



Volume 24, Issue 3

Winter 2006

*Seasons Greetings!*



A' Bratach Bhan (*The White Banner*) is published by The Clan Mackay Association of Canada

Editor: Sarah Bain Mallalieu

741 Woodward Ave Unit 2, Milton, ON L9T 3T6



Season's Greetings!

As we all enjoy the coming winter, I have been pondering some of our heritage. My children are learning all about the Native People in school, so, what better time to explore some more of our Scots heritage? Keeping that in mind, I have done some research and filled these pages with Scottish Christmas celebrations, traditional recipes and more. I am not afraid to admit that I learned a lot in researching this edition!

Now, don't forget, it is Renewal Time! Please take a couple of minutes to complete the Membership Renewal form included with this edition – it will ensure that you continue to receive the newsletter and all the other benefits of Clan participation!

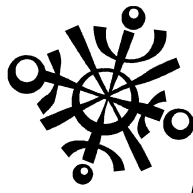
On a slightly different note, there has been some confusion as to the raffle this year. The raffle item is actually a wonderful piece of art – we had a number of raffle tickets left over from last year and wanted to use them up – “waste not want not!”

As for what is coming – we have a new year and new activities coming up. We can all look forward to the many Scottish Festivals and Highland Games in the coming year. We are looking forward to a large turnout this year in Fergus (Second Weekend in August, the actual dates will be available in the next volume!) plan to come out and see the festival, check in with Mora and Bob in the clan tent and enjoy a weekend of everything Scottish.

Now that that is out of the way, enjoy this edition! Please, let me know what you would like to see here – contributions are welcome!



This newsletter is for the entire clan, and any news that you may like to share is always welcome. Contributions can be made via e-mail through the website at [www.clanmackay.ca](http://www.clanmackay.ca) or via mail to Sarah Mallalieu 741 Woodward Ave #2, Milton ON, L9T 3T6.



## From the Desk of the President

### *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

*Christmas Edition 2006*

*Dear Clansfolk:*

*The Spirit of Christmas seems to be in the very air we breath. One day after Halloween and we are caught in the ever widening Christmas season. Stores are filled with colour and lights inviting everyone to buy, buy, buy. The positive side of this is many students, part time workers and turkey and tree farmers do owe a major part of their livelihood to the season.*

*Christmas can be a joyous time for some families, but also a sad time if the family does not live up to the blissful scenes presented in the mass media's seasonal programming. Rich or poor can relate to this problem. Psychologists report a high incidence of depression around Christmas among people who feel their lives do not add up to the norm and they should by rights be happier than they are.*

*In Canada where many religions coexist, the general celebration of the birth of Christ places an added psychological strain on many non-Christians. All children love to sing and be included, so we find Santa Claus has become a strong figure in the celebrations.*

*Most of the customs we celebrate at Christmas time today have their roots in pagan rituals. The Christmas tree, comes from 8th century German or perhaps Latvia or Estonia roots, it follows the worship of trees as spirits. Ancient Britons, enemies who met under the mistletoe, threw down their weapons and embraced-- in Canada we kiss under the mistletoe.*

*Scotland still treats Christmas as a minor occasion, very much secondary to Hogmanay, their New Year's celebration.*

*Perhaps what Christmas is all about is to help us rediscover the child in all of us. The Spirit of Christmas, which all religions can abide is to be kind, generous and understanding. A time to help the poor, say hello to our neighbours and remember the ones we love. If only we could have the Christmas Spirit all year long perhaps there would be no wars.*

*A special thanks to all the Executive for their wonderful help over the year. Together we strive to keep our Clan Mackay Association a vibrant organization. Let us take the Spirit of Christmas to heart, and reach out to as many as you can over the Holiday Season.*

*All the best for a Wonderful Holiday Season to each member of the Clan Mackay.*

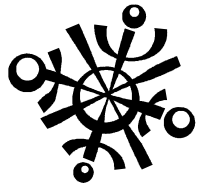
***Mora Mackay Cairns.***

*President,*

***The Clan Mackay Association of Canada***

***Tel: 905-820-5715 Morabob@rogers.com***

***Our Web Site: <http://www.clanmackay.ca>***



## Searching for Connections:

Col Roger J Mills is trying to trace the parents of Isabella Mackay.

Isabella Mackay married to James Mills (1770-1802) born 1771 in Lynn MA d.1823 in Mariotts Cove NS – she was a school teacher. They were married in St Paul's Anglican Church Halifax NS.

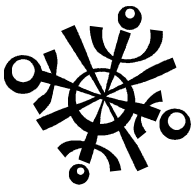
A child – James – was born in 1803 in Halifax NS.

If anyone can shed some light on who this lady was or her parents, please contact Roger at the address below.

Roger

[Roger2@ilchiro.org](mailto:Roger2@ilchiro.org)

Trying to find your roots? Visit our website [www.clanmackay.ca](http://www.clanmackay.ca).



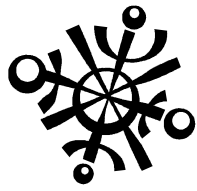
## Famous Scot

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859, in Edinburgh and educated at Stonyhurst College and the University of Edinburgh. From 1882 to 1890 he practiced medicine in Southsea, England. *A Study in Scarlet*, the first of 60 stories featuring Sherlock Holmes, appeared in 1887. The characterization of Holmes, his ability of ingenious deductive reasoning, was based on one of the author's own university professors. Equally brilliant creations are those of Holmes's foils: his friend Dr. Watson, the good-natured if bumbling narrator of the stories, and the master criminal Professor Moriarty. Conan Doyle was so immediately successful in his literary career that approximately five years later he abandoned his medical practice to devote his entire time to writing.

Some of the best known of the Holmes stories are *The Sign of the Four* (1890), *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), and *His Last Bow* (1917). They made Conan Doyle internationally famous and served to popularize the detective-story genre. A Holmes cult arose and still flourishes, notably through clubs of devotees such as the Baker Street Irregulars. Conan Doyle's literary versatility brought him almost equal fame for his historical romances such as *Micah Clarke* (1888), *The White Company* (1890), *Rodney Stone* (1896), and *Sir Nigel* (1906), and for his play *A Story of Waterloo* (1894).

Conan Doyle served in the Boer War as a physician, and on his return to England wrote *The Great Boer War* (1900) and *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Conduct* (1902), justifying England's participation. For these works he was knighted in 1902. During World War I he wrote *History of the British Campaign in France and Flanders* (6 volumes, 1916-20) as a tribute to British bravery. An advocate of spiritualism since the late 1880s, his lectures and writings on the subject increased markedly after the death of his eldest son in the war. His autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, was published in 1924. Conan Doyle died in Crowborough, Sussex, England, on July 7, 1930.



# Traditional Scottish Recipes

## Cloutie Dumpling

*Sometimes spelt "Cloutie" it gets its name from the "clout" or cloth in which it was traditionally boiled. This is a favourite at Christmas time and there have been many variations over the years as cooks have experimented. You may be glad to know that it doesn't have to be made in a "clout"!*

### **Ingredients:**

4 oz shredded suet or margarine (margarine makes a lighter dumpling)  
 8 oz (2½ cups) flour  
 4 oz oatmeal  
 3 oz sugar  
 Rounded teaspoon baking powder  
 8 oz mixed currants/sultanas/chopped raisins  
 One or 1½ teaspoon each of ground cinnamon and mixed spice  
 One teaspoon golden syrup (light corn syrup is the closest in N America)  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 ¾ tablespoons buttermilk

### **Method:**

Sift the flour and rub in the fat (suet or margarine) in a large mixing bowl. Add all the other dry ingredients and mix with a wooden spoon. Make a well in the centre and add the syrup and eggs and mix well. Add enough buttermilk to make a soft but firm batter.

At Christmas, cooks often wrapped small coins (in the old days a silver three-penny piece was popular) in greaseproof paper and placed them in the dumpling. If you do add coins, warn those eating the dumpling later so as to avoid broken teeth!

You now have a choice of container. The traditional way was with a cloth. Dip it first in boiling water and flour it well before adding the mixture. Tie the top, making sure there is enough room for expansion. Place a saucer or plate in the bottom of a saucepan and stand the dumpling in the cloth on top. Cover with boiling water and cook for 2½ to 3 hours.

Alternatively, you can use an 8-cup basin or pudding steamer which has been lightly greased with melted butter. Allow a one inch space at the top (even if this means throwing away some of the mixture - you need the space for expansion). Cover the steamer or basin with a greased sheet of foil and pour boiling water into the steamer until it comes two-thirds up the side. Boil for 3 hours.

Turn out the dumpling and either serve hot with custard or cold with cream.

## Bannocks

2 handfuls of oatmeal  
 1 cup flour  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 ¾ cup butter or margarine  
 ½ cup boiling water

Mix dry ingredients in a bowl. Mix in butter with knife until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add the water. Mix to a dough. Roll out until thin and then cut into rounds (about the size of a jam lid). Cook at 200 degrees celsius for 10 minutes - may vary slightly depending on size rolled out.

## **Shortbread**

2 Cup Sifted All-Purpose Flour

½ lb Cold Butter, cubed

½ cup Potato flour

½ cup sifted icing (confectioners) sugar

Put all ingredients in a large bowl and work with fingers until mixture is completely blended, five to ten minutes. Pat into a nine by nine inch cake pan and prick surface with a fork. Bake at 325 degrees for approximately 1 hour or until light brown. Cut into 1" squares immediately after removing. Allow to age for four to five days before serving.



## ***Christmas Traditions***

Having my own Scottish roots somewhat diluted by my very Canadian-West Indian upbringing, I had never really considered what traditional celebrations take place in Scotland during this time of year. I guess that I had assumed that Scots celebrated in much the same way as we do here, with Santa Claus and Reindeer and a couple of days off work. Imagine my surprise when I discovered just how wrong I was!

According to my research, Christmas was not really “celebrated” in Scotland until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century – and was in fact banned until the 1950’s! It was observed as a religious occasion, but not celebrated in the manner it is here in Canada. Again, my research showed that the ban on Christmas, which was a strictly enforced law, indicated that there were certain observances that were followed by the public such as the candles in the window (to light the way for the Holy Family) but that the Post Office, banks and other business were still open. The true celebration was Hogmanay (New Years).

It was not until 1958 that Christmas became a public holiday in Scotland. Prior to that, people worked a normal day (but the children still got presents!) What does all of this mean? That I was not able to find many “traditions” in Scotland – most of them resemble the Christmas’ that we celebrate here in North America.

My own heritage (Scots by way of the West Indies) left me very curious as to how Scottish families celebrate the season. So, after hours of research, I am still finding myself wondering, what is a traditional Scottish Christmas?



## Yule Traditions

### "OLD LANG SYNE"

*Whenever you go to a New Years party you usually end the evening with the singing of "Old Lang Syne". This is a custom that originated in the British Isles over 200 years ago. Usually everyone stands in a circle with hands joined. Then they sway and sing to the music of this famous song written by Robert Burns. He was Scotland's favorite folk poet and wrote the words for this song in 1788.*

*It is strange to imagine a happy evening with lots of lively music going on, and then at the stroke of twelve, everyone is singing a sad song, which translates in "Times long Past." Perhaps we need to think about the past and wonder just how the old year went, feeling sad and tearful with many thoughts about the past year. Then as the New Year begins we have many hugs and kisses and fireworks going off. This is the beginning of a New Year and many hopes for a wonderful year filled with much promise.*

*So as you read the wonderful lines of Robert Burns song, "OLD LANG SYNE" you can feel you are saying good bye to the old year before you welcome in the new year. It seems that letting something go and starting something new is not easy for us.*

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days of auld lang syne?  
For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days of auld lang syne?  
And here's a hand, my trusty friend,  
And gie's a hand o'thine;  
We'll tak' a cup of kindness yet  
For auld lang syne.*

### "FIRST FOOTING"

*When my husband was in the Second World War, stationed in Scotland he was able to go First Footing with his cousins. Here he learned about the old custom that originated in Scotland and England. The idea is that the first person that goes into a house should have black hair. A woman or a person with blond hair could not enter the home first. Also an undertaker was not welcome. A dark haired man brought good luck to the house. My husband had blonde hair so he was able to come in at the end.*

*Sometimes it was necessary to hire people with black hair, to enter the home first, as so many Scottish people, like the Campbells, had red hair, also a no no. Also it was not allowed to have any garbage leave the house on the first day of the year, This day was special and every thing was arranged so that it was a day to think about the future and pray that a good year was to come.*

*Mora MacKay Cairns*



## *From the Membership*

My mother was a MacKay.

My father was a MacKay.

Now before you think I was born with two heads here's the story!

My father, his father, grandfather and his great grandfather were all born in Dalcharn, Sutherland, also ancestral home to Honorable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada. Peter and I compared notes when he visited Fort McMurray. The paternal links of my father can be traced back in Strathnaver Cemetery to several gravestones from the 1800's.

I was born in Beaulay, Inverness-shire on the estate of Lord Lovat. My father worked on the estate before he joined the Royal Air Force and was based at Biggin Hill in wartime maintaining Spitfires. He met Douglas Bader and Guy Gibson and regaled stories of these air aces to me 50 years ago.

My mother was born to George and Flora MacKay. George MacKay's ancestry is in Tain Rosshire where James MacKay his great grandfather is buried. James left Bettyhill in 1780 following the clearances and there are several MacKays in Tain today.

Flora (Ferguson) MacKay my mother's mother did not speak English until she was 12 years old. She was born in North Uist (Outer Hebrides)

In our household Gaelic was spoken part of the time when friends called.

My grandmother's cousin went on to teach Gaelic at Dalhousie 30 years ago.

After we emigrated to Canada in 1966 I took up the Scottish cause in regard to my favourite Scot, Robert Burns, and was Director of the Burns Society for 20 years in Fort McMurray.

I have written many stories and articles on Robert Burns, many now plagiarised in newspapers and on the net.

I recommend all Scots read the following books available on **Amazon.com**:

**"How the Scots Invented the Modern World" - Herman.**

**"The Mark of the Scots" by Duncan Bruce.**

**"James MacKay- a Man to Cherish" by Helen Ogden Widener.**

All of these are great reading - I have discussed the MacKay book personally with Helen Widener who lives in Irvine Texas.

All MacKays should read these books.

My dislike: Canadian Tire Scots Money caricaturing all Scots...its a disgrace, and when I asked a lady in a Canadian Tire Store in Calgary why Scots were lampooned on their money, I received a reply so disgusting that I cant print it, so make your views known to these people to support Scottish dignity.

Best wishes to all, keep up the good work.

**Bert MacKay (member)**

**81 Grosvenor Boulevard,**

**St Albert, AB., T8N 0X9**

[bertmackay@shaw.ca](mailto:bertmackay@shaw.ca) 780-418-3205

### A QUICK SMILE:

As a Christmas present one year, the Laird gave his gamekeeper, MacPhail, a deerstalker hat with ear-flaps. MacPhail was most appreciative and always wore it with the flaps tied under his chin to keep his ears warm in the winter winds. One cold, windy day the Laird noticed he was not wearing the hat.

"Where's the hat?" asked the Laird.

"I've given up wearing it since the accident," replied MacPhail.

"Accident? I didn't know you'd had an accident."

"Yes. A man offered me a nip of whisky and I had the earflaps down and never heard him."