

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com



May 2026 — 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.

Our May 9 Gathering Annual Picnic & Caleigh

(A caleigh is a traditional Scottish or Irish gathering that features Celtic music and dancing that is a treasured social occasion.)

Location: Steve Belkoff and Lisa Stewart's barn
in the barn at **5495 Lynch Lane, Baldwin MD**
Social Hour: 6:00 PM -- Dinner: Around 6:30 PM

**PLEASE CONTACT SUSAN WHEELER
if you have not RSVP'd**

swheeler68@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

16 May - Fair Hill Scottish Games (Fair Hill, Cecil County)

July and August - HSHC outings TBD

21-22 August - Harford County Celtic Festival

6 September – Covenanter Highland Games (Quarryville PA)

13-15 November – Maryland Irish Festival (Timonium)

First Friday, May, June, August, October - Havre de Grace, Bel Air, Elkton

PROFILE OF NEW MEMBER CHRIS WILSON

The Highland Society of Harford County is fortunate to welcome as a member, CHRIS WILSON, Clan Gunn, the President of the St. Andrew's Society of Baltimore. Chris has been active in that organization since 2004 and has served in various leadership capacities. Chris was inducted into HSHC at the January 2026 gathering.

Born in Baltimore, Chris lives in Bel Air, where he has practiced law since 1986. His undergraduate degree is from Towson University, and he holds a degree in jurisprudence from the University of Baltimore.

Chris has a number of interests including horseback riding, fencing, and skeet shooting.

A fun fact about Chris is that Chris secretly longs to be a Scottish fiddler.



Anyone wishing to contribute an article, news, a joke or humorous anecdote or other contributions, news, suggestions for articles send them to: 21901SJ@gmail.com or abowden@bcps.k12.md.us

April Gathering



Laird's Letter



Dear Members and Friends,

May feels like a fitting time to reflect on where we have been together this season and to look ahead to the moments that continue to bring us closer as a community. Our April gathering was a wonderful example of that spirit. The room was full, the food was plentiful, and the conversation carried easily around the table. We were fortunate to hear from historian Denny Lynch, whose stories from his travels through Ireland and Scotland reminded us that history is not just something we study, but something we feel. His sharing of family letters, including those read aloud by relatives so their voices could be preserved, was especially moving. What stayed with me most was his reflection on the deep sense of connection and belonging he experienced when meeting family in Ireland for the first time. It was a powerful reminder of why we gather as we do.

That same sense of connection was evident at Havre de Grace's First Friday of May, where our board members hosted a booth and welcomed visitors throughout the evening. It was a tremendous success and a great opportunity to share our mission with the broader community. We would love to build on that momentum and invite any members who are interested to volunteer for the next First Friday on June 5. It is a simple and meaningful way to represent the Society and meet others who share an interest in our heritage.

Looking ahead, we will also be at the Highland Games at Fair Hill on May 16. This is always a lively and enjoyable event, and I encourage you to stop by the booth, lend a hand if you are able, and take time to enjoy the games themselves. There is nothing quite like the energy of the crowd, the music, and the traditions on display to remind us of the richness of Scottish culture.

Before we turn the page to summer, we will gather one more time on May 9th for our final formal event of the spring season, which will conclude with a ceilidh. In Scotland, ceilidhs have long been a cornerstone of community life. Traditionally held in homes and village halls, they brought people together for music, storytelling, and dancing, offering a chance to celebrate, connect, and pass traditions from one generation to the next. They were never about perfection, but about participation, laughter, and shared experience. That same spirit continues today, and it feels like the perfect way for us to close our season together.

As always, I am grateful for the energy, warmth, and commitment that each of you brings to the Highland Society. It is through these shared experiences, both large and small, that we continue to grow and flourish.

Yours in fellowship and tradition,
Susan

Treasurer's Report

Keith Reagan

Period: 1 April - 30 April 2026

OLD BALANCE	\$4,541.85
Expenses:	
Speaker honorarium	(\$75.00)
Speaker meal	(\$42.40)
Reservations for both May & June 1st Fridays	(\$60.00)
Income:	
April meeting raffle receipts	\$205.00
NEW BALANCE	\$4,569.45

The Kelpies Sculptures

submitted by Jeannie Nesbit



The Kelpies, Helix Park, Falkirk Scotland

Location: Located between Falkirk and Grangemouth in Scotland, specifically in The Helix Parkland.

Size: The sculptures stand at 30 meters (98 ft) tall and weigh over 300 tonnes each.

Purpose: They serve as a monument to Scotland's industrial past, honoring the heavy horses that worked on farms and canals.

"Kelpies are malevolent, shape-shifting water spirits from Scottish folklore that typically appear as horses to lure people to a watery death. Originating from the Gaelic term "cailpeach uisge" (water colt), they often haunt rivers and lochs. The famed 30-meter-high steel sculptures, designed by Andy Scott, are located at The Helix in Falkirk, Scotland, representing these mythical beasts and Scotland's horse-powered heritage." - from Wickapedia



The first recorded use of the term to describe a mythological creature, then spelled kaelpie, appears in the manuscript of an ode by William Collins, composed some time before 1759.

The Kelpie is the most common water spirit in Scottish folklore. Some mystery and disagreement surrounds the exact physical appearance of the Kelpie and the bodies of water they inhabit.

The first recorded use of the term to describe a mythological creature, then spelled kaelpie, appears in the manuscript of an ode by William Collins, composed some time before 1759. - from Facebook.com, ASprinkleOfFairyDust

The kelpie is even mentioned in Robert Burns' poem, 'Address to the Deil':

“...When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord
An' float the jinglin' icy boord
Then, water-kelpies haunt the foord
By your direction
And 'nighted trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction...”

What's In a Clan Name?

by SJ, from many internet sources



Gunn - Melissa Moreno, Chris Wilson

As one of the oldest Scottish clans, the Gunns can trace their heritage to the Vikings and the Norse Jarls of Orkney.

Noted for their ferocious fighting spirit and character, clan Gunn is perhaps most well known for a long-standing feud with clan Keith, borne out political conflicts and a need for land. The feud only officially ended in 1978 after around five hundred years.



Johnstone - George Kingery

Clan Johnstone originates from the Scottish Borders, and were one of the famous Border Reiver clans. Named after the Barony of Johnston in Annandale, they kept watch against the English for close to six hundred years from their position along the Scottish Marches.

Unlike many other Reiver clans, the Johnstons only raided the English. However, they had a long feud with the neighbouring clan Moffat, which climaxed in 1557 with the almost total destruction of the Moffats by clan Johnstone.



Keith - Keith Reagan

The Keiths were historically one of the most powerful clans in Scotland. Clan Keith held the hereditary title of Great Marischal of Scotland until 1715, when the 10th Earl Marischal participated in the Jacobite uprising and the title was subsequently forfeited.

The Keiths feuded for many years with clan Irvine, and fought with the Gunns for many years in land disputes in Caithness.



Macomber - Angie Schiaffino

Macomber is Scottish in origin (although some think it to be English). The family was first found in Perthshire where they were seated from very ancient times. McComber is an Anglicized form of a Gaelic name, probably Mac Ciaragáin ('descendant of Ciaragán'), a personal name based on a diminutive of ciar ('black', 'dark'), but erroneously identified with cíor ('comb').



MacDonald / McDonald - Lee Ann Anderson

For many years the MacDonalds held the title of Lord of the Isles, claiming territory along the west coast of Scotland, until James IV of Scotland removed the title and territory from the clan after fearing that they would overpower the monarchy and assert their own independence.





Recap of Denny Lynch's Presentation at Our Last Gathering

by Brian Nesbit, HSHC Aide to Laird

For the Highland Society members who were unable to attend our April Gathering, below is a brief summary for our guest speaker, Mr. Denny Lynch.

It is without a doubt Mr. Lynch poses fabulous style & flair. His presentation absolutely held the attention of those in attendance. Mr. Lynch began with a brief bio including his tenure as a retired Baltimore City PS history teacher with photography as his primary hobby. He then transitioned effortlessly into some history of the Scots and Scottish culture. Mr. Lynch also shared some personal photos he took while on recent holiday in Scotland with emphasis on various points of interest throughout Scotland. Mr. Lynch discussed the similarities of Scottish & Irish cultures.

With that, he shared his personal Irish ancestry. His relatives arrived in the United States during the 19th Century. While discussing his Irish roots, he shared with the group a personal handwritten letter from a female ancestor. That letter was truly touching to see and hear (he had recorded another family member reading the letter). Mr. Lynch shared several tidbits about his travels to both Scotland & Ireland.

Approaching the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Lynch displayed vintage family photos as well as photos he has personally taken during his travels. Mr. Lynch enjoys traveling to Scotland & Ireland on a regular basis.

In true typical Denny Lynch fashion, he was more than happy to field questions from HSHC members; even staying after the gathering to engage in more in depth conversations. Needless to say, Mr. Lynch was very well received by the HSHC and has an open invitation to return any time of his choosing.

Just as Denny signs off in his texts and emails by saying; "All the Best, Denny", I too wish everyone All the Best.

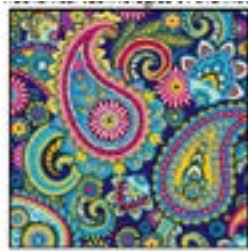


Paisley - A Place and a Pattern

by Dr. John Polk



Everyone is familiar with paisley patterns, unique, beautiful and sophisticated. Who can say no to a silk paisley shawl or necktie, the perfect and ever-fashionable flourish in dressing up. The pattern has an ancient history going 2000 year back to ancient Persia (Iran), but somehow it became identified with a Scottish working town that originated as an Abbey in the 12th Century. There is a fascinating story behind this that I think epitomizes Scottish character and ingenuity. It lies at the core of the long and remarkable growth of Scottish industry, from the simple skills of kilt weaving in ancient times to the remarkable mechanical technologies of the industrial revolution at which Scotland excelled.

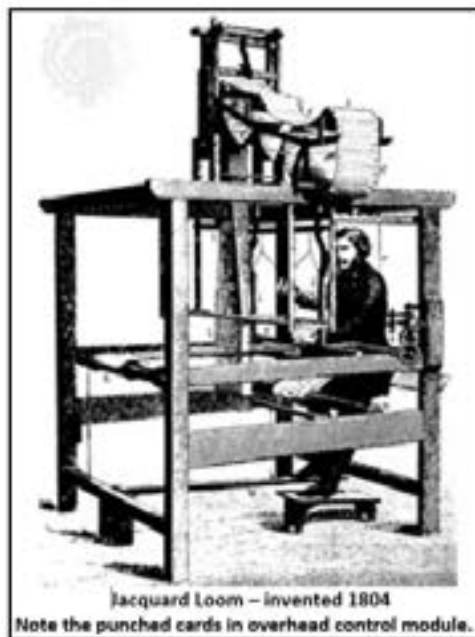


A particularly significant development was the water frame (1769) which connected the spinning frame to the power of a water mill. This might be seen as the effective beginning of the industrial revolution since it decisively took production out of the home and into a factory environment. Albeit small scale at the time, it was the first step in an inexorable progression. It happened in various places in Scotland but Paisley was particularly able to exploit it because of their concentration on higher quality products.



Textiles were a basic cottage industry in Scotland from time immemorial, noted especially for woolen goods, most famously of course the kilt. In the 18th century the scale of production increased steadily after the union of Scotland and England in 1707. British shipping companies expanded markets for Scottish goods as the quality of their products became more widely recognized. The production of linen goods also grew steadily and by the end of the 18th century linen exports exceeded wool. This was facilitated by key inventions that revolutionized the textile industry in the mid-1700's – the flying shuttle (1733), the spinning jenny (1764), and the spinning frame (1787). These were developed in England but Scottish textile producers were quick to take advantage of them and further develop their capabilities. They also had a great underlying resource in the skilled workers in a traditional occupation passed down over many generations. In Paisley they concentrated particularly on high quality products – linen lawns, gauzes and fine fabrics which became more feasible as weaving technology grew more sophisticated. Silk materials were also introduced at this time and became a major industry in the 1800s.

It was at this time that the more sophisticated patterns imported from distant lands by the East India Company became very fashionable and much in demand in British Society. The imports were very expensive and textile manufacturers in Paisley began to emulate them at lower cost in their own products. A decisive development was the invention of the Jacquard Loom in 1804. This was an ingenious technology that enabled the control of stitching patterns in powered looms by the sequencing of holes in slats or cards that guided the wool threads feeding into the warp of the fabric. It was invented in France but most fully exploited in Paisley.



Jacquard Loom – invented 1804
Note the punched cards in overhead control module.

The adoption of power looms and Jacquard technology made it possible to weave intricate repeating patterns efficiently, turning shawl production into a major industrial activity rather than a small craft. By the 1830s and 1840s, Paisley had become one of Britain's most important textile towns, with thousands of looms and a workforce deeply tied to weaving, dyeing, and finishing. This commercial success is why the pattern eventually took the Paisley name. In Britain, shawls patterned after the foreign originals became known as "Paisley shawls" and "Paisley" became the standard English term for the design.

WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOT- LAND

Ancient Wooden Island Found

Archaeologists discovered that a small island in Loch Bhorgastail on the Isle of Lewis, long thought to be natural stone, is actually a man-made “crannog” built on a massive, prehistoric timber platform.



Iconic Hotel Refurbished - the national.scot

A Thackray House, located on the bank of the River Teith, Callander, was first built in 1625 as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Perth. The building, world-famous for its unique pink exterior, has operated as a hotel since 1939, hosting musical stars like The Beatles while on a UK tour in the 1960s, as well as Hollywood director Cecil B DeMille.



Beltane Fire Festival - Beltane Fire Society

A modern, vibrant reimagining of an ancient Gaelic festival, held annually on April 30th on Calton Hill in Edinburgh, Scotland. It marks the beginning of summer and the transition into the light half of the year, featuring bonfire rituals, immersive performances, and drumming to celebrate fertility and growth.



10 new Scotch whiskies for World Whisky Day 2026 - including 'important' first release - the Scotsman

World Whisky Day falls on the third Saturday in May and this year will be celebrated on Saturday 16 May.

Glen Moray has recently launched Forbidden Fruit, a 7 year old whisky that has been finished in Calvados casks.

As the third whisky from the Distillery's playful Xperience Collection, Forbidden Fruit continues Glen Moray's journey of cask exploration.



All flights cancelled as Scottish airline collapses into liquidation

- thescottishsun.co.uk

As of May 2026, Scottish-based startup airline EcoJet has entered formal liquidation, cancelling all planned flights, including routes from Edinburgh to Southampton. Founded in 2023 to be the world's first electric airline, it collapsed after failing to secure essential funding for its ambitious hydrogen-electric retrofitting plans.



MINUTES OF OUR APRIL 21 GATHERING

Dr. Andrea Bowden



The Highland Society of Harford County met on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at the Vandiver Inn in Harve de Grace. There were 20 members and guests present. Brian Nesbit, 1st Aide to the Laird, Clan Nesbit, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Susan Wheeler, Laird, Clan Shaw, was involved in another meeting but joined us later.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Keith Reagan, Clan Keith. The Toast to the Office of the President was given by Brian Nesbit, Clan Nesbit. The Toast to the King was given by Andrea Bowden, Clan MacMillian. She also recognized the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth. John Polk, Clan Pollack, read Traditional the Toast to Scotland.

A delicious Moroccan dinner was presented by John Muldoon, General Manager of Vandiver Inn. We sampled delicious North African/Mediterranean cuisine.

After dinner, Brian introduced Celtic storyteller, Denny Lynch. Denny, a retired history teacher and photographer, showed beautiful slides of famous Scottish sites from castles to the Museum, homestead and grave of Robert Burns. He told the fascinating story of his Irish ancestors. Denny was witty and engaging and appreciated by all.

The next Gathering will be held the evening of Saturday, May 9th and will be a cèilidh (Scottish Dance celebration) combined with a potluck dinner at the farm of Steve Belkff and Lisa Stewart. The featured food will be roasted lamb! This Gathering will also serve as the HSHC annual picnic.

Brian reviewed future festivals/events:

16 May - Fair Hill Scottish Games (Fair Hill, Cecil County)

July and August - HSHC outings TBD

21-22 August - Harford County Celtic Festival 6 September – Covenanter Highland Games (Quarryville PA)

13-15 November – Maryland Irish Festival (Timonium)

First Friday, Harve de Grace, Bel Air, Elkton - May, June, August, October

The raffle featured books on Scotland donated by Angie Schiaffino and a basket of Celtic items including a gift certificate to Pappas Restaurant donated by Jeannie Nesbit.

The gathering adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Bowden, Secretary

Scottish Recipes of the Month

contributed by SJ

Scotch Eggs

from A Feast of Scotland, cookbook by Janet Warren

Makes 5

Ingredients:

1 lb sausagemeat (2 cups, firmly packed)
5 hard boiled eggs, shelled
1 large egg, beaten
a dusting of flour
dry white breadcrumgs
deep fat for frying



Directions:

Dust each egg with a little flour. Divide the sausagemeat into five and on a flooured surface work each piece into an oval. Place a hard-boiled egg in the centre of each one and mould the sausagemeat round it, making sure the surface is free from cracks. Put the beaten egg and breadcrumbs onto separate plates and coat each egg first in the liquid egg and then in the breadcrumb so that the surce is completely covered. Coat each egg again if you like to ensure a really good surface.

Heat a deep-fat fryer half full of oil to 360 degrees F / 185 degrees C, lower the eggs and cook them for about 5-6 minutes. If the fat is too hot the outside will brown before the sausagemeat is cooked. Drain when cooked and leave to cool.

Traditional Scottish Cranachan

from The Spruce Eats

Ingredients

1/4 cup steel-cut oats, pinhead oats, or rolled oats
1 1/2 cups fresh raspberries, divided
2 cups heavy cream, or double cream
3 tablespoons malt whisky, good quality, or vanilla
1 tablespoon honey, or Scottish honey, more for serving

Directions

Heat a large, heavy-bottomed skillet on medium-high heat until hot, but not burning.

Add the 1/4 cup oats and, while stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, toast until they have a light, nutty smell and begin to change color, about 3 minutes. (Do not leave the oats unattended, as they can quickly burn.) Remove immediately from the pan.

Remove 1/4 cup of the fresh raspberries for garnishing later, and place the remaining 1 1/4 cup raspberries in a food processor. Pulse once or twice to create a thick purée; do not over-blend it. It's okay if there are a few bigger lumps of berries.

Alternatively, you can simply crush the raspberries with a fork. This will give you a more rustic-looking dish.

Using a mixer, whisk the 2 cups heavy cream along with the 3 tablespoons malt whisky or vanilla to form firm peaks, about 3 minutes. Take care not to overwhip.

Fold in 1 tablespoon honey, if using, followed by the toast-ed oats.

Layer the dessert into either a glass bowl (1 1/2 quart or 6 cup capacity) or individual serving glasses, starting with either a layer of the cream or raspberries and finishing with a layer of the cream. If you wish, you can sprinkle a little raw oatmeal on the top for decoration.

Cover the bowl or glasses with plastic wrap and chill for a minimum of 1 hour.

To serve the cranachan, drizzle over a little extra honey, if desired, top with the reserved whole raspberries, and if you fancy, add a piece or two of Scot-tish shortbread.

