

# HSHC SPORRAN

[www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com](http://www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com)



February 2024 — Alba Gu Brath — Scotland Forever

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

**February 20 -**

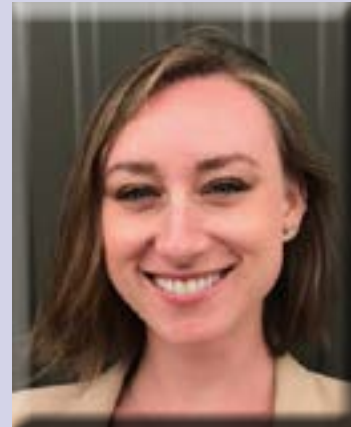
**OUR FEBRUARY GATHERING**

**6:30 to 8:30-ish pm**

**State Theater, Havre de Grace, MD**

**Theme: Annual Whisky Tasting**

**Katie Noe, Executive Director, Havre de Grace Arts Collective, Inc. has volunteered to put on the event for us as she has expertise in the art of spirits.**



## From the By-Law Review Committee:

We have good news! The By-Law Review Committee, which started under Laird Crystal and has continued under Laird Keith, has been hard at work reviewing the By-Laws of the Society for the last several months. The committee met three times on October 23, 2023, November 27, 2023, and February 5, 2024, and carefully and thoughtfully reviewed the entire document. We have now completed our work and produced a final draft of the revised By-Laws. All active members of the Society will receive a copy of this final draft by email for review. The procedure (per the Current By-Laws) to make changes to the existing document are as follows: *“The By-Laws may be altered or amended at any meeting of the Society by a vote of two-thirds of the Voting Members present, provided a copy or the substance of such proposed alteration or amendment shall be provided to each Voting Member at least ten days in advance of the meeting at which it is to be acted upon.”* The By-Law Review Committee unanimously recommends approval of the revised document at the next general membership meeting of the Society on Tuesday, February 20. You will have received your emailed final draft on or about February 6 with plenty of time to review the document prior to the February 20 meeting.

### By-Law Review Committee Members:

Keith Reagan, Chairperson

SJ Anderson

Andrea Bowden

John Polk

Glen Schmiesing

Susan Wheeler

# Laird's Letter



My Highland Society Fellows,

As I write my very first Laird's Letter, I want to say I am grateful for the honor of serving as your Laird. Thank you for the vote of confidence. Of course, you are also well served by the other hard-working members of your 2024 Board of Directors, without whom keeping the Society flourishing and well organized would not be possible. I cannot possibly fill the amazing shoes of my predecessor so as I mentioned at the last meeting, when I agreed to serve as Laird, it was with a promise from Crystal that she would continue to be in charge of programs for the Society (for which I am very grateful!!). So, after I open the meetings, I will be turning them over to Crystal for the evening's activities. I have appointed/re-appointed the following positions with the advice and consent of the 2024 Board of Directors:

Webmasters – Chamonie Miller and Erin Sullivan

Facebook Administrators – Crystal Hudson and Jeanie Nesbit

Co-Editors of the Sporrán – SJ Anderson & Dr. Andrea Bowden

Chaplain – Rev. Anne McCorkle Garrett

Wise Woman – Nancy Plummer

Mistress of the Revels (Event Planner) – Dr. Andrea Bowden

Piper – Tom Ritter

My many thanks to all of you diligently serving the Society.

We are seeking a volunteer to serve as Quartermaster for the Society with the responsibility of creating and maintaining a catalog of all the material belongings of the Society which are currently in several different

locations. A complete inventory has not been conducted in a long time. If interested, please reach out to me at [keith@reaganhouse.net](mailto:keith@reaganhouse.net)

We have had our first meeting of your new 2024 Board of Directors and plan on our meeting fairly regularly. We encourage your ideas, input, and comments. Many of you spend much of your precious time and energy in service for the Society and often at personal expense. As we have created an operating budget for the year, we ask that if you have any projects or ideas for which you will want reimbursement that you present the idea and projected cost to the Board prior to embarking on it. We have also revised the membership application form so when you have found that new prospective member let us know so we can reach out, greet them, and provide the new form.

What a fabulous dinner celebration of the birth of Rabbie Burns we had at our January general meeting! Thanks to Crystal and all who helped organize it. You must visit the Society's Facebook page and see the new cover photo taken with our Society banner of all present. Here is a link to take you directly to the Facebook page... <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068977556501>

I also will share that the official website of the Highland Society of Harford County has been resurrected. You will find it at... [highlandsocietyofharfordcounty.com](http://highlandsocietyofharfordcounty.com) It is very much a work in progress but is now in the hands of our most capable webmasters.

The exciting news for our next meeting on February 20 is that Katie from the State Theater will be presenting our whisky tasting event this year so be sure this one is on your calendar! I'll see you all then.

Alba gu bràth,  
Laird Keith Reagan

# INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

A highlight of the Burns Night Gathering was the installation of the 2024 Officers of the Highland Society of Harford County. The Installation was officiated by Jim Wasson, most senior past laird, who led the officers in the pledge of the Highland Society of Harford County. The newly installed Officers for HSHC for 2024 are:



Laird Keith Reagan, Clan Keith  
Aide-de-Laird Crystal Hudson-Boyd, Clan MacNeil of Barra  
2nd Aide-de-Laird Erin Sullivan, Clan  
Secretary Jeanie Nesbit, Clan Nesbit  
Treasurer John Polk, Clan Polk

## Treasurer's Report Dr. John Polk

Period: 1 – 31 January 2024

<b>OLD BALANCE</b>	\$3520.19
<b>Expenses:</b>	
Bank Fee	2.00
Donation, Rising Sun High School musicians*	150.00
Engraving, Award	47.70
Certificates	32.00
Toasting whisky	153.76
Haggis	144.00
Catering	450.24
Venue fee, State Theatre	100.00
Meeting supplies	19.88
<b>Income:</b>	
Meals, Jan meeting	655.00
Dues collected	735.00
<b>NEW BALANCE</b>	\$4550.36

# LADY CRYSTAL HUDSON-BOYD and PAST LAIRDS RECOGNIZED

by Dr. Andrea Bowden



John Polk introducing the Jack Owen Award

Lady Crystal Hudson-Boyd was awarded the coveted John (Jack) R. Owen Memorial Award on January 23, 2024, at the gathering of the Highland Society of Harford County. Newly elected Laird, Keith Reagan, cited her three-year leadership as Laird during the very trying time of the COVID19 Pandemic, her ability to attract new members, promotion of HSHC at festivals and events, and for the creative programs that she arranged for gatherings.



Incoming laird Keith Reagan giving outgoing laird Crystal Hudson-Boyd the Jack Woen Award

The John (Jack) R. Owen Memorial Award was instituted in 1998 upon his death. Mr. Owen was a 25+ year member and leader in the Highland Society of Harford County. He served as Laird in 1976 and on numerous committees over the years. He was active in the Society right up to the time of his demise.

The Award is a circular silver tray, two feet in diameter with the words in Gaelic THA ANIM URRAMACH “May his Name be Distinguished” inscribed along the lower rim and a Piper etched at the top. The names of the recipients appear in order of year awarded. Current HSHC members who have won the award are 2000 Col. James V. Wasson, 2011 Angela Macomber Schiaffino, and 2013 James E. Schiaffino.



Past laird SJ Anderson receiving her laird's medallion

Laird Reagan presented Lady Crystal Hudson-Boyd and SJ Anderson the traditional Medallion on a blue and gold ribbon that is awarded to Lairds at the conclusion of their terms. SJ was the first female Laird of HSHC and Crystal was the second. The Medallion was refabricated based on the historical design.

Past Lairds who are still members of the Highland Society of Harford County were also recognized with a Certificate of Appreciation for Leadership. Those recognized were Crystal Hudson Boyd 2020-2023, SJ Anderson 2017-2020, Chares Murray (Ray) Buchanan 2015-2016, John F. Polk, Jr. 2013-2014, and James V. Wasson 1992.

The HSHC members gave warm applause and sincere congratulations to all awardees.



Past lairds: Jim Wasson, John Polk, Ray Buchanan, SJ Anderson, Crystal Hudson-Boyd, & newly installed Keith Reagan



# Our Lairds, Past & Present

TERM(S)	LAIRD	CLAN(S)
1968-1969	David Franklin McGinnis, Jr.	MacInnes
1970-1971	Alexander Shaw	Shaw
1972	John Austin Malcomb	Malcolm
1973	O. Barton McLean	McLean
1974-1975	Stockton Todd Holden	Gordon
1976	John Roy Owen	MacDuff
1977	Frank Lee Fowler, Jr.	Munro
1978	Percy Howard Marshall, Jr.	Stewart
1979-1980	Gwynne Leroy Holden, Esq.	Stewart
1981	Peter J. Tapley	MacLachlan
1982	Alexander McComas, Jr.	Gunn
1983	James Cuthbertson Fulton	Stuart
1984	Donald Craig Kerr, Jr.	Kerr, McDonald, & Craig
1985-1986	Duncan Henry Mackenzie	Mackenzie, Macleod, & Macrae
1987	W. Paul Henderson	Henderson & Gunn
1988	John Garland Green	Scott
1989	James Thomas Wollon, Jr.	Erwin & Stewart
1990	Henry Clint Peden, Jr.	MacDonald, MacGregor, & McLean
1991	Albert Wade Laisy, Esq.	MacDonald of the Isles
1992	Col. James V. Wasson	Buchanan
1993	John Michael Pratt	Grant
1994	William E. Sivertsen	
1995-1996	Lars Warren Curley	Lindsay
1997-1998	William Clayton Wood	MacAlister
1999-2000	Wayne R. Kirn	MacBeth
2001-2002	David Frederick Wallace	Wallace
2003-2004	Charles "Butch" Wilson, Jr.	Gunn, Lindsay, & Scott
2005-2007	David C. Robinson	Campbell
2008	Steven M. Christy	
2009-2010	Charles "Butch" Wilson, Jr.	Gunn, Lindsay, & Scott
2011-2012	Rev Fr. A. Bradford Ingalls, Jr.	Gunn
2015-2016	Ray Buchanan	Buchanan
2017	Patrick "Mac" McGrattan	
2017-2019	Sarah "SJ" Anderson	Anderson, Campbell, & MacKay
2020-2022	Lady Crystal Hudson-Boyd	MacNiel, Stuart
2024	Keith Reagan	Keith

Historical data provided by James V. Wasson, John F. Polk, Jr., & SJ Anderson

# Our Robert Burns Night Celebration



Haggis Parade



Jim Wasson, John Polk, Keith Reagan, Tom Ritter, Lady Crystal



Jim Wasson addressing the haggis



John Polk



Piper Tom Ritter with John Polk & Keith Reagan



Keith Reagan



Lady Crystal

Ode to the Lassies  
by Brian Nesbit



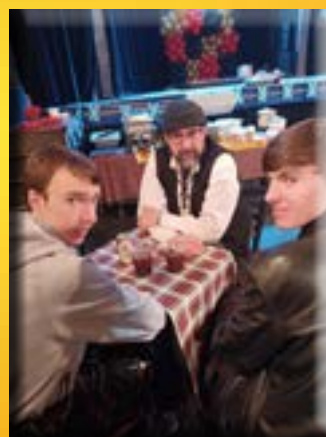
Ode to the Laddies  
by Jeanie Nesbit



# Past-Laird Appreciation



# Around the Room on Burns Night



# MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

by Secretary Jeanie Nesbit

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Rabbie Burns Dinner & Installation of Officers  
Greetings and Welcome to all by outgoing Laird Crystal.



A call for volunteers from the membership garnered the following:

- Whisky pourer - Brian
- Pledge of Allegiance- Nancy
- Toast to the Presidency - Mary Jean
- Toast to the King - Dave Ray

## Announcements:

- Coos were delivered to the hospital by Crystal and Ken who were in full Highland attire. Staff were thrilled to have been visited and given the gifts by the Society. A formal thank you will be following. A new fundraising effort for our festival table "Coos For Kids" will make its debut this season. In addition, the hospital has offered the Society members to join in their annual walk-a-thon; more information forthcoming!
- A Gaelic language organization has reached out to HSHC to consider cross-promoting. Crystal is in contact with them and is getting details on how we could benefit each other.
- Ken and Crystal's niece has sent an update from welding school. She's passed all classes, maintaining a 4.0 GPA and has certified to weld stick! We are all very proud Aunties and Uncles!
- Fairhill Scottish Games are set for May 18th. Crystal has been appointed Convener for Clan Stewart for the games. Please see Crystal if you are in a clan!
- Birthdays coming up: Joanna Reagan on January 24th and Jeanie Nesbit on February 4th! Happiest of birthdays!

A Toast was made to Robert Burns by Lady Crystal!  
Procession and presentation of the Haggis - presented by Jim Wasson, to the following;

- Piper - Tom Ritter
- Protector - Keith Reagan
- Whisky Bearer - John Polk
- Cook - Lady Crystal Hudson-Boyd

The Selkirk Grace, led by John Polk, and dinner is served with guests enjoying a choice of Haggis with neeps and tatties or roast beef, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables and salad. Dessert of a delectable raspberry laden yellow cake was presented by Lady Crystal.

A post dinner Toast to the Lassies and the Reply to the Laddies was given by Brian and Jeanie Nesbit. Followed by a brilliant speech by Lady Crystal, of Robert Burns The Poet and his significance in our culture - the Poet of the People, challenging all to see the beauty around you everyday, through Rabbie Burns' eyes.

## Installation of Officers:

Outgoing Laird Crystal thanked everyone for their support during her time as Laird of the Society, and expressed her great appreciation to the officers and members over the last 3 years for believing in her.

Induction of Officers was led by Jim Wasson. After reciting the pledge of the Highland Society of Harford County, the newly installed Officers of the Society for 2024 are as follows:

- Laird Keith Reagan
- Aide-de-Laird Crystal Hudson-Boyd
- 2nd Aide-de-Laird Erin Sullivan
- Secretary Jeanie Nesbit
- Treasurer John Polk

Laird Keith Reagan then presented the John R (Jack) Owen award to outgoing Laird, Lady Crystal. The award is presented to a member who has performed outstanding service to the Society and has exhibited the character of the true Scot.

Past President Medallions were presented by Laird Keith Reagan to former Lairds of the Society who had not received them previously - SJ Anderson and Crystal Hudson. Certificates were awarded to all past Lairds present at the meeting of the Highland Society by Andrea Bowden for their dedication to our Society.

A group photo of those members in attendance this evening was taken with the official Highland Society of Harford County banner.

To close the evening, members gathered hand-in-hand to sing Auld Lang Syne, until we meet again on February 20th.



# Punxsutawney Phil a Scottish Prognosticator?

By Editor Emeritus Ski Schiaffino (Clan McKay)

News Flash: Phil didn't see his shadow on February 2, 2024, so we will have an early spring!

This Penultimate Weatherman has Scottish Roots

As the hoopla and bally-hoo of HOGmanay fades away and the hangover is but a distant memory, this February we can turn our attention to another Hog. That means only one thing- Groundhog Day- February 2nd! While February to some may be candy hearts or birthdays, any true American Scot will tell you that the only real holiday in February is Groundhog Day. Although some of the lesser informed might think of it in terms of a German origin.

Like us, the day is an amalgam of many different cultures. But it is truly Celtic in origin. Throughout history at this time of year there were all sorts of 'celebrations'. In the Celtic calendar it was called Imbolc and centered around Brigid - the Celtic fertility goddess. It was a feast associated with fertility and weather prediction - for the planting of crops.

The Romans were also involved. (Scratch Western culture anywhere and you'll find a Roman.) They had a day in early February devoted to the divination of weather, except that they used a hedgehog. The Romans called this time of year Februa which meant offerings. In this case purification. The goddess Lupercalia (Roman version of Brigid) was asked to purify the land for spring planting. Then the church got involved and combined all of it into Candlemas Day-also February 2nd. This was a day devoted to the purification of Mary. After all it was a day originally devoted to women. Which leads us back to the Celts and Scotland. Our Groundhog Day is based on a Scottish poem that goes:

If Candlemas Day be bright and fair  
half the winter is to come  
and mair (more)  
If Candlemas Day be dark  
and foul  
half the winter was over at  
Yowl (Yule-Christmas)

Now you know why he goes back into his den if he sees his shadow.



So how did the groundhog become involved? Punxsutawney Phil - like us- is a synthesis. In Western Pennsylvania you can't throw a haggis egg without hitting someone of either German or Scottish descent with a little Native American thrown in for good measure. So come February second they just had to continue the Celtic tradition. They didn't have a hedgehog so they used a groundhog. But he isn't really a hog, pig or ground anything, although he does burrow underground. You might have a semi-accurate argument about Punxsutawney Phil being a pig. Another name for a groundhog is "Whistle Pig". When startled a Groundhog will make a sound similar to a whistle before it scurries underground. But even Phil's Taxonomic Rank isn't quite correct. Phil is actually a woodchuck. The word Woodchuck comes from an American Indian (Delaware Tribe) word Oijik -pronounced Wuchak. That is their name for the groundhog.

Add that to the fact that Groundhog Day is celebrated in a place called Punxsutawney, also an American Indian word- actually Lenni-Lenape or original people referring to a "clan" of the Delaware Tribe. Punxsy was a campsite halfway between the Allegheny and Susquehanna rivers notorious for its sandflies or as the Delaware referred to them "ponksads". (Sandflies are the American version of ubiquitous Scottish midges.) So, the campsite and eventually the town became ponksaduteney - the little town of the sandflies. It is a short jump (linguistically) from Ponksaduteney to Punxsutawney.

So, what we have in Groundhog Day is a Scottish poem celebrated by an American animal with an Indian name held in an American town also with an Indian name for a Scottish bug. What more could you ask of an American holiday? Groundhog Day has everything, lots of different

animals, people, cultures and celebrations! It has a little of everything and it's Scottish to boot! Here's to the whistle pig!

If you ever get the chance you simply must go to Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney. It is truly a wonderful experience - once.

# WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOTLAND

compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden

## Scotland's Oldest Tartan Recreated for Sale from London

CNN -- Textile designers and tartan experts have banded together to recreate the oldest piece of Scottish tartan for modern production, allowing fans of the famed plaid to wear a piece of history.

Using carbon dating, scientists discovered that the "Glen Affric" fabric, uncovered in a peat bog in the Highlands during forestry work and donated to the Scottish Tartans Authority in the 1980s, dated back to around 1500-1600. This, they said, makes it the oldest "true tartan"



specimen in Scotland. Specialists could find no similarity with any known clan tartans, which were developed in the early 19th century.

Though the sample was stained by the peat, experts were able to identify green and brown or black stripes overlaid on one or two colors. Dye analysis on 8 samples from the historic piece then revealed it had also contained red and yellow. Now, the pattern has been recreated for the modern wardrobe by tartan fabric creator and weaver House of Edgar.

## King Charles and the Princess of Wales Released from Hospital at Same Time

BBC January 29, 2024

King Charles III spent three nights in the London Clinic Hospital for a procedure to correct an enlarged prostate gland.



The monarch was very open about the issue and wanted to be an example for men's health. His announcement resulted in a 1000% increase in inquiries to the National Health Service about prostate problems, symptoms and treatment.

Kate Middleton was not as transparent about her issues. Her stay in the same institution was described only as "abdominal surgery" for which she was hospitalized for nearly two weeks. Both received well wishes from all over the globe. Queen Camilla and the Prince of Wales visited their spouses multiple times while they were hospitalized.

Buckingham Palace issued a statement That King Charles III had been diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer while in the hospital and is undergoing treatment. Prince Harry flew to London for a surprise visit with his father.

## A new UK record high temperature has been set in the Scottish Highlands

from BBC January 28, 2024

It recorded a peak of 19.6C (67.3F) at Kinlochewe on Sunday, making it hotter than Rome and the Cote d'Azur. If confirmed it would be the highest January temperature in the UK, breaking a record set in 2003 by more than a full degree celsius. It would also be the highest winter temperature ever recorded in Scotland. The temperature in Kinlochewe was significantly higher than the 18.3C (65F) recorded both at Inchmarlo and Aboyne in Aberdeenshire on 26 January 2003. The previous record high for the winter months for Scotland, was 18.7C (65.6F) which was recorded in Achfary in Sutherland on 28 December 2018.

The village of Kinlochewe in Wester Ross lies at the head of Loch Maree. The area is known for its spectacular mountain views, especially the Torridon Hills. While enjoying mild temperatures the village was also subject to a wind warn with gusts in excess of 40mph forecast. In the Western Isles a gust of 71mph was recorded.

## UK Leads in Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables

from The Guardian

One in three adults in the UK and Northern Ireland consume five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day, a higher proportion than in any other nation in the developed world, a report suggests. Regular consumption of fruit and veg is associated with improved health outcomes, particularly in lowering the risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer. The World Health Organization recommends eating at least 400g – or five or more portions – each day. Other leaders are Israel and Scandinavian countries.

## Eight Things Named After Robert Burns from MENTAL FLOSS January 2024

Robert Burns—widely regarded as Scotland’s national poet—is a celebrated literary figure who inspired future writing greats including William Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, and John Steinbeck. He’s credited with first penning “Auld Lang Syne,” which was based on an older folk song, and writing prose that still resonates widely today due to its humor, relatability, and universal themes of love and nature.

The “ploughman poet’s” everyman farming origins have always been part of his appeal.

1. **Burns Night** – an annual celebration held world-wide with dinners, drinking, music and recitation of Burns poetry.

2. **Burns Supper** – featuring traditional Scottish foods like the haggis and Scotch whisky and the Address to the Haggis by Burns.

3. **Street Names** – There are 929 street and house names with 272 towns and cities containing at least one Burns-related address. Ayr, Burns’s birthplace, and Glasgow contain the most, and 42 percent of Burns-related street names are in Scotland.

4. **Names in USA** - Despite never traveling to the United States, Burns’s work became a hit when it was first printed stateside. Both abolitionists and Confederates found interpretations in his work that appealed to their distinct values. His themes of solidarity, liberty, and equality, and his disdain of class distinctions (so common in the UK) were appealing to the fledgling U.S. democracy. It is therefore unsurprising his legacy spread across the United States and remain strong to this day. There are several hundred towns named Burns from Oregon to New York.

5. **Monument to Robert Burns** – The grandest monument is in Edinburgh and there are more nonreligious monuments to Burns worldwide than anyone except Queen Victoria.

6. **Burns Stanza** - The Burns stanza is a form of verse the poet widely employed in his work. It was actually used since the Middle Ages in English writing and Provençal poetry, though Burns later popularized it in some 50 poems, influencing subsequent generations of poets. The Burns stanza takes the form of a six-line stanza rhyming aaabab, the lines denoted a written in tetrameter (having four stresses), and those denoted b in dimeter (having two stresses).

7. **Robert Burns Trains** - Built by British Rail Engineering Limited (BREL), the Class 87 Electric Locomotive 87035 Robert Burns is one of 36 flagship trains built for passenger services on the UK’s West Coast Main Line between London and Glasgow in the mid-1970s. It was a high-speed service from 1974 to 2004, and is now on display at Crewe Heritage Centre, complete with its original livery and rededicated Robert Burns nameplates.

8. **The Burns Crater** - Burns found extraterrestrial fame in 1985 when the International Astronomical Union named a roughly 26-mile (43-kilometer) crater on the planet Mercury after him. Mercury’s craters are named after “deceased artists, musicians, painters, and authors who have made outstanding or fundamental contributions to their field and have been recognized as art historically significant figures for more than 50 years.” Burns shares the honor with other creatives such as John Lennon, Truman Capote, and Hector Berlioz.

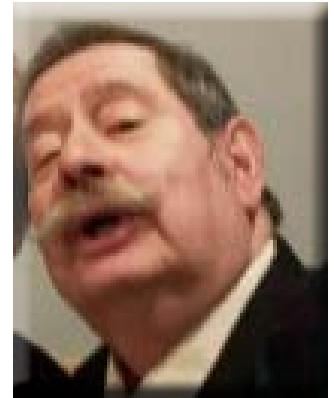
## Shrove Tuesday in Scotland from ICH Scotland



This tradition has historically been used as a way to prepare for Lent in Scotland by clearing away the cupboard of all the sweets. It has evolved into what is now known as Pancake Day. During the day individuals will make pancakes and add sweet toppings whether it is for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a late-night snack. This tradition has been happening for centuries in Scotland and has recently been adopted even by those who may not be celebrating Lent, which is the 40 days of reflection and penitence between Ash Wednesday, February 14 and Easter March 31, 2024.

# St. Valentine's Day Scottish Style

By Editor Emeritus Ski Schiaffino (Clan McKay)



Yes, Virginia there is a Valentine's Day in Scotland. The next time you're visiting Scotland take a side trip to The "City of Love", Glasgow, (Their phrase not mine.) and stop by the church of Blessed St. John Duns Scotus. Some of the remains of one of the St. Valentini can be found there.

St. Valentine's Day really is celebrated in Scotland. Do keep in mind that this is Scotland and it is February. Unless your favorite form of entertainment is running around in freezing rain or snow, then you really don't need much of a reason to celebrate anything. The Scottish enthusiasm and passion for Valentine's Day comes to life in the shops and stores soon after Christmas, or just after New Year, and definitely after Hogmanay. Although Burns' Night is the next celebration, shopkeepers, hoteliers and restaurant owners all try to cash in on the romantic occasion of Valentine's Day. Just like their brethren across the pond, evidence of their marketing is everywhere, with cards, gifts, special offers at hotels and special meal-deals.

Scotland's reputation for romantic venues is already well known throughout Europe. Indeed, the small village of Gretna Green (Scotland's version of old Elkton.) like Elkton, was THE place to go for a quickie wedding. It is the first village over the Scottish border on the road from England to Glasgow. It is particularly renowned for being the place where young English couples eloped; as English Law said they could not marry until they were 18 years old, whereas in Scotland marriage is allowed at 16.

Another charming Scottish custom is that in Auld Alba, Valentine's Day is celebrated by having a festival. At the festival there is an equal amount of young unmarried (single) men and young unmarried (single) ladies who get together. Each of them writes their name or a made up name, on a piece of paper. These then are rolled up. The names are placed in two hats; one for the men and one for the ladies. Then, they have to draw a piece of paper out of the hat. When all the valentines have been selected and matched the company is then split up into couples, gifts are given to the young ladies and the young ladies would wear the name of their valentine over their heart or on their sleeve. There might also be a dance. Then at the end of the festival there might even be a lot of marriages or at least romances.

There is another pleasant valentine ritual were the first unaccompanied young person (of the opposite sex) who just happens to walk by you in the street, or elsewhere, will be your valentine for the day. It's kind of Scotland's version of Sadie Hawkins Day, so for those of us who already have a valentine, perhaps we should consider avoiding Scotland on the 14th of February.

## Two Recipes of the Month

submitted by Dr. Andrea Bowden

### VALENTINE'S DAY CHERRY CRUNCH DESSERT

#### Ingredients:

1 can cherry pie filling (15.5 oz)  
1 t lemon juice  
1 box Duncan Hines Deluxe yellow cake mix  
½ cup chopped walnuts  
½ cup butter (1 stick) melted

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees  
Add lemon juice to pie filling  
Spread cherry pie filling on the of bottom of 9-inch square pan  
Combine cake mix, nuts, and melted butter to form crumbly dough  
Sprinkle on cherry pie filling  
Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes until golden brown  
Serve with whipped cream or ice cream



### MRS. HALL'S SHORTBREAD from All Creatures Great and Small

Want to nurture your inner Mrs. Hall? Be kind, be wise, be witty...and bake her beloved shortbread with the official recipe.



Mrs. Hall  
played by Anna Madeley

#### Ingredients

8 oz/1 cup unsalted butter at room temperature  
4 oz. superfine/caster sugar/bar sugar\*  
Pinch of Salt  
12 oz/2 ¾ cup all-purpose flour

#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees (325 degrees for convection) Grease or line two baking sheets with parchment paper  
In a large mixing bowl cream butter, sugar, salt and butter.  
Sift in flour gently and mix until combined. (Don't overmix or dough will become tough.)  
Flour a board and use a rolling pin to roll dough about ½ in thick.  
Cut into shaped using the rim of a small glass, cookie cutters or shortbread stamps\*\*  
Place on baking sheets at least an inch apart.  
Bake 15-20 minutes until slightly tan, but not golden.  
Remove and cool on racks.  
Sprinkle superfine sugar on the cooled "biscuits"  
Store in airtight container.



\* Notes: Superfine sugar/caster sugar is sold by Domino and is available in Walmart. It is not regular granulated sugar or 10X Confectioner's sugar. You can make your own by putting regular granulated sugar in a food processor (put towel on top of processor because of the dust). Process at high speed for 1-2 minutes-but stop before the sugar crystals turn to powder! Let the dust settle for 20 seconds.

\*\* Shortbread stamps used to be made of wood, but now are metal or silicon. They are available in varied patterns and sizes and are available at Target or on Amazon.

# Another Recipe of the Month

submitted by Dr. Andrea Bowden

## Mardi Gras King Cake

from Allrecipes

**Background:** King cake is a New Orleans tradition associated with Mardi Gras that involves a pastry, a tiny plastic baby, and a party! The ring-shaped cake is baked with a tiny plastic baby hidden inside; whoever gets the slice with the baby in it has good luck – and has to host the next party. Make sure to buy a new tiny plastic baby so you can get the full effect from this cake! Sprinkle with purple, green, and gold sugar, or decorate with whole pecans and candied cherries. The tradition of the king cake dates back to the Middle Ages. It was originally made to celebrate the Catholic Epiphany, a.k.a. Three Kings Day. French settlers brought the cake (and the traditions behind it) to Louisiana in the 1800s. So, what's the meaning behind the baby?

Some say the tiny token represents the Baby Jesus, while others believe it comes from another Louisiana tradition of hiding a bean or trinket in one slice of cake during the king's ball — whoever found the trinket would be crowned the “king” or “queen” of the ball. Regardless of its origins, the baby is said to bring good luck and prosperity. Be sure to tell everyone to inspect their piece of cake before they begin eating it. To be extra careful, you can use a plastic toy baby that is too large to swallow. You can also hide an orange wedge or 3 to 4 pecan halves inside the cake (avoiding items that may hurt someone's teeth), then place the honorable toy baby on top of the cake for all to see and adore! Plastic and metal babies are available from Amazon. Google” babies for Mardi Gras/King cakes.”

**Notes:** Don't roll up the logs too tight when you roll up the logs, as the pecans and raisins might rip through. Putting the glaze on while the cake is warm gives a nice drizzle effect and helps the glaze spread evenly over the cake. If using sanding sugar, make sure to put it on immediately after the drizzle, otherwise, the glaze will dry, and the sugar will not adhere. If you want to get wild, you can make a cream cheese icing instead of the powdered sugar glaze. Store your leftover king cake in an airtight container at room temperature for two to three days. You can freeze unfrosted king cake. Wrap each slice individually in storage wrap, then follow it up with at least one layer of aluminum foil. Freeze for up to three months.



### Ingredients

#### Dough:

1 cup whole milk  
¼ cup unsalted butter  
¾ cup warm water (110 degrees F)  
2 (¼-ounce) envelopes active dry yeast  
½ cup white sugar, divided  
2 large eggs  
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt  
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
5 ½ cups all-purpose flour

#### Filling

1 cup packed light brown sugar  
¾ cup chopped pecans  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
½ cup raisins  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
½ cup unsalted butter, melted

#### Glaze

2 cups confectioners' sugar  
2 to 3 tablespoons water  
2 plastic baby dolls  
purple, green, and gold sanding sugar

## Directions

1. Gather all ingredients.
2. To make the dough: Heat milk in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring often, until steaming and small bubbles form around the edges, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in butter until melted and fully combined, about 2 minutes. Allow mixture to cool to room temperature, about 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, stir together warm water, yeast, and 1 tablespoon of the sugar in a large bowl. Let stand until foamy, about 10 minutes.
4. Add cooled milk mixture, eggs, salt, nutmeg, and remaining 7 tablespoons sugar to yeast mixture, whisk until combined, about 30 seconds.
5. Beat flour into yeast mixture, 1 cup at a time, with an electric mixer fitted with dough hook attachment on medium speed until dough comes together, about 3 minutes.
6. Transfer dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, adding additional flour as needed, 8 to 10 minutes.
7. Place dough in a lightly oiled large bowl; turn to coat. Cover with a damp cloth or plastic wrap; let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 1 1/2 hours. When risen, punch down and divide dough in half.
8. Return dough to a lightly floured work surface, roll out each half into a 10x16-inch rectangle, dusting work surface and rolling pin with additional flour if needed.
9. To make the filling: Combine brown sugar, pecans, flour, raisins, and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Pour melted butter on top and mix until crumbly.
10. Sprinkle filling evenly over dough, about 1 cup per cake, using your hands or a spatula to press into dough.
11. Starting at one of the long ends, roll each dough rectangle into a tight log.
12. Bring the ends of each roll together, pinching the seams together to form 2 individual ovalshaped rings. Transfer each ring, seam side down, onto a large rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment. With scissors, make cuts 1/3 of the way through the rings at 1-inch intervals.
13. Cover with plastic wrap or a damp towel, and let rise in a warm spot until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
14. Bake both rings in the preheated oven in the upper and lower thirds until golden brown and a toothpick inserted comes out clean, or when a thermometer inserted into the center of the dough reads 190 F, about 25 minutes, rotating sheet trays 180 degrees and top to bottom, halfway through baking to ensure even browning. Some filling might leak out during baking.
15. Remove cakes and carefully push 1 doll into bottom of each warm cake. Let cool slightly, about 30 minutes.
16. To make the glaze: Whisk confectioners' sugar and 2 tablespoons water together in a small bowl until smooth, adding remaining 1 tablespoon water if needed to reach desired consistency.
17. Spread glaze evenly over the tops of both warm cakes.
18. Sprinkle sanding sugar immediately over glaze if desired