

Great SCOT!

Scottish Cultural Organization of the Triangle

February 2017

The Kirkin' of the Tartan

By Catherine McKinley



Numerous people, even those not of Scottish heritage, have heard of The Kirkin' of the Tartan. Most have no clue as to its meaning, history or purpose. The word "kirk" is the Scottish Gaelic word for church. "Kirkin" means "blessing." It is, most often, celebrated on "Reformation Sunday," which is the last Sunday in October and is, also, widely, observed on National Tartan Day - April 6th.

The tradition of The Kirkin' of the Tartan begins on July 25, 1745 when the young Prince Charles Edward Stewart, famously known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie," returned

from exile in France and began an effort to enlist the Highland Clans in an unsuccessful attempt to dethrone George II of England. He hoped to be able to, then, restore the Scottish throne to the Royal House of Stewart.

He was defeated, however, and following the demise of his campaign, the Act of Proscription was declared. It forbade any speaking of Gaelic, outlawed Scottish music, dancing and, especially, bagpipe playing. Scottish Highlanders, however, defied the law by hiding pieces of tartan under the clothes they wore to church, bringing them out only briefly so they could be the subject of a secret blessing, or kirkin' at a particular point in the service.

This ban was further enforced by the Disarming Act of 1746 which was, strictly, enforced by the Hanoverian English government. These restrictive laws were in effect for 36 years. During this entire period, even in church, clan members were afraid to display so much as a small swatch of their tartan, so, they just wore them in a place where they could touch during the special benediction given in the hope of restoring the cultural rights of Scottish citizens.

In North America, The Kirkin' of the Tartan tradition was revived, during World War II, by the Reverend Peter Marshall, the character in the book and film "A Man Called Peter," who was, originally from Southwest Scotland. As the pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C., Rev. Marshall recreated the Kirkin' ceremony to instill pride among Scottish-Americans and encourage them to sign up to defend Scotland. Therefore, originally, the kirkin' ceremony was conducted in Presbyterian churches, but, soon spread to every Christian denomination.

The Kirkin' of the Tartan begins with a procession of tartans into the church, accompanied by bagpipes or pipes & drums.

Afterward, there are often prayers, scripture readings and sermons followed by the official blessing. At the conclusion of the service, "Amazing Grace," is sung.

Sticky Toffee Pudding

By Carolyn McDonald Graf

Sticky Toffee Pudding is a modern recipe, arriving on the scene in the 1960's. It quickly gained popularity over other traditional puddings partly because it is easier to make. It is actually a cake, not a pudding. As with any popular recipe, there are conflicts about where the recipe was created. The Scots, who surely love sweets as much or more than any others, claim it was first served at the [Udny Arms Hotel](#) in Newburgh-on-Ythan, Aberdeenshire, in 1967.

The Brits claim it is from The Lake District where it was served at [Sharro Bay Hotel](#) in Ullswater. In 1960 an "icky sticky toffee sponge" appeared on the menu. Probably the recipe itself existed even before that but it was the name that later made it famous.



Dates are the ingredient that give the stickiness to the cake. Dates have been cultivated for so long that their origin is obscure. They are possibly the oldest fruit crop and have been cultivated in North Africa and the Middle East for 5000 years. They made their way from the Middle East to the Mediterranean and were well known in England during the time of Shakespeare. But, as with all imported foods, were only available to the very wealthy. There were certainly date puddings made at that time but not eaten by ordinary folk.

Whatever the origins, there are now many recipes for Sticky Toffee Pudding, with many variations. Some include molasses. Some leave the dates roughly chopped, and some add other spices. This recipe is quite delicious. The cake recipe is from Smitten Kitchen. The Sauce is from the Udy Arms Hotel. Sticky Pudding keeps well at room temperature and is even better the next day.

Ingredients

Cake

- 3/4 pound (12 ounces, 340 grams or about 2 1/4 cups) dried dates
- 2 1/4 cups (530 ml) boiling water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick, 4 ounces or 115 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- 3/4 cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons (25 grams) light or dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs

1/4 teaspoon fine sea or table salt
1 2/3 cups (210 grams) all-purpose flour

Sauce

1/2 cup (8 tablespoons) butter
2 + 3/4 cups brown sugar, light or dark
1 pint (2 cups) whipping cream
1 teaspoon vanilla

Whipped Cream

1 Pint

To make the cake, pit and roughly chop dates and place them in a heatproof bowl. Pour boiling water over them and stir in the baking soda. Cover the bowl and set it aside for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat oven to 350°F (175°C). Butter a 9×13-inch baking pan

Blend date-water mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth. (This is optional. Many recipes leave the dates finely chopped) In a large bowl, combine the melted butter and sugars. Whisk in eggs, then salt. Stir in the flour, then date puree. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Make the sauce while the cake is baking. Combine butter, cream, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Use a largish saucepan because the sauce will bubble. Whisk for about 10 minutes, until the mixture thickens slightly.

When cake is done remove from oven and poke holes in the top with a toothpick. Spread ½ or so cup of sauce on top of the cake. let it cool in the pan on a cooling rack.

Whip the cream until soft peaks form.

Cut the cake into squares (still warm is just fine). Drizzle each slice with the remaining sauce, a pinch of sea salt (optional), and top with a dollop of whipped cream.

<https://smittenkitchen.com/2014/11/date-cake-with-toffee-sauce/>

<http://www.cinnamonspiceandeverthingnice.com/british-sticky-toffee-pudding-challenge/>

Cary Indoor Solo Piping Competition

By Emily Sprague



Amber Tussing, Christine Sullivan and Evelyn Judson

The **11th Annual Cary Indoor Solo Piping Competition** will take place on Saturday, March 25, 2017 at the Cary Alliance Church in Apex. The contest draws around 30 outstanding solo pipers in Grades 1 through 4 from North Carolina and the surrounding states. Over the years, it has been a joy to watch dedicated pipers return each year, several moving through all amateur grades to become Open pipers. Judges this year will be Jim Dillahey of Charleston, SC and Ed Krintz of Charlotte. For more information, contact John Sprague, Director, at esprague@nc.rr.com.

Jennifer Licko Concert

By Diane Hill

Great Concert By Jennifer Licko and Crew!

Several SCOT members attended the outstanding Jennifer Licko concert at the Durham Arts Council on December 13th. The band presented a great mix of Scottish, Irish, Appalachian and Christmas-themed songs, and Jennifer, who learned Scots Gaelic so she could sing in that language, introduced several new tunes in that language. Several students of the Annandale Center livened up the show with various highland dances, a great hit with the audience of about 70.

Jennifer, a native of Swansboro, North Carolina, had been a dance student of Jo Kalat's years ago along with Amy Mooney and Pat Johnston of the Annandale Center, and it was our own Pat Johnston who encouraged her to further her studies in the Gaelic language. Jennifer spent almost a decade living in Scotland and Ireland, a sojourn which is reflected in a unique blend of southern Appalachian and Scottish and Irish music, including some pieces of her own writing. She was backed by Bob Noble, Dylan Foley, Patrick Mongan and Patsy O'Brien. And she can still do a neat Highland Fling herself!



We certainly would have liked to see more SCOT members at the show...Last year the concert, held at the 100-seat Cary Theatre, was a full house, which encouraged Jennifer to find a larger-capacity theatre this year; unfortunately the concert was held mid-week which may have discouraged some folks from attending. There was also a lack of publicity by the Durham Arts Center, which has no marquee or other display of upcoming shows, and only one newspaper advertisement had been placed. On the other hand, ticket prices were kept low compared to similar small band concerts, so we still expected a good turnout, though only about 70 tickets were actually sold.

If you were unable to attend the concert, you can still obtain CDs of Jennifer's music at www.jenniferlicko.com.

Whisky Tasting

Dear Members,

We have now set the date for our 2017 Whisky Tasting, mark your calendars for March the 9th. We have managed to get the use of the Prestonwood Country Club once more with their excellent facility and of course the Fabulous Buffet!!

Once more the event will be conducted by Craig Hill our Whisky aficionado who always does a great job of entertaining and enlightening us with regards to the various Whisky's that we will be tasting.

I hope to see many of you there.

Happy tasting
Donald



President's Corner

Dear Members,

I trust everyone had A Great Christmas and New Year?

SCOT is now geared up for another busy year, by the time you receive this newsletter our Burns Nights will probably be over and getting ready for all the spring events coming up, so be sure to watch the website our facebook page and your inbox for updates.

The Celtic Christmas concert was unfortunately not very well attended, but I have to tell you that this was a great evening and I am so glad that Nancy and I were able to attend this concert.

Some Events you can look forward to, Movie Night, Whisky Tasting, Sister Cities Ceilidh and much more!!

Ceud mile failte – One hundred thousand welcomes to our new member Stephanie Floyd.

As always, please let us know what we can do to make SCOT the organization you all want it to be! Come along and enjoy our events, they are for you, our members!!

God Bless, and enjoy each and every day of This New Year!

Donald Ross

Calendar of Future SCOT Events and Other Activities

February 2017

Movie Night – Cary, NC (Annandale Center)
February 11, 2017

March 2017

Whisky Tasting – Cary, NC (Prestonwood)
March 9, 2017

St. Patrick's Day Parade – Raleigh, NC
March 11,

Cary Indoor – Cary, NC
March 25, 2017



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The Scottish Cultural Organization of the Triangle (S.C.O.T.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to informing and educating the public about the history, culture, and heritage of Scotland and the Scottish people.

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We welcome your contributions to this quarterly newsletter! Please forward news of any achievements, births, marriages, or graduations to Amy Mooney (danceramy@aol.com) to be included. If you have an article, story, artwork, or bit of Scottish lore to share, please submit it to the Editor (SCOT.triangle.news@gmail.com).