



Maypole Dancing (staticflicker.com)

# Scottish Heritage USA

## NEWSLETTER MAY 2022

ISSUE #5-2022

## HAPPY MAY DAY

The earliest known May celebrations appear with the Festival of Flora (*Roman goddess of flowers*) held from 27 April to 3 May during the Roman Republic era, and the Maiouma festival celebrating Dionysus and Aphrodite held every three years during the month of May. During the Floralia festival, hares and goats were released and beans, lupins and vetches (*varieties of beans*) were thrown among the crowds. The festivities, including offerings to Flora or Ceres, concluded with competitive events and spectacles.

Maiouma was celebrated as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, when records show expenses for the month-long festival were appropriated by Emperor Commodus. According to early chronicles, the Maiouma was a 'nocturnal dramatic festival' held every three years and known as the Mysteries of Dionysus and Aphrodite. It was known as the Maioumas because it is celebrated in the month of May. It was celebrated with extravagant banquets and offerings. Its reputation for licentiousness caused it to be suppressed during the reign of Emperor Constantine.

A later May festival celebrated in Germanic countries, Walpurgis Night, commemorates the official Canonization of St. Walpurga on 1 May 870. In Gaelic culture, the evening of 30 April was the celebration of Beltane (*lucky fire*), the start of the summer season. First noted in 900 AD, the celebration mainly focused on the symbolic use of fire to bless cattle and other livestock as they were moved to summer pastures. This custom continued into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which time cattle would be made to jump over fires to protect their milk from being stolen by fairies. People would also leap over fires for luck.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some have observed May (*May Day*) with various May devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary with skits and processions and May crownings. 1 May is also the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker (*this date was chosen by Pope Pius XII in 1955 as a counterpoint to the communist International Workers' Day*).

The best-known modern May Day traditions, observed in both Europe and North America, include dancing around the maypole and crowning the Queen of May. Fading in popularity since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is the tradition of giving of "May Baskets," small baskets of sweets or flowers usually left anonymously on neighbors' doorsteps.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many neopagans began reconstructing some of the older pagan festivals and combining them with more recently developed European secular and Catholic traditions and celebrating May Day as a pagan religious festival.



Beltane Queen



May Day Basket

May Day has been celebrated in Scotland for centuries. It was previously associated with the Beltane Festival. Reference to this earlier festival is found in the poem 'Peblis to the Play', contained in the Maitland Manuscripts of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Scots poetry (*texts containing major works not attributed to any specific author*). The poem describes the celebration in the town of Peebles in the Scottish Borders, which continues to stage a parade and pageant each year, including the annual 'Common Riding', which takes place in many towns throughout the Borders. As well as the crowning of a Beltane Queen each year, it is customary to sing 'the Beltane Song'.

*Continued on page two 'May Day'*



## MAY DAY (cont'.)

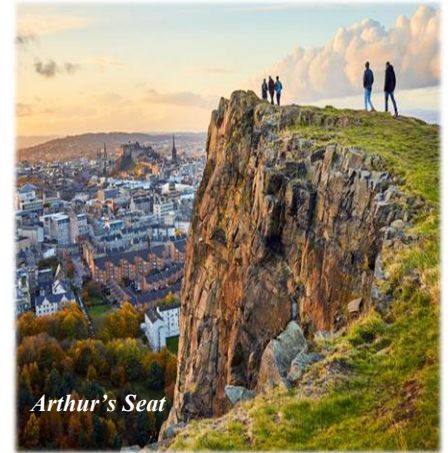
### Jethro Tull's Beltane Song (First Verse)

Have you ever stood in the April Wood  
And called the new year in  
While are the phantoms of three thousand years  
Rise as the dead leaves spin?  
There's a snap in the grass behind your feet  
And a tap on your shoulder,  
And the thin wind crawls along your neck;  
It's just the old gods getting older.  
And the kestrel drops like a far-off shot  
From a red cloud hanging high.

A-come-A-Beltane (chorus)

Scottish May Day/Beltane celebrations have been somewhat revived since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both Edinburgh and Glasgow organize May Day festivals and rallies. In Edinburgh, the Beltane Fire Festival is held on the evening of May eve and into the early hours of May Day on the city's Calton Hill. An older Edinburgh tradition has it that young women who climb Arthur's Seat and wash their faces in the morning dew will have lifelong beauty. At the University, some students gather on the beach late on 30 April and run into the North Sea at sunrise on May Day. This is accompanied by torchlit processions and celebration.

Too early and too cold for me!



Arthur's Seat

## RADICAL WALKWAY CLOSED?



Edinburgh's Radical Road, the path up to Arthur's Seat, is steeped in history. So reports the walkway could be permanently closed to the public will come as a blow to locals and visitors alike. The road was closed in 2018 by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) due to a 50-ton rock fall. While the agency is considering the best option for the pathway, permanent closure has not been ruled out.

Less than one mile from Princes Street is the site of Holyrood Park; a 650-acre inner-city oasis which was once a royal hunting estate before its designation as a park by King James V in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Radical Road sits approximately halfway up the side of the 151 ft. Salisbury Crags; the series of cliffs which make up Arthur's Seat. The steep-sided pathway got its name

from the unemployed West of Scotland weavers who were set to work (at the suggestion of Sir Walter Scott) paving a track round Salisbury Crags, following their failed efforts during the National Strike named the Radical War of 1820.

The Radical Road offers great views of Edinburgh over toward Fife, the Ochils and the Pentlands.



Story and photo courtesy of Gary Flockhart Edinburgh News

## MEMBERS' ONLY BBQ by SCOTTISH COTTAGE

### JOIN US AFTER GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND GAMES FOR A MEMBER THANK YOU BBQ



**When:** 10 July 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 PM  
After the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

**Where:** 116 Paupers Ridge Lane  
Sugar Mountain, Banner Elk  
North Carolina 28604-9934

**Cost:** \$25 per person \$40 per couple  
*\$5 discount per Member who joins at the 2022 Games*

Beer, wine and set-ups provided (BYOB)

Reservations may be made on-line at [www.scottishheritageusa.org](http://www.scottishheritageusa.org), or call the office at (910) 296-4448

Members are encouraged to bring a guest or two!



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# RECIPE CORNER

## PARTAN BREE

We are going to the sea for this month's quick and easy recipe. Partan is the Scots word for a crab and bree is a liquid in which something edible has been boiled and left to soak. So Partan Bree is Crab Soup, a specialty from north-eastern Scotland, where much of the country's fishing fleet is based.

### Ingredients:

1 large, cooked crab (reserve 2.5 cups liquid from boiling crab)  
2 oz rice  
2 ½ cups of milk  
¾ cups cream  
Salt & Pepper to taste  
Chives  
Parsley

### Preparation:

1. Remove all the meat from the crab, keeping the claw meat separate
2. Cook the rice in a pan with the milk and reserved water
3. Run cooked rice and brown body crab meat through food processor to blend
4. Add cream and reheat
5. Divide claw meat on top of each serving
6. Salt and pepper to taste

If soup is too thick, add more milk. Serve garnished with fresh, green finely chopped chives and a sprig of parsley



*Recipe and photo courtesy of Epicurious*



## TAKE A CHANCE ON OUR 2022 RAFFLE

Scottish Heritage's 2022 raffle to benefit the scholarship fund for dance and piping students is now underway! Take a chance and win:

- A custom-made Kilt or Ladies Skirt
- Haggis Supper Kit
- Princess Diana Wool Scarf
- Harris Tweed Handbag
- Adorable Stuffed Animals
- And many more prizes

Drawing will be held the end of November 2022 – you need not be present to win

Tickets are \$12.00 each and can be purchased on our website: [www.scottishheritageusa.org](http://www.scottishheritageusa.org) or call the office (910) 295-4448





## 2022 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

### CALLING ALL MEMBERS TO HELP WITH OUR SUMMER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

Help us enroll 100 new members between July and September 2022

- ✚ If you know a friend who is planning trip to Scotland, encourage them to join for the wonderful deals they receive with a membership.
- ✚ Invite a friend to a Highland Game
- ✚ Give a Scottish Heritage brochure to a friend
- ✚ Buy a raffle ticket for a friend
- ✚ Encourage friends to watch Men in Kilts
- ✚ If you have a tent at a Highland Game ask us for brochures to distribute
- ✚ Give a membership to Scottish Heritage as gifts for birthdays, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Christmas and any other occasion.

## HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY



Mothers' Day is celebrated in over 40 countries around the world. Even though the holiday has become rather commercial, we still honor and love our mothers. So Happy Mothers' Day to all you wonderful moms!

Looking for a family to host Anna from Scotland, a high school exchange student for the 2022-23 school year. Anna is 16 and loves playing guitar, basketball, drawing and painting and enjoys the great outdoors. She has excellent references from her teacher who describes her as organized, hard-working and conscientious.

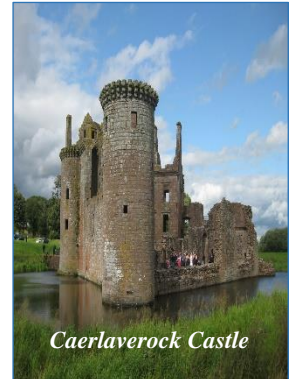
Anna will be a great addition to her host family and if anyone reading this is interested in hosting her this coming year, please contact STS student exchange program.

<https://www.stsfoundation.org>

## CELTIC KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. In which city was the Timex factory located?
2. What are stovies?
3. What is the main ingredient of partan bree ?
4. What is 'capercaillie'?
5. Who led the troops that burned the Campbell stronghold at Inverary in 1644 ?
6. In which city will you find the Howff and what is it? (Not the pub)
7. Which order of monks lived at Deer Abbey?
8. Where is St. Baldred's Cradle?
9. Where did St. Baldred live?
10. Who succeeded Malcom II to the throne?

**Bonus:** What is special about Caerlaverock Castle?



1. Dundee 2. potatoes & onions cooked slowly in pan with meat scraps 3. Crab 4. Common Thistle 5. The Marquis of Montrose 6. Dundee. It is a burial ground established in 1564. It holds one of the most important collections of tombstones in Scotland. The majority of graves face exactly due east. 7. Cistercian 8. Tynemouth 9. Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth 10. Duncan I

**BONUS:** It is triangular



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