

From the Land o' Cakes to Camperdown – food and drink of Western District Scottish immigrants

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Dr Iain Buckland

Introduction:

In 18th century Scotland, the time of Robert Burns, a distinctive cuisine had developed which allowed the largely rural community to sustain itself in harsh climatic conditions. Farmers and their families experienced regular crop failures and periods of famine, but through careful selection of crops and land management practices suited to the terrain and climate, farming families survived. The Highland clan structure gave some protection to families, but with the diminishment in the power of clan chiefs following their defeat at Culloden in 1746, the Highland social system broke down in favour of new found economic pragmatism. Many Highland tenant farmers were forced off their lands and moved to coastal settlements where they subsisted as best they could with fishing, kelp gathering and small plot vegetable growing. Others moved into the cities and towns in search of work in factories, while a large number decided to emigrate to start new lives in far off lands such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The uncertainties and hardships of working the land and the squalor of the newly industrialized cities were left behind in the hope of a better standard of living and a secure future for their children in their adopted countries.

For many people who leave their homeland for another country, whether voluntarily or by force, food and culture are often closely connected. Familiar foods from their home country are a comforting reminder and an enduring link with the past. The cuisine of their homeland is often continued long after the families have adapted in other ways to their new cultural environment. These food traditions are handed down to descendants through cherished family recipe books. A legacy of the continuation of these food traditions is often manifested in the community as ethnic restaurants. The proliferation of Italian, Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants in Australia bear witness to various waves of immigration. But after centuries of Scottish immigration, where are the Scottish restaurants? Australian historian Malcolm Prentis refers to the Scots as the

“invisible” immigrants, who “adapted so successfully that they are often hard to recognise”.¹ Prentis argues that the Scots have not had an obvious influence on Australian cuisine or habits of dining-out.² Only on special occasions did the traditional foods of Scotland appear: “Haggis, neeps and tatties on Burn’s birthday, black bun at Hogmanay.”³ Was this the case in the Western District of Victoria?

In the foreword to *Scotland to Australia Felix*, Stewart McArthur suggests that there are four fundamental questions about the Scots in Australia: “Why did they leave Scotland? Why did they choose to emigrate from Scotland and many settle in western Victoria? What legacies did they bring from Scotland to the new colony? And why were the Scots able to prosper as pastoralists, artisans, shopkeepers and businessmen, and become leaders of their communities in the new world?”⁴ This paper seeks to answer a fifth question - what did the immigrants who came from Scotland to Camperdown eat and drink? Did the early Scottish settler families continue the culinary practices from their homeland in their new adopted country or did they, as Prentis asserts, quickly abandon them for the diet of their Australian neighbours. By examining newspapers and documents from the time, a picture emerges of an immigrant community adapting to a new life, far from the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, retaining some cultural features while rejecting others.

Thoughts on Culture and Cuisine:

When historians consider past societies, they rarely consider eating and drinking habits in their historical narratives. However, food and culture are very closely connected. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in his pioneering treatise on gastronomy, *The Physiology of Taste*, wrote, “Tell me what you eat: I will tell you what you are.”⁵ University of Adelaide gastronomer Barbara Santich has made a lifetime study of the relationship between culture and cuisine. She concludes, “Culture is the unique combination of the place where we live and the people. Cuisine is the

¹ Malcolm Prentis, *The Scots in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), vi.

² Prentis, 240.

³ Prentis, 211.

⁴ Various authors, *Scotland to Australia Felix – Founding Scots of Victoria’s Camperdown District* (Camperdown: Camperdown & District Historical Society Inc, 2018), v.

⁵ Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste* (London: Penguin Books, 1970, first published 1825), 13.

product of foods and people. However we choose to depict it – a list of dishes, a vibrancy of style in the kitchen – cuisine goes hand-in-glove with culture.”⁶ Santich’s illustrates her assertion with the well documented division between the butter-based cooking in the north of France and the preference for olive oil in the south around the Mediterranean. This is somewhat similar to the 18th century preference for barley bannocks in the Highlands of Scotland compared to oatcakes in the Lowlands. Both are examples of how cuisine is an expression of culture, just as culture is expressed through cuisine. Of course cuisine also relates to the availability of produce. Santich argues that “food preferences flow directly from the food supply.”⁷ Barley and oats were used in Scotland as these grains are hardy and more suitable to Scotland’s harsh climate than wheat.

The cuisine of a community is persistent. While the immigrant will adapt in many ways to a new adopted culture, traditional food practices will often remain as a comforting reminder of the “old country”. Senior Research Fellow at the University of London, Anne J. Kershen has written extensively about the migrant experience and claims that “the association of food with the migrant experience is not just one which embraces hunger, satiation, taste and economic activity. For, taking the view that ‘we are what we eat’, food is part of an individual’s culture, religion and identity.”⁸ British anthropologist Parvathi Raman, with reference to her own family’s emigration to England in the 1950s, argues “The food of home, and our food memories of ‘before’ have afforded us pathways for re-visiting and re-evaluating past selves, as well as providing sites for the imagination of future possibilities.”⁹ Apart from these private reassurances, recreating the food from home has also often provided migrants with opportunities for generating an income in their adopted home. Examples in recent history include the establishment of Indian restaurants by East Bengalis in the United Kingdom in the 1950s and the proliferation of Vietnamese restaurants in Australia following the end of the war in the 1970s.

Considering then the wave of Scottish immigration to the Western District of Victoria in the 19th century, is there evidence of any lasting culinary impact, either personal or public? If so, where

⁶ Barbara Santich, *Looking for Flavour* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1996), 90.

⁷ Santich, 15

⁸ Anne J. Kershen, “Introduction: Food in the Migrant Experience.” In *Food in the Migrant Experience*, ed. Anne J. Kershen, 2 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

⁹ Parvathi Raman, “Me in Place and the Place in Me.” *Food, Culture and Society* 14, no. 2 (2011): 166.

are the Scottish restaurants? To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider the socio-cultural background to early 19th century Scotland and in particular, the food culture with which the migrants to Australia would have been familiar.

The Clearances – socio-cultural background to the early 19th century in Scotland:

The socio-cultural environment of the early 19th century in Scotland was predetermined by several key events of the 18th century. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this was a revolutionary period for Scotland, with its people experiencing significant change in all facets of life. The political, social, cultural and economic environment shifted dramatically and by the end of the 18th century, Edinburgh had developed into an intellectual centre to rival London and Paris. To match this outpouring of ideas was a technological and scientific revolution, much of it based in Glasgow, with important discoveries made by a succession of Scottish inventors, engineers, doctors and scientists.¹⁰ By the end of the 18th century, living conditions would have improved for the majority of people but there would be a great deal of pain and suffering for many along the way. In addition there would be an increasing disparity between the living conditions of people living in the Highlands compared to the Lowlands.

The 18th century opened with the Act of Union in 1707, which dissolved the parliament in Edinburgh and transferred government to London. Historian Fiona Watson suggests, “The Scottish parliament voted itself out of existence and the reluctant Scottish bride finally succumbed to her ambivalent southern suitor, for better or worse.”¹¹ With Scotland at the time of union effectively divided culturally and economically between Highland and Lowland regions, the new parliament wanted to integrate the north west of Scotland into the rest of the country. To the Highlanders this would have appeared as unacceptable interference and many decided to support the Stuart monarch, James Francis Edward Stuart (the Pretender, James VIII & III), who was then living in exile in France. James made two attempts at returning to Scotland. The first in 1708 was foiled by bad weather and incompetence and the second in 1715, while initially more successful with James briefly taking up residence in Scone Palace, resulted in a hasty return to

¹⁰ Arthur Herman, *How Scots Invented the Modern World* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 322.

¹¹ Fiona Watson, *Scotland: From Prehistory to the Present* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2003), 206.

exile with his supporter the 6th Earl of Mar.¹² Finally, with French support, the Pretender's son, Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) landed in Scotland in 1745 and led his band of Jacobite supporters south with an ambition to militarily convince England of the benefit of a Stuart restoration. The motivation for the Highlanders themselves was primarily economic, with many Highland farmers believing that they were missing out on the material benefits from the union. Historian Neil Oliver asserts that the poor farmers were vulnerable to Highland "Jacobite salesmen" who promised that things would be better without union.¹³ The willingness with which many Highland farmers charged into battle in 1745 was a result of the feudal social system that still operated in that region of Scotland. Oliver suggests that a major factor was the power of the clan chiefs: "They still held the fates and lives of their tenants in their clenched fists and so could compel their obedience to any cause, on pain of eviction or death."¹⁴ After an initial string of military successes, Charles was forced to retreat at Derby. Oliver argues that the enterprise was doomed to fail and that the outcome of the final showdown at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 was predictable: "In the Lowlands across the central belt and southwards towards England itself, support for the Jacobite cause had been desperately thin; it was an anachronistic fairy tale few believed in any more."¹⁵ Unlike the Highlanders, the Lowland merchants were doing quite well from the union and the destabilization caused by the Jacobites was an unfortunate interruption to business and a threat to access to markets in England and the colonies.

What followed Culloden was a systematic attempt to break down the Highland way of life and while the Duke of Cumberland's cruel and vindictive retaliation against the Jacobites led to much suffering, it also led to significant social change, opening the way for aid to stimulate the Highland economy.¹⁶ Investment in roads and bridges in particular led to increased trade and social mobility, both into and out of the Highlands. In the last quarter of the 18th century there was an enormous increase in demand from the rest of Britain for Highland produce such as

¹² Neil Oliver, *A History of Scotland* (London: Phoenix, 2010), 305.

¹³ Oliver, 317.

¹⁴ Oliver, 317.

¹⁵ Oliver, 321.

¹⁶ Watson, 216.

cattle, kelp, whisky, wool, mutton, timber, slate and other products.¹⁷ However, the Highlands did not share equally in the prosperity that followed this commercial activity. After Culloden, the Highlanders were disarmed and the military and judicial powers of the chiefs over their clans were abolished. Highland dress was banned, which Australian historian Don Watson regards as “a gratuitous act which in fact ran deep into the basic ordering of clan society.”¹⁸ The Disarming Act was repealed in 1782, but the decline in Highland culture was irreversible; the relationship between the chiefs and the clan folk had changed. Don Watson argues strongly, “Put simply, the incorporation of the Highlands and Islands into British capitalism demanded the destruction of Highland society and in so doing it demanded an act of treachery by the lairds against their people.”¹⁹

Commercial forces led to a rapid increase in rental on land, leaving many tenants unable to pay. Historian T.M. Devine argues, “The Highland elites were subordinating their lands to market production and new commercial imperatives, and a revolution in the attitude to and function of land took place.”²⁰ Following Culloden, the role of the clan chiefs changed from one of protector of their tenants to one of landed gentleman and landlord who increasingly demanded market rents. In addition to these commercial pressures was the breakdown in the traditional township or ‘baile’ – groups of tenant farmers, cottars and servants. Shared farms were increasingly taken over by single tenants. Another threat to traditional Highland life was the coming of blackface and Cheviot sheep. The demand for wool and mutton meant that sheep were more profitable than cattle or crops leading to depopulation of the land in favour of intensive sheep grazing. This period in Highland history became known as the Clearances, which Devine defines as “the extensive and direct removal of peasant communities to make way for the big sheep farms. The new order and the old pastoral economy were fundamentally incompatible as not only was there intensive competition for scarce land, but the rental return from sheep was significantly higher than from cattle.”²¹

¹⁷ T.M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofter's War - The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 32.

¹⁸ Don Watson, *Caledonia Australis – Scottish Highlanders on the Frontier of Australia* (Sydney: Random House, this edition 1997), 22.

¹⁹ Don Watson, 23.

²⁰ Devine, 33.

²¹ Devine, 36.

Many families moved voluntarily or with assistance to the coast to try to make a living fishing or collecting kelp (used in soap and glass making). Devine asserts, “The people no longer had a traditional guarantee of land and the old social order was destroyed forever.”²² There were few protections so the tenants were very much at the mercy of their landlord. For instance, historian Caroline Bingham sites the case of a piece of land in Glengarry which had been let to tenants for £15/ year, but a sheep farmer was able to offer a rent of £250 for it. The tenants were evicted and the rental of the Glengarry Estate increased between 1768 and 1802 from £700 to over £5,000. Most tenants could not afford to stock sheep so eviction was inevitable.²³ One notorious example was on the estate of the Duke and Countess of Sutherland, where up to 10,000 people were evicted and moved to settlements on the coast, under the direction of Patrick Sellar, an exponent of agricultural improvement. The small crofts were not large enough to support them and while fishing was meant to make them industrious and productive, there were too many people competing for the resource. The Sutherlands prospered while the crofters starved.²⁴ Not all landowners removed tenants from their lands; some, such as the Duke of Argyll (John Campbell, 5th Duke of Argyll), tried hard to find new industries to employ the tenants, but the depression that followed the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 forced many to sell their land to English aristocrats who set up hunting, shooting and fishing enterprises on their estates.²⁵ Devine asserts that more money was being generated from grouse shooting than from earlier tenant farmers.²⁶ For those that tried to make a living out of small pockets of land on the coast, potatoes offered the hope of a high-yield, sustaining crop. In 1750 potatoes were relatively uncommon, but by the end of the century many families had come to rely on this nutritious food in their diet. Reliance on a single crop made them very vulnerable to famine, which came in the 1840s and unlike previous crop failures which lasted a couple of years, this time the potato failure lasted a decade.

It could be argued that the clearances were a necessary part of agricultural modernisation which benefited some, but caused untold misery for others. Devine argues that the clearances were

²² Devine, 37.

²³ Caroline Bingham, *Beyond the Highland Line – Highland History and Culture* (London: Constable and Co., 1995), 167.

²⁴ Bingham, 168.

²⁵ Bingham, 168.

²⁶ Devine, 80.

possible because of the “legal and customary defencelessness of the people.”²⁷ The net result was that many Highland families moved to the coast, to the industrialising cities to live in substandard conditions in crowded tenements, or in some cases made the ultimate decision to emigrate in search of a better life. The situation for tenant farmers in the Lowlands was not much better as rural reforms led to property amalgamations with individual husbandmen replacing communal farms. Devine writes, “The whole of Scotland in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was in turmoil as the new order took shape.”²⁸ From 1755 to the 1790s no less than 60% of the Highland region’s parishes failed to increase population because of the large outflow of people.²⁹ With mass evictions came schemes of assisted emigration, which allowed for the poor and destitute to be exported to the colonies, avoiding claims on landlords for charity and releasing even more land for commercial grazing. Clearances increased particularly during the famine years of the 1840s and 1850s. Devine argues that over the decade of the famine more than 16,000 people were assisted to emigrate to Canada and Australia.³⁰ The Highland and Island Emigration Society led by Charles Trevelyan, supported by Sir John McNeill had the objective of removing 30-40,000 surplus people to Australia as the “final settlement”.³¹ Trevelyan did not achieve this number, but a total of about 5000 people were assisted to move to Australia and started a new life.

Nature of Scottish migration to Australia in the 19th century:

America was initially the focus of Scottish migration, with about 20,000 Highlanders arriving between 1763 and 1775. After the War of Independence (1775-1783), the focus shifted to Canada as the preferred destination. Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island became Gaelic speaking communities and the Scots adapted to the new environment which climatically resembled Scotland. By the 1830s N.S.W. had become the new destination for emigration from Scotland, but later this expanded to include Victoria.³² Don Watson maintains that the

²⁷ Devine, 39.

²⁸ Devine, 39.

²⁹ Devine, 46.

³⁰ Devine, 147.

³¹ Devine, 191.

³² Don Watson, 50.

Highlanders were ideal employees on grazing properties as they were familiar with the care of sheep, were modest in their living and not likely to be tempted to run off to the goldfields.³³

Not all immigrants to Australia were Highlanders. Historian Ben Wilkie writes that “most of the arrivals from the industrial Lowlands tended to be skilled tradesmen, agriculturalists or farm labourers, whilst a majority of Highlanders listed their occupations as simply related to agricultural labour.”³⁴ The gold rush of the 1850s accelerated emigration from Scotland. In that decade about 600,000 migrants entered Australia and around 100,000 were from Scotland (16%). Just over half of the Scots gained government assisted passage compared to 25% of the English. Around 80% of assisted Scottish migrants settled in Victoria, mostly in rural locations.³⁵ Many used modest amounts of capital to settle in the lands west of Geelong and east of the South Australian border. Analysing the origin of Scottish immigrants to the Camperdown District of Victoria included in the recent book *Scotland to Australia Felix*, of the migrants studied, only about one third could be said to have come from relatively prosperous situations and most of those were from the Lowlands.³⁶ Regardless of their means or how they came to the district, most seemed to do well. With the gold rush came a demand for food and clothing and the Western District squatters were well placed to provide wool and mutton. This made many families very wealthy in a relatively short time, confirming the view that the Scottish immigrants were industrious.

Malcolm Prentis argues that, on the journey to Australia the Scots tended to be lumped in with the English as “invisible ethnics”, but in reality they had a shared history and a “subtle but deeply held and distinctive national consciousness.”³⁷ Diaries of emigrants examined by Prentis showed that shipboard meals sometimes made provision for Scottish tastes, including dishes such as porridge, sheep’s head broth, haggis, Scotch broth, oatcakes and barley bannocks.³⁸ Many appreciated the gesture, while others complained about the quality. The question remains, did the Scots continue their culinary traditions when they arrived at their destination?

³³ Watson, 75.

³⁴ Benjamin Wilkie, *The Scots in Australia 1788-1938* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2017), 26.

³⁵ Wilkie, 26.

³⁶ Various authors, *Scotland to Australia Felix – Founding Scots of Victoria’s Camperdown District*, 10.

³⁷ Malcolm Prentis, “Haggis on the high seas – Shipboard experiences of Scottish Emigrants to Australia 1821-1877.” *Australian Historical Studies* 124 (2004): 296.

³⁸ Prentis, 299.

Overview of the food of Scotland in the 18th and 19th Century:

When considering the food of Scotland in the past, it is necessary to distinguish between the diet of the wealthy and the poor. It is also important to consider the foods available in the Highlands compared to those of the Lowlands. Catherine Brown, author of *Scottish Cookery*, defines the Highland diet that would have applied in the early eighteenth century: “Their frugal, largely meatless, diet was based on broths made with vegetables, dried beans and peas, barley and lentils; brose and porridge made of oats and barley; and everything supplemented with milk, cheese and butter.”³⁹ F. Marion McNeill, who wrote the definitive book on Scottish cuisine in 1929, proposed that “it is the natural conditions and products that determine the general character of the national cuisine.”⁴⁰ Brown’s summary of the Highland diet reflects the harsh nature of that particular environment and poor soil. It would not been too different for the lower classes in other parts of Scotland. In coastal areas, seafood would have been an important part of the diet. For these people, potatoes and fish (often herring) would have been a common dish. In the remote islands, even seabirds were caught for food, oil and feathers. Game was also an occasional part of the diet of all classes up until the nineteenth century, although later access to game became more restricted to the wealthy. Vegetables were an important addition to basic soups and gruels, particularly kail and cabbage grown in the small kitchen garden, or kailyard, which surrounded most farm houses.

What was common to ordinary people in both Highlands and Lowlands was the near absence of meat in the diet for most meals except for festive occasions.⁴¹ Animals were capital assets and too valuable to eat. Cows provided milk and cheese, sheep produced wool and the occasional sale of livestock could inject cash into the household economy when required. Meat or no meat, the staple of the Scottish diet for hundreds of years was grains. If the basic bread in the Highlands was barley bannocks, then the equivalent staple in the Lowlands was oatcakes, usually baked on the girdle over an open fire. Oats had supplanted barley as the principal grain in the early 1700s in most parts of Scotland, although barley continued to be used in the Highlands.

³⁹ Catherine Brown, *Scottish Cookery*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2013), x.

⁴⁰ F. Marian McNeill, *The Scots Kitchen* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2006), 12.

⁴¹ Alexander Fenton, *Food of the Scots, Volume 5 in Scottish Life and Society – A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), 265.

Oats were eaten in various forms including porridge, brose, sowens, as well as oatcakes. Robert Burns poem *On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations Thro' Scotland* written in 1789 opens with the line "Hear, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots". The cakes referred to here are oatcakes, eaten by all classes at any time of the day with most meals.

For the wealthy, be they in the Highlands or Lowlands, their diet would have also included many of these traditional staples, but with much greater quantity and variety of produce. In contrast to the farmer's diet, the pattern of meals for the rich was heavily meat based. In times of prosperity, the wealthy could entertain lavishly, with dishes often showing the influence of French cuisine. However, in times of harvest failure, rich and poor suffered alike.⁴²

Special mention must be made of haggis. Although haggis is firmly associated with Scottish traditional cuisine, for the poor and common folk, it would have been reserved for special celebrations. McNeill asserts, "The choice of the haggis as the supreme national dish of Scotland is very fitting. It is testimony to the national gift of making the most of small means; for in the haggis we have concocted from humble, even despised ingredients, a veritable *plat de gourmets*."⁴³ One can see why the symbolism might have appealed to Robert Burns, who immortalised this much misunderstood dish in his *Address to a Haggis*.

Food in a New World:

It is rare for individuals or families to record daily meals. Sometimes special dinner party meals are recorded, but the everyday meals are usually eaten and forgotten. In my Doctor of Philosophy research at the historic property Beleura, I was able to piece together a picture of eating and drinking by a combination of diaries, letters, invoices, hand written recipes and annotated cookbooks. The variety and depth of documentation available at Beleura is very rare for an historic domestic property. In the vast majority of situations, the resources are not available for a researcher to accurately assess historical food practices. At a community level, newspapers offer a potentially useful record of daily life and in this paper I have used the

⁴² Olive Geddes, *The Laird's Kitchen – Three Hundred Years of Food in Scotland* (Edinburgh: The National Library of Scotland, 1994), vii.

⁴³ McNeill, 132.

National Library of Australia’s Trove digital newspaper archive to find references to recipes of Scottish origin. Most newspapers have lifestyle pages, often with recipes from editorial staff and submitted by readers, suggesting a possible approach to evaluating historical food trends. The Camperdown Chronicle was founded in 1874 and with a large percentage of the local population with links to Scotland, it might be expected that some references to Scottish recipes would be found in its pages over the years. The aim of this paper is to test this hypothesis.

Using Catherine Brown’s book *Scottish Cookery* as a source of typical Scottish recipes, searches were made using the Trove newspaper archive for references over the 100 years between 1860 and 1959. The search was limited to Victorian papers, particularly noting any references in the Camperdown Chronicle. To limit the search to what would hopefully be the most relevant articles I tagged each search with the word “recipe”, to eliminate more general references. My first trial search was for “shortbread recipe” which predictably resulted in a large number of references with only limited connection to real Scottish identity. Later searches were for less obvious Scottish recipes to try to unlock articles of more direct connection to Scottish heritage. This revealed some surprising references, but not always consistent with my expectations. The results of these searches are summarised below:

| | Total Victoria | Camperdown Chronicle |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| Shortbread (most traditional of all Scottish biscuits) | 760 | 13 |
| Haggis (made with sheep’s pluck and oatmeal) | 120 | 2 |
| Oatcakes (staple flat bread of Scottish diet) | 85 | 1 |
| Dundee cake (almond covered light fruit cake) | 100 | 4 |
| Cock-A-Leekie soup (chicken, leek and rice soup) | 34 | 1 |
| Bannocks (barley flat bread favoured in the Highlands) | 144 | 2 |
| Sheep’s head broth (legendary peasant soup) | 347 | 5 |
| Scotch broth (vegetable, meat and barley soup) | 355 | 4 |
| Minced collops (mince always served with ‘tatties’) | 63 | 2 |
| Hotch-potch (spring vegetable and mutton soup) | 9 | 1 |
| Stovies (potato and onion ‘gratin’) | 14 | 0 |
| Rumbledethumps (potato, onion and cabbage fritters) | 1 | 0 |

This is merely a random selection of common and some not so common Scottish recipes. Apart from the ever-popular shortbread, which can't really be compared to the other less well known recipes, the greatest incidence of references to Scottish recipes occurred in the decades between the 1890s and the 1930s. The incidence of Scottish recipes in the 1930s is particular high, perhaps due to housewives looking for inexpensive meals for their families during the depression years. Scottish cuisine is well known for its frugality. For instance, there were a surprising 74 references to sheep's head broth in Victorian newspapers in the 1930s, but only five by the 1950s. This would suggest that in the post war years, the ready availability of a variety of cuts of meat at reasonable prices made the cooking of a sheep's head unnecessary. Consistently, the largest numbers of references to Scottish recipes were in the state-based papers such as the Argus, the Age and the Weekly Times. While this is not a particularly rigorous study, the small percentage of references in the Camperdown Chronicle compared to the state totals suggests a poor link with any particular population of Scottish origin.

Malcolm Prentis argues, "Foods such as haggis were superseded in Australia, with its abundant and cheap meat, dairy products, fruit and vegetables."⁴⁵ The relative scarcity of recipes of Scottish origin in the local newspapers, together with the total absence of any sort of Scottish restaurant culture, appears to confirm the argument that for the migrants in Australia, Scottish traditional cooking was viewed as a cuisine of poverty and largely disappeared with easy access to fresh food. Why make haggis with its complicated preparation when you can eat freshly killed mutton or beef? There certainly seems to be no greater incidence of Scottish recipes in the Camperdown Chronicle than other newspapers across the state, despite the high proportion of Scots in the Camperdown and district population. Of course the scarcity of recipes may not be irrefutable proof of an absence of Scottish cooking amongst immigrant families. For many families, some traditional foods are so commonly known that recipes are thought to be unnecessary. Sometimes only unfamiliar dishes are worthy of written recipes, perhaps accounting for the lack of references in the newspapers. We have no way of knowing the truth.

⁴⁴ Note: References from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspapers/?q=>

⁴⁵ Prentis, 211.

Apart from specific recipes, there were also a small number of general articles about Scottish food that were circulated among Victorian newspapers up to World War II. While these are not sufficiently numerous to suggest any strong attachment to Scottish cooking, they do show a lingering interest from some sections of the community in the cuisine. For instance, in the 3rd June 1879 edition of the Colac Herald (also in the Australasian) there was a long article on the merits of growing oats with specific mention of the best strains and of their uses. The article even mentions the rather obscure Scottish oat preparation known as sowans, involving the fermentation of oat husks. Another article on *Scotch Cookery* was published in the Leader on the 5th October 1901. This article appeared to focus on some of the more challenging and unusually named Scottish dishes such as haggis, howtowdie (forcemeat stuffed fowl), crappit heads (stuffed fish heads) and Atholl Brose. The recipes have been sourced from one of the most revered Scottish cookery books, Meg Dods' *The Cook and Housewife's Manual* (1826). The purpose of the article seems more to shock than to educate and it is unlikely that many of the readers would have been tempted to actually make the dishes. The ingredients are obscure and the methods unclear and complicated.

In the 18th June 1912 edition of the Camperdown Chronicle an article was published titled *Recipes from Land o' Cakes*. The article must have been appealing, as a rather lazy journalist from the Chronicle reprinted it word perfectly in 1934 and again in 1938. This obviously popular article included recipes for Scotch buns, shortbread, Dundee cake, fruit cake and rice seed cake. Clearly, the author was not aware that Burns was referring to oatcakes in his poem title. None of these general newspaper articles would lead me to revise my assertion that the Scottish immigrants essentially left their cuisine behind them when they landed in Australia. The traditional dishes mentioned in these articles have been relegated to a curiosity or perhaps a distant memory of the past, although cakes always have an appeal.

As previously noted, family documents rarely make mention of daily meals, but in Camperdown there exists a special family scrapbook which, amongst a wide range of topics, includes a number of references to food and several recipes. James Dawson (1806-1900) created the scrapbook depicting aspects of life in the Western District of Victoria. The scrapbook is under the care of Sue Cole, a descendant of the Dawson family. Dawson was an exceptional man, who came from

Bonnytown near Linlithgow, Scotland and emigrated to Australia in 1839. The Dawsons moved to the Camperdown area in 1868 and James and his daughter Isabella shared a deep interest and respect for the culture of the local aboriginal people.⁴⁶ The scrapbook includes hand-written recipes for haggis, Garibaldi scones, hare soup (known as Bawd Bree) and a comic poem in praise of Hotch Potch, a mutton and vegetable soup. The first two of these recipes are attributed to a Mrs Hutchison of Bonnytown and the hare soup is dated 1882, Glasgow. While these recipes are clear proof of some remnant interest in Scottish cooking in the Dawson family, the problem with unannotated recipes is that there is no way of knowing if they were actually cooked. Nevertheless they offer the prospect that recipes of Scottish origin may be lurking in other family cookbooks in the Western District of Victoria.

While there may be little evidence for the regular cooking of traditional Scottish dishes in the homes of Scottish immigrants in Victoria, some Scots did make lasting contributions to Australian cuisine but not perhaps in the way we might expect. The Scots have been renowned for their excellent education system and it is in the field of cookery education that some Scottish immigrants have made an impact. If there was any desire to promote and preserve Scottish cooking traditions, then it should be apparent in the pages of the *P.W.M.U. Cookery Book*. The Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (P.W.M.U.) was established in Victoria in 1890 when there was a world-wide evangelical movement to share the gospel and help the poor and vulnerable in practical ways. A committee was formed under Mrs C. Strachan to collect, test and select recipes for a fundraising cookbook. Originally published in 1904 as *Home Cookery for Australia*, it changed its name in 1916 to the *P.W.M.U. Cookery Book* and later again to the *New P.W.M.U. Cookery Book*. It continues in print today, with over 500,000 copies sold since the first edition was published 115 years ago.⁴⁷ The book has become a "must have" for new cooks, but disappointingly, there are very few recipes of Scottish heritage. In a 1949 edition, there are recipes for Scotch broth (unusually made with beef), minced collops, sheep's head mould, Scotch ginger bread, Edinburgh biscuits, Scotch current bun and, of course, shortbread.⁴⁸ Most of these would be found in similar books of the time, without the Presbyterian Scottish heritage.

⁴⁶ Various authors, *Scotland to Australia Felix – Founding Scots of Victoria's Camperdown District*, 54.

⁴⁷ Liz Harfull, *Tried Tested and True* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2018), 18.

⁴⁸ Miss A.M. Campbell, *The New P.W.M.U. Cookery Book* (Melbourne: Brown, Prior, Anderson Pty Ltd, 1949), 7.

The other significant contribution made by the Scots to cookery education was a young Margaret Fulton who was born in Nairn, Scotland and moved with her family to Australia to settle in Glen Innes, N.S.W. at the age of three. After World War II, Fulton embarked on a career in catering and went on to become one of the most influential cookery writers in Australia. Her *Margaret Fulton Cookbook* was first published in 1968 and has been in print continuously since, with over 1.5 million copies sold. A 50th anniversary edition was recently released. While her famous cookbook features few recipes of Scottish origin, just the obligatory Scotch broth, shortbread and Dundee cake, the real strength of the book is in Fulton's communication with the reader and her practical approach to domestic cookery. Fulton was taught her earliest lessons in cookery by her mother Isabella. During the depression years, Fulton watched her mother provide food for the family using the very Scottish ability of making do with little. Fulton's grand-daughter Kate Gibbs (also a cookery writer) explains: "Isabella was an alchemist in the kitchen, and followed her countrymen's tradition of turning food that might seem to be lead into gold. What was a humble shoulder of lamb or mutton neck, an unlovely strip of stomach, became complex broths and wonderful brews."⁴⁹ Isabella didn't make haggis, but her practical, improvisational approach to cookery, passed onto her daughter Margaret, may have been a more lasting expression of Scottishness. Perhaps the immigrant Scots were continuing their culinary traditions in Australia, not so much with specific recipes from home, but through an attitude of making the most of the ingredients at hand. It was an attitude that the Scottish immigrants to the Western District of Victoria would certainly have applied to survive in a new land. Gibbs identifies one traditional recipe that Isabella handed on to her daughter Margaret, who in turn gave it to the world in her cookbook – Scotch broth. This nutritious soup made with an odd assortment of vegetables and whatever scraps of lamb are available seems to embody this Scottish principle of making do. It has sustained generations of Scots across the world for centuries and is the one Scottish recipe that reliably appears in many community cookbooks.

⁴⁹ Kate Gibbs, *Margaret and Me – Recipes for life from my grandmother's kitchen* (Sydney: Murdoch Books Australia, 2015), 31.

Celebration of Scottishness – the role of the Scottish societies in preserving culture:

Wilkie suggests that in the 19th century the Scots became adept at wearing more than one “hat of identity” concurrently – a Scottish one and a British one.⁵⁰ Richard J. Finlay argues, “It was during this period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that the Scots started to reinvent themselves. It was the era of Highlandism and tartantry, the romanticism of the Scottish past, the sentimentalisation of rural life and the contribution of imperial Scotland to the British Empire.”⁵¹ It is ironic that at a time when thousands of Scots were being encouraged to leave their homeland, the popularity of the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the acquisition of the Balmoral estate by Queen Victoria in 1852 were encouraging people to visit the Highlands and explore Highland culture. Expatriate Scots were not immune to bouts of nostalgia, causing some to become even more fervent in asserting their Scottish identity than those back home, particularly by observing seasonal events and anniversaries. A focus of many of these events was the celebration of Robert Burns as national hero. Finlay suggest that Burns was emblematic of an older, purer and uncorrupted Scotland, which had as yet, been untouched by industrialisation and mammon.”⁵² This would have resonated with many Scots in Australia who had been forced to leave Scotland by the same social and economic forces, perhaps accounting for the proliferation of memorial sculptures to Burns in Australia at that time. It was reported that thousands of people attended the unveiling of George Lawson’s sculpture of Robert Burns on St Kilda Road in January 1904.⁵³

The Scottish societies that sprang up around the world in the second half of the 19th century were important in the preservation of Scottish identity. They were mainly St Andrews and Caledonian Societies and their main function was to provide a meeting place for people of Scottish descent, provide welfare when needed and the promotion of Scottish culture, particularly music and dancing. Five Scottish societies were founded in Victoria in the 1850s in response to the large number of immigrants from Scotland arriving in Port Phillip and settling in the state. Geelong’s Commun Na Fienne was founded in 1856, Maryborough’s Highland Society in 1858, followed

⁵⁰ Wilkie,74.

⁵¹ Richard J. Finlay, “Heroes, Myths and Anniversaries in Modern Scotland.” *Scottish Affairs*, no. 18 (1997): 3.

⁵² Finlay, 4.

⁵³ “The Burns Statue,” *The Colac Herald*, January 25, 1904, via Trove, <http://trove.nla.gov.au>

by Caledonian Societies in Ballarat in 1858 and Bendigo in 1859. All were in rural areas settled by Scots, although the Royal Caledonian Society of Melbourne was also established in 1858.⁵⁴ These fledgling organisations were well supported, an example being the Grand Caledonian Gathering held over two days in 1860 which was reported to have attracted 20,000 visitors, who enjoyed music, dancing, games, archery and rifle shooting.⁵⁵ Encouraged by their success, a three day gathering was held in 1861, once again, well attended. By the turn of the century there were seven Scottish associations in Melbourne and at least another ten in regional towns.⁵⁶ Growth continued with thirty one new Scottish societies formed in Victoria from 1902-1910.⁵⁷ A Caledonian Society was formed in Camperdown in 1905, surprisingly late compared to other towns, considering the large contingent of people of Scottish descent in the district.

While dishes derived from the Scottish tradition appear not to have been on the daily menu for most immigrant families, particular dishes made a regular appearance at ceremonial dinners of the Scottish societies. On Burns Night (25th January) haggis would be served with ‘neeps and tatties’. St Andrew’s Day (30th November) would see sheep’s head, haggis and other traditional dishes served. Black bun, shortbread and Atholl Brose would make an appearance at Hogmanay (New Year’s Eve).⁵⁸ Of course, whisky would lubricate most events. The first Haggis Supper was held by the Camperdown Caledonian Society on the 28th August 1906. The Camperdown Chronicle reported on the 30th August, “proceedings throughout were marked by a spirit of hearty enjoyment.” The new societies seemed to relish such celebrations, as the ceremonial use of traditional foods as an adjunct to memory and cultural identification is common for immigrants, not only from Scotland but across the globe. Of course the events did not always go to plan, not surprisingly, considering the remote nature of some settlements. One such mishap was a reported accident that befell a Cameron who was escorting a haggis (prepared with great trouble on a district station) to a dinner of the St Arnaud Caledonians. Floods were raging then and the Cameron, on his ride through the bush, got caught by a creek. “He managed to escape”,

⁵⁴ Alec H. Chisholm, *Scots Wha Hae* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1950), 2.

⁵⁵ Chisholm, 7.

⁵⁶ Chisholm, 38.

⁵⁷ Chisholm, 52.

⁵⁸ McNeill, 248.

says a chronicler of the day, “but alas, the haggis was drowned in the Carapooee! (a local creek)”⁵⁹

Drinking culture and the temperance movement:

It is no exaggeration to say that drinking was a problem for many of the inhabitants, both wealthy and poor, in 18th and 19th century Scotland. The preferred tippie for the poor was originally ale, but taste changed later to cheap, low quality whisky. The social dislocation and crowded conditions in the cities meant that many resorted to alcohol to dull the senses. Even the wealthy merchant and professional classes consumed vast quantities of French claret, their preferred libation. For some Scots, particularly after Union, drinking claret was seen as an act of defiance against the English. Later in the 18th century at the height of anti-French sentiment, the wealthy weaned themselves off claret in favour of port, aligning themselves more with the English upper classes. They also developed a taste for Highland whisky even if it was only available then in the Lowlands on the black market. Many judges, including the Solicitor General of Scotland Henry Dundas (1742-1811) were heavy drinkers, thinking nothing of spending the night carousing at a tavern then appearing in court the next day to make judgements that would change people’s lives. Dundas was reported to have been seen emerging from a dram shop early one morning after a heavy night at the tavern, fully dressed in his court attire with wig and cravat, trying to settle his stomach with a “hair of the dog”. Fellow lawyer and writer James Boswell (1740-1795), himself a heavy drinker, commented on the issue, “In some countries such an officer of the crown as the Solicitor General being seen in such a state would be thought shocking. Such are our manners in Scotland that it is nothing at all.”⁶⁰ Excessive drinking was also common in the church. Dr Alexander Webster, minister of the Tolbooth Kirk of St Giles, had the nickname Dr Bonum Magnum for his ability to drink five bottles of claret at a sitting and remain sober.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Chisholm, 53.

⁶⁰ Michael Fry, *Edinburgh – A History of a City* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2009), 162.

⁶¹ Elspeth King, *Scotland Sober and Free – The Temperance Movement 1829-1979* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1979), 4.

Most business deals were signed at taverns while consuming large amounts of alcohol and social events for all classes required copious quantities of ale, wine and whisky. The society ran on alcohol, but it became apparent to many commentators of the day that this situation could not continue forever. The Old Statistical Accounts published from reports written by ministers of religion between 1791 and 1799, gives a predictably negative view of the impact of alcohol on Scottish communities. In general they were critical of the role played by ale houses, dram shops and tipping huts in the lives of parishioners. They were specifically concerned that a trend towards replacing beer with whisky as the drink of choice of the working classes was leading to rising levels of crime, drunkenness, alcoholism and impoverishment of families.⁶²

In 1822, the duty on spirits was lowered from seven shillings to two shillings and ten pence per gallon. As a consequence, consumption of spirits in Scotland more than doubled in seven years. A reaction was inevitable and a fledgling temperance movement started to gain influence in Scotland under the leadership of John Dunlop (1789-1868). Dunlop travelled to France and was surprised by the “superior morals” of the inhabitants, concluding that the message of the church in Scotland was being neutralised by the “intemperance of our inhabitants”.⁶³ He teamed with printer William Collins to produce anti-drinking tracts and toured the west coast of Scotland lecturing on the evils of strong drink. The first Temperance Societies were formed in Maryhill and Greenock in 1829. The Temperance Society Record, published by Collins in 1830 was the first of many newspapers to be printed on the subject. Early temperance societies took pledges against spirits only, with a view to encourage consumption of “nutritious” liquors, beer and wine. This was largely due to a perception that excessive drinking was less of a problem in wine drinking countries such as France, Italy and Spain.⁶⁴ Early reformers thought that total abstinence from alcohol was too severe, but others considered all alcohol a problem and encouraged teetotalism.

The temperance movement was not united in its approach or objectives. The Scottish Temperance League founded in 1844 produced printed educational brochures, while the United

⁶²Anthony Cooke, *A History of Drinking: The Scottish Pub since 1700* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1.

⁶³ King, 7.

⁶⁴ King, 8.

Kingdom Alliance for the Suppression of the Traffic in Intoxicating Liquors attempted law reform and favoured prohibition. The Scottish Association for Suppressing Drunkenness looked for practical alternatives to venues serving alcohol and opened refreshment rooms, coffee houses and temperance hotels which flourished from the 1840s. The Glasgow Abstainers Union organised alternative activities without alcohol, such as concerts, cooking classes, sewing classes, dances and lectures. The Scottish Band of Hope Union, established in Leeds in 1847 and in Scotland in 1871, focussed on educating the young about the evils of drink. The Independent Order of Rechabites was a friendly society modelled on other societies of the time, but on temperance principles. Other prominent temperance associations were the Sons of Scotland Temperance Friendly Society, Daughters of Temperance with a children's arm, the Cadets of Temperance.⁶⁵ The Good Templars came to Scotland in 1869 and had distinctive regalia and rituals common to other groups such as the Masons. Their aim was total abstinence and quickly spread. Glasgow historian Elspeth King asserts, "Temperance has permeated and enriched the entire fabric of social and political life in Scotland and without it the quality of life would have been much poorer."⁶⁶

While traditional Scottish foods may not have survived translation to the Western District of Victoria, the love of whisky seems to have continued uninterrupted. Journalist Richard Zachariah notes in his book on the families of the Western District, that in the late 19th century, 80% of the Scotch whisky imported into Australia was consumed in the Western District.⁶⁷ The extent of drunkenness is hard to ascertain, but as in Scotland, the temperance movement began to make its presence felt in Camperdown in the second half of the 19th century. The Camperdown Temperance Society was the parent temperance society in Camperdown which met at Temperance Hall. A meeting of the Society was reported in the *Camperdown Chronicle* on 11th July 1879. A number of temperance organisations with similar objectives followed including the Independent Order of Good Templars, Independent Order of Rechabites, Women's Christian Temperance Union (and Young WCTU), Total Abstinence Society and the Band of Hope (for children). While each had a slightly different style, they regularly met under the banner of the

⁶⁵ King, 15.

⁶⁶ King, 26.

⁶⁷ Richard Zachariah, *The Vanished Land – Disappearing dynasties of Victoria's Western District* (Mile End: Wakefield Press, 2017), 44.

united temperance societies of Camperdown. For instance, the Camperdown Chronicle reported on the 18th August 1886 a meeting of the united temperance societies at Temperance Hall to celebrate Mr Thomas Shaw's fifty years as a teetotaler. 150 people attended. On the 6th April 1893, the Camperdown Chronicle reported a combined picnic of the united societies. Clearly the temperance movement was well supported in Camperdown although it is not clear how many members were from the Scottish immigrant community although prominent Scots, James Tait and John Walls were both involved with a number of these societies.

Conclusions:

From the newspaper and other evidence discussed in this paper it would appear unlikely that the Scottish immigrants to the Western District of Victoria continued to cook traditional Scottish meals on a regular basis. Good quality, cheap ingredients made many of the Scottish dishes irrelevant and, in the minds of many immigrant families, these meals were probably too closely connected with their previous lives of poverty and deprivation. The Scots in Victoria quickly adapted to the culinary practices of their fellow countrymen and women. The key exception to this practice was with regard to Scottish celebrations such as Hogmanay, St Andrews Day and Burns Night, where the various Caledonian societies used traditional dishes such as haggis to engender a sense of kinship and Scottish identity. In addition, if there was any influence on the Australian diet of the time, it was most likely very subtle – not recipes so much, but an attitude of invention and adaptation as the culinary legacy of the Scottish immigrants.

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