

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com

May 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.



Monday, May 20 -

OUR MAY GATHERING

6:30 to 8:30-ish pm

State Theater, Havre de Grace, MD

Theme: Gin Tasting! Guided by Nancy Plummer

Please Note: Our next gathering is MONDAY, May 20!



Past Laird Todd Holden regaled us with tales of our Society's history - how we began, the ups, downs, disputes & split. His stories were rivoting and encouraging.



John Polk presented one of our "Scottish jiggers" to Todd in appreciation of his talk.

Welcome New HSHC Officers!!!

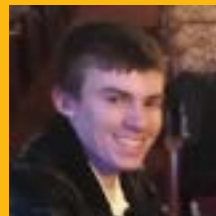
Laird - John Polk

Aide de Laird - David Ray

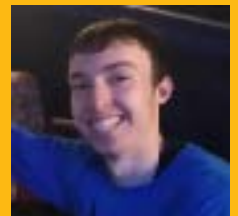
2nd Aide de Laird - Susan Wheeler

Thank you (!!) for volunteering your services to the Society!

Welcome New Members



Logan Zahn
Dylan Zahm



Our Members Step Up!

HSHC Officers Resign & Election of New Officers

By Dr. Andrea Bowden



Recently, the Highland Society of Harford County experienced the resignation of key officers. HSHC is fortunate to have others willing to step forward and assume leadership roles. John Polk, HSHC Treasurer, assumed the role of acting Laird. Jeanie Nesbit will continue to serve as HSHC Secretary. In response to John's request for volunteers to fill the vacated positions, David Ray stepped up to serve as Aide de Laird and Susan Wheeler volunteered to serve as 2nd Aide de Laird. They were formally nominated at the April 16th meeting and approved by unanimous voice vote. The Interim officers were sworn in by SJ Anderson, former Laird. They will serve through the end of 2024 when nomination and election of officers for 2025 will take place.

Dr. John Polk – Laird & Treasurer; Clan Pollock.

John has been a member of the Highland Society of Harford County since 2010. He served as Aide de Laird in 2012, as Laird in 2013-14, and has been our Treasurer since 2016. He has served as Clan Historian for Clan Pollock International since 1998 and authors a regular historian's column for the clan's quarterly newsletter. He started the Polk-Pollock-Pogue DNA Project in 2009 which now has 500 participants and traces its male-line DNA back to the family's progenitor, Fulbert, of 12th century Renfrewshire, Scotland. He is the author of four books, including *Beyond Damned Quarter*, which won the Sumner A Parker Prize as book of the year by the Maryland Genealogical Society in 2015; Volume 535 of the Archives of Maryland, and two books on Cecil County colonial history. John was a platoon leader and quality control officer in the construction of Highway QL-1, with the U S Army Corps of Engineers in Vietnam in 1970-71, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. He received his Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Delaware in 1979 and had a 40+ year career as a research mathematician at the Army Ballistics Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and as Senior Advisor for International Collaborative Research Programs at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory.



David Ray – Aide de Laird, Clan McRay

Dave has been a member of the Highland Society of Harford County since 2018. He served as Aide to the Laird from 2022 through 2023. David is well known for his interesting presentations at HSHC gatherings and for the creative, historically accurate costumes that he makes. His interests are Viking history and Renaissance Fairs. David is a special education teacher at John Archer School in Harford



Susan Wheeler – 2nd Aide de Laird, Clan Shaw

Susan has been a member of the Highland Society of Harford County since June 2022. Susan has enjoyed learning more about her Scottish heritage through research and visited Scotland for the first time in September 2023. Professionally, Susan is an Instructional Leadership Executive Director ILED, for Baltimore City Public Schools. She enjoys running, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.



Laird's Letter



Fellow Scots –

As you all know, our esteemed Society has gone through some rather traumatic happenings of late. There have been multiple resignations of officers, including our Laird, Aide de Laird and 2nd Aide de Laird, and a number of strongly worded messages openly posted to the membership.

These are unfortunate and certainly not what any of us expected when we joined. I am sure we all have enough real concerns in our lives not to want more from the Highland Society. That said, I am hoping that the traumas are now behind us, and we can return to our shared moments of fun and friendship. Our Society has faced crises before and weathered them, as we will this one. We are now 57 years old and I am sure there are many more still to come. It is up to us.

I was particularly encouraged by the large turn-out that we had for our April meeting, by the open and meaningful discussion that took place, and by the volunteers that stepped up to assume leadership roles. As I looked around the room during the discussion, I felt reassured by the genuine cordiality that I saw and know that our esteemed Society remains intact.

Looking ahead, I am sure we will be doing things somewhat differently. We will need broader participation in organizing activities. Please find ways to help your newly elected officers who have generously volunteered their time. Everyone has a role. We can talk more about this at the next meeting as we enjoy Nancy Plummer's Scottish gin. See you on Monday, 20 May.

John Polk, Laird



SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2024

12:00 noon – 4:00 PM

Picnic Lunch at 1:00 PM

HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY

Family Heritage Picnic

Harford County 4-H Center

6 Cherry Hill Rd, Street, MD 21154

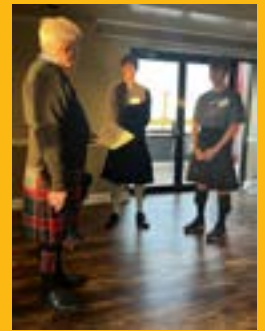
Treasurer's Report Dr. John Polk

Period: 1 – 30 April 2024

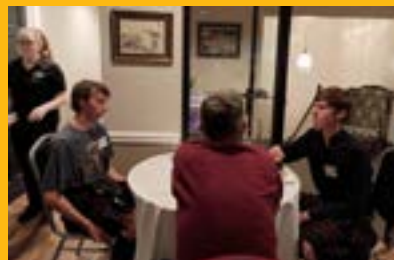
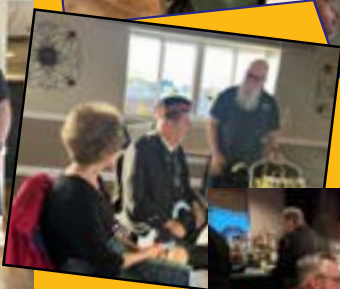
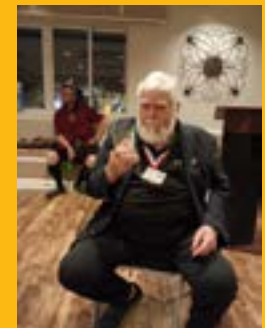
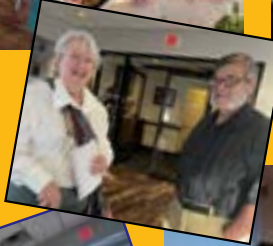
OLD BALANCE	\$4448.37
Expenses:	
Bank Fee	3.00
MacGregors, Venue and catering	927.74
Toasting whisky, MacGregors	65.00
Income:	
Proceeds, Meals	780.00
Whisky raffle	80.00
NEW BALANCE	\$4312.63

Our Last Gathering

remember, it's ctrl + or cmd + to make the image bigger



Logan & Dylan Zahn join



MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

April 16, 2024

Acting Laird John Polk opened the gathering at 8:07 pm. at MacGregor's Restaurant in Havre de Grace.

The toast to the president was given by Susan Buchanan of Clan Buchanan

The toast to the King of England was given by Andrea Bowden of Clan MacMillan

The toast to Scotland was given by Nancy Plummer of Clan Forsyth

We all toasted Mark Lyons and Jack Polk who celebrated April birthdays and other special celebrations.

The meal was blessed by our Chaplain Pastor Anne McCorkle Garrett of Clan MacKay and we enjoyed the plentiful dinner buffet with chicken parmesan and beef burgundy; with cookies for dessert.

Following dinner, our guest speaker and esteemed Laird Emeritus Todd Holden regaled us with remembrances of Highland Society shenanigans of years past. Two excerpts:

(1) He told us how our founding fathers started the HSHC (the Society) as a spin-off from the Saint Andrew's Society of Baltimore, and a fun-loving club for people of Scottish descent, or those with a bit of scotch in them. They initiated new members by scotch "baptism" and accolade (which Google says is the actual term for the act of touching someone's shoulders with a sword) with a claymore on each shoulder and then thrusting the claymore into the ceiling, where it would dangle and sway until they took it out.

(2) Disagreements and even a split in the Society are part of our history and Todd remembered how the membership was divided between those who wanted the Society to stay carefree and meet at the relaxed Blue Bell Restaurant outside Bel Air, and those who wanted it to be more dignified and meet at "the" country club. One night it came to blows when one member kicked another in the balls so hard he crumpled to his knees. This was later retaliated by a hard sock to the jaw, causing some damage.

The split came and the Pitlochry Rowdies (the fun bunch that allowed women to attend gatherings, met at varied restaurants including a strip joint, and had

galas at the Bayou Restaurant) and the HSHC (the classy bunch that wanted dignified meetings and required the wearing of the tartan) went their separate ways. Todd was a Pitlochry Rowdie who later came back to the Society. The Rowdies eventually disbanded.



Following Todd's talk, SJ Anderson of Clans Anderson, Campbell, and MacKay won the scotch raffle – she said this is the first time in many years that she's won - woohoo (yay me)!

At 8:43 pm, John Polk opened the business part of the gathering and reported on the latest Board of Directors meeting, held on 25 March, attended by Laird Keith Reagan, Aide de Laird Lady Crystal Hudson-Boyd, Secretary Jeanie Nesbit, and Treasurer John Polk.

Per John's account, the board meeting was conducted in a normal and productive manner for about two hours until all business was concluded. At that point Lady Crystal announced her resignation as Aide de Laird, and said she was sending an e-mail notification to the Board members. She said she would remain on the Board of Directors as Laird Emeritus (immediate past President), as provided in HSHC By-Laws. Laird Keith asked her to explain the reasons for her unhappiness. This led to a verbal exchange between the Laird and Aide de Laird which became quite heated.

Per John, the main reason stated by Lady Crystal for her unhappiness was what she considered to be the Laird Keith's excessive oversight of her work preparing for Society meetings. The exchange became a loud and one-sided complaint on Lady Crystal's part. Secretary Jeannie Nesbitt said she was uncomfortable with the language, and left the meeting. Lady Crystal continued her complaint for several more minutes, then left. Laird Keith sent an e-mail message to the Board the next day announcing his resignation citing Lady Crystal's continuing membership on the Board of Directors. He sent his formal resignation to the Society the following day (27 March).

Discussion followed about homophobia and transphobia (an accusation Crystal made in a later email to the membership at large). None of the members have heard or felt negativity about the LGBTQ community and we

agreed that all are welcome who are of Scottish descent or love the Scottish culture.

Discussion also followed about our celebrating a Kirkin' o' the Tartans and the part established religion plays in the ceremony. One member stated that at a previous kirkin' the minister had used language that non-Christian Society members found quite offensive. It was agreed that we would wait a year or three before deciding on when to participate in another kirkin'.

The next order of business was to fill the open positions on our Board of Directors. John Polk nominated **Dave Ray as 1st Aide de Laird** and **Susan Wheeler as 2nd Aide de Laird**, noting that they had volunteered their services; and **John Polk** offered to serve as Laird unless anyone else wished to step forward, but there were no takers. Jean Fischer moved that they all be unanimously elected; Kallie Lyons seconded the motion. The motion was carried and their initiation installation as officers was immediately performed by Past Laird SJ Anderson who administered the oath of office.

John Polk will also continue as our treasurer for now.

Upcoming events were announced before closing the gathering:

- **Gin tasting** will be our next gathering entertainment on Monday, May 20 at the State Theater
- **The 62nd Fair Hill Scottish Games** - May 18, 2024 - Gates Open 8am (see Dave Ray about volunteering to help).
- **HSHC annual covered-dish picnic** in June – more info coming later from Andrea Bowden

Kallie Lyons moved to close the gathering; Susan Buchanan seconded; all approved and the gathering was closed at around 9:00 pm.

-- Minutes respectfully presented by SJ Anderson (tonight's substitute secretary)

FASHIONABLE HATS

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

Members of the Harford Conty Highland Society sport some fantastic fashions. Since I love hats, I was interested in chapeaus worn by Jean Fischer and Anne Garrett. Both look wonderful and very Scottish.



(SJ's note: for those interested, here's a link to the vendor's website. It doesn't display this exact hat there, but it does offer something similar. <https://scotlandhouseltd.com>)

The Scottish Gin Revival - the Latest Scottish Craze

by Nancy Plummer

At our next Highland Society, I will be giving all a sampling of 5 Scottish Gins and a special beverage to taste. Come to our meeting in Monday, May 20th at the State Theatre, for this unique tasting. Here is an introduction to the latest alcohol craze in Scotland.

Gin is a spirit typically made from a base of grain, such as wheat or barley, which is first fermented and then distilled. To be classified as gin, the predominant flavor must be of juniper berries, otherwise the drink cannot be called gin, by law. Most gins have anywhere from 35% to 55% ABV. (alcohol by volume) Geneve is the original Dutch juniper berry spirit which led to the creation of the drink we know today as gin.

Ahh Juniper berries! The taste of the juniper berry is fresh with a fruity citrus flavor and an aromatic, piney spiciness. The berry is in no way sweet, instead it has a pungent, piney taste that can mimic sweetness. I'm one who loves the tingling feeling the juniper berries gives the lips and its unique flavor. When the herbal gins became popular a few decades back, I sometimes defied anyone to find the juniper taste that I so loved. To me the more herbs that were added the less juniper I tasted. More about that later.

While traveling in the Borderlands of Scotland in 2023, I learned that there is a huge gin revival of the herbal variety, and it still had that juniper taste. I was hooked and tasted a different gin every evening.

The History of Gin.

In the 1600's and 1700's water was unsafe, and people became sick and died, but beverages made of alcohol, were ok. So, gin consumption in the UK increased at this time and was known as the gin craze. However, people were dying from this craze as well, especially children. Social reformers such as Joseph Jekyll, pushed forward the Gin Act of 1736. The hope was to curb gin consumption by instituting a 20 shilling per gallon excise tax, as well as a £50 annual license (equivalent to £8,000 today) for all gin sellers. Passed in 1735, it was set to take effect in September 1736. The law proved immensely unpopular and provoked public rioting. King George II issued a proclamation requiring compliance with the law and an end to public disorder against it. After just a year, though,



enforcement began to wane, and the public began to defy the law more openly. It is said that only two of the annual licenses were ever purchased. Moonshine (coined because it was made illegally at nighttime) also became widespread as people produced their own gins, sometimes using dangerous ingredients such as turpentine and sulfuric acid.



By 1743, gin production had increased to an all-time high of 8,000,000 imperial gallons (9,600,000 US gallons) and enforcement of the law was considered impossible. The financial strain of the War of the Austrian Succession also played a role as the government sought a solution which would generate more income. The act was repealed by the Gin Act of 1743, which set much lower taxes and fees. This act remained in place for centuries.

Gin in the 20th Century

In the 1950s, gin consumption declined in the UK. It represented all that was wrong with the past, and the austerity of the post-war years. And with other spirits—especially vodka, thanks to its fresh, youthful marketing campaigns became popular. Sean Connery's James Bond was ordering vodka martinis shaken not stirred while London distilleries were closing left and right, due to rising property values and lack of consumer interest. Soon, only Beefeater remained.

There was a big interest in the business world to create small distilleries to make craft gin again. There were lots of small batch Scotch distilleries, why were small batch Gin distilleries not allowed? This old Gin Act (1743) was still on the books, so it outlawed small scale gin distilleries. Three centuries later, it meant boutique hopefuls weren't allowed to open a gin distillery. Scotland was known for its small distilleries making single malt scotch, and it was a booming business. £7.1 billion in the UK, £ 5.3 billion from Scotland. There was a movement to allow small batch gin distilleries.

So, the hopeful distillers went to court. Parliament was resistant, so according to the story I heard at Moffat wood-Fired distillery, they went to the EU and in 2010 the Gin Act was repealed allowing small distilleries to make gin. It revitalized the gin craze. This small business made gin with love, care, and imagination. Because these are

small batches, they took the time to slowly introduce the herbs so not to kill the flavor of the juniper berries. Also adding locally grown herbs, and flavors. The larger factory distilleries do not do this. So those with a discerning palate are all about finding these distilleries popping up all over the UK but especially in Scotland.

There are approximately 179 individual Scottish Gin brands on the market with a combined 646 Scottish Gins available to buy. In 2022 gin revenue in the UK was £ 950 million with Scottish gin accounting for £140 million.

The Gin Cooperative

Their membership has consistently remained around the 80 mark since 2018, with every member producing their gin in Scotland, with a business based in Scotland that believes in and champions the Scottish Gin category. The



cooperative always approached what can be a touchy subject for some, 'what is a Scottish Gin' with a clear ethos that Scottish Gin should be made in Scotland by a business based in Scotland by people who believe Scottish Gin is a recognizable brand and spirits category.

Why Scottish Gin? Artesian gin makers in Scotland are big on passing down recipes used by past generations and using the herbs and flavors of locale and place. These flavors make the difference to those wishing to experience a new and unique alcoholic beverage.

References: Wikipedia--The Scottish Whiskey Association--The Scottish Gin Cooperative --Scottish Gin Tours--The

THE IRONY OF ST GEORGE'S DAY

from Newsbreak

April 23rd marks St George's Day – a day to celebrate the Christian martyr who became the patron saint of England. He is, perhaps, best known through the English – aka St George's – flag whose white background and red cross have become an emblem for the country's far right. The fact is, the real St George was a symbol of multinationalism and diversity. And he wasn't even British!

He was born in the 3rd century AD, some 2,000 miles from England, in Cappadocia (what is modern-day Turkey) and Lydda (modern-day Israel) of Palestine. Whilst most learn of him as a bold dragon, the truth is, he Instead, he was more likely army, according to English

Furthermore, the story Silene (modern-day Libya) murderous dragon post-by several centuries. The popularized in the Middle after his death – in a saints' lives called The the tale was probably just between good and evil.

St George is understood his Christian faith – executed by the Roman Emperor Diocletian in the early 4th century for refusing to honor the pagan gods. His bravery and heroism ensured his canonization and led to his idolization in countries across the world. Indeed, England isn't the only country to claim him as their own. Georgia, Venice, Genoa, Portugal, Ethiopia and Catalonia all have him as their patron saint, and many of them hold their own celebrations in his honor.

His reputation for virtue and valor spread across Europe and his feast day – 23 April – was celebrated in England from the 9th century onwards. But St George wasn't used to represent the country until the reign of Henry VIII in the 16th century. In other words, he was a truly international man.



is thought to have died in in the Roman province primary school children knight who slayed a fierce wasn't a knight at all. an officer in the Roman Heritage .

that St George rode to to free the city from a dates the real George story was developed and Ages – hundreds of years collection of stories about Golden Legend. In reality, an allegory for the battle

to have died a martyr for

TARA PINS FROM IRELAND – A REAL TREASURE

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

At the March gathering of the Highland Society of Harford County, I noticed that Betsy Wasson was wearing a TARA Pin holding her tartan ribbon. I realized that I had the same pin!

Betsy told me, “When I was in high school in Ireland in the late 1950s a classmate of mine gave it to me as a birthday gift.” I got my pin (center) in the early 1980s on my first trip to Ireland. I’ve purchased TARA pins on all my subsequent visits. Recently, I found one still in the box from a trip to Ireland in the 1990s. It is the traditional Claddagh symbol.



I did some research and found that the older pins are now selling for \$50-\$100 and are listed as “vintage, enamel, depicting drawings from the Book of Kells.” You can buy vintage TARA jewelry online through ETSY. Pieces that are younger are much less expensive, but no less beautiful.

Susan and Ray Buchanan frequently visit Ireland and Susan has purchased two TARA charms from the TARA Diary collection for her Pandora bracelet. One is a thatched cottage (left) and the other is a shamrock circle (right). TARA also has sterling silver pins, charms earrings, and necklaces as well as other jewelry.



The Book of Kells

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

Dating back to 800 AD, the illuminated manuscript known as the Book of Kells is renowned for its extraordinary illustrations and ornamentations. Its intricate drawings incorporating Celtic and Christian traditions are a testament to



the incredible craftsmanship of the medieval Irish monks believed to have created it while on the remote island of Iona in Scotland. Despite Viking raids, theft, and fights between various Irish and English factions, 680 astonishingly detailed vellum (calf-skin) pages of Latin text remain intact. The manuscript, which tells the story of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke across four volumes, is on view in Dublin, Ireland at Trinity College’s magnificent 18th-century-old library.

Scottish Women from History You Should Know

from the Tartan Plaid Company // compiled by Dr.Andrea Bowden

A cursory look at any list of well-known Scots will frequently reveal a strong gender bias in favor of men. This should come as no surprise in many respects, since these lists are frequently compiled from outdated historical texts that were published during an era when women's accomplishments were carelessly disregarded in favor of white men who all seemed to have enormous moustaches. Here we showcase a few remarkable Scottish ladies here who truly deserve more recognition.



ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

Margaret, an English princess, was raised in exile at the court of Hungary. A devout woman since her early years, Margaret went back to England in 1057 since her father was a legitimate heir. Regretfully, he passed away soon after arriving, but Margaret remained at court, where her brother was being discussed as a potential monarch. Margaret and her family eventually made the decision to escape to the continent following the Norman conquest in 1066. But a storm seized their ship, pushing it north to Scotland. It was here that she met and wed Scotland's King Malcolm III. They produced two daughters, one of whom married Henry the First of England, and six sons, three of whom rose to become kings of Scotland. Margaret became Saint Margaret 157 years after her death thanks to her piety and reforms of the Scottish church.

LADY AGNES CAMPBELL

A 16th-century noblewoman, Lady Agnes Campbell was highly educated and unafraid to put her education to use. She was nurtured in a world of political intrigue and cunning, and she spoke multiple languages, including Latin. Her first marriage ended when her spouse passed away in an Irish prison. Agnes later married the Irish chief's heir, who had previously captured her first husband. She brought an army of 1,200 Clansmen with her, and she led them in combat. She led her forces against the English, and she did so admirably, winning the admiration of both allies and foes.



FLORA MACDONALD

The lyrics of the Skye Boat Song, which serves as the soundtrack for the film *Outlander*, are well-known to people all over the world, but perhaps less people are aware of Flora MacDonald's daring scheme to elude capture and her exciting life that followed. MacDonald disguised the Prince as a woman and they rowed from the little island of Benbecula to Skye after he left the Scottish peninsula in 1746 after the defeat at Culloden. Unfortunately, the oarsmen talked about this event, and Flora ended up being taken prisoner by the English and kept in the Tower of London for a while. Following her release, she engaged in more adventures in colonial America during the War of Independence. While returning home to Skye via boat, she was also injured in a privateer attack. The starting and finishing points for the North Coast 500 are now marked by the bronze statue of Flora MacDonald outside Inverness Castle.

WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOT- LAND

FEARS FOR THE FUTURE OF GALIC LANGUAGE

from The GUARDIAN March 2024

Gaelic-language campaigners and MSPs have protested furiously about plans to axe a network of Gaelic community workers, raising fresh fears about the survival of the language. Up to 27 Gaelic development workers based in Hebridean islands, rural counties and Scotland's major cities are being laid off after the Scottish government cut funding to Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG), the body charged with protecting and reviving Gaelic. The job losses have alarmed activists, who said these development workers were essential to their efforts to promote and reinvigorate the language and Gaelic communities, after decades of decline. Community leaders on Tiree, an island in the southern Hebrides where Gaelic was once the primary language, said losing their two development officers would have "significant negative implications" for the island. Scottish ministers argue that they are championing Gaelic. Holyrood is weighing up a Scottish languages bill to provide legal recognition to

STATUE OF ELIZABETH II COMPLETE WITH CORGIS IS UNVEILED

exerpt from Town and County

The statue in Rutland is one of the first memorials to the late Queen to be unveiled since her death and was unveiled in Rutland, England, on what would have been her 98th birthday. To further cement her link with the corgi, several members of the Welsh Corgi League proudly brought their dogs to be part of the 400-strong crowd at the unveiling. The seven-foot bronze statue by Sculptor Hywel Pratley depicts the Queen in state robes. According to reports, the sculptor told the crowd at the unveiling that the plinth was designed to be sat on and could be a hit with the Instagram generation. "It will make perfect backdrop for pictures and people will even be able to sit on it. (SJ note: remember, it's ctrl or cmd > + sign to make the image bigger.)



Carl Court/Getty Images

BALLOON SYNDROME HEDGEHOG FOUND IN FIELD

from the BBC



A hedgehog has had to be deflated by rescuers after swelling up to the size of a football. The female hedgehog, which had inflated to twice its normal size, was discovered in a field near Quedgeley, Gloucestershire. She was so large she was spotted by a passenger on a passing bus. At Wild Hogs Hedgehog Rescue, the hedgehog was diagnosed with balloon syndrome caused by gas collecting under the skin. Manager Emily Harper said: "I have deflated

her as much as I can."

Balloon syndrome only occurs in hedgehogs and is due to their ability to curl up, meaning they have a gap under their skin. Ms. Harper said air can get trapped under the skin - sometimes from an infected wound - and the animal can "balloon up". "She'd grown so big you couldn't see her legs and her skin was very tight at the limit of what it could stretch to," she said. "She was very large but generally in good health." At the rescue centre, a needle was inserted under the hedgehog's skin to release some of the trapped air. The procedure will be repeated until she can be released.

Celtic Recipes of the Month

DUBLIN CODDLE

contributed by Joshua Zahn

BACKGROUND: This nourishing dish of bacon, sausage and potatoes has been a favorite in Ireland - particularly Dublin - since the seventeenth century. It is usually served with Irish soda bread to “sop up” the juices, which are thick if it has been slow cooked or “coddled”.

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound bacon
8 good pork sausages
4 medium onions (peeled and sliced)
1 leek with green tops (all parts sliced)
2 bay leaves
2 springs thyme
1 teaspoon pepper
2 garlic cloves (chopped)
6 starchy potatoes (like russets) peeled and cut into chunks
6 cups ham or chicken stock (1 cup stout optional)
Soda bread to serve



DIRECTIONS:

Lay bacon strips on broiler pan and cook until almost crisp
(Alternately, fry in a skillet — keep the bacon fat in both methods)

Lay cooked bacon on paper towel

Cook sausages in skillet until nicely browned

Remove, let cool and slice length wise

Fry onions in same skillet – about 7 minutes

Use a large Dutch oven, layer potatoes, onion, bacon, and sausage

Add leeks, thyme, bay leaf and garlic and finally more potatoes

Salt and pepper each layer

Pour stock over all the layers

Cover and bring to a boil on top of the stove

Transfer to the oven and cook at 300 degrees for 45 minutes



CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT BARS

contributed by Betsy Wasson

BACKGROUND: These versatile cookies can be made for any holiday or occasion- just vary the food coloring in the frosting.



Cookie Base:

Ingredients

1/2 cup + 2 tbsp butter
6 tbsp cocoa powder
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/2 cup flour
1/4 tsp peppermint extract
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
(Crushed candy canes can be used for winter holidays)
pinch of salt

Directions

Preheat oven to 350*

Melt butter stir in cocoa powder.

Add eggs which have been beaten with sugar.

Stir in remaining ingredients.

Bake in 8" or 9" square pan for 15 minutes.

Cool before adding frosting and glaze.

Frosting:

Ingredients

1 cup Confectioner's sugar
2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp milk (more if needed)
1/4 tsp peppermint extract
1-2 drops food coloring (to go with the season)

Directions

Mix ingredients together.

Spread on cooled cookies and chill.

Glaze:

Ingredients

6 tbsp cocoa powder
1/4 cup butter
2 tbsp sugar

Directions

Melt butter.

Stir in sugar, then cocoa powder.

Spread over chilled frosting.

Cut into small squares.

Store in refrigerator during warm weather.

