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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for April 20th 2012

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Electric Scotland News

Videos

A number of you may know that I have always tried to get pictures to go with the various historical books we publish on the site and have usually been unable to obtain any. I had a bit of a brainwave this week and figured I might actually be able to get some YouTube videos of the various places. And so this week I have spent several days trawling through YouTube and have managed to find quite a few excellent videos.

As a base I worked through the list of books under "Places in Scotland" at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/books.htm#places> and so went through them one by one and when I found a good video I added it to the index page of the book. Having announced this I got in an email asking why I had not just created a new page where I could point to the various videos I found. I confess I hadn't considered that so am afraid to see the videos you'll need to load the book link to go to the index page and scroll down that page to see if there is a video. In most cases I have embedded the video but in some cases this wasn't possible so have simply added a link to the video on YouTube.

I will say that not all books have videos associated with them but most have. Where we have more than one book about a place only the first book has the video embedded on it. Now some of these videos are quite long and can be around 40 minutes but of course others might only be a few minutes. I have tried only to select videos that to me are of good quality. I now intend to seek videos of new books we post up on the site in the months ahead.

I might add I've also found some good videos of Dundee at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/dundee/index.htm>

And as an added service I also decided to add videos for all the Canadian Provinces and you can view these at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/videos/index.htm>

My Canadian Experience

I find I have now been working on this journal for some 8 years and figured it was time to close it. The intention of the video was to explore the reasons I decided to come to Canada and to document my life during my settling in process through obtaining Permanent Landed Status, then citizenship and then a period of settling in and establishing myself. I feel what I have done to date has done that task and so feel I should close it at this point. The final entry can be viewed at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/canadandx.htm>

ABOUT THE STORIES

Some of the stories in here are just parts of a larger story so do check out the site for the full versions. You can always find the link in our "What's New" section in our site menu and at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm> and also <http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

We try not to point to a pdf file and instead send you to page where the pdf can be downloaded.

Electric Canadian

The Stories of the Counties of Ontario

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/stories/index.htm>

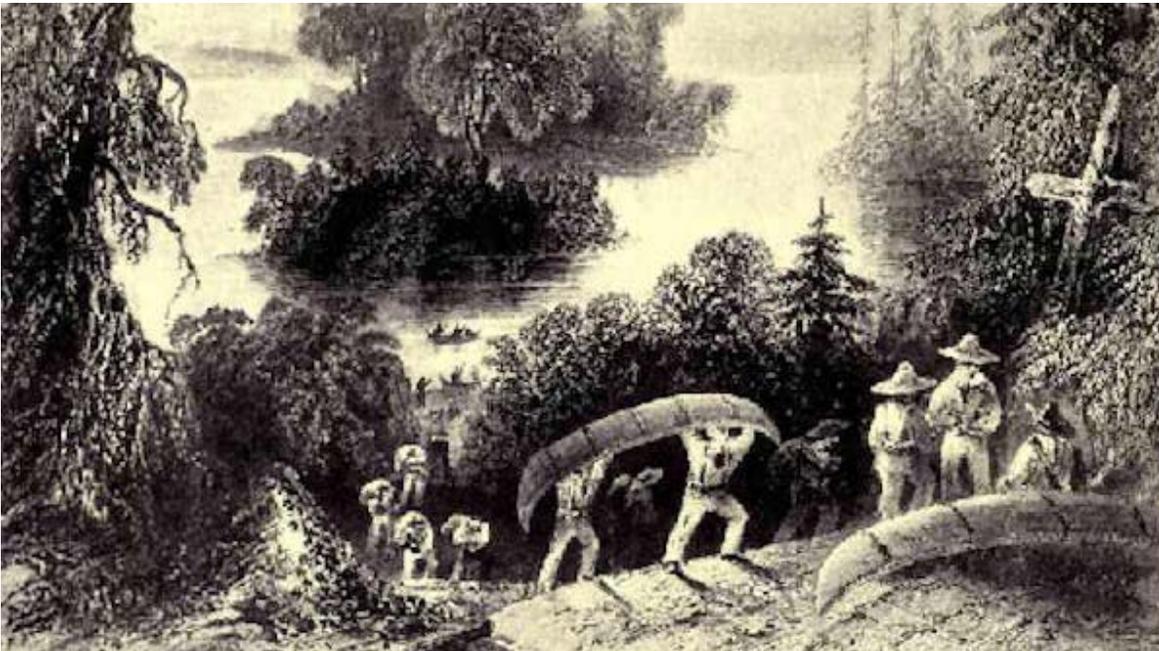
By Emily P Weaver (1913).

This book is now complete and I certainly enjoyed the stories contained in it.

The Gentleman Emigrant

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/gentleman/index.htm>

His Daily Life, Sports and Pastimes in Canada, Australia and the United States by W. Stamer (1874). This is actually a 2 volume publication but have just put up volume 1 and a small part of volume 2 which is the Canadian part of this book.



The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue has been compiled by Garry Knox in which he is mainly commenting on the Economist's article on Scotland. In the Synopsis there is a range of interesting news items all well worth a read. I noted a list of 7 key strengths of the Scottish economy...

Scotland's Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, highlighted seven key strengths of Scotland's economy.

1. Overall Wealth: An independent Scotland would be ranked 6th in the OECD in terms of GDP per head, compared to the UK's sixteenth place (in 2010).
2. Oil: There is up to 24 billion barrels remaining in the North Sea. Such a figure equates to a wholesale value of some £1.5 trillion in today's prices.
3. Renewables: Scotland has around 25 percent of Europe's potential offshore wind and tidal energy, and a tenth of Europe's wave

power potential.

4. Food & Drink: The latest food and drink export figures show exports are at an all time high of £5.4 billion, and growing.
5. Public Finances: In terms of our public finances, Scotland is better off than the UK as a whole to the tune of £510 for every man, women and child in Scotland in the most recent year (2010/11).
6. Education: Scotland has five of the top 200 universities in the world.
7. Inward Investment: Scottish Development International are an award winning agency, with major companies continuing to locate in Scotland.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org>

The Working Life of Christina McKelvie MSP

We got in Christina's weekly diary for 19th April 2012 which you can read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/120419.htm>

Scottish Poets in America

With Biographical and Critical Notices by John D, Ross (1889)

Now added...

William Wilson

A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast.

"Having summered and wintered it for many long years with your dear father, I ought to know something of the base and bent of his genius, though, as he hated all shams and pretensions, a very slight acquaintance with him showed that independence and personal manhood, 'as wha daur meddle wi' me,' were two of his strong features; while humor, deep feeling and tenderness were prominent in all he said or wrote. *I loved him as a man, a poet and a brother, and I had many proofs that my feelings were reciprocated." So wrote Hew Ainslie of William Wilson in a letter addressed to General James Grant Wilson, the esteemed editor of "The Poets and Poetry of Scotland" and of the "Cyclopaedia of American Biography." William Wilson was born at Crieff on the twenty-fifth of December, 1801. He was educated with great care, and early began to take an interest in poetical matters; indeed, many of his own verses, written before he had reached his tenth year, prove that even at this tender age he was possessed of superior poetical talents. He is said to have inherited these gifts from his mother, a patriotic Scottish lady who ever delighted in singing the old Jacobite songs and ballads, which she did with much sweetness and pathos. At the age of twenty-two Mr. Wilson removed to Dundee, where he edited for some time the Literary Olio, and to which he contributed largely, both in poetry and prose. He afterwards went to Edinburgh and entered into business on his own account as a commission agent. While there he is credited with having contributed no less than thirty-two valuable poems in less than three years to the Edinburgh Literary Jotirnaly a well-known publication then under the editorship of Henry Glassford Bell, late Sheriff of Lanarkshire.

You can read this entry at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/america/chapter24.htm>

The other entries can be found at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/america/index.htm>

Northern Notes and Queries

Edited by Rev. R. W. Cornelious Hallen (1886)

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I noted one entry which drew my attention as I was born in Rotten Row hospital in Glasgow...

240. ROTTEN ROW.—The word 'Rotten' frequently occurs in place-names, and its meaning has been discussed with no very satisfactory results. London¹ and York, and possibly other English towns, possess a 'Rotten Row'; but the name is not confined to England. There are Rotten Rows at Dunfermline, Dundee, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. But Rotten as a compound is found in Rotten-yard, New Cumnock; Rotten Cairn, Rottenhill, Rotten Moss, in Aberdeenshire. May not the word be Teutonic, and equivalent to red? Mr. Rottenherring, an inhabitant of Ayrshire in the 17th century, was probably simply Mr. Redherring, belonging to the great continental tribe of Herring, Herringhook, Pickleherring, etc. In days when town houses were built chiefly of wood and covered with thatch, a street or row in which red painted or red tiled houses predominated may well have been called the Rotten or Red Row. Rotten Cairn may have consisted of a heap of red-coloured stones. Rotten Moss and Redmoss, Clatt, Aberdeenshire, may both owe their name to the colour of the bog soil. Perhaps some of our readers will take up the subject, which has not yet been sufficiently examined. H.

We now have up the "December Edition 1889", which you can read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/northern/index.htm>

Songs of Robert Burns

We added this week...

Historical Notes: Jacobites

Some interesting information on Clan Campbell in this part.

You can get to this book to read more at <http://www.electricscotland.com/burns/songs/index.htm>

The Bards of Bon Accord 1375 - 1860

By William Walker

Added the chapters on "Robert and William Forbes"

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/bonaccord/index.htm>

The History of Blairgowrie

Town, Parish and District being an account of the Origin and Progress of the Burgh from the Earliest Period with a description of the Antiquities, Topography, Civil History, Ecclesiastical and Parochial Records, Institutions, Public Works, Manufactures, Legends, Sports, Statistics, and Biographical Sketches of Eminent Persons, etc. by John A. R. MacDonald (1899)



The final chapter contains a goodly number of interesting facts such as...

A Blairgowrie in America.

IN a pamphlet issued in 1882 by the Scottish American Land Company, descriptive of the State of Iowa, it is stated that "at Blairgowrie, a farm owned by Mr Adamson, of Pitlochry, Scotland, we saw a lot of steers, about 600 in number, in good condition."

There is also a place named Blairgowrie near Chicago.

A Curious Despatch from India.

"We hereby certify that the 'Neilsonian' cauliflower, produce of the seeds supplied by Mr Neilson, merchant, High Street, Blairgowrie, are very fine. These vegetables have of late daily graced the Worshipful Festive Board, and their great size, beautiful whiteness, and delicacy of taste and appearance, have invariably called forth complimentary comment.

"Given under our Worshipful hand and holograph, at our Castle of Taroshek, in the province of Scinde and Valley of the Indus, this fifteenth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine.

"R. Cowpar, Captain, H. M.'s 1st Bombay Fusileers, Dep. Commissioner of Hydra-bad, and Her Majesty's Justice of the Peace for the island of Bombay and its dependencies, &c."

A "Blair Chiel" Mayor of Dunedin.

The "Otago Guardian" of 2nd July, 1874, says:— "After one of the sharpest contests ever known in Dunedin, Mr Keith Ramsay has been elected Mayor of this city. . . In the year 1862 Mr Ramsay emigrated from Blairgowrie to New Zealand, and that he had in so short a time risen to the highest municipal dignity in the City of Dunedin speaks volumes for his industry, perseverance, and sterling worth, and reflects honour on his native town of Blairgowrie."

Again, the "Otago Guardian" of 29th July, 1875, reports that at a meeting of the City Council, on 28th July, the following resolution was, on the motion of Councillor Walter, the Mayor-elect, passed unanimously:— "That this Council desire, on the eve of the

retirement of Mr Ramsay from the Mayoral Chair, to thank him for the courtesy and impartiality he has always manifested during his term of office, and wish that at no distant period he may be found taking an active part in the affairs of the city.”

Mr Ramsay was entertained to a banquet in the Free Church School, James Street, by his old schoolfellows, while on a visit home in 1898.

A “Blair Highlander” in Russia.

On the occasion of the coronation of the Czar in 1856, at Moscow, John Saunders (MacAlister), a native of this district, attended as piper and valet to the Duke of Sutherland, who represented the Queen. The “Daily News” correspondent states that “MacAlister, the Dukes piper, was in attendance in the ante-room at Lord Granville’s ball in full uniform, kilt and philabeg, it being the intention of the noble host that, in some interval of the dance, the Russian guests should be made acquainted with the peculiar characteristics of Highland music; but the bardic soul of MacAlister was impatient of restraint. He shouldered his pipes and, striking up a pibroch, marched into the centre of the brilliant ring, round which Dukes and Duchesses were at that moment dancing.

“I watched the effect (says the correspondent) of this strange music on the unaccustomed ears of the Russians with great interest. They were at first evidently astounded, the officers putting their hands to their ears, and the ladies crossing their hands and gazing on the kilted Aeolus in mute surprise. But soon it became evident that there was a sympathy between the warlike race on the one hand and the warlike music on the other; and when the Grand Duchess Constantine, one of the most beautiful women in Russia, retired to another apartment, she sent for MacAlister, who played ‘ The White Cockade ’ in a manner that elicited Her Imperial Highness’ commendation. From that moment he became the fashion, and several times in the course of the evening played again to admiring audiences. MacAlister, since his arrival, has been quite a lion among the Russians, who follow him in crowds through the streets, thinking him to be the chief of all the foreign ambassadors, and that, with a fastidious refinement of hauteur, he prefers walking on the ground, as none of the carriages are grand enough for his notions of personal dignity.”

Pennant’s Description of Blair.

Pennant, on his Scottish tour, states that in passing through the district of Blairgowrie, it was a proverbial remark that “the inhabitants wanted fire in winter, water in summer, and the grace of God all the year round.”

You can read the rest of this chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/blairgowrie/chapter14.htm>

The other chapters can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/blairgowrie/index.htm>

Brother Scots

By Donald Carswell

This week we added an account of Smith O’ Aiberdeen

You can read this account at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/brother_scots.htm

The History of Brechin

By David D Black, Town Clerk (1867)



Brechin Cathedral and Round Tower

An interesting comment about the Union of the Crowns in 1707...

On 1st May 1707, England and Scotland were legally united into one kingdom, under the title of Great Britain, and the Parliament of Scotland was abolished. This measure created no little sensation throughout the two kingdoms. The town council of Brechin instructed their commissioner, Francis Moli-son, to vote in the Scotch Parliament for the "union betwixt Scotland and England, and for all necessary supplies by this kingdom," thus showing that the court party was then predominant in the burgh ; but we have understood that the commissioner disobeyed these instructions and voted against the union. The mode of electing the first member from this town to the British Parliament, is not made plain in the burgh records.

It is stated, on 24th September 1707, that Provost Young is appointed " commissioner to meet with the burghs of Aberdeen, Montrose, Aberbrothick, and Bervie; and that at Montrose the 26th day of September instant, anent giving instructions to (blank) Scott of Logy, younger, who is to represent in the British Parliament, the 14th October next, the burghs of Aberdeen, Brechin, Montrose, Arbroath, and Bervie; and this is all which we learn from the record on the subject. In May 1708, the council, in obedience to a precept from the Earl of Northesk, then sheriff of Forfar, nominated. Provost Young their commissioner, to go to Aberdeen on 26th May, and meet with the other commissioners from this district of burghs, and elect a member to the Parliament of Great Britain, summoned to meet at Westminster on the 8th July ensuing. Who was then elected member is not recorded.

This mode of election continued, each of the five burghs presiding alternately, till the Act of 2 and 3 William IV., c. 65, in 1832, put the election directly into the hands of the people, and conjoined Brechin with the other three Angus burghs, Forfar, Arbroath, and Montrose, and with the burgh of Bervie in Kincardineshire, in the right to return a member of Parliament. It may be noticed in passing, that the order of precedence adopted in convening the burghs for the first election of a member to the Parliament of Great Britain was " Aberdeen, Montrose, Brechin, Aberbrothock, Inverbervie; so that the designation of the "Montrose District of Burghs" in the Reform Act, when Aberdeen had a member assigned to itself, is only carrying out the old designation of this district of burghs, notwithstanding that Arbroath certainly now is the largest of the whole. According to the order in which the shires were called in the Scottish Parliaments, Edinburgh of course stood first, Ross was the thirty-third and last, while Forfar stood the twenty-fifth.

You can read this particular chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/brechin/chapter06.htm>

The other chapters can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/brechin/index.htm>

Culross and Tulliallan

or Perthshire on Forth, its History and Antiquities with elucidation on Scottish Life and Character from the Burgh and Kirk-Session Records of that District by David Beveridge (1885) in two volumes.

This is a new book we're starting on and yes we do have a few videos for you to view.

The object of the following work is twofold—to give a monograph or special history of a particular district, and at the same time, by using the civil and ecclesiastical records of that district as a basis, to present a view of the social and domestic usages of Scotland in bygone times. It may be regarded as an endeavour to combine a survey of the annals and local antiquities of a detached region of Perthshire with a contribution, though a modest one, in historical studies and folk-lore, to the general fund of archaeological literature.

You can get to this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/culross/index.htm>

Robert Burns Lives!

Edited by Frank Shaw

Book Review of "Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture"

For academics, the words "transatlantic culture" represent an often used term. But if you are a layman like me, you have to get your head around the phrase and once you do, the 14 wonderful chapters of Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture will fall into place. You will find this to be a refreshing book, easily readable, without any \$500 words. Actually, (a favorite word of my ten-year-old granddaughter Stirling), it is a rather scintillating book that grabs hold and does not turn loose until you finish reading it - then a mild feeling of disappointment comes over you since there is no more to read. It is a very good book, one that will stick with you, and one you will use time and again in your search current or up to date conversations about Robert Burns. There are a lot of critical essay books on the poet, and this is one of the better ones! I found myself going back to re-read the introduction and those pages my handy yellow marker had highlighted throughout the book. It's that good!

You can read the rest of this article at http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns_lives136.htm

Other articles in this series can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm>

Thistles And Ferns

The Memoirs of Bob Walker of Waipukurau, New Zealand, Part 3. You can view this at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz/bob_walker.htm

Three Hundred Things a Bright Boy Can Do

By Many Hands (1914). I stumbled across this book and given the problems on obesity with children thought I'd make this book available. I might add that most of this book is also applicable to girls.

Preface

The Editor hopes that this volume will be the means of inspiring boys to adopt some hobby and to follow it diligently. At any rate he has arranged that they shall be able to have a wide choice of occupations, and shall begin with expert assistance. Too many youths fall into mere aimless dawdling, and waste the golden years of their life loafing about smoking cigarettes, watching others play, chattering endlessly about games, but never engaging in them. Though this book is written for the boy's play hour, it will not be without value in aiding him upon the sterner side of his career, if it shows him how to train hand and eye, how to strengthen his will and muscles, and if it inculcates patience, exactitude, and perseverance

You can view this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/brightboy.htm>

The Rise and Progress of Whisky-Drinking in Scotland

By Duncan M'Laren (1858)

The Act usually known in Scotland as the Forbes M'Kenzie Act, 16 and 17 Victoria, cap. 67, came into operation May 21st, 1854. The bill, about which so much has been said, as bearing on the cause of sobriety and good order in Scotland, was introduced into the

House of Commons by the gentleman whose name it bears; but having vacated his seat before the measure had made much progress, it was watched over, and carried through, mainly by Mr Cumming Bruce. In the House of Lords it was under the charge of Lord Kinnaid, and, as I once stated at a public meeting in Edinburgh, his lordship also did a great deal privately, by his personal exertions, to promote its passing through the House of Commons; and he may thus be said to have been the chief author of the Act. Its short title is 6 Public-Houses (Scotland) Act.'

I need not state to the people of Scotland that the leading provisions of the Act are two in number—(1,) That there shall be no selling of intoxicating drinks on Sundays, except to bona fide travellers, and (2,) That there shall be no selling of such drinks during any day of the week after eleven o'clock at night. These two provisions are so manifestly just in themselves, and so conducive to the welfare of society, that I am happy to say they have commended themselves to the great body of the people of this country.

There is, however, an active and influential section of the community who have always been opposed to these provisions, and who have been using all the means in their power to get the Act modified or repealed; and they have endeavoured to procure the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the working of the Act, with a view to accomplish their object in this indirect way. The ostensible movers in this cause are a committee of Glasgow publicans and spirit dealers, but they are privately receiving the sympathy and support of influential distillers, and other persons who do not publicly come forward to advocate their cause. They are also supported in their efforts by a portion of the public press, and by a small number of Scotch members of Parliament.

Being always more anxious to know what opponents have to say against any cause of which I have formed a decidedly favourable opinion, than to know what friends say in its favour, I have read and heard much against the 'Public-Houses Act;' and if I understand the objections of its opponents aright, they may be classed under these heads :—

They say that, both as regards the requirements for shutting up public-houses during the entire Sunday (as compared with the former law, which required them to be shut only during the hours of divine service), and as regards restricting the business hours on week-days to 11 o'clock at night, they are novelties in the legislation of Scotland, of a Puritanical character, and interfering with the liberty of the subject; that they are unjust to the persons engaged in the spirit trade; that they have proved injurious in their operation as regards all classes; and in particular, that in place of diminishing drunkenness, they have increased it—causing an enormous increase in the consumption of whisky, amounting to nearly two millions of gallons annually. These allegations have often been made, and those last mentioned were embodied in an official memorial recently prepared by the Glasgow Committee, and presented by them to Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, with a view to induce him, on the part of the late Government, to appoint a Parliamentary Committee of inquiry.

You can read the rest of this 50 page book in pdf format at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/whisky.htm>

And finally...

Slice Of Life

I was shocked to read on an internet site about cuisine that deep fried pizza is not a Scottish invention, but is in fact from Naples where it is a street food called pizza fritta. The website states: "It is not a Scottish atrocity but a delicious traditional speciality of Napoli." Yet another Scottish invention stolen by foreigners, it seems.

And that's all for now and hope you all have a great weekend.

Alastair
