Omaha Pipes and Drums

OPD 2015 Newsletters

OPD 2015 Monthly Newsletter

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

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www.omahapipesanddrums.com
a Celtic tradition since 1970

the National Trust for Scotland

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, commonly known as the National Trust for Scotland (Scottish Gaelic: *Urras Nàiseanta na h-Alba*) describes itself as "the conservation charity that protects and promotes Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy."

The Trust was established in 1931. It is similar in function to the National Trust, which covers England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and to other national trusts worldwide. The Trust's Patron is Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay; the President is James Lindesay-Bethune, 16th Earl of Lindsay, and the Chairman is Sir Kenneth Calman.

The Trust owns and manages around 130 properties and 180,000 acres of land, including castles, ancient small dwellings, historic sites, gardens, and remote rural areas. Most grounds and open spaces are open throughout the year but buildings may generally only be visited from Easter to October, sometimes only in the afternoons.

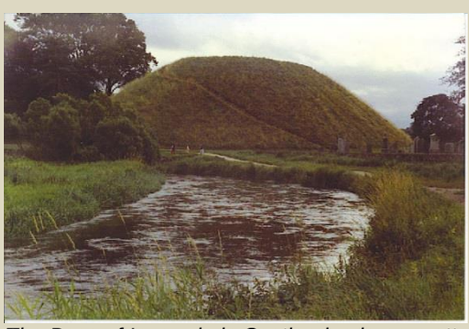
Annual membership of the Trust allows free entry to properties and "Discovery Tickets" are available for shorter term visitors. Membership also provides free entry to National Trust properties in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and vice versa.

http://www.nts.org.uk/Join/

Castles

A man's home may not be a "castle." A **c**astle is a type of fortified structure built in Europe and the Middle East during the Middle Ages by nobility. The word *castle* is derived from the Latin word *castellum* which is a diminutive of the word *castrum*, meaning "fortified place". Scholars debate the scope of the word *castle*, but usually consider it to be the private fortified residence of a lord or noble. This is distinct from a palace, which is not fortified; from a fortress, which was not always a residence for nobility; and from a fortified settlement, which was a public defense. Over the approximately 900 years that castles were built, they took on a great many forms with many different features.

Castles, in the sense of a fortified residence of a lord or noble, arrived in Scotland as a consequence of the centralizing of royal authority in the twelfth century. Prior to the 1120s there is very little evidence of castles having existed in Scotland, which had remained less politically centralized than in England with the north still ruled by the kings of Norway. David I of Scotland (r. 1124–53) spent time at the court of Henry I of England, becoming Earl of Huntingdon, and returned to Scotland with the intention of extending royal power across the country and modernizing Scotland's military technology, including the introduction of castles. The Scottish king encouraged Norman and French nobles to settle in Scotland, introducing a feudal mode of landholding and the use of castles as a way of controlling the contested Scottish Lowlands. The creation of castles in Scotland was less to do with conquest and more to do with establishing a governing system. These were primarily wooden motte-and-bailey constructions, of a raised mount or motte, surmounted by a wooden tower and a larger adjacent enclosure or bailey, both usually surrounded by a fosse (a ditch) and palisade, and connected by a wooden bridge.



The Bass of Inverurie in Scotland, a large motte and bailey castle built in the mid-twelfth century

The need for thick and high walls for defense forced the use of economic building methods, often continuing the Scottish tradition of dry-stone rubble building, which were then covered with a lime render, or harled (plastered) for weatherproofing and a uniform appearance. In addition to the baronial castles there were royal castles, often larger and providing defense, lodging for the itinerant Scottish court and a local administrative center. By 1200 these included fortifications at Ayr and Berwick. In Scotland Alexander II (r. 1198–1249) and Alexander III (1241–86) undertook a number of castle building projects in the modern style. Alexander III's early death sparked conflict in Scotland and English intervention under Edward I in 1296. The resulting Wars of Independence brought this phase of castle building to an end and began a new phase of siege warfare.

The first recorded siege in Scotland was the 1230 siege of Rothesay Castle where the besieging Norwegians were able to break down the relatively weak stone walls with axes after only three days. When Edward I invaded Scotland he brought with him the siege capabilities that had evolved south of the border, resulting in the rapid fall of major castles. Edinburgh Castle fell within three days, and Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Dunbar, Stirling, Lanark and Dumbarton castles all surrendered to the English king. Subsequent English sieges, such as the attacks on Bothwell and Stirling, again used considerable resources including giant siege engines and extensive teams of miners and masons. As a result Robert the Bruce (r. 1306–29) adopted a policy of castle destruction, rather than allow fortresses to be easily retaken and then held by the English, beginning with his own castles at Ayr and Dumfries, and including Roxburgh and Edinburgh. After the Wars of Independence, new castles began to be built, often on a grander scale as "livery and maintenance" castles, to house retained troops, like Tantallon, Lothian and Doune near Stirling, rebuilt for Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany in the fourteenth century.

Tantallon Castle

Early gunpowder weapons were introduced to Scotland by the 1330s. The new technology began to be installed in Scottish castles by the 1380s, beginning with Edinburgh. In the fifteenth century, gunpowder weaponry fundamentally altered the nature of castle architecture. Existing castles were adapted to allow the use of the new weapons by the incorporation of "keyhole" gun ports, platforms to mount guns and walls that were adapted to resist bombardment. Ravenscraig, Kirkcaldy, begun about 1460, is probably the first

castle in the British Isles to be built as an artillery fort, incorporating "D-shape" bastions that would better resist cannon fire and on which artillery could be mounted. It also used "letter box" gun-ports, common in mainland Europe, although rarer in England, they rapidly spread across the kingdom. Scotland also led the way in adopting the new caponier design for castle ditches, as constructed at Craignethan Castle.

Craignethan Castle

An extensive building and rebuilding of royal palaces probably began under James III in the Fifteenth Century. The shift in architectural focus reflected changing political alliances, as James V had formed a close alliance with France during his reign. Work from his reign largely disregarded the insular style adopted in England under Henry VIII and adopted forms that were recognizably European.

In the period of French intervention in the 1540s and 1550s, at the end of the Rough Wooing (December 1543 – March 1550), Scotland was given a defended border of a series of earthwork forts and additions to existing castles. These included the erection of single bastions at Edinburgh, Stirling and Dunbar. The unique style of great private houses in Scotland, later known as Scots baronial, has been located in origin to the period of the 1560s. It kept many of the features of the high walled Medieval castles that had been largely made obsolete by gunpowder weapons and may have been influenced by the French masons brought to Scotland to work on royal palaces. It drew on the tower houses and peel towers, with their parapets, corbels, and bartizans. The new estate houses built from the late sixteenth century by nobles and lairds were primarily built for comfort, not for defense, although they were often called castles. They retained many of these external features which had become associated with nobility, but with a larger ground plan. This was classically a "Z-plan" of a rectangular block with towers, as at Colliston Castle (1583) and Claypotts Castle (1569–88).

Claypotts Castle

In 1603 James VI of Scotland inherited the crown of England, bringing a period of peace between the two countries. The royal court left for London, and as a result – with the exceptions of occasional visits - building work on royal castles north of the border largely ceased. Some castles continued to have modest military utility into the eighteenth century. The royal castles of Edinburgh, Dumbarton and Stirling, along with Dunstaffnage, Dunollie, Blackness and Ruthven Castle, continued in use as practical fortifications. Tower houses were being built up until the 1640s. After the Restoration the fortified tower house fell out of fashion, but the weak state of the Scottish economy was such that, while many larger properties were simply abandoned, the more modest castles continued to be used and adapted as houses, rather than rebuilt.

In the Bishop's Wars castles that held out for the king against the Covenanters, including Caerlaverock and Threave in 1640, were slighted, with their roofs removed and walls breached to make them uninhabitable. Tantallon was used as a base for Scottish attacks on Oliver Cromwell's advancing army in 1651. As a result it was pounded into submission by the New Model Army's siege train, losing its end towers and ceasing to be a residence from that point. The sequence of Jacobite risings from 1689 threatened the Crown in Scotland, culminating in the rebellion in 1745. Stirling was able to withstand the Jacobite attack in 1745 and the siege of Blair Castle, at the end of the rebellion in 1746, was the final castle siege to occur in the British Isles. In the aftermath of the conflict Corgaff and many others castles were used as barracks for the forces sent to garrison the Highlands. Kildrummy, Huntly and Doune were destroyed as a result of their part in the rebellion.

BlaireCastle

There was a revival of the castle in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as part of the wider Gothic Revival movement, as new houses were built and existing buildings remodeled in the Gothic and Scots Baronial styles. Inveraray Castle displays the incorporation of turrets and is among the first houses in the revived style.

Inverary Castle

Restoration of castles began in the early twentieth century, with projects including the renovation of Duart Castle on Mull, and the complete reconstruction of Eilean Donan (shown in the header) from a few fragments of masonry. The restoration movement grew after World War II with a fashion for renovating tower houses. Most of Scotland's castles, whether ruined or occupied, remain in private ownership, though many are open to the public at least occasionally. During the twentieth century a number of older castles were transferred into the care of the state, and these are now the responsibility of Historic Scotland.

Until next month…

Sláinte

OPD
February 2015

The **Omaha Pipes and Drums**
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Luckenbooths

Built around 1460, the Luckenbooths or "Locked booths" housed Edinburgh's first permanent shops. The row of seven tenement buildings was connected to the Old Tolbooth, running parallel to St Giles.

Originally exclusive to the use of goldsmiths and jewelers, they later housed tenants with a variety of trades including a baker, milliner, hairdresser and "ane chymist and druggist".

Between the south wall of this building block and the wall of the Churchyard is a narrow close called the Krames, where retailers without premises began to offer their wares around 1550-60. Lord Cockburn described this area as "The paradise of childhood' on account of the toys, trinkets and other hardware sold at stalls along this pathway.

The Luckenbooth Brooch

During the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries there were two main styles of brooches in Scotland; one was the ring brooch, often with incised decoration, and used to fasten plaids by both men and women. The other brooch was a heart shaped one, often given at weddings and engagements as tokens of love.

From the eighteenth century onwards small plain heart shaped brooches were worn to protect against evil spirits, the evil eye or the attention of the fairies. These are the famous “Luckenbooth Brooches”. These brooches were heart shaped and usually made of silver.

Their names come from “The luckenbooth” or “locking booths” (see insert). These small shops, which were in fact very tiny and could be securely locked at night, were a feature of Edinburgh’s Royal Mile.

The brooches were traditionally given as love tokens, or as betrothal gifts instead of an engagement ring, with initials on the back. Mottoes like *“let thee and me most happy be”* were sometimes engraved on heart brooches. They were also widely used to fend off bad luck, especially for newborn babies and nursing mothers wanting to ensure a good flow of milk. A little silver heart was pinned to a child’s clothing to keep it safe. Some would say this was to protect against witches; others mentioned “the guid folk” or mischievous fairies. In some regions a girl’s brooch was put near her left hip, and a boy’s half-way down the left thigh.

Although these customs were dying out by the 20th century, many individuals and families held on to their luckenbooth brooches, because of their meaning perhaps, and some used them for good luck in times of illness etc. The little pieces of silver like were treated as lucky charms, although the name luckenbooth has nothing to do with luck.

Usually an antique luckenbooth brooch is silver and quite small. Silver can be associated with good fortune or protection against evil, in Britain and across Europe. There were also practical reasons why silver was more popular than gold. Most heart brooches were not showy pieces for the wealthy classes. Silversmiths knew a lot of poorer customers wanted this kind of jewelry. Simple looped pins, not fully hinged, were common fastenings. If the brooch was decorated with gems, they were often colored glass paste. Semi-precious garnets were also used.

Luckenbooth brooches used to have other names:

- **Witch’s brooch**. This underlines the superstitious reasons for protecting children with a small piece of silver pinned on their clothing.
- **Mary’s brooch**. Some people say the v-shaped dip in a capital M resembles the top of a heart, and there are stories linking the brooch with Mary Queen of Scots and her husband Lord Darnley.

The brooches could be a simple friendship gift too – with no suggestion of romance or “evil eye” protection. In the 1920s the design was chosen as the symbol for a network of women’s clubs (SWRI) who made the heart white to stand for purity and the crown gold for courage.

Until next month…

Sláinte

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The Keeper *of the* Great Seal of Scotland

The Great Seal is administered by the *Keeper of the Great Seal*, one of the Great Officers of State. The first Keeper was Sir Alexander de Cockburn (1389) From 1885 this office was held by the Secretary of State for Scotland. It transferred in 1999 to the First Minister of Scotland, whose place in the order of precedence in Scotland is determined by his office as Keeper of the Great Seal. In practice the Seal is in the custody of the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland, who has been appointed as Deputy Keeper.

The current (2014) Keeper of the Great Seal is Nicola Sturgeon. Nicola Ferguson Sturgeon (born 19 July 1970) is the fifth and current First Minister of Scotland and the Leader of the Scottish National Party. She is the first woman to hold either position.

Records of charters under the Great Seal of Scotland from 1306 to 1668 are published in the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland (*Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*).

You can learn more about the history of Scottish seals from the eleventh to the seventeenth century here.

OPD
March 2015
5th Anniversary

The Great Seal of Scotland

The Great Seal of Scotland (An Seala Mòr na h-Alba in Gaelic) allows the monarch to authorize official documents without having to sign each document individually. Wax is melted in a metal mold or matrix and impressed into a wax figure that is attached by cord or ribbon to documents that the monarch wishes to make official. All Royal Warrants are super-scribed by the Monarch of the day.

There are frequent references to the Great Seal in Acts of Parliament of Scotland as far back 1398, and to this day legislation approved at Holyrood must 'pass under' it.

The Seal of King Duncan II, the earliest extant Great Seal, is best known from an impression, unfortunately not perfect, preserved among the numerous Scottish documents in the Treasury of Durham Cathedral and dates to 1094. When perfect, the seal measured about two inches and one-eighth.

On it are observed the King riding on a warhorse turned to the right. On it the King styles himself – "Duncan, son of King Malcolumb, by hereditary right King of Scotia."

He was deposed by Edgar.

With Alexander the First, who was king from the 8th of January, 1106-7 to April, 1124, a new type of Great Seal was initiated which has endured – with few but notable interruptions – to the present day. This is the duplex type where the king, as king, seated on a throne, is delineated on the one side, and as military leader, riding to war on a charger at the head of his host, on the other.

Click here to see examples of other early seals.

A number of functions disappeared under the Act of Union, which technically abolished the Great Seal but appointed a Seal to be kept and used in place of the Great Seal. It is this seal that is generally referred to as the Scottish Seal though technically it is referred to as "Her Majesty's Seal appointed by the Treaty of Union to be kept and used in Scotland in place of the Great Seal of Scotland."

The Design of the Great Seal is a responsibility of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. The reverse of the seal shows the monarch on horseback, but is not changed from reign to reign—the current version is that engraved in 1911 for the accession of King George V. The obverse is inscribed "ELIZABETH II D G BRITT REGNORVMQVE SVORVM CETER REGINA CONSORTIONIS POPULORUM PRINCEPS F D" and the figure on it is the same as on the Great Seal of the United Kingdom.

The Great Seal of Scotland is the same size as the English seal; has a similar obverse/seal with Scottish modifications, and an armorial reverse/counterseal. The arms look similar to the English arms, but have the Scottish Lion in the first quarter, instead of the three English 'Leopards'.

Until next month…

Sláinte

OPD April 2015

The History *of the* Quaich

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There are many occasions to use the quaich

- Simple Toast with Family or Friends
- Wedding Toast
- Christening Toast: In Scotland, it is customary to celebrate Christening by toasting with a quaich, as well as giving a quaich as a Christening gift.
- Holiday Toast
- Robert Burn's Supper: The highlight of any Robert Burns celebration is the parading of the Haggis led by a kilted bagpiper, and the recitation of Burns' "Address to a Haggis". This is customarily followed by a toast, whereby the reader and the piper toast with a traditional quaich.
- New Year Celebrations: Share a "Cup o Kindness" in a Scottish quaich!
- Tartan Day: Tartan Day honors the contribution of Scottish Americans to this country and is a perfect time to celebrate the Tartan and Scottish culture with a quaich.
- St. Andrew's Day is November 30th of each year. Fly the national flag of Scotland, the Saltire or St. Andrew's Cross, and share a toast in a quaich.
- As a simple gift: Give a quaich as a simple gift to show your friendship, love or just as an expression of something Scottish, whether it be a birthday, anniversary or just because.
- As an Heirloom: Your quaich will last a lifetime, and can be passed down to future generations.

So whatever its use, share it with those to follow you and make it a tradition.

A quaich is a special kind of shallow two-handled drinking cup or bowl in Scotland. It derives from the Scottish Gaelic *cuach* meaning a cup. It would appear that perhaps the word also evolved from "quoich". Quoich is also a word used to describe a cup shape; for example the place named Loch Quoich, a loch and reservoir located in the west Scottish Highlands.

The quaich may have been inspired by the low silver bowls with two flat handles frequently used as bleeding vessels in England and the Netherlands in the 17th century. Historically, the quaich was used as both an eating and drinking vessel and of wood stave construction.

Traditionally, quaichs are made of wood; an art form known as "treen". Some early quaichs are stave-built like barrels and some have alternating light and dark staves. The staves are held together by bands of willow or silver. They generally have two, and more rarely three or four, short, projecting handles called "lugs".

The silver-mounted wooden quaich on the left is dated 1692. The wooden quaich on the right is set with a silver coin of Charles II.

Other wooden quaichs were lathe-turned out of a single piece of wood and there was another group which were turned then carved outside in basket-weave pattern. In addition to wood, they are made of stone, brass, pewter, horn, and silver. The latter were often engraved with lines and bands in imitation of the staves and hoops of the wooden quaichs.

The bowl of this quaich from the 18th century is formed from alternate strips of ebony and ivory.

Over the years, the quaich has also evolved as a toasting cup, lending to yet another name, the "Cup of Friendship". It has been used as a common toasting cup to celebrate visitors, weddings, christenings, family and friends or just to share a dram of fine Scottish whiskey. And its construction evolved over the years too. Quaichs were also made of pewter, sterling silver and even gold. Aristocracy took an interest in fine quaichs, the making of which became a well-respected profession.

This silver example was made in 1878-9 by Hamilton & Inches of Edinburgh. It is decorated with thistles and set with 'Cairngorm' cut stones. The lugs are formed from curving thistle leaves.

Commemorative quaichs awarded as prizes, or given as gifts, are more commonly made of pewter or silver. These prize cups are rarely used for actual drinking.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), famed Scottish author, was fond of serving libations from his collection of quakes. One of his quaichs, the "Waterloo Tree Quaich" was recently recovered after being stolen from Abbotsford House near Melrose in 1994. The quaich was made by Joseph Angell of London in 1824 from silver gilt and elm wood that was cut from a tree at the Waterloo battlefield in 1815. The Duke of Wellington supposedly directed troops against Napoleon from beneath the tree, which subsequently became a source of souvenir wood.

It has also been reported, that a recent auction fetched over £20,000 for a Silver Quaich, thought to be the most ever paid for a piece of silverware.

Today, the Quaich enjoys a place in Scottish, American and Canadian cultures as a fine traditional drinking vessel linked to the past. And how do you say Quaich? In Scotland, the guttural "ch" sound ends the word, such as in the word "loch". The Americanized version of the word tends to be more like "quake".

Until next month…

Sláinte

OPD
May 2015

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The Black Watch

The source of the regiment's name is uncertain. In 1725, following the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, General George Wade was authorized by George II to form six "watch" companies to patrol the Highlands of Scotland, three from Clan Campbell, one from Clan Fraser, one from Clan Munro and one from Clan Grant. These were to be "employed in disarming the Highlanders, preventing depredations, bringing criminals to justice, and hindering rebels and attainted persons from inhabiting that part of the kingdom." The force was known in Gaelic as *Am Freiceadan Dubh,* "the dark" or "black watch".

Other theories have been put forward; for instance, that the name referred to the "black hearts" of the pro-government militia who had sided with the "enemies of true Highland spirit", or that it came from their original duty in policing the Highlands, namely preventing "blackmail" (Highlanders demanding extortion payments to spare cattle herds). However, these theories are without historical basis and do not stand up to scrutiny.

Scottish Regiments

The French term *régiment* entered military usage in Europe at the end of the 16th century, when armies evolved from collections of retinues who followed knights, to formally organized, permanent military forces. At that time, regiments were usually named after their commanding colonels, and disbanded at the end of the campaign or war; the colonel and his regiment might recruit from and serve several monarchs or countries. Later, it was customary to name the regiment by its precedence in the line of battle, and to recruit from specific places, called cantons.

A Scottish regiment is any regiment (or similar military unit) that at some time in its history has or had a name that referred to Scotland or some part, thereof, and adopted items of Scottish dress. These regiments were and are usually a product of the British Empire, either directly serving the United Kingdom, serving as colonial troops, or later as part of Commonwealth country military establishments. Their "Scottishness" is no longer necessarily due to recruitment in Scotland or any proportion of members of Scottish ancestry. Traditionally, Scottish regiments cultivate a reputation of exceptional fierceness in combat and are often given romantic portrayals in popular media. Within Scotland, itself, regiments of the Scottish Lowlands did not adopt as strong a "Scottish" (specifically Highland Scottish) character until the late Victorian Era.

Lowland Regiments

The Lowland regiments generally predate the more widely known Highland regiments. The senior Lowland regiment was The Royal Scots. The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), once known as the Royal Regiment of Foot, was the oldest, and therefore most senior, infantry regiment of the line in the British Army, having been raised in 1633 by Sir John Hepburn, under a royal warrant from Charles I, on the Scottish establishment for service in France.

On 23 March 2006, of the Royal Scots with the King's Own Scottish Borderers, were merged into the single battalion forming part of the new Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The Royal Scots Fusiliers was raised in Scotland in 1678 by Stuart loyalist Charles Erskine, *de jure* 5th Earl of Mar for service against the rebel covenanting forces during the Second Whig Revolt (1678–1679). It was used to keep the peace and put down brigands, mercenaries, and rebels. In the Glorious Revolution of 1689, the regiment was ordered south. Initially, it stayed loyal to James II of England; however, when he fled to Ireland, it opted to serve Prince William of Orange. Ironically, the regiment later fought against the Jacobites during the Second Jacobite Rebellion (1745) at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

The Royal Scots Fusiliers were amalgamated with the Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment) in 1959 to form The Royal Highland Fusiliers, (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment).

The King's Own Scottish Borderers was raised on 18 March 1689 by David Melville, 3rd Earl of Leven to defend Edinburgh against the Jacobite forces of James II. It's claimed that 800 men were recruited within the space of two hours. The Regiment's first action was at the Battle of Killiecrankie on 27 July 1689.

Although this battle was a defeat for the Williamite army, the Jacobite commander, John Graham, 1st Viscount Dundee (Bonnie Dundee), was killed by a volley fired by Leven's Regiment, bringing an end to James II's attempt to save his throne in Scotland. The Regiment was judged to have performed well and was granted the privilege of recruiting by beat of drum in the City of Edinburgh without prior permission of the provost.

Throughout the 17th, 18th and most of the 19th centuries these Scottish regiments served widely and with distinction. They did not however differ significantly in appearance or public perception from the bulk of the line infantry of the British Army. In 1881 the introduction of the Cardwell system of reforms provided the opportunity to adopt a modified form of Scottish dress for the Lowland regiments. Comprising doublets and tartan trews this gave the Lowlanders a distinctive identity, separate from their English, Welsh, Irish, and Highland counterparts.

The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) was the only regiment of rifles amongst the Scottish infantry. It was formed in 1881 under the Childers Reforms by the amalgamation of the 26th Cameronian Regiment and 90th Perthshire Light Infantry. After the amalgamation, the 1st Battalion preferred to be known as "The Cameronians" while the 2nd preferred to be known as "The Scottish Rifles"

The Cameronians was disbanded on 14 May 1968 at Douglas Castle, near Douglas, South Lanarkshire in the presence of the Duke of Hamilton. However, the name of the Cameronians continued through the Territorial Army, with two companies of the 52nd Lowland Regiment badged as Cameronians. One company was disbanded in 1992, the other was rebadged as the King's Own Scottish Borderers in 1997.

Highland Regiments

The original Highland regiments were raised in the 18th century with the object of recruiting rank and file solely from the Scottish Highlands. The first Highland regiment was the Black Watch.

The Black Watch was originally raised from clans openly loyal to the status quo to police the Highlands, which were deemed to be both rebellious and lawless by the contemporary British establishment. However, due to a pressing need for personnel in North America during the Seven Years' War, William Pitt the elder made the decision to raise new Highland regiments to fight in this imperial war. The war ended in victory and among other things, Canada was secured as a part of the British Empire, while the British East India Company's position in India was consolidated and expanded, both at the expense of the French. These Highland regiments were disbanded after the war, but other Highland regiments were later raised and, like the rest of the British Army, saw service in various wars including in the British colonization of India and the Peninsular War.

Other Highland regiments include:

- The Highland Light Infantry
- The Seaforth Highlanders (Ross–shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's)
- The Gordon Highlanders
- The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders
- The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)
- The Highlanders, 4th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland (4 SCOTS)
- The 51st Highland Volunteers

The Childers Reforms restructured the infantry regiments of the British army. The reforms were undertaken by Secretary of State for War Hugh Childers in 1881. The reform created a network of multi-battalion regiments. In practice, it was not always possible to apply the scheme strictly. This structure lasted until 1948, when every regiment of line infantry had its regular battalions cut to one, with only the three original Guards Division regiments retaining two regular battalions.

The system introduced in 1881 finally came to an end with the reforms introduced by the Defense White Paper of 1957. A number of pairs of regiments were amalgamated, while regimental depots were closed with recruiting and training being organized in multi-regiment brigades.

Until next month…

Sláinte

OPD June 2015

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The **Guardians of Scotland** were the *de facto* heads of state of Scotland during the First Interregnum of 1290–1292, and the Second Interregnum of 1296–1306. During the many years of minority in Scotland's subsequent history, there were many guardians of Scotland and the post was a significant constitutional feature in the course of development for politics in the country.

In a letter (written in Old French) from the Scots Parliament of 1290, sitting at Birgham, confirming the Treaty of Salisbury, the guardians of Scotland are listed as:

"... Guillaume de Seint Andreu et Robert de Glasgu evesques, Johan Comyn et James Seneschal de Escoce, gardeins du reaume de Escoce..."

English translation: "William [Fraser] of St Andrews and Robert [Wishart] of Glasgow bishops, John Comyn and James the Steward of Scotland, guardians of the kingdom of Scotland".

The Maid of Norway

Before Mary, another woman was Queen of Scots.

The last King of the House of Dunkeld was Alexander III, (4 September 1241 – 19 March 1286) King of Scots from 1249 to his death. His wife had borne him two sons and a daughter; but by 1286 his sons were dead and his daughter, Margaret, had borne only a single daughter, also named Margaret, to her husband Eric II of Norway before herself dying.

Alexander had himself remarried, but in early 1286 he died in an accident while riding home. His wife, Yolande of Dreux, was pregnant; but by November 1286 all hope of her bearing a living child had passed. Accordingly, in the Treaty of Salisbury, the Guardians of Scotland recognized Alexander's three-year-old granddaughter, Margaret (Maighread) known as 'The Maid of Norway', as Queen of Scots.

It is unlikely that this was intended to allow Margaret to rule alone as queen regnant, but rather jointly with her future spouse, whoever he might be.

In Scotland, six Guardians were named to rule the kingdom until an heir could be sorted out. Queen Yolande was insisting she was pregnant. The records are uncertain as to what happened to this child. Accounts say she miscarried, had a stillborn child, a false pregnancy and yet another says she was faking her pregnancy.

By November of 1286, it was clear King Alexander had no heir. Scotland was on the brink of civil war with Robert the Bruce and John Balliol contending for the throne. By 1289, the Guardians had gained some stability between the three claimants.

In 1289, Margaret's father King Eric sent ambassadors to King Edward I of England with documents proclaiming Margaret as Queen. From this point on Edward and Eric worked on a settlement and excluded the Scots until there was a meeting with Edward, Robert the Bruce and some of the Guardians at Salisbury in October of 1289. Edward was pressing for a marriage to his own son, the future Edward II. The Treaty of Birgham was signed in July of 1290, agreeing Margaret would be sent to Scotland before November 1, 1290 and she would marry Prince Edward of England. The treaty called for Scotland to be separate from England but had clauses allowing King Edward I to interfere in Scottish affairs if he saw fit.

In August of 1290, Margaret's father decided she would be taken to the Norwegian territory of the Orkney Islands, where final arrangements would be made for her entry to Scotland. Two Scottish knights and Margaret's retinue, along with the Bishop of Narve, left Norway in September to make the voyage. Margaret was to fall ill on the trip, whether from seasickness, a weak constitution or some other illness. The ship arrived in Orkney where Margaret was taken ashore. She died in the arms of the Bishop.

The Bishop took her body back to Bergen. Her father insisted on opening the coffin so he could view his daughter one more time. She was buried in the Cathedral of Bergen beside her mother. The nobility of Scotland, who had been gathering at Scone for a coronation, were now faced with a dynastic crisis. No less than thirteen claimants to the throne were now gathering their armies.

Until next month…

Sláinte

The **Omaha Pipes and Drums**
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Kirk

The Kirk of Scotland was in official use as the name of the Church of Scotland until the 17th century, and still today the term is frequently used in the press and everyday speech. *Kirk Session* is still the standard term in church law for the court of elders in the local congregation, both in the Church of Scotland and in any of the other Scottish Presbyterian denominations. *The Free Kirk* is heard as an informal name for the Free Church of Scotland, the remnant of an evangelical Presbyterian church formed in 1843 when its founders withdrew from the Church of Scotland. *High Kirk* is the term sometimes used to describe a congregation of the Church of Scotland which uses a building which was a cathedral prior to the Reformation.

The verb *to kirk*, meaning 'to present in church', was probably first used for the annual church services of some Scottish town councils, known as the *Kirking of the Council*. Since the establishment of a Scottish Parliament in 1999, the *Kirking of the Parliament* has become a fixed ceremony at the beginning of a session. Historically a newly married couple would attend public worship as man and wife for the first time at their Kirking. *Kirking of the Tartan* ceremonies have become an integral part of most Scottish Festivals and Highland Games.

OPD
July 2015

The Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland known informally by its Scots language name, the Kirk, is the national church in Scotland. It is Protestant and Presbyterian. Its longstanding decision to respect "liberty of opinion on matters not affecting the substance of the faith" means it is relatively tolerant of a variety of theological positions, including those who would term themselves conservative and liberal in their doctrine, ethics and interpretation of Scripture. Though it is legally the national church, it is not a state church in the sense of being under the control of the state.

The history of how it grew into its present shape starts more than 1,500 years ago. About 400AD, St. Ninian began the first large-scale Christian mission to Scotland from Whithorn in the far south-west, converting many Pictish people to the new faith, long before Scotland was a single country. The great heroic figure of the early story is St Columba, the Irish prince-in-exile, who crossed to the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland later in the fifth century. He established a community of monks who spread the Gospel far and wide through Scotland and the north of England.

In the centuries that followed, as Scotland began to find its identity as a nation, and hundreds of years of tension with her English neighbors to the South began, the Church adopted the Roman, not Celtic, practices of work and worship. Saintly figures like Queen Margaret encouraged and supported its work and influence, and the papacy allowed Scotland to be independent of England for church purposes.

The Reformation in Scotland came to its head in the 1560s, and was modelled on John Calvin's Geneva. His pupil John Knox is famous for head-to-head debates with Mary, Queen of Scots; the Catholic Queen who returned from France and tried to remain loyal to the Roman system. By the end of the 16th century, the Protestant Church of Scotland had developed into a Presbyterian Church, with a system of courts (today the General Assembly, presbytery and kirk session), and a strong tradition of preaching and Scriptural emphasis.

Anyone reading Scottish history comes to realize what a key player the Church of Scotland has been since it was reformed in the 16th century. It was not all plain sailing from then on, however, especially after the crowns of Scotland and England were united in 1603. Attempts by Charles I and Charles II to control the Kirk (to use the Scots term) met with protest, including the signing of the National Covenant at Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh in 1638. Many years of struggle continued amongst factions with different views. Known as the Covenanters they continued to proclaim their faith, even resorting to holding open-air services.

The succession of William and Mary to the throne in 1688 changed the situation, and the Revolution Settlement of 1690 finally established the reformed, Presbyterian Church as the national Church of Scotland. The monarch even today has a special relationship with the Church of Scotland and renews that every year by sending a representative to attend the General Assembly.

Controversy and division were common in the Church between 1750 and 1850, when there was considerable concern about the Church's relations with the State, particularly over intervention in the appointment of ministers. The largest division was the Disruption of 1843, a major split which saw about one third of the Kirk break away to form what came to be the Free Kirk.

The next 90 years were spent removing the causes of division, and reuniting several churches, all of them Presbyterian, so that today the Church of Scotland is the largest Protestant church in the country, with a number of very small churches alongside it, representing those who chose not to find their way into the union process.

The process of reunion gave the Church of Scotland an opportunity to resolve once and for all how it wanted to govern itself and how it wanted to relate to the state. Little remains of the Church's previous establishment, but it retains a strong sense of a national responsibility to bring Christ's Gospel to the whole of Scotland. It is free, therefore, from civil interference in spiritual matters. In a millennium and a half, the Church has been at different times a tiny, radical outside force, a revolutionary movement, a strand of government and a partner in civil society. It has been supportive and critical, protective and destructive.

Today the Church of Scotland lives in the creative tension of serving a nation, offering the ordinances of religion and also providing a prophetic Gospel voice through parish ministry and national engagement of many kinds.

Until next month…

Sláinte

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The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) is a governing body to oversee pipe band competition, and to promote and encourage the development of pipe band culture throughout the world. It was founded, and has been active, since 1930.

Click here for a complete history of the RSPBA.

The RSPBA sets the rules and guidelines for pipe band contests that take place in [the United Kingdom], administers the events themselves, coordinating adjudication, logistics and evaluation, and holds Annual General Meetings to ensure that the rules and regulations are up to date. In addition, the RSPBA administers and coordinates the World Pipe Band Championships.

At Branch level, there are numerous contests held at Highland Games and any venue which raises the fund to hold a contest. Bands are placed in a Grade system - from Grade 4 up to Grade 1. Competitive standards are set and maintained by the Music Board, and each branch of the RSPBA may appoint two National Council members to represent their Branch Members at the national level.

Cowal Gathering

The Cowal Highland Gathering (also known as the Cowal Games) is an annual Highland games event held in the Scottish town of Dunoon, Argyll, over the final weekend in August.

The Cowal peninsula, formed by Loch Fyne to the west and Loch Long to the east, and deeply indented by a series of further sea lochs, is the most visited part of Argyll. It is not far from Glasgow and frequent ferry services by both CalMac and Western Ferries from Gourock serve Dunoon

Dunoon is the capital of the Cowal peninsula, and grew from a village to a major Clyde seaside resort in the 1800s. It is dominated by Castle Hill upon which sits Castle House, built in the 1820s by a wealthy Glaswegian who generated local protest about access to common land around the house.

The first Cowal Games was held in Dunoon in 1894, and attracted fewer than 2,000 spectators. By 1901, attendances reached 5,000, and the first overseas competitor, an American athlete, took part. Nowadays, the Cowal Games attracts more than 3,500 competitors, with many coming from overseas countries, including Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Dunoon regularly welcomes around 15,000 to 20,000 visitors for the Games, doubling the town's population for the weekend.

1906 saw the introduction of a pipe band competition. In 1929, the first approaches from Scottish societies overseas were received, and this has continued as expatriates the world over have turned to Dunoon for advice and practical assistance in setting up their own Gatherings.

After a break during the years of World War II, the first post-war Gathering, in 1946, attracted attendances of 28,000. However, the record attendance, to date at least, was in 1950 when 30,000 visitors attended, one of whom was then-Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

In 2000, changes to the Highland dancing format resulted in the Friday becoming a high-profile day, with the top dancers out to qualify for Saturday's finals. The Solo Bagpipe competition introduced a graded system. Shinty was reintroduced, attracting high-caliber competitions.

2003 saw Cowal extended to a three-day event with the introduction of the Scottish National Highland Dancing Championships and the five-kilometer Cowal Run. Around 750 dancers compete over the three days.

The 2007 event saw controversy when it was announced that the committee had decided to abandon the track, athletic and shinty competitions. Other changes made in 2007 were the introduction of a Most Entertaining Band competition and the mace-over-the-bar competition, both of which are light-hearted events allowing the bandsmen to let their hair down whilst entertaining the crowds.

In 2009 a children's entertainment tent was added to the attractions as was an upgraded food court featuring "Food from Argyll" a collection of local producers who bring the best of fresh, local produce to the event.

In January 2013, following a meeting between the Gathering Committee and the RSPBA, it was announced that, from 2014, Cowal would lose its status as a 'major' Pipe Band competition, a status enjoyed by the event since 1906. The Gathering chairman admitted that the major competition had outgrown the limited facilities at Dunoon Stadium. As a result, only 24 pipe bands registered to compete at the 2014 gathering, although most competed in several events when they would have only competed once previously.

Today, the games are a mix of Highland dancing, pipe bands, wrestling, heavy athletics, solo piping, drum majors, ceilidh, children's entertainment, fun run, and local food.

Until next month…

Sláinte

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Peat

Perhaps nothing evokes the magical lure of the Highlands better than simply mentioning a peat fire. With the absence of coal and the destruction of the Caledonian forest, which covered the Highlands, it is almost by Divine order that peat, in Gaelic moine, should provide the only material of general use for heating.

Peat forms when plant material, usually in wet areas, is inhibited from decaying fully by acidic and anaerobic conditions. It is composed mainly of wetland vegetation: principally bog plants including mosses, sedges, and shrubs. As it accumulates, the peat can hold water, thereby slowly creating wetter conditions, and allowing the area of wetland to expand. Peatland features can include ponds, ridges, and raised bogs.

In communities throughout the Highlands crofters still have the right to cut and collect peat, though generally only enough for their personal use for the season.

The cutting or 'casting' of the peat begins in May allowing plenty of time for summer's sun and winds to dry out the peat briquettes. Before the peat can be cut from the bog, an instrument called a cabar-lar is used to clear away all surface growth. Then using a specially-shaped peat-cutting spade called a torr-sgian the turf is cut into pieces of the form of a brick. The torr-sgian enables the peat to be cut, lifted and thrown in a single practiced movement, where they are caught and passed from one person to another, spread out to harden, and then set on end by threes and fours to dry. When removed they are 'stacked' like a small hut beside the house, and protected from wet by a covering of the upper part of the moss. The primitive stack was conical, and hence called Cruach mhoine, as descriptive of its form.

Until the development of the road system in 18th century the pattern of settlement was closely related to river valleys and coastal areas, where rivers and lochs often provided an easier means of transport than overland. As a result, domestic peat-cutting has led to many exciting archaeological discoveries.

Peat bogs had considerable ritual significance in prehistoric times for Bronze and Iron Age people considered them to be home to (or at least associated with) nature gods or spirits. Surprisingly common finds such as wooden containers of bog butter, a hard yellow substance that seems to be some form of animal fat. It appears to have been buried deliberately, either to preserve it or as an offering to the gods. Such offerings, or votive deposits, can take many forms, special importance being placed upon 'wet' places by prehistoric religions. Valuable and prestigious items such as jewelry, weapons and tools made of bronze (copper alloy) were deliberately thrown into rivers, lochs and marshes.

Bog bodies, also known as bog people, are the naturally preserved human corpses found in the sphagnum bogs in Northern Europe. Unlike most ancient human remains, bog bodies have retained their skin and internal organs due to the unusual conditions of the surrounding area. These conditions include highly acidic water, low temperature, and a lack of oxygen, combining to preserve but severely tan their skin. Despite the fact that their skin is preserved, their bones are generally not, as the acid in the peat dissolves the calcium phosphate of bone.

My favorite use of peat is in the making of Scotch. Scotch whisky distilleries, such as those on Islay, use peat fires to dry malted barley. The drying process takes about 30 hours. This gives the whiskies a distinctive smoky flavour, often called "peatiness". The peat level of a whisky is calculated in ppm. The normal Highland whiskies have up to 30 ppm, the whiskies on Islay usually have up to 50 ppm. In rare cases, like the Octomore, whisky can have more than 100 ppm of peat.

Until next month…

Sláinte

Peat deposits are found in many places around the world, including northern Europe and North America, principally in Canada and the northern United States. Here, too, occur some of the world's largest peatlands, including the West Siberian Lowland, the Hudson Bay Lowland, and the Mackenzie River Valley.

Depending on the agency, peat is not generally regarded as a renewable source of energy. the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and another organization affiliated with the United Nations classifies peat as a fossil fuel. However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has begun to classify peat as a "slow-renewable" fuel.

About 60% of the world's wetlands are peat. About 7% of total peatlands have been exploited for agriculture and forestry. Under proper conditions, peat will turn into lignite coal over geologic periods of time.

In November 2002, the **International Peat Society** and the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) published guidelines on the "Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands — Backgrounds and Principles including a framework for decision-making". The aim of this publication is to develop mechanisms that can balance the conflicting demands on the global peatland heritage, to ensure its wise use to meet the needs of humankind.

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Traditional Uses of Heather

Heather has been plentiful in Scotland for as long as it's history has been written (and probably before that too). Over thousands of years, the inventive, practical and resourceful Scots have found a whole host of uses for this natural bounty.

- Especially on Scotland's islands, heather played a major role in building construction. It was used in walls, thatched roofs, ropes, pegs and more. It also appeared in the thatched roofs of mainland houses.
- Since ancient times dried Scottish heather was used as a sort of fragrant and bouncy mattress. Evidence of this has been found in a 4000 year old village on the island of Skara Brae in the Orkneys.
- Heather stems are tough, strong and resilient (like the Scottish people), and were used in making a whole variety of implements including brooms, farming tools such as hoes or rakes and ropes.
- Heather was believed to have some amazing medicinal properties, and was used by ancient Scots to treat all sorts of conditions and ailments including nervousness and anxiety, coughs, consumption, digestive issues, poisoning, blindness, arthritis, rheumatism and more.
- And last, but not least, heather is used to create the most deliciously scented soaps, candles, and perfumes.

Heather

Heather is synonymous with Scotland. Heather grows freely and abundantly spreading its glorious purple hues across around five million acres of Scottish moorland, glens and hills. Perhaps it's because it was (and still is) so readily available that the Scots have found so many practical uses for one of their national flowers.

The name 'Heather' may come from the old Scottish word *'haeddre'* which is seen as far back as the 14th Century. It may also have been called *'heddir'* or *'hathar'* at different periods of time, and is also sometimes known as 'Ling Heather', referring to the Old Norse word *'Lyng'* which meant 'light in weight'.

Calluna vulgaris (known as common heather, ling, or simply heather) is the sole species in the genus *Calluna* in the family Ericaceae; *Calluna* from the Greek *kallunein*, "beautify, sweep clean", in reference to its traditional use in besoms. It is a low-growing perennial shrub growing to 7.9 to 19.7 inches tall, or rarely to 39 inches and taller, and is found widely in Europe and Asia Minor.

Many plants referred to as heather are actually heath. Heath (pictured above) is a similar plant (the leaves look a bit different) with condition needs similar to Heather plants. The untrained eye has difficulty telling them apart. Heaths are widespread worldwide but are fast disappearing and considered a rare habitat in Europe.

The color of wild Scottish heather usually ranges from lilac to purple. You can also find white heather growing wild but it's much less common - perhaps that's one of the reasons it's thought to be lucky. Other species can be found in a variety of colors, from gold or copper, to red or even silver-gray. Heather usually blooms twice a year in Scotland, in early summer and then during the late summer and early fall (Autumn). Although it varies from year to year depending on weather, the best time to see the full beauty of Heather in Scotland is often between late July and early September.

Just like any other Scottish symbol, the humble heather plant has its fair share of legends attached to it.

One of the more well-known legends is centered on a confrontation between Viking raiders and the last surviving Pictish King. Some accounts put it during the 4th Century AD, but as the Vikings didn't actually appear on Scottish soil until the end of the 8th Century, this is unlikely.

After their army is defeated, the Pictish King and his son find themselves cornered on a cliff-top, where the Viking chief tortures them in an attempt to obtain the secret recipe for Heather Ale.The King of the Picts is quick witted, but doubts that his son is strong enough to withstand the torture without giving up the recipe. So he makes a deal with the Viking Chief, saying that if his son is spared the torture and killed quickly, he himself will reveal the secret. The young prince is then thrown off the cliff and into the sea where he drowns quickly. BUT, the Pictish King doesn't uphold his end of the arrangement, and although it costs him his life he wins the battle and the recipe is safe. In some variations of the tale the brave King takes the Viking over the edge of the cliff with him.

Wild Scottish Heather is most often some shade of purple, with white heather being much more rare. Legend has it that in the 3rd Century AD, Malvina (daughter of the legendary Scottish poet, Ossian), was betrothed (engaged to be married) to a Celtic warrior named Oscar. Tragically (but not unexpectedly!), Oscar died in battle, and when Malvina heard the news she was heartbroken. The messenger, who delivered the bad news, also delivered a spray of purple heather that Oscar had sent as a final token of his undying love for her.

It's said that when Malvinas' tears fell onto the flowers in her hand, they immediately turned white, and this magical occurrence prompted her to say, *'although it is the symbol of my sorrow, may the white heather bring good fortune to all who find it.'* Even today, white Heather is considered to be lucky, especially for brides, and adding a spray of it to your bouquet, on table decorations and so on is popular.

Until next month…

Sláinte

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In the churchyard of Fortingall Church near the east end of the attractive village of Fortingall is the Fortingall Yew, believed to be 5,000 years old and quite possibly the oldest living thing on earth.

The footpath through the churchyard to the yew carries a series of inscriptions that help set 5,000 years in perspective: but the truth is that for mere humans it is a almost unimaginable length of time. The Fortingall Yew was a sapling when our Stone Age ancestors were building a burial cairn west of today's Fortingall, and was already 1000 years old when the very first Bronze Age settlers left their mark on the surrounding landscape.

Yew trees were viewed as sacred by our pagan ancestors and by the early Christians, so it is perhaps not surprising that when a religious community was founded here in the 600s it should have been established close to what must already have been a huge tree.

A Curious Tale

Imagine the scene – a select gathering of some of the most celebrated figures of the early 20th century, onboard a luxurious ship.

As they idle away the hours, enjoying drinks and Havana cigars, the conversation turns mischievous. One of the party, millionaire landowner Sir Donald Currie, who has recently bought himself a pretty little Perthshire hamlet, is boasting that his new purchase is the birth place of Pontius Pilate. Having recently found an old stone with the initials P. P. engraved on it, he thinks Pilate might have been buried there too. His friends, Rudyard Kipling and Alfred Tennyson among them, start laughing – this is his most outrageous story yet. Then, their creative minds get to work. The rest of the day is spent concocting a legend – one which has survived to this very day.

This theory about how Fortingall came to be linked with Jesus Christ's infamous executioner has been put forward by Fortingall resident, Neil Hooper. Having carried out extensive research into the legend which claims Pilate was born in the village; Neil believes that Sir Donald Currie, a ship owning laird and MP who in 1885 bought the Glen Lyon estate which included Fortingall, could have made up the story, possibly with the help of his high-society friends, as "an elaborate joke".

The story then spread through Currie's links with publications such as the London Pall Mall Gazette and The Times. Adding weight to the theory is the fact that no mention of a link between Fortingall and Pontius Pilate existed until Currie's connection with the village in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This is despite 16th century Fortingall having its own chronicler, Sir James Macgregor, Dean of Lismore.

Neil hasn't let fact stand in the way of good fiction however, and has just finished penning a book which follows the story of Pontius Pilate's birth in Fortingall, as if it were true.

The book, which is soon to be published, is based on the famous legend that Pontius Pilate's father was dispatched by Caesar Augustus to foster good relations with Caledonian chieftains, among them one Metellanus, whose royal seat was at Dun Geal – the White Fort – at Fortingall.

The envoy was then said to have fathered a child with a Scots woman. He returned to Rome with the child – Pontius Pilate, who eventually became Roman Procurator of Judea.

Many accounts have Pilate's father being a Roman legionary, when no Roman army came anywhere near Scotland until years after Pilate's death; and they name Pilate's mother as a Maclaren or a Menzies, clans that were unknown until the late middle ages. Even the less ridiculous version, that the father was an ambassador from Augustus to the leader of the Caledonians, lacks any evidence.

Well, whether its links with Pilate are indeed fact or fiction, one thing's for sure – Fortingall is undisputedly home to one of the oldest living things on earth – the Fortingall Yew (see side panel), which stands at the corner of the church.

Until next month…

Sláinte

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The Santa Oath

I will seek knowledge to be well versed in the mysteries of bringing Christmas cheer and good will to all the people that I encounter in my journeys and travels.

I shall be dedicated to hearing the secret dreams of both children and adults.

I understand that the true and only gift I can give, as Santa, is myself.

I acknowledge that some of the requests I will hear will be difficult and sad. I know in these difficulties there lies an opportunity to bring a spirit of warmth, understanding and compassion.

I know the "real reason for the season" and know that I am blessed to be able to be a part of it.

I realize that I belong to a brotherhood and will be supportive, honest and show fellowship to my peers.

I promise to use "my" powers to create happiness, spread love and make fantasies come to life in the true and sincere tradition of the Santa Claus Legend.

I pledge myself to these principles as a descendant of St. Nicholas the gift giver of Myra.

-Phillip L. Wenz

OPD

December, 2015

Clan Claus

The concept for The Clan Claus Society was developed in early January 2008, when a few Santa's who were involved as members of the online Santa forum ClausNET.com began discussing several Scottish-themed events which were taking place across the United States and in Scotland itself. While not exactly sure as to when the words "Clan Claus" were first used, the concept took off rapidly. Soon there was talk about kilts, the Clan Crest and even a Coat of Arms.

The Clan Claus Society, who's Founder and Advisory Board Members each had their own separate passion for all things Scottish, the Celtic arts in general, and especially, the music of Scotland's most famous musical instrument, the Great Highland Bagpipe, asked themselves many questions concerning Santa's Scottish heritage: What are the ways in which the Christmas season is celebrated in Scotland? Who are the prime participants of a Scottish Christmas? How could they introduce to the general public this rich Scottish history within the context of a family-oriented atmosphere?

The Clan Claus Society is fundamentally different from any other Santa group. All members participate in an organization that is totally "FAMILY" oriented. As such, the Society invites like-minded individuals to join together to share in the Christmas family camaraderie and to encourage others to uphold the traditions of the Scottish Santa Claus persona throughout the year keeping the Spirit of Christmas alive in the hearts of all ages.

The Clan Claus Society embodies the desire to preserve and perpetuate the history ideals, traditions, family values, and heritage of the Scottish Santa Claus persona.

Although a large number of members are from established and officially recognized Clans, The Clan Claus Society is not recognized officially as a Clan by The Court of the Lord Lyon or any other governing body.

The Clan now has over 350 members worldwide in 13 different countries including Scotland, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Japan, Cayman Islands and all over the United States.

Their tartan, "Claus of the North Pole", is registered with the Scottish Tartan Authority under Certificate No. 7869 Certificate issued January 10th 2009. It has also been included into the National Records of Scotland together with the National Archives of Scotland. A Certificate has been issued by the Keeper of The Scottish Register of Tartans on August 5th 2011.

The only Membership Requirement is that you Have and Keep The Spirit of Christmas in your Heart All the Year Long.

Until next month, next year,

Nollaig Shona agus
Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Dhuit

Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year