



OPD 2012
Newsletters

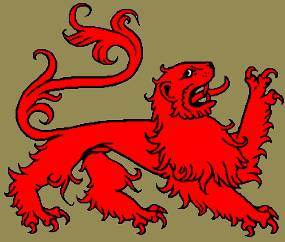
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OPD ²⁰¹² Monthly Newsletter

^{The} Omaha Pipes and Drums – *A Celtic tradition since 1970*

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The Omaha Pipes and Drums
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Hogmanay Photos



Link to
[Edinburgh Hogmanay](#)



January 2012

Hogmanay

Pronounced hog-muh-NAY is the Scots word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year in the Scottish manner. Its official date is 31 December (Old Year's Night). However this is normally only the start of a celebration which lasts through the night until the morning of **Ne'erday** (1 January).

The roots of Hogmanay perhaps reach back to the pagan celebration of the winter solstice among the Norse, as well as incorporating customs from the Gaelic New Year's celebration of Samhain. In Europe, winter solstice evolved into the ancient celebration of Saturnalia, a great Roman winter festival, where people celebrated completely free of restraint and inhibition. The Vikings celebrated Yule, which later contributed to the Twelve Days of Christmas, or the "Daft Days" as they were sometimes called in Scotland. The winter festival went underground with the Protestant Reformation and ensuing years, but re-emerged near the end of the 17th century.

There are many customs, both national and local, associated with Hogmanay. The most widespread national custom is the practice of *first-footing* which starts immediately after midnight. This involves being the first person to cross the threshold of a friend or neighbor and often involves the giving of symbolic gifts such as salt (less common today), coal, shortbread, whisky, and black bun (a fruit pudding) intended to bring different kinds of luck to the householder. Food and drink (as the gifts, and often Flies cemetery) are then given to the guests. This may go on throughout the early hours of the morning and well into the next day (although modern days see people visiting houses until the 3 January). The first-foot is supposed to set the luck for the rest of the year, so it is important that a suitable person does the job. A tall, handsome, and dark-haired man bearing a gift is strongly preferred. According to popular folklore, a man with dark hair was welcomed because he was assumed to be a fellow Scotsman; a blond or red-haired stranger was assumed to be an unwelcome Norseman.

An example of a local Hogmanay custom is the fireball swinging that takes place in Stonehaven, Kincardineshire in north-east Scotland. This involves local people making up *balls* of chicken wire and tar, paper, and other flammable material up to a diameter of 61 cm. Each ball has 2 m of wire, chain or nonflammable rope attached. The balls are then each assigned to a swinger, who swings the ball round and round their head and body by the rope while walking through the streets of Stonehaven from the harbor to the Sheriff court and back. At the end of the ceremony any fireballs that are still burning are cast into the harbor. Many people enjoy this display, which is more impressive in the dark than it would be during the day. As a result large crowds flock to the town to see it.

Another example of a pagan fire festival is The Burning of the Clavie that takes place in the town of Burghead in Moray. The Hogmanay custom of singing Auld Lang Syne has become common in many countries. Auld Lang Syne is a traditional poem reinterpreted by Robert Burns, which was later set to music. Outside Scotland, a common mistake is to sing "For the Sake of Old Lang Zine" instead of "For auld lang syne".

An old custom in the Highlands, which has survived to a small extent and seen some degree of revival, is to celebrate Hogmanay with the *saining* (protecting, blessing) of the household and livestock. This was done early on New Year's morning with the smoke of burning juniper, and by drinking and then sprinkling "magic water" from "a dead and living ford" around the house ("a dead and living ford" refers to a river ford which is routinely crossed by both the living and the dead). After the sprinkling of the water in every room, on the beds and all the inhabitants, the house was sealed up tight and the burning juniper carried through the house and byre. The smoke was allowed to thoroughly fumigate the buildings until it caused sneezing and coughing among the inhabitants. Then all the doors and windows were flung open to let in the cold, fresh air of the New Year. The woman of the house then administered "a restorative" from the whisky bottle, and the household sat down to their New Year breakfast.

Until next month...

Sláinte



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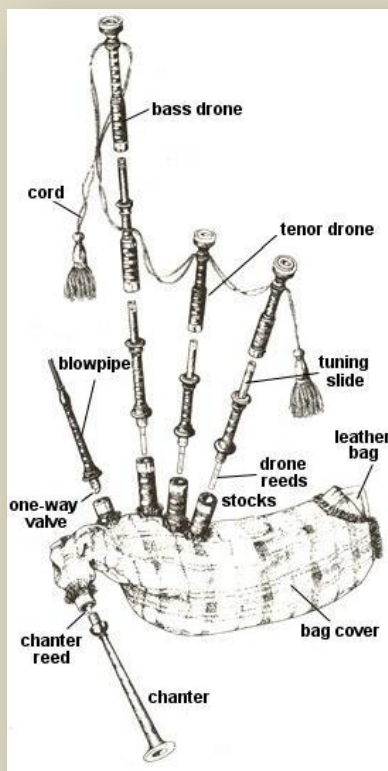
History of the Pipes

A great deal of uncertainty, conflict and controversy surrounds the questions of the origins of bagpipes. The earliest possible reference to a bagpipe occurs around 400 BC, when Aristophanes, the Athenian poet jibed that the pipers of Thebes (an enemy of Athens) blew pipes made of dogskin with chanters made of bone. Several hundred years later, Suetonius described the Roman Emperor Nero as a player of the tibia utricularis in Lives of the Twelve Caesars. Nero is reported to have said he would play the bagpipe in public as a penance for not winning a poetry contest. Dio Chrysostom who also flourished in the first century, wrote in Orations about a contemporary sovereign, probably Nero, who could play a pipe ("aulein") with his mouth as well as with his "arm pit". From this account, it has been deduced that a true bagpipe was used - having a blowpipe, bag and a chanter (probably a double chanter since double pipes were used at this time). A coin of Nero depicts a bagpipe, according to the 1927 edition of Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.



How Bagpipes Work

Bagpipes are a class of musical instrument, *aerophones*, using enclosed reeds fed from a constant reservoir of air in the form of a bag. The Great Highland Bagpipes (GHB) consists of a bag, three drones, a blowpipe, and a chanter.



In essence, a piper blows through the blowpipe into the bag. The blowpipe is fitted with a one-way valve that prevents the air from coming back out the blowpipe when the piper takes a breath. From the bag, the air passes out through the drones and the chanter, each making a sound.

The three drones are composed of two (shorter) tenor drones which are one octave (eight notes) lower than the fundamental pitch of the chanter (called "Low A") and one (long) bass drone, one additional octave lower than the tenors. The drones each have a single reed which sounds a pitch (like humming a single note) hence the term "drones."

Drone reeds can be made of natural cane, synthetic materials, or a combination of both.



Natural Cane



Synthetic



Synthetic/Cane

Moving the bridle on the drone reeds allow the piper to adjust the pitch. Additional tuning of the drones is accomplished by

sliding the drones up and down on their tuning slide/pin (down for sharper, up for flatter). The air pressure moving across the blade of the drone causes the reed to vibrate and produce sound.

The chanter has a double reed; two matched pieces of (almost universally) Spanish Cane wrapped around a metal tube called a "staple".



The reeds come in various strengths requiring different amounts of pressure for the blades to vibrate and produce sound. The pitch of the chanter is changed by pushing the reed further in or out of the top of the chanter - in for sharper, out for flatter.

The note sounded by the chanter is determined by which of its holes are covered (or not) by the piper's fingers.



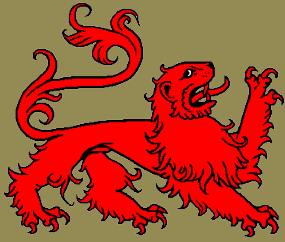
Individual notes of the chanter are tuned by taping the top of the finger hole to flatten the pitch. A chanter reed requires precise positioning into the chanter and the chanter holes usually require precise positioning of tape to sound musical. To complicate the tuning process, the pitch of the chanter reed will shift as the instrument warms up, requiring the piper to retune frequently until the instrument has been stabilized. Moisture (or lack thereof) also affects the tuning.

When a piper takes a breath, the piper's arm applies more pressure to the bag to maintain a steady pressure and even tone. A bagpipe played by an inexperienced or "unsteady blower" will waver in pitch and sound out of tune.

Bagpipes require a lot of stamina to play for any length of time. Pipers spend their careers learning to maintain steady pressure and mastering tuning, but the results are a truly wonderful experience.

Until next month...

Sláinte



The **Omaha Pipes and Drums**
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10th Annual Concert
Omaha Pipes & Drums
7 PM Tuesday, March 6th
St. Andrew's Church
84th & Pacific Streets



St. Patrick's Day Parade
10 AM Saturday, March 10th
Downtown Old Market



Check the Band website at
www.omahapipesanddrums.com
for a list of performances on
St. Pat's Day



Leprechauns seem to magically appear in St. Patrick's Day festivities. The Gaelic word, lepreachan, refers to a small creature similar to a sprite. Historians link these little people to the ancient "mound dwellers", the Tuatha De Danann who were forced by their conquerors to live underground. Over the years, the leprechaun took the form of a mischievous old man who stored his gold coins in a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. If captured by a human, in order to gain his freedom, the leprechaun must grant his captor 3 wishes-what luck, indeed!



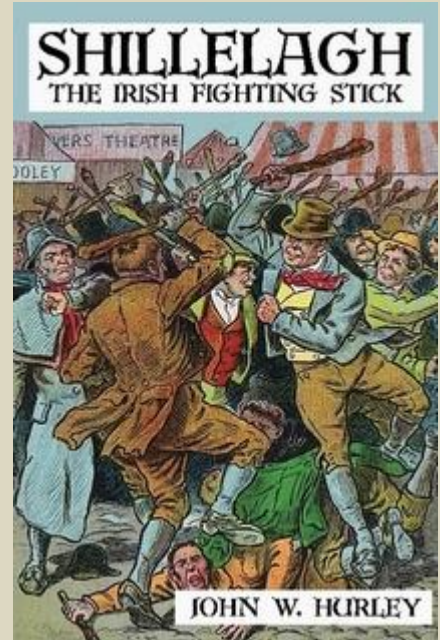
March, 2012

Shillelagh

A **shillelagh** (*shi-LAY-lee* or *shi-LAY-lə*) is a wooden walking stick and club or cudgel, typically made from a stout knotty stick with a large knob at the top that is associated with Ireland and Irish folklore. The name, an Anglophone corruption of the Irish *sail éille*, appears to have become convolved with that of the village and barony in County Wicklow.

Shillelagh is a very small village located in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains. This village was, until the 19th century, reputed for its great oak forest, one of the most famous of Europe. The head of those trees served to feed a nearby forge, the shillelagh forge, and the rest was exported everywhere notably to construct the roof of the Westminster abbey in London, several boats of the British navy in the 16th century and some buildings of Trinity college in Dublin. Today this forest has nearly disappeared, replaced by fields, and only a handful of centuries old oak trees still grow.

One of the hypotheses on the birth of the shillelagh comes directly from the prehistory of Ireland¹. The island was occupied before the arrival of the Celts around 500 B.C. (a date which is subject to debate), as early as 8000 B.C. The people living in those times were much smaller than those who succeeded them, as proven by several artifacts from the Bronze Age. Following the arrival of the Celts, they were driven to the center of the island. Many of their chiefs decided to follow the ways of the Celts, but some, united by the chief Ealach, refused and isolated themselves. They were known as Siol Eolaigh or followers of Ealach, a term which might have been the source of the word Shillelagh, as these people were often associated with the blackthorn sticks, which they would have used without removing the spikes. Their ability to disappear across the mazes created by the bushes of this plant, created myths around them and were soon nicknamed Leprechauns by the Norman occupants. They also had a reputation of being good shoe-makers and potters and so people would often leave their broken pots and shoes by their doors so they could be repaired by the small peoples. Their association with the blackthorn sticks also produced a lasting tradition. It was a belief that hanging a blackthorn branch outside your house would act as a lucky charm. This may be explained by the fact that the Leprechauns considered it as a weapon and lacking a sense of property like some Amerindian tribes, they would often steal objects. So people would hang blackthorn branches outside their house to indicate that the owner was armed with a *shillelagh* and knew how to use it.

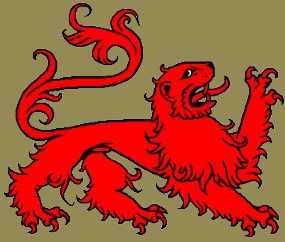


The stick is one of, if not the oldest weapon of mankind. It was used by all layers of society and can be found on Egyptian hieroglyphs, on Greco-Roman representations of Hercules and on the notorious tapestry of Bayeux, in the hands of William the conqueror himself. And as we've seen, the use of the blackthorn stick could go back to the foundations of Ireland's history. But it isn't before the 14th century that the term *shillelagh* is used as we know it today. It would actually come from Richard II king of England from 1377 to 1400 AD. In 1399, Richard would mount an expedition against the rebellious Irishmen of Leinster. Richard pursued across the plains of Imal and Glenmalure the chief Art Mor McMurrough and his ally Domichadh Mac Brain Ruaigh O'Byrne. But rapidly the situation reversed, the Irish, much more familiar with the terrain and more mobile would make their enemies suffer a living hell. Richard would complain about the use of the sticks of Shillelagh against his men. Like guerrilla warfare, the Irish would attack and retreat quickly into the woods. The English survivors, strained and starving would rejoin the coast where supplies were waiting for them. This trip would be fatal for Richard II; his cousin Henry taking the opportunity of his absence and defeats to take power and have him imprisoned and assassinated on his return to England.

Until next month...

Beannachtai Na Feile Padraig Oraibh!

St. Patrick's Day Blessing Upon You!



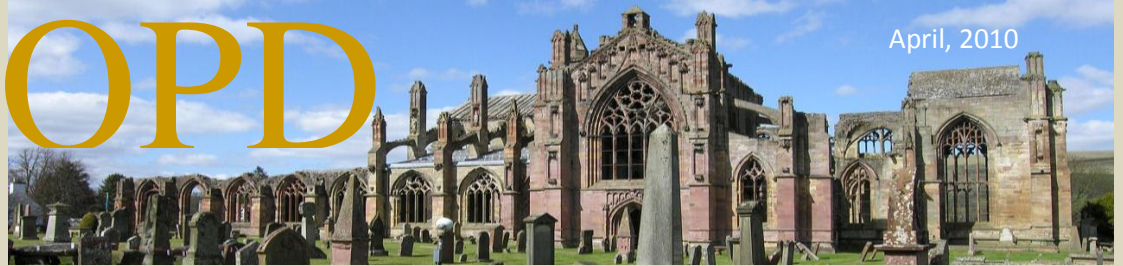
The **Omaha Pipes and Drums**
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Tartan is a pattern consisting of crisscrossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colors (see the April 2011 edition of *OPD*). The English word *tartan* is derived from the French *tiretain*. This French word is probably derived from the verb *tirer* in reference to woven cloth (as opposed to knitted cloth).

Today *tartan* is generally used to describe the pattern, not limited to textiles. In America the term *plaid* is commonly used to describe *tartan*. The word *plaid*, derived from the Scottish Gaelic *plaide*, meaning "blanket", was first used of any rectangular garment, sometimes made up of tartan, particularly that which preceded the modern kilt or belted plaid. In time, *plaid* was used to describe blankets themselves.

Tartan is recorded by counting the threads of each color that appear in the sett. The *thread count* not only describes the width of the stripes on a sett, but also the colors used. For example, the thread count "K4 R24 K24 Y4" corresponds to 4 *black* threads, 24 *red* threads, 24 *black* threads, 4 *yellow* threads.

The shades of color in tartan can be altered to produce variations of the same tartan. The resulting variations are termed: *modern*, *ancient*, and *muted*. These terms refer to color only. *Modern* represents a tartan that is colored using chemical dye, as opposed to natural dye. *Ancient* refers to a lighter shade of tartan. *Muted* refers to tartan which is shade between *modern* and *ancient*.



Tartan Day

Tartan Day (part of **Scotland Week**) celebrates the existing and historical links between Scotland and Scottish descendants in North America. In the United States there are over 30 million people who claim Scots descent. Tartan Day is held on April 6, the anniversary of the date on which the Declaration of Arbroath was created in 1320.



The Declaration is a Latin letter which was sent to Pope John XXII in April/May 1320. It was most likely drafted in the scriptorium of Arbroath Abbey by Abbot Bernard on behalf of the nobles and barons of Scotland. It was one of three letters sent to the Pope in Avignon, the other two being from King Robert Bruce himself and from four Scottish bishops, attempting to abate papal hostility. The document received the seals of several Scottish barons and it then was taken to the papal court at Avignon in France by Sir Adam Gordon.

Cunning Diplomatic Letter or Constitutional Document?

There is considerable debate over the Declaration's significance. For some it is simply a diplomatic document; while others see it as a radical movement in western constitutional thought.

It could be viewed as a cunning diplomatic ploy by the Scottish barons to explain and justify why they were still fighting their neighbors when all Christian princes were supposed to be united in crusade against the Muslims. All this, just at the point when they were about to retake Berwick: Scotland's most prosperous medieval town. As an explanation, it failed to convince the Pope to lift his sentence of excommunication on Scotland.

Others analyze what the Declaration of Arbroath actually says. The Scots clergy had produced not only one of the most eloquent expressions of nationhood, but the first expression of the idea of a contractual monarchy.

Tartan Day is now part of the North American calendar. Supporters of the event call it a signal of the strengthening Scots-Canadian/American relationship in the 21st century. The Tunes of Glory Parade in 2002 saw 10,000 pipers and drummers march through the streets of New York. They were the centerpiece of the event where thousands of Americans celebrated their links to Scotland. One of Scotland's national treasures, William Wallace's sword, left Scotland for the first time in 700 years and was flown to New York for the Tartan Week celebrations of 2005.

The Tartan Day resolution of the United States Senate

Senate Resolution 155, March 20th 1998

Whereas April 6 has a special significance for all Americans, and especially those Americans of Scottish descent, because the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scottish Declaration of Independence, was signed on April 6, 1320 and the American Declaration of Independence was modeled on that inspirational document;

Whereas this resolution honors the major role that Scottish Americans played in the founding of this Nation, such as the fact that almost half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Scottish descent, the Governors in 9 of the original 13 States were of Scottish ancestry, Scottish Americans successfully helped shape this country in its formative years and guide this Nation through its most troubled times;

Whereas this resolution recognizes the monumental achievements and invaluable contributions made by Scottish Americans that have led to America's preeminence in the fields of science, technology, medicine, government, politics, economics, architecture, literature, media, and visual and performing arts;

Whereas this resolution commends the more than 200 organizations throughout the United States that honor Scottish heritage, tradition, and culture, representing the hundreds of thousands of Americans of Scottish descent, residing in every State, who already have made the observance of Tartan Day on April 6 a success;

Whereas these numerous individuals, clans, societies, clubs, and fraternal organizations do not let the great contributions of the Scottish people go unnoticed:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate designates April 6 of each year as "National Tartan Day."

Until next month...

Sláinte



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National Anthems

The earliest national anthem was the Dutch "*Het Wilhelmus*", written around 1570. The United Kingdom followed with "*God Save the King (or Queen)*", which was first performed in 1745. Spain came next, with the "*Marcha Real*" in 1770. "*La Marseillaise*" was first performed in 1792 and was adopted as the French National Anthem in 1795. Pretty much everyone else followed in the 1800s.

In general only one verse of ***God Save the Queen*** is sung; sometimes two verses are sung, and on rare occasions three:

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen:
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the Queen.

O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall.
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix,
God save us all.

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour;
Long may she reign:
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
*To sing with heart and voice
God save the Queen.*



A Nation without a National Anthem

With a date of origin of AD 843, Scotland is one of the oldest continuously surviving nations in the world. At least two parts of that sentence, the date of origin and the phrase "continuously surviving" are open to argument, but for the moment let's just take it as read that Scotland has been around for over twelve-and-a-half centuries. And as a nation it can boast one of the oldest flags in the world, The Saltire, which actually predates the nation it represents. It comes as something of a surprise, therefore, to discover that Scotland is a nation without a national anthem: though even this is arguable.

Scotland's problem stems from the fact that the period of the growth in anthems was also the period of lowest ebb in the fortunes of Scotland's nationhood. In 1707 the Scottish Parliament voted itself out of existence by approving the Act of Union with England, and for the next two centuries there seemed every chance that Scotland would lose even its name in favor of "North Britain". Few imagined the possibility of the re-emergence of Scotland as a nation in need of an anthem.

So for many people, Scotland does have a national anthem: the UK national anthem, "*God Save the Queen*". Thomas Augustine Arne (1710–1778) is the composer of the song; first sung in 1745. "*God Save the Queen*" is the national anthem of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Like many aspects of British constitutional life, its official status derives from custom and use, not from Royal Proclamation or Act of Parliament.

England (as distinct from the United Kingdom, comprising England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) has no official national anthem of its own; "*God Save the*

Queen" is treated as the English national anthem when England is represented at sporting events.

The question of what the Scottish national anthem ought to be is one that has increasingly been argued about since the early 1970s. In 2006 the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted an online poll that attracted 10,000 votes. Most popular candidate, by a significant margin, was "*Flower of Scotland*" written by Roy Williamson of The Corries in 1967. This has for many years been the anthem used by Scotland supporters at international rugby and football matches, and the 2006 vote revealed that 41% of Scots felt it should become the Scottish National Anthem.

The song harks back to the victory of Robert the Bruce over the English at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and the first verse runs:

*"O Flower of Scotland, When will we see,
Your like again, That fought and died for,
Your wee bit Hill and Glen, And stood
against him, Proud Edward's Army, And
sent him homeward, Tae think again."*

This makes it ideal as a sporting anthem, but perhaps not so good as an all-round national anthem.

Second place in the 2006 poll fell to "*Scotland the Brave*" with 29% of the votes; while "*Highland Cathedral*" polled 16%; "*A Man's A Man for A' That*" polled 7%; and "*Scots Wha Hae*" polled 6%.

But for now Scotland remains a nation without a national anthem.

Until next month...

Sláinte



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**Haggis: "Great chieftain
 o' the puddin' race"**

Ingredients:

Set of sheep's heart, lungs
 and liver (cleaned by a
 butcher)

One beef bung

3 cups finely chopped suet

One cup medium ground
 oatmeal

Two medium onions, finely
 chopped

One cup beef stock

One teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

One teaspoon nutmeg

½ teaspoon mace

Method:

Trim off any excess fat and
 sinew from the sheep's
 intestine and, if present,
 discard the windpipe. Place
 in a large pan, cover with
 water and bring to the boil.
 Reduce the heat and
 simmer for an hour or
 possibly longer to ensure
 that they are all tender.
 Drain and cool.

Finely chop the meat and
 combine in a large bowl
 with the suet, oatmeal,
 finely chopped onions, beef
 stock, salt, pepper, nutmeg
 and mace. Make sure the



June, 2012

Haggis

The haggis is widely believed to be a
 Scottish delicacy (and I use the term
 loosely) made from a sheep's stomach
 stuffed with wheat and barley, among
 other things. However, rumors persist of
 the haggis in fact being a small furry
 animal native to Scotland.

Haggis Hunting

A strange and eerie sound drifts slowly
 down the glen, *uisge beatha! uisge
 beatha!* The sun is peeping over the
 horizon but none can feel the warm rays
 through the swirling mist. The men are
 huddled by the traditional "siggah" rock,
 chanting and taking turns at the cask with
 the warm golden water of life.

Suddenly, a tracker appears on the
 heathery slope and calls "*haggi!aggi!*" In
 a flash, the men are up and running,
 spreading out in the ancient hunting
 pattern which each had learned as a boy.
 Catching a wild haggis, in these days of
 scarcity, would make a living legend of the
 team involved.

A haggis whistle is used to attract the
 animals.



The most difficult part of the ancient art of
 haggis hunting is actually locating the
 beast and then chasing it in the right
 direction. The haggis has evolved to be
 just a bit faster than the fittest man and
 more sure footed than a mountain goat. It
 runs along the hillside using its two long
 legs and the one short leg to maximum
 advantage.

Once it slips through the hunting line it can be
 gone into the gorse in a flash. The hunters
 must keep behind and on the uphill side so
 that the haggis is gradually driven down to
 lower ground. This can take over three hours,
 but once the critter is down on the glen floor
 the advantage swings quickly in favor of the
 hunters – because of its uneven legs the
 haggis can only run in circles when on flat
 ground.



As soon as the hunters see a haggis circling in
 this fashion they surround it, and bring up the
 cask for celebratory refreshment. Within about
 twenty minutes the haggis can be found lying
 flat out through dizziness and exhaustion.
 Soon after that the men are usually found
 lying flat out around the haggis, with an empty
 cask rolling amongst them!



ingredients are mixed well. Stuff the meat and spices mixture into the beef bung which should be over half full. Then press out the air and tie the open ends tightly with string. Make sure that you leave room for the mixture to expand or else it may burst while cooking. If it looks as though it may do that, prick with a sharp needle to reduce the pressure.

Place in a pot and cover with water. Bring to the boil and immediately reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for three hours. Avoid boiling vigorously to avoid bursting the skin.

Serve hot with "champit tatties and bashit neeps" (mashed/creamed potato and turnip/swede). For added flavor, you can add some nutmeg to the potatoes and allspice to the turnip/swede. Some people like to pour a little whisky over their haggis - Drambuie is even better! Don't go overboard on this or you'll make the haggis cold.

Since 1971 it has been illegal to import haggis into the US from the UK due to a ban on food containing sheep lung. The situation was further complicated in 1989 when all UK beef and lamb was banned from importation to the US due to the crisis. In 2010 a spokeswoman for the US Department of Agriculture stated that they were reviewing the ban on beef and lamb products, but the ban on food containing sheep lung will remain in force.

Haggis Hurling

Haggis hurling is claimed to be a traditional Scottish sport. It is said that the haggis would be prepared for lunch for the man of the family who was out working the croft or cutting peat, by his wife. Scotland is known as a land of rivers and bogs, so walking from the croft house to the place of work could often entail a long way round to cross a river or low lying ground.

In these cases the wife would throw the cooked haggis to the husband, who would catch it using the front apron of his kilt. If he dropped it, he either went hungry; or spent the afternoon scraping his lunch off a rock; or spent the afternoon scraping bits of peat off his lunch.

According to the Guinness Book Of Records, the present World Record for Haggis Hurling is held by Alan Pettigrew of Saltcoats. He threw 1lb 8 oz. Haggis 180 feet 10 inches on the island of Inchmurrin on Loch Lomond in August 1984.

There are a number of rules associated with modern haggis hurling:

- The purpose is to compete for both distance and accuracy from on top of a platform, usually a half a whisky barrel.
- The haggis must be of traditional construction and recipe. Tender boiled sheep's heart, lung and liver with spices, onions, suet and oatmeal and stock stuffed in a sheep's paunch which has then been boiled for three hours. The haggis must land intact: a broken or split haggis results in disqualification.
- At the time of hurling the haggis should be cooled and inspected to ensure no firming agents have been applied. Rules dictate that the haggis must be packed tight and secure, with no extra skin or flab.

- The sporting haggis weighs 500 grams, with a maximum diameter of 18 cm and length of 22 cm. An allowance of ± 30 grams is given and this weight is used in both junior and middle weight events. The heavyweight event allows haggis up to 1 kg in weight, but the standard weight of 850 grams is more common, with an allowance of ± 50 grams.
- Judging is undertaken by the Hagrarian, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Heather and the Steward of the Heather. The Hagrarian checks that each haggis is in order, the Clerk of the Heather blows the hooter to begin the hurl, and the Steward of the Heather measures the hurl (always in feet and inches) and confirms the haggis remains unburst.

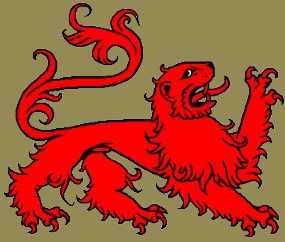
But.... is haggis hurling a joke or is it real? It turns out that the answer is both. In 1977, one Robin Dunseath placed an advert in a Scottish national newspaper announcing that at the Gathering of the Clans that year in Edinburgh there would be a revival of the ancient Scottish sport of haggis hurling. The response was unexpected: large numbers of people wanted to take part, and many who did take part then took the sport back to the United States, Canada and Australia, where competitions were established by people who believed they were reviving a traditional Scottish sport extinct since the early 1800s.

The funds raised by the hoax, and from the book that followed about the sport and its supposed history, *The Complete Haggis Hurler* went to charity.

The results since have been amazing. Scottish haggis hurling societies have developed wherever Scots have traditionally settled. And having let the Genie out of the bottle, Robin Dunseath found he couldn't persuade it to go back in. He eventually owned up to the hoax that lay behind the sport, only to find his creature had developed a life of its own, and that while haggis hurling may not actually be a traditional Scottish sport, it soon will be.

Until next month...

Sláinte



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Saint Margaret of Scotland

(c. 1045 – 16 November 1093), also known as Margaret of Wessex and Queen Margaret of Scotland, was an English princess of the House of Wessex. Born in exile in Hungary, she was the sister of Edgar Ætheling, the short-ruling and uncrowned Anglo-Saxon King of England. Margaret and her family returned to England in 1057, but fled to the Kingdom of Scotland following the Norman conquest of England of 1066. Around 1070 Margaret married Malcolm III of Scotland, becoming his queen consort. She was a pious woman, and among many charitable works she established a ferry across the Firth of Forth for pilgrims travelling to Dunfermline Abbey, which gave the towns of South Queensferry and North Queensferry their names. Margaret was the mother of three kings of Scotland and a queen consort of England. According to the *Life of Saint Margaret*, attributed to Turgot of Durham, she died at Edinburgh Castle in 1093, just days after receiving the news of her husband's death in battle. In 1250 she was canonized by Pope Innocent IV, and her remains were reinterred in a shrine at Dunfermline Abbey. Her relics were dispersed after the Scottish Reformation and subsequently lost.



Religion in Scotland

Scotland is a traditionally Christian nation in which, in the 2001 census, some 65% of the population said they were Christian. The Church of Scotland, or The Kirk, has legal recognition as the national church in Scotland: but, unlike the Church of England south of the border, it is not an "established church", i.e. it is not formally linked with the state.

The story of the development of religion in Scotland is a complex one. Little or nothing is known about religious practices before the arrival in Scotland of Christianity, though it is usually assumed that the Picts practiced some form of "Celtic polytheism", a vague blend of druidism, paganism and other sects.



The Picts were a group of Late Iron Age and Early Mediaeval Celtic people living in ancient eastern and northern Scotland. There is an association with the geographical distribution of brochs, Brythonic place name elements, and Pictish stones. Picts are recorded from before the Roman conquest of Britain until the 10th century, when they merged with the Gaels. They lived to the north of the rivers Forth and Clyde, and spoke the extinct Pictish language, thought to have been related to the Brythonic languages spoken by the Britons to the south. They are assumed to have been the descendants of the Caledonii and other tribes named by Roman historians or found on the world map of Ptolemy. Pictland, also known as Pictavia, gradually merged with the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata to form the Kingdom of Alba (Scotland). Alba expanded, absorbing the Brythonic kingdom of Strathclyde and Bernician Lothian, and by the 11th century the Pictish identity had been subsumed into the "Scots" amalgamation of peoples.

Christianity may have started to have some impact in the Pictish world even before they pushed the Romans back from Hadrian's Wall in AD 367, but its first documented arrival in Scotland was in AD 397, when St Ninian founded the first Christian Church in Scotland at Whithorn. He then set to work converting the southern and eastern Picts to Christianity.



Saint Columba's miracle at the gate of King Bridei's fortress

There were still Picts and Scots in need of conversion when St Columba arrived on the scene in the years after 563, and it seems likely that Celtic Christianity was firmly established across what is now Scotland by the end of the 600s. The next few hundred years were marked by the emergence of doctrinal differences between the Celtic Church and the Roman Church, and, from 795, the increasing presence in Scotland of initially pagan Vikings, first as raiders, then as settlers.

It was due to the influence of St Margaret, who married Malcolm III in 1070, that the Roman Church gained supremacy over the Celtic Church across Scotland. The main strand of the story of religion in Scotland over the following 500 years was one of the growing wealth and prestige of the Roman Church, an age in which numerous magnificent abbeys, priories, nunneries, collegiate churches and other churches were built across much of Scotland.

During the Middle Ages Scotland showed - by contemporary European standards at least - considerable religious tolerance. It was one of the few states in Europe not to systematically persecute Jews, and in the *Declaration of Arbroath* of 6 April 1320, the great and the good of Scotland put their name to a document containing the statement *cum non*

sit Pondus nec distinccio Judei et Greci, Scoti aut Anglici, which translates as "there is neither bias nor difference between Jew or Greek, Scot or English".



Declaration of Arbroath

Generally believed to have been written in the Arbroath Abbey by Bernard of Kilwinning, then Chancellor of Scotland and Abbot of Arbroath, and sealed by fifty-one magnates and nobles, the letter is the sole survivor of three created at the time. The others were a letter from the King of Scots, Robert I, and a letter from four Scottish bishops which all presumably made similar points.

500 years of Roman Catholicism, and any semblance of religious tolerance, came to a juddering halt with the Reformation in 1560. In Scotland this took the form of an orgy of destruction driven by an especially radical brand of Presbyterian Protestantism ("Presbyterian" means governed by representative committees rather than by a hierarchy of bishops). It led to the supplanting of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland by the Presbyterian Kirk; and to the loss of much of the magnificent architecture built during the previous 500 years.



James VI

If the practice of religion in Scotland in the 1500s was destructive, things only got worse in the 1600s. First, efforts by James VI/I to secure his hold on Ireland resulted in his "Plantation of Ulster" in the early years of the century. Large numbers of Protestants from Scotland were offered land in return for settling in predominantly Catholic Ireland. Many took up the offer. This was to trigger an era of conflict in Ireland that has only very recently reached any sort of resolution.

In 1637, efforts by Charles I to impose an Anglican form of Protestantism in Scotland resulted in riots in Edinburgh. They were followed by a national uprising and the signing of the National Covenant by those who wished to retain a Presbyterian form of Protestantism in Scotland. This led directly to war with England over whether bishops should be introduced into the Kirk, which in turn led to the two English Civil Wars, to the occupation by Cromwell of Scotland, and, later in the century, to the "Killing Time", a period in which many Scots were killed because of their support for either the Covenant and radical Presbyterianism on the one hand, or the Crown on the other.



The future James II with his father, Charles I

The lines of conflict changed when, in 1689, the English Parliament engineered the "Glorious Revolution" in which the Catholic James VII/II was displaced by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange. The Jacobite uprisings in Scotland in 1689, 1715, 1718 and 1745 all involved largely Catholic Highland clans supporting the Jacobites against the largely Protestant Hanoverians, who in turn received large scale support from Protestant Scots.



William the III and II married his first cousin, the future Queen Mary II

The 1800s saw two main developments on the religious front. The first was a series of schisms and splits that saw significant fragmentation within the established Protestant Kirk. Some of these were late healed, though not before they led to the building of large numbers of new churches in many communities across Scotland. The second was significant immigration by Irish Catholics to, particularly, west central Scotland. The Catholic communities here were later boosted by the arrival of Italians and Poles.

Since 1900 Scotland has seen the gradual decline in the numbers of those actively practicing the religions they were born into. But the period also saw significant levels of sectarianism, especially, but not exclusively, in West Central Scotland. This was given particular expression in the relationships between the supporters of Glasgow's two dominant football teams, Celtic and Rangers: and, to a lesser degree, between those of Edinburgh's two football teams, Heart of Midlothian and Hibernians. Sectarianism, especially in relation to football, remains one of the least attractive aspects of modern Scotland. And to bring the picture completely up to date, the events of the last few years and their treatment in the media have given rise to a number of instances of religious intolerance of Muslims.

All in all, the story of the evolution of religion in Scotland does little credit as a nation. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why, in 2001, Scotland's second biggest religion was no religion at all.

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Sláinte



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Hadrian (*Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus Augustus* 24 January 76 – 10 July 138), was Roman Emperor from 117 to 138. He is best known for building Hadrian's Wall, which marked the northern limit of Roman Britain. In Rome, he re-built the Pantheon and constructed the Temple of Venus and Roma. In addition to being emperor, Hadrian was a humanist and was philhellene in all his tastes. He was the third of the so-called Five Good Emperors.



Antoninus Pius (*Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius*; September 86AD – March 161AD), also known as Antoninus, was Roman Emperor from 138AD to 161AD. He was a member of the Nerva-Antonine dynasty and the Aurelii. He did not possess the sobriquet "Pius" until after his accession to the throne. Almost certainly, he earned the name "Pius" because he compelled the Senate to deify his adoptive father Hadrian; the *Historia Augusta*, however, suggests that he may have earned the name by saving senators sentenced to death by Hadrian in his later years.



Scotland's Great Walls

Most people are familiar with Hadrian's Wall, the stone and turf fortification built by the Roman Empire across the width of modern-day England. But Hadrian's wall was the second of three such fortifications built across Great Britain, the first being Gask Ridge and the last the Antonine Wall. All three were built to prevent military raids by the Pictish tribes (ancient inhabitants of Scotland) to the north, to improve economic stability and provide peaceful conditions in the Roman province of Britannia to the south, and to mark physically the frontier of the Empire. Hadrian's Wall is the best known of the three because its physical presence remains most evident today.

Gask Ridge refers to the 10 miles ridge of land to the north of the River Earn in Perthshire. In Scottish Gaelic, a *gasg* is a projecting tail or strip of land. In the early 20th century, a line of Roman signal-towers (or watch-towers) was discovered along this ridge between the Roman forts of Strageath and Bertha.

The Gask Ridge system was constructed sometime between 70 and 80 CE. Although the Gask Ridge was not a wall, it may be Rome's earliest fortified land frontier. The fortifications approximately follow the boundary between Scotland's fertile Lowlands and mountainous Highlands, in Perth and Kinross and Angus. The later Hadrian's Wall and Antonine Wall were further south, and, by taking advantage of the heavily indented coastline of Great Britain, were considerably shorter.



Hadrian's Wall was built following a visit by Roman Emperor Hadrian (AD 76–138) in AD 122. Hadrian was experiencing military difficulties in Britain and from the peoples of various conquered lands across the Empire, including Egypt, Judea, Libya, Mauretania, and many of the peoples conquered by his predecessor Trajan, so he was keen to impose order. However the construction of such an impressive wall was probably also a symbol of Roman power, both in occupied Britain and in Rome. Construction probably started in AD 122 and was largely completed within eight years. Construction started in the east and proceeded westwards, with soldiers from all three of the occupying Roman legions participating in the work.

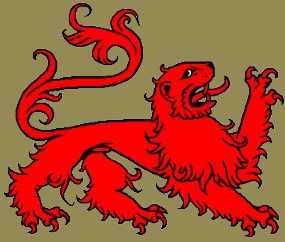
Hadrian's Wall was 80 Roman miles (73 statute miles) long, its width and height dependent on the construction materials which were available nearby. Hadrian's Wall extended west from Segedunum at Wallsend on the River Tyne, via Carlisle and Kirkcubright-on-Eden, to the shore of the Solway Firth, ending a short but unknown distance west of the village of Bowness-on-Solway.

Construction of the **Antonine Wall** began in CE 142, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, by Quintus Lollius Urbicus and was completed in 144. The wall stretches 37 miles from Old Kilpatrick in West Dunbartonshire on the Firth of Clyde to Bo'ness, Falkirk, on the Firth of Forth.

The wall was intended to replace Hadrian's Wall 160 km (100 miles) to the south, as the frontier of *Britannia*, but while the Romans did establish temporary forts and camps north of the wall, they did not conquer the Caledonians, and the Antonine Wall suffered many attacks. The Romans called the land north of the wall *Caledonia*, though in some contexts the term may mean the area north of Hadrian's Wall. The wall was abandoned after only twenty years, when the Roman legions withdrew to Hadrian's Wall in 164, and over time reached an accommodation with the Brythonic tribes of the area who they fostered as the buffer states which would later become "The Old North".

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Band Grades

Pipe band competitions are either sanctioned or non-sanctioned. Sanctioned games are approved by a pipe band association, of which there are many. The Alliance of North American Pipe Band Associations (ANAPBA) encompasses 10 associations in Canada and the United States. The Omaha Pipes and Drums is a member of the Midwest Pipe Band Association.

Each Association has grading guidelines for pipe bands. "Grade", is how a pipe band is classified. The ANAPBA (North American) grades bands from Grade 1 to Grade 5 (Grade 1 is the uppermost grade). The Royals Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) grades bands from Juvenile, 4B, 4A, 3B, 3A, 2, and 1. For a comparison, a Grade 5 ANAPBA band would compete in 4B in a RSPBA event. The Omaha Pipes and Drums currently compete as a Grade 4 band.

At sanctioned games, the different grade bands compete with different music. For example, in the MWPBA, Grade 4 bands compete with a Quick March Medley (QMM) - any number of quick marches of any common or compound time signatures played in succession within a time limit of 2:45-4:30 minutes - and a Medley (MED) - a minimum of 4 different tune categories within the time limit 3-5 minutes.

Grade 1 bands in the MWPBA submit two at the Medleys and one is drawn at the line by the judge which is to be played. They must also submit two MSRs (March, Strathspey, Reel) of which one is chosen at the line to compete with.



Bagpiping Championships North America Championships

The **Glengarry Highland Games** consist of a series of traditional Scottish competitions held annually in Maxville, Ontario, Canada, held the first weekend in August. In 1948, when the first Games organizers decided to revive the traditional sporting and cultural events of their Scottish ancestors, little did they think that 65 years later, tens of thousands would still be trekking to Maxville on the long summer holiday weekend.



The games span three days and attract as many as 50,000 people; they are the largest Highland Games of its kind outside of Scotland.

Eight pipe bands competed at the first Glengarry Highland Games in 1948 and today, the Games can boast of hosting the largest massed pipe bands in North America with bands that have numbered over seventy.

The Glengarry Highland Games are the only games in North America to host the Piobaireachd Society Gold Medal Competition that is sanctioned by the Piobaireachd Society of Scotland. This competition is held on Friday in downtown Maxville at the United and Anglican churches. In addition, there are amateur piobaireachd competitions on Friday as well as Professional Piobaireachd on Saturday on the main grounds.

Highland Dancing has also seen a growth in numbers and events over the years. There are now between two and three hundred competitors. The two days of competition bestows a variety of dance caliber. You can be witness to World Champions, North American, Canadian and Ontario dancers as they showcase their best in competition. The Massed Highland Fling at the Official Opening was first held in 1962.

With the interest and growth of violin teachers in the area, the participation of fiddlers at the Games became more and more prominent. The Glengarry Games is synonymous with massed fiddlers who participate each year in the Scottish fiddle venue.

The Heavyweight Competition continues to be a crowd favorite with competitions in Amateurs, Open Pros., Women, and Masters divisions.



World Pipe Band Championships

The **World Pipe Band Championships** are held in Glasgow, Scotland the second weekend in August. The event has been operating regularly since 1930, when the Scottish Pipe Band Association (today known as the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association) was formed. For competitive

bands, the title of World Champion is highly coveted, and this event is seen as the culmination of a year's worth of preparation, rehearsal and practice. 235 bands comprising of 8000 pipers and drummers from across all across the World competed for the title of World Champions in their respective Grades.

The entirety of the World Championships takes place on one day in August, the current venue being Glasgow Green. Typically several hundred bands attend, traveling from all over the world. Competition commences at 9AM. Depending on the size of the grade - or in the case of Grade One, where a band has not previously secured automatic qualification - bands are required to perform in a qualifying round which takes place in the morning. The top bands at the end of the qualifying round play in a second event in the afternoon to determine the winner. In 2013, the games will move to a two-day format for the first time.

In 2004, the Omaha Pipes and Drums competed in three games in Scotland; North Berwick, Bridge of Allan, and the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow. The band finished in 6th place in Grade 4 at Bridge of Allan, 8th Place in Grade 4 at North Berwick, and 7th place in the qualifying rounds of Grade 4B at the World Pipe Band Championships. The band offset the cost of travel and lodging for the trip for each member.

Northern Ireland's Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band won its eighth world championship this year. You can view and listen to all of the Grade 1 competitors on the [BBC website](http://www.bbc.co.uk).



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Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament is a unicameral legislature comprising 129 Members, 73 of whom represent individual constituencies and are elected on a first past the post system; 56 are elected in eight different electoral regions by the additional member system, serving for a four year period. The Queen appoints one Member of the Scottish Parliament, on the nomination of the Parliament, to be First Minister with the convention being that the leader of the party with the largest number of seats is appointed First Minister although any member who can command the confidence of the chamber could conceivably be appointed First Minister. All other Ministers are appointed and dismissed by the First Minister and together they make up the Scottish Government, the executive arm of government.

Since September 2004, the official home of the Scottish Parliament has been a new Scottish Parliament Building (shown in the banner above), in the Holyrood area of Edinburgh. Designed by Catalan architect Enric Miralles, some of the principal features of the complex include leaf-shaped buildings, a grass-roofed branch merging into adjacent parkland and gabion walls formed from the stones of previous buildings. Crow-stepped gables and the upturned boat skylights of the Garden Lobby, complete the unique architecture. Queen Elizabeth II opened the new building on 9 October 2004.



Scottish Independence

Scotland was an independent country from its foundation in the Early Middle Ages (traditionally 843) until 1707 with the Act of Union. The Acts of Union were two Acts of Parliament: the Union with Scotland Act 1706 passed by the Parliament of England and the Union with England Act passed in 1707 by the Parliament of Scotland. They were put into effect the terms of the Treaty of Union that had been agreed on 22 July 1706, following negotiation between commissioners representing the parliaments of the two countries. The Acts joined the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland (previously separate states, with separate legislatures but with the same monarch) into a single, united kingdom named "Great Britain"



King James VI and I

The two countries had shared a monarch since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, when King James VI of Scotland inherited the English throne from his double first cousin twice removed, Queen Elizabeth I. Although described as a Union of Crowns, until 1707 there were in fact two separate Crowns resting on the same head (as opposed to the implied creation of a single Crown and a single Kingdom, exemplified by the later Kingdom of Great Britain). There had been three attempts in 1606, 1667, and 1689 to unite the two countries by Acts of Parliament, but it was not until the early 18th century that both political establishments came to support the idea, albeit for different reasons.

The Acts took effect on 1 May 1707. On this date, the Scottish Parliament and the English Parliament united to form the Parliament of Great Britain, based in the Palace of Westminster in London, the home of the English Parliament. Hence, the Acts are referred to as the Union of the Parliaments. On the Union, historian Simon Schama said "What began as a hostile

merger, would end in a full partnership in the most powerful going concern in the world ... it was one of the most astonishing transformations in European history."

The Visit of King George IV to Scotland in 1822 and the subsequent rise in tartanry did much to reinvigorate a sense of a specifically Scottish national identity, which had been split between the Episcopalian and Roman Catholic-dominated Highlands and the Presbyterian-dominated Lowlands since the Glorious Revolution in 1688, and continued during the 18th century through the Jacobite risings, the Act of Proscription and subsequent process of Highland Clearances by landlords.

From the mid-19th century, calls for the devolution of control over Scottish affairs began to be raised, but support for full independence remained limited. The "home rule" movement for a Scottish Assembly was first taken up in 1853 by a body close to the Conservative Party, complaining about the fact that Ireland received more support from the British Government than Scotland and soon began to receive Liberal Party backing.

In 1921, the Scots National League formed as a body primarily based in London seeking Scottish independence, largely influenced by Sinn Féin. They established the *Scots Independent* newspaper in 1926 and in 1928 they helped the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association form the National Party of Scotland, aiming for a separate Scottish state. One of the founders was Hugh MacDiarmid, a poet who had begun promoting a Scottish literature, while others had Labour Party links. It cooperated with the Scottish Party, a home rule organisation formed in 1932 by former members of the Conservative Party, and merged in 1934 to form the Scottish National Party (SNP), which at first supported only home rule but later changed to supporting independence.

Supporters of Scottish independence continued to hold mixed views on the Home Rule movement which included many supporters of union who wanted devolution within the framework of the United Kingdom. Some saw it as a stepping stone to independence, while others wanted to go straight for independence.

Following the SNP's victory in the 2011 election, which gave the party an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament, First Minister Alex Salmond stated his desire to hold a referendum for independence "in the second half of the parliament" which would place it in 2014 or 2015.

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The Flag of Scotland is the **Saltire**: the white diagonal cross of Scotland's patron saint, St. Andrew, on a blue field. It is one of the oldest flags in the world, dating back, according to the version of the story you believe, to 832, or to 815, or to 761.

According to the most popular version of the legend, a joint force of Picts and Scots under King Angus of Dalriada met an Angle army under King Athelstan at a location four miles north east of Haddington, in East Lothian, in 832. The Picts and Scots were heavily outnumbered, and the night before the battle, King Angus prayed for victory. It is said that during the night St. Andrew appeared to Angus in a dream and promised him the victory he had prayed for.

The following morning the two armies formed up for battle. As they did so, a strange cloud formation appeared, forming a broad diagonal white cross against the background of bright blue sky. The Picts and Scots believed this to be an omen: and so did the Angles. The battle that followed was an improbable victory for the outnumbered Picts and Scots. And the Saltire has been the Flag of Scotland ever since.

The Saltire became part of the Union Flag following the Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland in 1603. One of the oddities of the Saltire is that the shade of blue used for the background has never been defined.



Saint Andrew

Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Patras in Greece, Amalfi in Italy, Luqa in Malta, and Esigueira in Portugal. He was also the patron saint of Prussia. The flag of Scotland (and consequently the Union Flag which also features on the flags of Australia, New Zealand and the arms and flag of Nova Scotia) feature St. Andrew's saltire cross. The saltire is also the flag of Tenerife, the flag of Galicia and the naval jack of Russia. The Confederate flag also features a saltire commonly referred to as a St. Andrew's cross, although its designer, William Porcher Miles, said he changed it from an upright cross to a saltire so that it would not be a religious symbol but merely a heraldic device. The Florida and Alabama flags also show that device. But the Saint never actually set foot on Scottish soil. So how did the brother of Saint Peter come to be Scotland's patron saint?

St. Andrew was a Galilean fisherman and the first disciple of Jesus. According to Tradition, Andrew left the Holy Land after Pentecost to spread the Word in lands around the Black Sea, in what are now Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. In 60AD, during the reign of Nero, he was working in Patras, where he baptized the wife and brother of the Governor, Aegaeus. The Governor was so incensed by this; he ordered the death of the Apostle. Andrew was crucified on a cross in the shape of an X on November 30 which has since become known as the St. Andrew's Cross and forms the basis of the Scottish flag, the Saltire.

Despite having never visited the nation, legend has it that an Angel appeared before Greek monks in Rome and ordered St. Andrew's remains to be taken from Constantinople (now part of Turkey) to the ends of the Earth for safety. St. Rule (Regulus in Latin) undertook the task but became shipwrecked on the east coast of Scotland at a small town later to become St. Andrews.

What probably happened was that the relics were brought from Rome by St. Augustine in 597AD as part of his great mission to bring the Word to the Anglo-Saxons. In 732 they were brought from Hexham to Fife by Bishop Acca, who was seeking asylum with the Pictish King Oengus (Angus). The relics were held at Kirrymont, which was later renamed St. Andrews. From this time, the remains of the first-called Apostle became a major focus of European pilgrimage, second only to Compostella. Numbers coming to venerate the relics of the Saint grew quickly.

In the 11th century St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, endowed a ferry service across the river Forth and hostels, at north and south Queensferry, for pilgrims. The relics were initially housed in St. Rules Church and eventually in the great medieval Cathedral of St. Andrews. Twice a year the relics were carried in procession around the town. Masters and scholars from the colleges, Greyfriars, Blackfriars and Augustinian canons of the metropolitan church and trade guilds all participated. Cathedral and church bells rang and in the evening there were bonfires and fireworks.

Through the dark ages, and medieval period of Scottish history, the Apostle played a major role in the creation and defining of the Scottish Nation. It was commonly believed that the Apostle Andrew had chosen the Scottish people to care for and honor his relics. And so the patron Saint, the saltire flag, the relics and the See of St. Andrew became crucial symbols of nationhood. On 14th June 1559 the interior of St. Andrews Cathedral, including the shrine and relics, was destroyed by reformers who had accompanied John Knox to the city.

The three centuries that followed were difficult for Catholicism in Scotland. Catholic worship was outlawed. The traditions were kept alive in a few outlying glens and islands. Catholics in cities and towns had to rely on visiting priests, trained overseas. Priests like the Jesuit martyr St. John Ogilvie operated underground and were put to death if discovered.

The image of St. Andrew has come to symbolize Scotland, with his cross forming the national flag (the Saltire), and St. Andrew's Day on November 30 becoming a celebration of Scotland at home and abroad.

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Wren day (Irish: *Lá an Dreoilín*) celebrated on 26 December, St. Stephen's Day. The tradition consists of "hunting" a fake wren, and putting it on top of a decorated pole. Then the crowds of *mummers* or *strawboys* celebrate the Wren (also pronounced as the *Wran*) by dressing up in masks, straw suits and colorful motley clothing and, accompanied by traditional céilí music bands, parade through the towns and villages.

Some theorize that the Wren celebration has descended from Celtic mythology. Ultimately, the origin may be a Samhain or midwinter sacrifice and/or celebration, as Celtic mythology considered the Wren a symbol of the past year (the European wren is known for its habit of singing even in mid-winter, and sometimes explicitly called "Winter Wren").

The tradition may also have been influenced by Scandinavian settlers during the Viking invasions of the 8th-10th Centuries. Various associated legends exist, such as a Wren being responsible for betraying Irish soldiers who fought the Viking invaders by beating its wings on their shields, in the late first and early second millennia, and for betraying the Christian martyr Saint Stephen, after whom the day is named.



Christmas in Scotland and Ireland

Prior to the Reformation of 1560, Christmas in Scotland, then called Yule (alternative spellings include Yhoill, Yuil, Țule and Țoull; see Yogh), was celebrated in a similar fashion to the rest of Catholic Europe. Calderwood recorded that in 1545, a few months before his murder, Cardinal Beaton had "*passed over the Christmase dayes with games and feasting*". However, the Reformation transformed attitudes to traditional Christian feasting days, including Christmas, and led in practice to the abolition of festival days and other church holidays; the Kirk and the state being closely linked in Scotland during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.

Christmas Day only became a public holiday in 1958, and Boxing Day in 1974. The New Year's Eve festivity, Hogmanay (see the January 2012 edition of OPD), was by far the largest celebration in Scotland. The gift-giving, public holidays and feasting associated with mid-winter were traditionally held between the 11th of December and 6 January. However, since the 1980s, the fading of the Church's influence and the increased influences from the rest of the UK and elsewhere, Christmas and its related festivities are now nearly on a par with Hogmanay and "Ne'erday". The capital city of Edinburgh now has a traditional German Christmas market from late November until Christmas Eve.

The placing of a lighted candle in the window of a house on Christmas Eve is still practiced today. It has a number of purposes but primarily it was a symbol of welcome to Mary and Joseph as they travelled looking for shelter. A further element of the tradition is that the candle should be lit by the youngest member of the household and only be extinguished by a girl bearing the name 'Mary'. The placing of a ring of Holly on doors originated in Ireland as Holly was one of the main plants that flourished at Christmas time and which gave the poor ample means with which to decorate their dwellings.

The traditional Irish Christmas dinner consists of turkey or goose and ham with a selection of vegetables and roast potatoes. In Cork and some surrounding areas, Spiced beef is traditionally eaten as part of the Christmas dinner. Dessert is very rich with a selection of Christmas pudding, (sometimes served with brandy being set alight and poured over it) Christmas cake, yule log and mince pies with equally rich sauces such as brandy butter.

Santa Claus, *Daidí na Nollag* (Daddy of Christmas) in Irish, is known in Ireland as *Santy* or *Santa*. He brings presents to children in Ireland, which are opened on Christmas morning. It is traditional to leave a mince pie and a bottle or a glass of Guinness along with a carrot for Rudolph, although in recent years Guinness has been replaced with milk and mince pies with cookies due to Americanization.

Little Christmas (*Nollaig Bheag*) is one of the traditional names in Ireland for January 6, more commonly known in the rest of the world as the Feast of the Epiphany. It is so called because under the older Julian calendar, Christmas Day celebrations fell on that day whereas under the Gregorian calendar it falls on December 25. It is the traditional end of the Christmas season and the last day of the Christmas holidays for both primary and secondary schools in Ireland.

In the Scottish Highlands the term *Little Christmas* is applied to New Year's Day, also known as *Là Challuinn*, or *Là na Bliadhna Ùire*, while Epiphany is known as *Là Féill nan Rìgh*, the feast-day of the Kings. The Transalpine Redemptorists who live on Papa Stronsay celebrate 'Little Christmas' on the twenty-fifth day of every month, except for December, when the twenty-fifth day is of course celebrated as Christmas Day.

Little Christmas is also called Women's Christmas (*Nollaig na mBan*), and sometimes *Women's Little Christmas*. The tradition, still very strong in Cork and Kerry is so called because of the Irish men taking on all the household duties for the day. Most women hold parties or go out to celebrate the day with their friends, sisters, mothers, and aunts. Bars and restaurants serve mostly women and girls on this night. Children often buy presents for their mothers and grandmothers.

Until next month,

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Dhuit

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year