construction of what is now called Dunrobin Castle with the profits of her endeavors.

Today, the palace of Dunrobin is a tourist destination in the far north of Scotland, with its luxurious furnishings and impressive gardens, but it should be remembered that it was built upon the suffering of the poor people of the Sutherland estate who were forced from their lands -- sometimes to seacoast villages and sometimes overseas to America or Australia -- so the owners could enjoy their wealth. As one contemporary Gaelic poet put it (figuratively and hyperbolically):

S' ann mar le gruaige nan cailleach na coimhearsnachd
a fhigh na h-ighne na rìghinn na chroch-bhrait
a chroch iad le pròis feadh na h-ionaid --
an seòmar-biadhtachd 's aoidheachd 's cuideachd
anns an taigh-oighreachd Dùn Robain.

Chunnaic mi na cìrean airgid --
na fiaclean mar air an spìonach
a-mach à beoil nam pràpanach
nam muinntirean Dhùn Robain.

(Mac an t-Saoir)

As if with the hair of the old women of the village
the lords' daughters wove the tapestries
hung with pride throughout the palace --
the long corridors, the bedrooms and dining halls
in the estate mansion of Dunrobin.

I saw the silver combs
their teeth as if yanked
out from the mouths of the children
of the people of Dunrobin.

Not far from Dunrobin stands a small monument entitled *The Emigrants* memorializing the fate of the Highlanders, including those who suffered directly under the hand of the Duchess of Sutherland and her agents, driven from their ancestral homes all over the Highlands during na fuadaichean -- the clearances



Andrew Laing, the sculptor of the memorial wrote, "I thought first of the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden. It is the archetype for displacement, for whatever reason, voluntary or involuntary. The sensations are loss, disorientation and anxiety ... [emotions] represented ... in the sculpture. To this day scattered across the highlands are ruins -- *làraichean* -- of old villages where once people lived, loved, laughed, danced, sang: grim reminders of the ethnic cleansing that devastated our homeland.



One Gaelic poet posits that there is a wider lesson to be learned.

Na diocuimhnicheamaid gus crìoch an t-saoghail
 mairidh partanachd 's cruadhail
 's mi-rùn nan Gall ri clann a' Ghàidheil:
 Cuimhnicheamaid gu brath Dùn Robain.
 (Mac an t-Saoir)



Let us not forget that until the end of the world
 Greed and cruelty will continue,
 and the hatred of the Gall* for the children of the Gael:
 Let us always remember Dunrobin.

**Gall* technically means foreigner, stranger, especially a native of the south of Scotland or a Scot that cannot speak Gaelic; it is one of those words that a group uses to distinguish those who not members of the group -- or culture, or race, or whatever. It can signify variously, according to context, a Lowlander as opposed to a Gaelic Highlander; or an English person, as opposed to a Scot; or a European as opposed to a Brit. When Norse overlords ruled the outer Hebrides, the Outer Isles were given the name *Innse Gall* -- the Islands of the Strangers (because it was the Norse Vikings who ruled there for a while, as opposed to Gaels -- but of course, in the end, these Viking invaders became quite Gaelicized, leaving a legacy of Norse influence on the culture and language).

To our assessment of this, historian Eric Roberts offers a counter-balance to the collective tales of woe by pointing out that what we now call the Clearances were part of a wider shift in populations and economic systems throughout Europe -- from rural agrarian to urban industrial, from feudal collective possession to individualistic and capitalistic ownership. "The process was more dramatic and sudden in the Highlands and greatly exacerbated by the population increase ... the sheep clearances were essentially an acceleration of the process long in motion, more dramatic and greater in scale but ... the strains were multiplied and the tragedy entrenched." Other historians have pointed out that the clearances were part of a wider socio-economic movement that involved the consolidations of farmland and the mechanization of agricultural technology.

However accurate this observation might be, the fact remains that a barbaric atrocity remains an atrocity even when attached to a logical rationale or might be linked to an eventual benefit. (It does not justify the Holocaust, for instance, to say that some descendants of Jews murdered by the Nazis now live comfortably in the United States.) Additionally, sometimes past evils are rationalized with the explanation that people of the time didn't recognize a certain practice as evil. Apocryphally, virgins were once sacrificed to the volcano gods -- however, in the case of the Clearances, the actions of those who carried them out were condemned *at the time*. The people alive during the 1800s when these outrages were being committed recognized them as crimes against humanity. The end result of the Clearances was the destruction of the Highland way of life, the beginning of the end for an intact Gaelic culture, in

part brought about by a depopulation of the Highlands. In one section of the Highlands, the depopulation was up to 98% -- with the population not having been restored even now to the level it was in the mid-1800s.

In the end, that said, I would add we have within our Gaelic history the opportunity of taking one other lesson, one that goes beyond simply carrying away the memory of the bitter injustice that our forbearers endured -- that that is learning from this, and learning especially forbearance, empathy, compassion. The Christian Bible states the injunction to remember one's own pain and through that understand the pain of others: "Remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt" (Deut 15:15). In a similar way, reflecting on our history can make us more understanding and compassionate towards others who are now enduring the same kind of trauma.

To Commemorate the month of July: If we really want to remember our history -- our complete history -- we must remember the painful as well as the happy. (And there's a purpose to this, also, which I will get to.) One of the things I'm trying to do in this *leabhar laithichean* -- book of days -- is provide us with ways and means to remember that are more tangible and visceral than "just" reading the information on a page (I say this, being a *reader*, myself -- I mean, never without a book in my hand. Many years ago, I had to discipline myself: do not read while driving!). Anyway, there is a difference between reading information on a page and experiencing it, even if the experience is second hand or through some sort of re-enactment or ritual. So here are a couple things we can do:

Option #1: Now, the clearances -- *Na Fuadaichean* -- happened over a period of years, so there's not a particular date, but admittedly somewhat arbitrarily, I chose a date (the one noted above) that marked a significant event. So, you can use this date, or you can adjust it. But in any event, the idea is that you, yourself, are *cleared*.

In the following pages, you'll see instructions how to build a little cardboard house. (As well, there are children's play house-construction sets for sell in various places -- but if you're really Scottish like me, you'll go for the really inexpensive/no-cost variety; besides, it'll give you more of a hands-on experience.) Build you miniature cottage. Add little toy farm animals and little people figures; that'll add to your experiencing what is to come. (You can make these out of cardboard, as well -- in which case, you can color them.) Do this over a period of a week or so. Get to know the figures. Name them. Tell stories about them.

Then the day comes that your little farm family is *cleared*. Burn the little cardboard house. (Do this *safely* -- if you can't do it in a fireplace, or BBQ pit, or in the middle of a concrete or asphalt expanse, then just smash it.) Scatter the little people and the animals.

And then you leave. Where do you go? It could be someplace totally unplanned, someplace you've never been before -- much like the fate experienced by our ancestors.

Or, you might time this to coincide with your vacation, which would be interesting -- just like many of our ancestors were forced out of the homeland in a traumatic expulsion, only to find new and arguably "better" lives *thar thairis* -- abroad, over the seas. So, maybe the enjoyment of your vacation can in a sense replicate the new life our ancestors found in their new homes.

How to Build a Cardboard Croft for *na fuadaichean* (10-13 minutes)

1 Pick a box to use.

- Use one slightly larger than a shoe box if you have one.

2 Place one of the open ends on the bottom.

- You can close the flaps or cut them off, depending on what you want.
- If you want to have a removable roof, you should leave the bottom on.

3 Create the roof structure.

- Cut flat lines on two opposite sides. On the other two sides, go up to a point in the middle, like a roof. Basically, you're creating a triangle shape on top of a rectangle or square shape. For this part, you can use scissors

4 Cut out the roof.

- The roof should be a single piece of cardboard large enough to reach over the edges of the roof space. Bend it in half so it rests correctly over the roof angle.

5 Cut out the doors and windows.

- Use a pencil to draw where you want doors and windows. Use a craft knife or scissors to cut them out. For the doors, leave one edge uncut, so you have a door that opens and shuts.

6 Glue the roof on.

- Use hot glue to glue the roof in place. Trace the glue along the top edges of the cardboard, and then set the roof in place.
- You can leave the roof off if you want a removable roof, as long as you left the bottom on for structure.^[4]

Finally, “thatch” the roof with grass or similar material. Settle the croft house in its “farmyard” and place your “farm family” and their animals in and around it.



Cranachan

Raise your own banner atop this traditional Scottish dessert of oats, cream, whisky and raspberries. It is simple to prepare and makes a delicious mid-summer dessert treat.

Ingredients

570ml/1 pint double cream
85g/3oz porridge oats
7 tbsp whisky
3 tbsp honey
450g/1lb raspberries
fresh mint, to garnish

Directions

Toast the oats in a frying pan, being careful not to burn them.

Lightly whip the cream until it reaches the soft peak stage, then fold in the whisky, honey, oatmeal and raspberries.

Serve in dessert glasses garnished with a few raspberries and mint.



Oranges an' Whisky

Here is a delicious way to add some additional flavor to oranges to make a great dessert.

Ingredients:

- 4 oranges
- 2 tablespoons demerara (brown) sugar
- 3 tablespoons whisky
- 3 tablespoons water
- Whipped cream

Directions:

- Peel and thinly slice 3 of the oranges, removing all pips and pith. Put the juice from the remaining orange with the sugar, whisky and water in a pan. Heat gently, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Simmer for two minutes. Add the orange slices and raise the heat for 1-2 minutes. Remove from the heat.
- Arrange the fruit in a dish and pour any remaining juices from the pan over them. Chill and serve with whipped cream.
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Standing Stones of Callanish, Isle of Lewis

2021

an Lùnasdal

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
1 Là Lùnast / Lughnasadh Achd an Toirmisg (Act of Proscription), 1747	2	3	4	5	6 b. Alexander Flemming 1881, discover of penicillin	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 b. John Logie Baird, 1888- inventor of television	14 Ghoideadh Lia Fàil le Edward I, 1296 (Stone of Destiny stolen by Edward I, 1296)
15 b. Sir Walter Scott, 1771	16	17	18	19 Am Prionnsa Teàrlach a' togail bratach aige, Gleann Fhionnainn (Prince Charles raises his standard, Glenfinnan), 1745	20	21
22	23 Reachdan ì (Statutes of Iona), 1609	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	NOTES:				

The Statutes of Iona were of the first government efforts to curtail and erode, if not destroy, Gaelic culture, which included the outlawing of Celtic religious practices, the keeping by the clan chiefs of hereditary bards, the “brew[ing of] aquavitie” (which was known in Gaelic as *uisge-beatha*, water of life, or whisky), and the mandating that the children of the chiefs be educated in English rather than in Gaelic.

Glenfinnan and the ‘45: Prince Charles Edward Stewart landed -- essentially alone -- on the west coast of Scotland in an attempt to raise a rebellion and reclaim the British throne for the Stuart dynasty. He prevailed upon some Highland chiefs to take up his cause -- though many had severe doubts. In a dramatic moment, about a month later, the Prince’s standard (flag) was raised and thus was born the ‘45 rebellion and *Bliadhna Theàrlaich* (“Charlie’s Year”) commenced.

The largely Highland army (there were small contingents of Irish and French) achieved some initial successes and marched into England towards London. At the town of Derby, a hundred miles from London, Charles’ councilors -- arguing that the hoped-for rising of English supporters had not happened and the promised support from France had not materialized -- prevailed upon the Prince to turn the army around and retreat back to Scotland. John Lorne Campbell referred to the uprising of the ‘45 as “the ill-starred attempt of Prince Charles Edward Stewart was in its consequences the greatest disaster tha ever befell the Highlands ... [which led directly to] most of the consequent social and economic distress” experienced by the Scottish Gael. The people who supported the claim of the Prince’s family to the British throne did not foresee the ruin their rebellion would bring upon their land, their people, their culture, their way of life. For them, the cause of the Prince was a rightful one, seen in terms of a legitimate claim to rule and to national pride:



Raising the Standard at Glenfinnan

O, hi-ri-ri, tha e tighinn,
O, hi-ri,ri, 'n Rìgh tha uainn,
Gheibheamaid ar n-airm 's ar n-èideadh,
'S breacan-an-fhèilidh an cuaich.

“Oran Don Phrionnsa,” Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair

Cha tearma thigeadh ceart oirnn
'Prasgan nan Garbh-chrìoch'
Ach cruithneachd nan gaisgeach
Chuir ceartas am fear-ghnìomh,
Fìor-eitean nan curaidh
An am curaidse dhearbhadh,
Luchd-bhualaidh nam buillean
Ann an cumasg nan dearg-chneadh

“Mar Chuimhneachan air na Daoine A Dh'èirich le
Phrionnsa Teàrlach,” Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair

O, hi ri ri, he is coming,
O, hi ri ri, our exiled King,
Let us take our arms and clothing,
And the flowing tartan plaid.

“Song to the Prince,” Alexander MacDonald

Unjustly they term us
'The Mob from the Wastelands.'
We were the flower of the heroes
Who to manly deeds trusted,
The true kernel of valor
When courage was proven,
Strikers of stout blows,
In the tumult of bloody wounding.

“In Memory of the Men who Rose with Prince
Charles,” Alexander MacDonald

The Act of Proscription, 1746 -- Following the '45 rebellion, the British Parliament enacted this law the purpose of which was to destroy Gaelic culture and the clan system. The law banned the wearing of Highland dress (the kilt) except for men in British/Scottish military regiments, the playing of the bagpipe (on the basis that the bagpipe was considered a weapon of war), and the possession of weapons by Highlanders. Penalties included incarceration and exile from Britain.

Edinburgh Festival: The annual arts and entertainment festival is something that must be experienced -- once in a lifetime, if not yearly. It's the biggest arts festival in the world with an international cast. Almost any form of art that is to your taste is on display -- music (of all sorts), theater, and dance -- both in the main festival and what is called the "Fringe," which sprung out of the Festival proper and is sometimes more exciting, with stand-up comedy, challenging theatrical productions, spoken word poetry, cabaret acts, exhibitions, music and musicals. Coinciding with these is the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo held in Edinburgh Castle. It is impossible to define what exactly the Tattoo is because each year is different, but suffice it to say that each one features massed bagpipe bands and much more!

Lughnasadh / Lughnasa, dedicated to the Celtic god Lugh, who also figures in the ancient Gaelic saga of the winning of Ireland by the ancestors of the Gaels from the evil giants, the Fomorians. Also known as Lugh Làmhfhada (Lugh of the Long Arm) in the Book of Invasions. Adopted by the Christian church as Michaelmas, this was a day on which a feast was held to ensure the coming prosperity of the harvest and that the god of prosperity would overcome the god of blight. The day was often marked by the cutting of the last sheaf of grain and forming the stock into a figure known as a' Mhaighdean (the 'Maiden').



Performer on Royal Mile, Edinburgh, during Fringe Festival

Ruaraidh Mac Thòmais - Derek Thomson (b August 5, 1921), according to one commentator did "more for Gaelic than any many living" as publisher, poet, writer, scholar. Thomson (using his English name), like other Gaelic poets of the 20th century, wrote of Gaelic and Scottish matters, as when he penned the poem "An Crann" in support of Scottish independence,

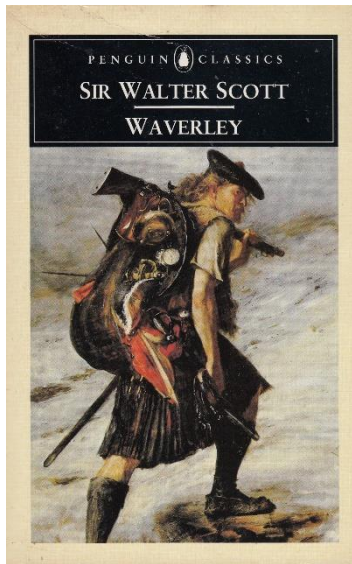
Nuair a thèid an Crann an àird
Bidh Seoc an Aonaidh air a mhàs

When the Saltire (the Scottish flag) goes up
The Union Jack (the British flag) will get a bump on the butt

But he also extended Gaelic attention from the Highlands to the wider world (which is not to say that Gaels had not been participating in the wider world -- since the very earliest days, Scots have been sailing, fighting, exploring, across the globe). In "Ròidean Rwanda" he wrote of the genocide that took the lives of as many as a million people in that African nation:

Ròidean fada Rwanda
A' dol 'nan smùid
Fo chasan an eagail 's an dòchais

The long roads of Rwanda
Turning to dust
Under the feet of fear and hope ...



Sir Walter Scott, was a novelist, poet, playwright and historian who was vastly popular in the late 1800s. Along with Robert Burns, Scott probably did as much as any person to popularize Scottish culture, history, and experience. A world-famous and fabulously popular writer in his day, Scott wrote drew from Scottish history and legend stories about the whole of Scotland, and though he was not a Gael, he wrote particularly sympathetically about the Highlands, as in such novels as *Rob Roy* about the outlaw hero, and *Waverly*, which centers itself against the backdrop of the quest of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

To Commemorate the month of August: *Na Geamachan Gàidhealach* - The Highland Games: although different localities hold Scottish Games or Highland Games at different times over the course of the summer -- anytime between May and October -- we're mentioning it here. The Games we now enjoy are a continuation of a Highland tradition of gathering (in fact, sometimes even today, they're referred to as "gatherings") over pleasant summer months and enjoying elements of culture that we share: music, dancing, sports, food, and some drink. So *at any time* that your locality holds a Highland Games, **go**. Think of it as "raising the standard" at Glenfinnan.



Finnan Haddie

There are references to smoked fish in Scotland going back to the 16th century. James Boswell wrote about them in the 18th century, mentioning that Scottish smoked fish could be obtained in London. But these were heavily smoked (as a preservative) and a bit tough. In the late 19th century, as fast transportation by train became available, the Aberdeen fishing village of Findon (pronounced locally as "Finnan") began producing lightly smoked and delicately flavored haddock (haddies) which were of a much finer texture. They were an immediate success and variations on these tasty fish have become very popular. They can be simply grilled with butter but here is a recipe with milk and onions which turns them into a delicately flavored fish stew. The quantities are sufficient for four people.

Ingredients:

- One pound (500g) smoked haddock
- One large onion, thinly sliced
- 14oz (400ml or one and two thirds of a cup) milk
- ½ teaspoon cracked pepper
- 1½ teaspoons mustard powder
- 1oz (30g or ¼ stick) butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons plain flour
- 1 finely chopped spring onion
- Some finely chopped parsley
-

Directions:

- Place the thinly sliced onion in the base of a large pan. Cut the smoked haddock into pieces about ½" to an inch (2cm) wide and spread over the onion.
- Mix the milk, pepper and mustard and pour over the fish. Bring to the boil slowly, reduce the heat to low and simmer covered for five minutes. Then uncover and simmer for another five minutes.
- Remove the fish from the pan with a slotted spoon to allow the juices to run off and place in a warm serving dish. Continue to simmer the mixture in the pan for another five minutes, stirring frequently.
- Mix the warm butter and flour and add to the pan along with the finely chopped spring onion. Stir over a low heat until the mixture comes to a slow boil and thickens slightly. Pour over the fish and serve with some finely chopped parsley.



View from Loch Ness

2021

an t-Sultain

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
29	30	31	1	2 b. Kirkpatrick MacMillan, 1812, inventor bicycle	3	4
5	6 Là na h-Obrach (Na Stàitean Aonaichte)	7 First proceedings in new Scottish Parliament building, 2004	8 b. Iain Noble, 1935, founder Gaelic college, Sabhal Mor Ostaig	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Reifreann Neo- eisimeileachd na h-Alba (Referendum on Independence) 2014
19	20	21	22	23 b. John Macadam, 1756, inventor asphalt roads	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	NOTES:				

Sir Iain Noble was instrumental in founding the premier Gaelic college, *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*, on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Dedicated to the development of Gaelic language and culture, the college offers several degrees in Gaelic arts, media, literature, and education, as well as in environmental science and regional development. (The name derives from the original structure on the property -- the “great barn” -- that still serves as a campus public area and administrative offices.

The college is part of a wider Gaelic revival. In Scotland and Nova Scotia, there is a revival of the teaching Gaelic in elementary and high schools, as well. Which reminds us of a legend about the heroes of the *Feinne* -- protectors of the Gaelic homeland against invaders -- who fell into a long sleep in hidden-away caves and who would rise up when the homeland was most threatened. Well, now the children of the Gael are awakening, rising up out of the mists of ancient time and emerging from their “caves” to rescue Gaeldom. Only, now, these heroes are the young people who are learning the language, and the “caves” are the schools from which they emerge, conversant in their heritage language.



Sabhal Mòr Ostaig - (the great barn at Ostaig) -- on the Isle of Skye

The Scottish Parliament Building was constructed following the “devolution” of powers of home-rule to Scotland. It was designed to present a national identity, reflecting the people, the land, the history, and the culture of Scotland. It was built using stone from various parts of Scotland and is fronted by an external façade that remembers the schiltrons at the Battle of Bannockburn in the form of long staffs of the spearmen who fended off the English attackers.



On the building exterior are mounted plaques with Scottish proverbs such as “*Abair ach beagan is abair gu math e*” -- Say but little and say it well. Inside the parliamentary mace is displayed on which is inscribed the principles that guide Scottish law: “Wisdom”, “Compassion”, “Justice”, and “Integrity.”



Reifreann Neo-eisimeileachd na h-Alba (Referendum on Independence): In 2014, the Scottish people voted on the question whether Scotland should break away from the United Kingdom to form an independent state. (Scotland was already a “nation” within the state of the United Kingdom.) The referendum resulted in 55% of the voters voting in favor of staying in the United Kingdom. One of the reasons given by many voters was the promise that the U.K. would remain in the European Union, a promise that was betrayed by the Brexit vote to leave. Following that, the Scottish National Party, a political party dedicated to the proposition of eventual Scottish independence, has held a majority of seats in the Scottish parliament, and currently, many people in Scotland are debating whether a second independence referendum should be held in the near future.

The Battle of the Plains of Abraham: Scottish, and especially Highland, soldiers formed the ‘tip of the spear’ for a great many of the fighting forces of the English Empire. An example of this and the complicated relationship between Highland soldiers and their (very often) English officers is to be had in this battle during what Americans call the French and Indian War, and what the British call the Seven-Years War, that was waged between the colonial aspirants to American territory, the French and the English. The battle hinged on a surprise attack on the city of Quebec City, held by the French, which was defended on one side by high cliffs over the St. Lawrence River. The French were awaiting a British attack on the side of the city that faced a level plain -- confident that the cliff side of the city was secure.

However, in a spectacular ascent, the largely Highland troops -- used to scaling hills and mountains in their homeland -- scaled the cliffs during the evening and early morning hours, and when dawn came, the dismayed French saw the British troops arrayed against them on the Plains of Abraham at their rear.

And here’s the story: Fifteen years before, at the Battle of Culloden Moor, when the English soldiers were sweeping the field of battle and murdering the wounded Highlanders who had been left behind. One small band of English soldiers came upon the wounded chief of Clan Frazier. The officer in charge ordered one of his lieutenants to shoot the “traitor.” His name was James Wolfe, and his refusal to murder the wounded man was never forgotten by the Highlanders.

It was that same James Wolfe, now a general, who inspired the Highlanders on this day to do the impossible, and as the story goes, when he lay dying on the Plains of Abraham, it was into the arms of the son of the Chief of the Fraziers that he fell.

To Commemorate the month of September: This month seems to be *eadar dà lionn* -- between two waters, between sinking and swimming, betwixt and between, neither here nor there. Sounds like a perfect time for a *cèilidh* to me! So, why don’t we enjoy one, and be sure to play some Gaelic music (which includes the Scottish fiddle, the bagpipes, Gaelic singing), some Scottish dancing, and lively *craic*! (lively, fun conversation ... what did you think we meant?)



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Mince 'n Tatties

Even today, when I'm cold or beaten, I turn to mince for comfort. It reminds me of my grandmother's love. Simple to make, not at all complex in its taste complexion, nothing says home and comfort to me like mince 'n tatties. Although ground beef (hamburger meat) is generally referred to in Britain as "mince," for me, the mention of the word means specifically this method of preparing it -- a lightly spiced-meat sauce over a bed of fluffy potatoes.

Preparation time: 50 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 lb beef mince (ground hamburger meat)
- 1 cup of peas (frozen is fine)
- 2 carrots (if desired)
- 1 tablespoon toasted pinhead oats
- water (to cover)
- 1 -2 beef bouillon cube (or equivalent powdered beef bouillon)
- salt and pepper
- gravy mix (*Bisto*, if you can find it, gives the dish its special tang)
- 1 - 2 lbs boiled potato (depending on taste)

Directions

Separately, boil and mash the potatoes.

Heat the oil in a pan and sauté the onion until it is brown.

Add in the mince (hamburger meat) and cook until well browned.

Drain off the liquid.

Slice the carrots and boil

Add the peas and oatmeal, mix well and pour in enough water to just cover.

Crumble in the stock cubes, season and stir.

Cover the pan and simmer for about 20 minutes.

Once the mince is cooked, thicken the mix with about 3 teaspoons of *Bisto* (or gravy mix or cornstarch mixed with a cold water). Simmer for another 20 minutes.

Serve over the mashed potatoes.



Note: Some people prefer the peas separate, some sprinkled over the top, and some mixed in. Personally, I like the mince served over the potatoes and the peas topping the whole thing.



On the Hills of Scotland,
Charles Jones

2021

an Dàmhair

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Là na Taingeachd (Canada) - Thanksgiving, Canada	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 b. 1911, Somhairle MacGill- Eain, bàrd - Sorley MacLean, poet	27	28	29	30
31 Oidhche Shamhna - Halloween	1	NOTES:				

James Macpherson's publication in 1760 of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language* was an international sensation and a scandal. The poems harken back to a time when the Gaelic world stretched across Ireland and Scotland, which countries share a common language, culture, and literary tradition. Macpherson claimed that the poems were translations of Gaelic poems of the 3rd century Gaelic bard Ossian and that he had collected the original Gaelic poems from oral sources in the Scottish Highlands. The story of the epic poem revolves around the defense of Gaelic homeland from invading Scandinavians (or Vikings).

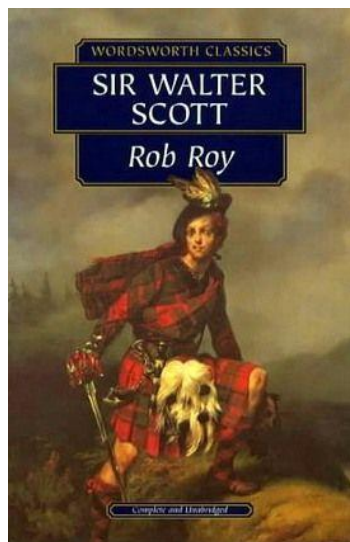
Fragments was wildly popular amongst readers across Europe and greatly influential amongst intellectuals and artists. However, some critics attacked the work as a forgery and Macpherson as a charlatan. Recent scholarship supports the substance of Macpherson's claim, that the stories derive from oral tradition, for while no original written source has been located, the stories

in *Fragments* have been found in various forms across the Highlands, lending credence to the claim that *Fragments* was a "loose translation" of oral Gaelic literature. For example, Peter Hately Waddell argued in *Ossian and the Clyde* (1875) that poems contained geographical references that could not have been known to Macpherson and therefore must have been drawn from literary sources as he claimed rather than being the result of his own composition. Scottish literary scholar Derick Thomson investigated possible sources for Macpherson's work and concluded that Macpherson had collected genuine Scottish Gaelic ballads but had adapted them to his own original composition, weaving together stories, themes, and characters into a cohesive narrative. However, even as *Fragments* does seem to have derived from authentic sources, it was suffused with themes and points of view that were not in the originals but rather addressed and served the needs and sensibilities of Macpherson's time.

Macpherson and the popularity of his *Fragments* might have been at least partly responsible for the revival of interest in European in "folk art," which saw a surge of research in and collection of ancient folktales, poetry, songs -- not just in Scotland but all across Europe. For example, it was about 50 years later that the brothers Grimm amassed their famous assortment of German fairy tales. In the 1860s, Francis James Childs published *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 305 Scottish, English, and American folk ballads. In the late 1800s, J.F. Campbell amassed his collection of Popular Tales of the West Highlands, a four-volume set of Gaelic (with English translations) folk tales from the Highlands. And of

course, Sir Walter Scott and his novelistic adventures, many set in the Highlands or revolving around Highland characters, would not have been possible without Macpherson's *Fragments*.

Somhairle MacGill-Eain -- Sorley MacLean (b. October 26, 1911): If the 19th century saw Gaelic poets turning back to the Gaelic world that had been lost, as in Màiri Mhòr MacPhearson's "*Nuair a Bha mi Òg*" ("When I was Young" -- speaking of the lost communities of the Highlands), in the 20th century they turned to the outer world. There are two many significant writers, poets, singers, thinkers, to give full credit here, but one that should be noted in Somhairle MacGill-Eain, poet, teacher, writer, critic. He was influenced first and foremost by Gaelic culture and its poetry; he wrote that he was blessed with the gift of having "the inability to forget the words to any Gaelic song I liked, even if I heard it only once." Growing up in the generations following



the reaction to the depredations of the Clearances, he was shaped by them and the forced emigration of thousands of his countrymen, but also by the land reforms that granted protection to the Highlanders who remained.

His production of poetry was prodigious, and at once personal, “Gaelic,” and universal. For instance, in his book of poetry, *Dàin do Eimhir* (Poems to Eimhir, his wife), he writes of “Gaoir na h-Eòrpa” (The Cry of Europe), he struggled with the attractions of his personal life -- his love for his wife, and his sense of responsibility for the plight of millions engulfed in the European war (World War II) -- you might say it’s the old story, the conflict between love and duty:

A nighean a’ chùil bhuidhe, throm-bhuidhe, òrbhuidh,
Donn do bheòil-sa ‘s gaoir na h-Eòrpa,
A nighean gheal chasurlach aighearach bhòidheach,
Cha bhiodh masladh ar latha-ne searbh ‘nad phòig-sa.

Girl of the yellow, heavy-yellow, gold-yellow hair
The song of your mouth and Europe’s cry of agony,
Fair, heavy-haired, spirited, lovely girl,
The disgrace of our day would not embitter your kiss.

Am Mòd -- is a week-long festival that celebrates Gaelic culture and arts. Although the main event is held in Scotland and is known as *Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail* (The Royal National Mod), there are many *mòds* in Scotland and around the world. The theme of the *mòd* is *ar cànan ‘s ar ceòl* -- our language and our music, and at the event, artists compete in and display expertise in Gaelic singing, poetry reciting, storytelling (all in Gaelic, of course), as well as bagpiping, fiddling, harp-playing, and dancing. There are competitions for the writing of short stories, poetry, and non-fiction, as well. The *Mòd* is a gathering, a coming together, of people from across the world to celebrate what the lexicographer (dictionary writer) Colin Mark refers to as *cànan ar cridh’ s’ ar gaoil* -- language of our hearts and our love. Typically, at the end of each Mòd, the entire assemblage rises to sing “Suas leis a’ Ghàidhlig” (Up with Gaelic!). In part,

Togaibh i, togaibh i cànan ar dùthcha;
Togaibh a suas i gu h-inbhe ro chliùitich;
Togaibh gu daingeann i ‘s bithibh rith’ bàidheil,
Hì horo, togaibh i; Suas leis a’ Ghàidhlig!

Raise her up, the language of our land.
Raise her up to the rank of high honor;
Raise her firmly but kindly,
Lift her; Up with the Gaelic!

‘S i cànan na h-òige, ‘s i cànan na h-aois.
B’ i cànan ar sinnsir, b’ i cànan an gaoil.
Ged a tha i ‘nis aost’ tha i reachdmhor is treun.
Cha do chaill i a cli ‘s cha do strìochd i fo bheum.

Language of youth, language of old age.
Language of our ancestors, language they loved.
Although it is old, it is noble and strong.
It has not lost its vigor, it has not yielded to attack.

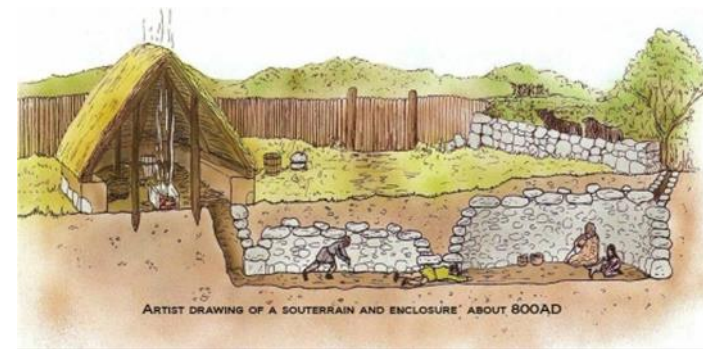
You can find many recordings of this song (and at greater length) on the Internet.

Music and love: A large part of the Mòd is the music, for music is integral to Gaelic culture. We’ve made many references to “poetry” in this text, but keep in mind that in traditional Gaelic culture was an oral culture, not a written culture, which is to say that the poetry was composed to be sung, not read (in fact, many of our greatest poets in previous centuries could not write in Gaelic.) So much a part is music in Gaelic culture is that it is embedded in a lovely proverb that goes “Thig an crìoch an t-Saoghail, mairidh ceòl ‘s gaol” -- Come the end of the world, two things will continue to exist: music and love.

Samhain -- which you might know as Halloween -- and the “other world.” Officially (well, as “official” as things can be in a folk culture), Halloween, or Samhain, marked the first day of winter, and the coming of winter was hailed with more fun and merriment than any other season of the year. People engaged in games and divinations (fortune telling) that were more in fun and jest than with any serious belief attached -- “for entertainment purposes only,” as we say nowadays.

Besides that, as a day that marked the boundary between two seasons -- you might say, the season of growth and the season of death (spring/summer vs. autumn/winter) -- it thought to be a liminal time, a day that was neither this, nor that, a time when the boundaries of the “two worlds” melted, and this world and the “other world,” that of fairies, and sprites, and “things that go bump in the night” came together, and the denizens of the two worlds could pass between them. Thus, there are many tales of people who on Halloween chanced upon a fairy mound, or fairy ring (of dancers). And very often, the human would get caught up in the festivities of the fairy folk and quite literally lose track of time -- not realize that whole months or years, even, had passed even though it had seemed he or she had only been gone for an evening. (A kind of “Rip Van Winkle” experience, only the character was alive and experiencing the whole time.)

The Other World: Gaelic folktales and mythology abounds with references to the Land under Waves, the Land under Mountains, and the Fairy-folk (*na Sithichean*). As a part of the Gaelic mythology that the Scottish Gaels inherited from the Gaelic people of Ireland, the precursors of the Gaels in Ireland -- the Tuatha de na Dana, the People of the Goddess Dana -- when they were defeated by the Gaels (who later became the Irish and the Scots), retreated under the “fairy mounds.” (As myth often takes its impetus from history, in ancient times, some people actually did construct extensions of their homes underground -- these underground extensions of the above-ground structures are known archaeologically as “souterrains,” from the French, *sou-terrain* -- underground. Hence, it is possible that as the Gaelic-speaking people came to dominate, there were remnants of the races who previously inhabited the islands who commonly built underground extensions to their dwellings, which the Gaels eventually came to mythologize as “fairy mounds.”



Fantastical, supernatural events were not confined to Halloween, however. There was -- and still might be -- a belief in the ability of some especially gifted individuals to “see” the future. This ability was known as *an dà shealladh*, in English called “second sight” (but actually meaning something more like “two sighted”). Robert Kirk in 1691 wrote that the ability was one which enabled the possessor to “the nature and actions of the Subterranean ... Invisible People hertofor going under the name of Elves, Faunes, and Fairies.” This ability was not considered desirable nor was it sought after by the Gaels. In some ways, the ability to see the *taibhs* was considered a curse and is still attested to by many people in the Highlands of Scotland.

The Brahan Seer -- Coinneach Odhar (or, “Dun Kenneth,” c. 1625 - 1675) -- was reputed to possess *an dà shealladh*, often interpreted as ‘second sight.’ One of his prophecies involved the Battle of Culloden Moor, still a fifty-to-a-hundred years in the future. Passing by the moor one day, he addressed it: “Thy bleak moor shall, ere many generations have passed away, be stained with the best blood of the Highlands ... heads will be lopped off by the score, and no mercy will be shown or quarter given on either side,” a prophecy, sadly enough, which came to be fulfilled in 1746. Highlanders did not regard the ability as a gift: it could not necessarily be controlled, the visions did not come at the will of the seer, and sometimes they were troubling or brought trouble. It was the Brahan Seer’s “gift” that brought about his demise. One day, Isabella, wife of Kenneth Mackenzie, the 3rd Earl of Seaforth, one day demanded that the seer tell her what her husband was doing on his trip to France. Coinneach first said that the Lord Seaforth was well, but Isabella

insisted on knowing more and threatened to kill Coinneach Odhar if he did not say what he saw. Thus pressed, Coinneach Odhar finally told her he saw her husband, the Lord Mackenzie, in *flagrante delicto* -- that is, having an affair with another woman. In a rage, Isabella accused the Seer of witchcraft and ordered him executed. As MacKenzie was about to be hung, he prophesized the end of the Seaforth family in some detail. In part: "The day will come when the Mackenzies of Fairburn will lose their entire possessions; their castle will become uninhabited and cow will give birth in the uppermost chamber," which prophecy came to pass just as he described within just a few generations, as the family lost its wealth and power, the tower fell to ruin and was used by a local farmer as a barn; even the more outlandish part of the prophecy was fulfilled with a cow wandered into the tower, became stuck on the upper level, and gave birth there.

To Commemorate the month of October: What can we say except ... *Halloween*! The night when the two worlds slide together and fairies and spirits ... "and things that go bump in the night" cross over into our world (or maybe you cross over into the next!).

Alternatively (or in addition), you could also attend a local (or distant) *mòd*. (Or listen to free recordings of it on the internet at Radio nan Gàidheal.)

Cullen skink

Cullen skink is a classic Scottish smoked fish soup with velvety leeks and potato. Although haddock can be had fresh all year long, this dish is perfectly warming for winter.

Preparation time: less than 30 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins to 1 hour

Recipe Serves 4

Ingredients

For the stock

75g/2½oz butter
1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 leeks, roughly chopped
2 onions, peeled, roughly chopped
2 fennel bulbs, roughly chopped
250ml/9fl oz white wine
500g/17½oz smoked haddock
750ml/1 pint 7fl oz water

For the soup

75g/2½oz butter
1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 leeks, finely chopped
2 shallots, peeled, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled, crushed
300g/10½oz potatoes, peeled, chopped
500ml/17½fl oz double cream
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
pinch freshly grated nutmeg



- For the stock, heat the butter and vegetable oil in a large pan and gently fry the leeks, onions and fennel for 3-4 minutes, or until softened.
- Add the white wine to the pan and bring to the boil. Add the smoked haddock, pour in the water and bring back to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, skimming off any scum that rises to the surface, until the haddock is cooked through.
- Strain the haddock, reserving the cooking stock. Chop the haddock into bite-sized pieces.
- For the soup, heat the butter with the vegetable oil and fry the leeks, shallots and garlic for 3-4 minutes, or until softened. Add the potatoes and the chopped smoked haddock to the pan.
- Add the reserved cooking stock and bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Stir in the cream and briefly blend the soup with a stick blender.
- Serve the soup with crusty bread and sprinkle with the chopped fresh parsley and a sprinkling of freshly grated nutmeg.

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Lochan na h-Achlaise on Rannoch Moor

2021

an t-Samhain

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Là nan Seann-ghaisgeach, Na Stàitean Aonaichte (Veteran's Day, U.S.)	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Là na Taingealachd, Na Stàitean Aonaichte (Thanksgiving, U.S.)	26	27
28	29	30 Là Naomh Anndra (St. Andrew's Day)	1	2	3	4
5	6	NOTES:				

St. Andrew - the patron saint of Scotland since a victory of the Scots over the Picts in a battle in 747AD. This day gives us occasion to reflect on just what is Scotland: Where did Scotland come from?

Dàl Riata -- This first kingdom of Gaels in what is now present-day Scotland. There was a time when the Gaels of Scotland and Ireland were united. Many ancient legends and myths (if a distinction is to be made between them) indeed record the traveling between the two areas by legendary figures, such as Deirdre and the sons of Uisne, Diarmaid and Grainne, CuChulain, the great hero who received training in the ways of the warrior from *Scathach*, woman warrior on the Isle of Skye (the ruins of whose castle can still be found on that island).

Even outside of mythology and legend, in the historical period of the first millennium BCE (A.D.), what are now two countries were then part of a single, contiguous Gaelic homeland. Dàl Riata was the name of the territory that spanned what is now Scotland and Ireland; the Scottish portion was centered in what is now Argyll. It was the ancestral home of the Scottish Gaels and indeed of Scotland itself. The first Gaelic ruler of this territory is said to be Fergus Mòr (either “Great Fergus” or “Big Fergus”) in the 5th century A.D./C.E. He and his heirs gradually extended their domination over what was to become Scotland through a series of wars and marriages with the Picts and the Saxons.



Dùn Scàthaich - Scathach's castle -- Isle of Skye

This unity was to last for many centuries through common culture and language, shared interests, partly as reflected in the intermarriage of Gaelic families in both countries -- all despite the interposition of English or British state-borders and the attempts of the English-language culture to eradicate all memory of Gaeldom. This unity was recalled with the publication in 2002 of *An Leabhar Mòr -- The Great Book of Gaelic* -- which presented a collection of Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic poetry (along with English translations), each poem artfully displayed alongside a piece of original art.

The essential unifying quality of the Gaelic people was memorialized by the Gaelic poet Somhairle MacGill-Eain (Sorley MacLean):

... an fhèile
Nach do reub and cuan,
Nach do mhill mìle bliadhna,
buaidh a' Ghàidheil buan.
Somhairle MacGill-Eain



...the hospitality
That the sea did not tear,
That a thousand years did not spoil:
The eternal quality of the Gael.
Sorley MacLean

Stealing (and re-stealing) the Stone of Destiny: The Stone of Destiny, or the Stone of Scone (in Gaelic, *an Lia Fàil*, the Stone of the King, or *Clach na Cinneamhain*, the Stone of Destiny) is the stone on which the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned at Tara there. When the Gaels came to Scotland, Fergus, the first King of the Scots in Scotland brought the stone to *Dàl Riata* in what is now Argyll, where it became the symbolic seat of the throne of the King of Scotland for hundreds of years, until Edward I of England stole it in 1296 during his attempted conquest of Scotland.

On Christmas day, 1950, four Scottish students stole the Stone back from Westminster Abbey and hid it in Scotland. The poet Dòmhnall Mac an t-Saoir celebrated of the recapturing of the Stone:

A' Chlach a bha mo sheanmhair	The Stone that my grandmother
'S mo sheanair oirre seachas,	And my grandfather spoke about
Air tilleadh mar a dh'fhalbh i--	Has returned as it left --
Mo ghalghad a' Chlach!	My darling's the Stone!

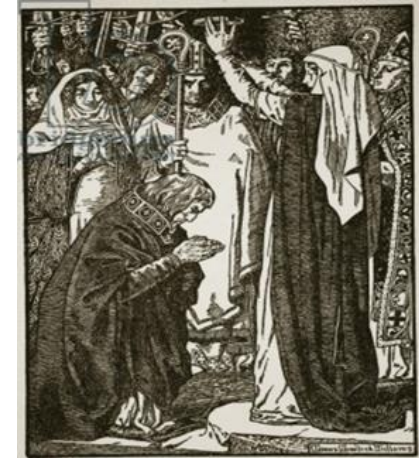
After a year, the stone was returned to London, but on November 15, 1996, the Stone was at last returned home to Scotland, where by agreement it was to remain except for coronations of a new British monarch. However, doubts exist whether either the stone that the English king originally stole or that the Scottish students stole back is the actual Stone of Destiny on which ancient Gaelic kings were crowned. The speculation is that the

canny Scottish churchmen who were entrusted with the safekeeping of the Stone in the first place anticipated the possibility of the English theft and substituted a "cheap replica" of the actual. One piece of evidence for this is that the current stone seems to have been quarried near Scone, Scotland, not Ireland, its legendary place of origin. (Another myth of its origin identifies it as the so-called "Jacob's Pillow," the stone on which the Biblical Jacob rested his head while fleeing his brother Esau, a story told in Genesis. According to this origin story, the Gaels brought the stone to Ireland with them when they invaded early in the first millennium.)

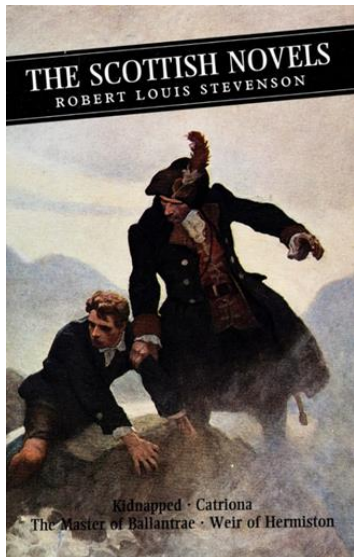
Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist, musician and travel writer. His most famous works are *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Like Sir Walter Scott, although not Gaelic himself, Stevenson wrote sympathetically of the Highlanders and the tragic destruction of their culture and their way of life in the entertaining, adventure genre in which he excelled.

To Commemorate the month of November: We haven't had a cèilidh in a while, so what would be better in a dreary month of November than to host or attend one. You know the drill: This is a gathering that is part party, part self-entertainment, part visit, for the cèilidh is a gathering in somebody's home -- that's the visit part. It's festive and fun -- that's the party part. During the evening, the participants share stories (personal, funny, exciting, or sad), sing songs, recite poetry, play music -- that's the entertainment part, but which is more than passively enjoyed

entertainment produced by a professional artist. It's a sharing of things significant to us, that come from us. Hold or attend a session in which you regale yourself (and guests) with Scottish and Gaelic music. Of course, if you're in a Thanksgiving celebrating country, then since everybody has gathered together anyway, that holiday is a perfect opportunity to *cèilidh*!



Isabella, Countess of Fife, crowning Robert the Bruce. Note that in this depiction, **she** is standing on the Stone of Destiny



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To prepare for the festive season, we thought we'd offer you a special treat that would grace any holiday table:

Shortbread:

A classic and famous Scottish treat, this is one of the simplest recipes in the world and one of the easiest to ruin. False economy will create a disaster, while, on the other hand, getting too fancy and dressing it up will ruin it.

This is not a recipe in which you can substitute anything for butter. The distinctive (yummy) taste of shortbread depends on butter -- and preferably, sweet and fresh.

Preparation time: less than 30 mins

Cooking time: 45-60 mins

Makes 32 shortbread biscuits

Ingredients

- 1 lb sweet butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar, plus extra to finish
- 3 cups plain flour
- 1 cup rice flour (or 4 cups total plain flour)

Directions

1. Cream the butter and add sugar gradually. Blend well.
2. Gradually work in the flour.
3. Turn the dough out on a lightly floured board to pat out (Use part confectioners/powdered sugar and part flour to flour your board)
4. Pat the dough into two circles, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Pinch the edges and prick all over with a fork.
5. Place on baking sheet.
6. Chill in refrigerator for half an hour.
7. Set oven at 375°F/190°C. Bake for five minutes.
8. Lower temperature to 300°F and bake for 45-60 minutes.
9. When done, shortbread should be golden but not browned.
10. Cut into wedges while still warm.
11. Makes about 32 shortbread wedges.





Kilchurn Castle

2021

an Dubhlachd

Là na Sàbaid	Diluain	Dimàirt	Diciardain	Diardaoin	Diahoine	Disairthaine
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Grian-stad a' gheamhraidh (winter solstice)	22	23	24	25 Nollaig (Christmas)
26	27	28	29 b. 1766, Charles Macintosh, inventor raincoat	30	31 Oidhche na Bliadhna Ùire / Oidhche Callain / Oidhche nam Bonnag (New Year's Eve)	1
2	3	NOTES:				

Christmas Eve: *Oidhche nam Bannag* (the Night of the Bannocks, or cakes) -- is described in the Carmina Gaedlica as the celebration on Christmas eve, when "gifts were given and received in remembrance of Christ, the great Gift to mankind." And from one of Campbell's sources, in Gaelic: "*Oidhche nam Bannag bha na mnathan-taighe a' toir na clach bhonnaig dh'an chlainn nighean 'nan uchd mar shamhla air Brighid, o'n is i a' chiad bhoireannach a ghabh Criosda Mac Dhe 'na h-uchd.*" (On the Night of the Bannocks, the women of village would place bannocks into the laps of the girl children as a symbol of Brigit, as she was the first woman who took Christ, the Son of God, into her lap.) A Christmas carol:

OCHD an oidhche fhada,
 NÌ e cur is nì e cathadh,
 NÌ e sneachda geal gu latha,
 Nì e gealach glieal gu madainn,
 Nochd oidhche na Nollaige Moire,
 Nochd rugadh Mac Moire Òighe,
 Nochd rugadh ìos Mac Rìgh na glòire,

This night is the long night,
 It will snow and it will drift,
 White snow there will be till day,
 White moon there will be till morn,
 This night is the eve of the Great Nativity,
 This night is born Mary Virgin's Son,
 This night is born Jesus, Son of the King of glory.

Christmas -- *Nollaig*: Prior to the Protestant Reformation in the 1600s, Christmas was celebrated as in much of Catholic Europe with "[passing] over the Christmase dayes with games and feasting," but during the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, these traditions were frowned on as a "popish" (that is, Catholic) festival. In 1640, Parliament forbade the "Yule vacation and all observation thereof in time coming." This dour, joy-crushing attitude lasted for 400 years. Indeed, until the 1960s, Christmas Day was a normal working day for most people in Scotland. So if there is a specifically "Scottish" aspect to Christmas it is that it was not celebrated! And even today, Christmas is the lesser holiday between it and New Year's (in terms of festivities, parties, etc.), although the American custom of recognizing has caught on. So, if you want to experience a holiday-season "blow-out" in Scotland, time your visit for New Years!

Winter solstice, the longest night of the year: *Uair Ìsle na Gréine* - time of the lowest sun; *Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan* - night of the seven suppers (that is, the night is so long, you don't have just one supper, but seven of them!). The midwinter celebration, including that of Christmas, derived from the observation of ancient (probably stone-aged) peoples of the declining of the sun and the hours of daylight. To the primitive mind, this "disappearing" of the sun (and the life it made possible) was an alarming prospect. Through the process of sympathetic magic -- by which like creates like -- fires were lighted at the darkest time of the year to summon the light and heat of the sun (it's the same process by which voodoo dolls work -- I stab my doll replica of my enemy here, and it hurts my real enemy over there).

Like many ancient people, particularly those inhabiting the northern latitudes where winter days were short and the nights long, the pagan Celts had celebrations around the time of the winter solstice, in part to brighten the darkest days, in part to propitiate the gods to allow the sun to return. In Norse mythology, Odin the gift-bringer, swept across the night sky in a chariot drawn by horses. The Christian Church took over the festival but some of the traditions harked back to the pagan roots. The Yule log was burned in the fireplace, there was kissing under the mistletoe (related to a Druidic fertility rite) and the house was decorated with evergreen holly to spark the return of general plant life.



Santa Land, Princess St. Gardens, Edinburgh

New Year's Eve -- *Oidhche Callain* - known in Scots as Hogmanay -- is one of the liveliest and most festive occasions in the Calendar. Iain Moreach in his short story, "An Aghaidh Choimheach" describes the young men of a modern Highland community going around to various homes singing or otherwise performing in exchange for gifts. Sir James Frazier in his study of world mythology *The Golden Bough* recounts the customs of the ancient Celts to recognize the New Year on the 1st of November - what is now Halloween -- with bonfires and riotous celebrations. Michael Newton in his "A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World," confirms the transference of customs from the Celtic New Year to the Christian. The celebrations were meant to "ward off evil and defend the neighborhood from dearth." The men would go to each house and call on the *bean an taighe* (the woman of the house):

"Èirich thus', bhean chòir ..
 Liobhair thus' a' Challuinn uait
 Mar bu dual dhuit a thoirt dhuinn ..."

(Arise, o good wife ... offer up the Kalends goods / As is your custom to give us.)

"The door was then opened with great excitement and generosity."

Along with this is the custom of "first footing." The first person to enter a home on New Year's Day (which could include just after midnight) is considered to bring luck and good fortune. The first-foot should bring gifts, very often comprising a coin, bread, salt, coal, evergreen, and a drink, which represent financial prosperity, food, flavor, warmth, long-life, and good cheer.



Princess St. and Edinburg Castle at Hogmanay



Happy Hogmanay!
 By Sarah Anne Lawless

To this day, Hogmanay is arguably a more "important" festival in Scotland than Christmas, at least more outwardly celebrated, as Christmas has long been regarded as a more solemn religious holy day. Historians believe that we inherited the celebration from the Vikings who, coming from even further north than ourselves, paid even more attention to the passing of the shortest day. While clearly celebrated around the world, the Scots have a long rich heritage associated with this event, when the whole country celebrates in the build up to "the bells" chiming midnight - and Burns' song "Auld Lang Syne" is murdered once again! There are traditions such as cleaning the house (known as "redding") on 31st December (including taking out the ashes from the fire in the days when coal fires were common). And Scotland is the only part of the UK that has a statutory holiday on 2nd January as well as 1st January - so we can recover from the excesses of New Year's Eve!

Famous the world over is Robert Burns' song "Auld Lang Syne." We cannot let mention of this song go without, first, a reminder of the meaning of the title: it's a call for us to remember "old times' sake" (or, long time since). And this is indeed an appropriate time, amidst all our jollity and festivities, to remember those "old acquaintances" who have shaped our lives in the past:

Original Scots

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne*?

For auld lang syne, my jo,
for auld lang syne,
we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Contemporary English

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and days long since gone?

For days long since gone, my dear,
for days long since gone,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for days long since gone.

The poet reminds us of the good times we have had in the past, when we were young and carefree:

We twa hae run about the braes,
and pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit,
sin' auld lang syne.

We two have run about the hills,
and picked the flowers fine;
But we've wandered many a weary mile,
since days long gone.

But for old time's sake, we should embrace and renew our past bonds of friendship:

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
and gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak' a right gude-willie waught,
for auld lang syne.

And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand of yours!
And we'll take a good-will drink,
for days long since gone.

And what better way to close this *leabhar laithichean* (this book of days) than with the injunction from Scotland's national poet to never forget those "acquaintances" which have shaped us? Which includes both those persons who have influenced us in our individual lives and the broader history of our people which has made us what we are today.

So, lift your glasses and wish each other, those present and those long gone, *slàinte mhath!* (pronounced something like, *slan-cha-va*) -- Good health!

To Commemorate the month of December: Need we remind you of Christmas and New Year's Eve?

Need we say more?

Atholl Brose

A Highland alternative to egg nog: This famous beverage is named for the Duke of Atholl and is reputed to be very healthful. It is suitable for any time of year, but especially for a frosty New Year's eve and a cheery Oidhche Callain toast!



Ingredients:

2 cups oatmeal*

2 cups cold water

½ - 1 cup heather honey (to taste)

2 cups heavy cream

Scotch whisky** - 2-4 cups (or as many as you like!)

*Any type of oats are fine: quick, old-fashioned, or steel-cut. However, if using steel cut, it really is best to soak them overnight. (If you want to be fancy, toast them beforehand.)

**Everyone has their own taste in whisky; however, this is not a beverage helped by a peaty, smoky single-malt. A popular blend or a milder single-malt would be about right.

Directions:

Place the oats into a blender with the water and blend for five minutes or so. Let the mixture sit for a few minutes, then pulse again, mixing to the consistency of paste. Set aside for an hour. Strain the pulp through a fine sieve, or a cheesecloth-lined colander, pressing out as much liquid from the oatmeal until it is dry. You should be left with at least **2 cups of brose or oat milk** that is opaque and about as thick as 1 or 2% milk. Discard the oatmeal.

- Pour the honey into container and microwave for a minute or until the honey is runny but not hot.
- Pour the honey into a blender and add the 2 cups of brose. (Optional: a pinch of salt can also be added at this time if desired.) Blend until the honey is fully dissolved.
- Add 2 cups of heavy cream and pulse a couple times to incorporate. (Do not blend long, lest you turn your drink into butter.)
- Blend with the whisky. Adding whisky to the whole lot can make it curdle if it sits for very long or is refrigerated. Therefore, it is often best to add the spirits just prior to serving. If adding whisky to the whole batch, stir the whisky in. Alternately, let everyone add whisky to taste to their own portion.

Raise your glasses to each other with the wishes expressed in the Gaelic toast, *Slàinte Mhath!* (Good Health!).

If you have any questions, suggestions, or if you are interested in learning Gaelic, please contact me at profmichaelmcintyre@gmail.com

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