



News Release

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[Tartan Fest at State Museum
Celebrates Celtic Heritage](#)

Columbia, S.C. --- The pipes will be skirling and the clans gathering as the South Carolina State Museum holds Tartan Fest, its annual celebration of Celtic heritage on Saturday, April 3.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 11 a.m. with a parade of tartans and clan banners. Master of ceremonies Mike Miller will welcome members of Clan Gillean (MacLean) as the honored clan for the day, with current and former clan presidents in attendance from North and South Carolina and Tennessee. The Irish branch of Celtic heritage also will be represented at this year's Tartan Fest, adding the "wearing o' the green" to the Scottish plaid.

Raphe O'Geaney will sing the national anthem of Ireland, "Amhran na bhFiann (The Soldiers' Song)," with Jean Ray Williams performing "Flower of Scotland," the national anthem of Scotland. Melinda Spencer, current president of the Robert Burns Society of the Midlands, will sing "God Save the Queen," national anthem of the United Kingdom, and Evelyn Stith will perform "The Star Spangled Banner."

Musically bringing the house down throughout the day will be Celtic rockers Rathkeltair, one of the most exciting bands touring international Celtic festivals today. Piper Neil Anderson and drummer Nick Watson, two original members of the ground-

breaking Celtic group Seven Nations, are joined by guitarist Trevor Tanner in this compelling musical sound that has been described as “Celtic Rock Jam Fusion.”

“Columbia’s own Palmetto Pipes and Drums under the direction of Pipe Major Billy DuBose return to lead the Parade of Tartans and then will offer a set of their own stirring marches and Scottish anthems,” said State Museum Director of Programs and Education Meika Samuel. Young Evelyn Stith will sing Scottish ballads and poems by the Scottish national poet Robert Burns set to music.

Celtic dancing once again takes center stage as members of Rince na h’Eireann School of Irish Dance perform Irish step dancing, a type of dance generally characterized by a stiff upper body and quick, precise movements of the feet. Although it dates back to the late 17th and 18th century, Irish step dancing has gained wide attention in the past two decades through the popular musical “Riverdance” and the stellar performances of Michael Flatley and Jean Butler.

“Scottish dancing will be well-represented with performances by award-winning Highland dancer/teacher Laura Tellefsen and the Palmetto Scottish Country Dancers,” said Samuel. “In many ways, highland dancing evolved from step dancing. However, some highland dances, such as the sword dance, date back to the medieval period and perhaps even earlier, to prehistoric times.”

Highland dancing was performed only by men until the late 19th century, but women now comprise more than 95 percent of the highland dancers competing today. Also demonstrated will be Scottish country dancing, a social dance done with a partner or partners in a formation or pattern of group movement about the dance floor.

Throughout the day, wee laddies and lassies can make a variety of Celtic crafts in the Discovery Center and participate in Captain Kidd’s treasure hunt.

Scottish traditions are highlighted throughout the day with programs on fencing by Palmetto Fencers, falconry by Winged Ambassadors International (featuring a live falcon) and athletic competition by Highland Games judge Rick Norred. The British Car Club Midlands Centre will gather outside the Museum with British sports cars for automobile buffs.

The lure of the tartan (various patterned plaid textiles that distinguish certain families or clans) will be explored at the Celtic fashion show with kilts, sporrans,

Glengarry hats, trews and Sgian Dubhs on display. Guests can interact with several Scottish and Irish societies, who will display information about Celtic heritage. For those interested in a Scottish souvenir, vendors on the mezzanine and in the lobby will sell their wares, from classic kilts and Celtic jewelry to boxes of tea and other unique items.

“Guests hungry for more Celtic culture – literally – will not be disappointed,” Samuel said. “Scottish foods such as haggis, meat pies and haggis rolls will be sold by Cameron’s of Kearny throughout the day.”

For more information, e-mail publicprograms@scmuseum.org .

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CUTLINE #1 FOR TARTAN FEST

The music of Palmetto Pipes and Drums will draw crowds at the South Carolina State Museum Saturday, April 3 as the museum presents Tartan Fest, its annual celebration of Celtic heritage in the Palmetto State.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Photo by Susan Dugan/courtesy S.C. State Museum

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CUTLINE #2 FOR TARTAN FEST

The unmistakable sound of bagpipes will join demonstrations of Scottish and Irish dance, falconry, fencing, Scottish food, kids’ activities and much more Saturday, April 3 as the South Carolina State Museum presents Tartan Fest, its annual celebration of Celtic heritage in the Palmetto State.

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Photo by Susan Dugan/courtesy S.C. State Museum

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