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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 29th 2012

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Electric Scotland News

I was in Toronto overnight this week taking in the summer get together of the Knights Templar in Toronto. Where the event took place they had the portrait of the Duchess of Cornwall which was presented to her when she and Prince Charles visited Canada recently as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.



I took a few more pictures which you can see at <http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/3050-Summer-gettogether>

I also tried to persuade the Templar's to help with the Canadian site and some said they'd be happy to help out so fingers crossed we might get some interesting new information from them. I was told that the Greek ethnic group mainly came to Canada in two immigrations, one in the 1920's and the other in the 1970's so hoping to get more about this.

I was also talking to Matthew who is a Dutch immigrant. He has written a book about his life in Canada and he's promised me a digital copy so I can put it on the site so again looking forward to getting this.

I'm still waiting for Steve to sort out the comments system so we can get this installed. As this is a programming issue I am totally reliant on him fixing the issue with the email so not sure how long this is going to take. Hopefully sooner than later.

Clan Crests is an area I get many requests to make available on the site. I've always been very wary of copyright which is why I've not done anything about this. However I have been talking to Celtic Studios which is the largest company selling clan products in the world and is a Canadian company. Having had a long chat with Louis, the owner, he is now going to provide copies of the crests for the site. He does hold the copyright for all these illustrations so as he's giving us permission to display them we are now legal to offer them. We'll be adding them over the course of the next few months to each of the clan pages.

He's also provided an explanation of clan crests and provided a pdf file about the background of his company and all the products he offers. I told he offers some 100 products for each clan. He is also looking to start an ongoing advertising contract with us from 1st September 2012. You can read this information at <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/crests.htm>

I keep getting emails in asking for recommendation for holidays in Scotland so this week I've emailed a range of companies in Scotland that offer various one day tours hoping that some might see value in advertising with us and telling us about what is available. I'll see if any of them get back to us. I might however add that past experience tends to suggest I won't hear back from any of them but always worth another go.

In the news this week I heard about the roof of the shopping mall in Elliot Lake collapsing. The hotel is in the mall and I stayed there for three days back in 2004. At time of writing 3 people have been found dead with others still missing. I had a great time there and really enjoyed my time so hoping that the people I met there are all ok. This is a town which almost didn't survive after the demise of the uranium mine. It had become almost a ghost town until a developer decided to bring it back. Around just 10 years ago you could purchase a 3 bedroom detached home there for just \$35,000. Retirement living started to sell lakeshore properties where they would put in a main trunk road behind the properties to give road and hydro access. Once you purchased your plot you just needed to build an access road down to your property from the trunk road and of course build your dream home. If interested you can see the pictures I took around the area during my visit at <http://www.electricscotland.net/canada/elliotndx.htm>.

I noticed the Health care act in the USA has passed the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. Pretty significant move so will be interesting to see how this plays out on the election front,

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

Basketball

I found this book by the inventor of the game who was born in Canada but is also of Scots descent. There are a few missing pages in the book but don't think it does much harm to what is a very interesting account. We're adding a chapter a day until complete and you can read this book at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/basketball/index.htm>

At time of writing we're now up to chapter IX.

The Pioneers of Blanshard

With an Historical Sketch of the Township by William Johnston (1899).

This is a new book we've started and am adding a chapter per day until complete. Here is what the Preface has to say...

I DEEM it quite unnecessary to offer any apology for the publication of this work. The rapid formation of historical societies, both county and township, in so many different sections of our Province, indicates that the public mind is at last thoroughly awakened to the necessity of collecting and preserving in some more permanent and abiding form than the evanescent columns of the weekly newspaper or the scarcely less ephemeral magazine, these fast disappearing records of our old pioneer life, with their humble story of trials and triumphs, ere the destructive hand of time has obliterated them forever.

The interest and attention which our early local history is exciting on almost every hand is certainly as much to be lauded as the past neglect of it was to be condemned, and is truly only a suitable recognition on our part of the immense debt of gratitude which the generation of the present owes to the old pioneer past. To the courage, hardihood, and brave-heartedness of these old backwoods settlers of the early days we certainly owe it that our country is what it is; and amid all the luxury, refinement, and progress of the wonderful to-day we must ever remember that the humble past has been the parent of the present, as the present will be the parent of the future.

I confess, with something akin to pride, the gratification it has been to me to know that the present book may be considered one of the pioneer works of its class. I feel, too, that it is a matter of considerable importance that every child of the township should have some knowledge of its early history and settlement. I have deemed it, therefore, no idle ambition to have attempted the task of rescuing that history, as well as the names of many of the first settlers, from that oblivion with which time in a few short years would inevitably overtake them. In my own humble way I have striven to give both the history of Blanshard and the biography of its first settlers as much of permanence and publicity as is to be secured in a work of this kind.

The lives and hardships, the joys and sorrows of those humble heroes and heroines of the backwoods have always to me had a charm and an interest which I have striven, however feebly, to impart to these pages. If to the reader they give one-half the pleasure in reading them which they have given me in writing them I will be amply rewarded.

The old pioneer life, in this section of the province at least, has for many years been a thing of the past. Only a very few of that fast diminishing band of greyhaired veterans who can remember the old days in the backwoods are now left in our midst. To touch some slumbering but still responsive chord of memory which would waken the hearts of these, and at the same time to stir up some sympathetic interest in the minds of the present generation in a life of which they know practically nothing has been my constant and I hope not unworthy aim. Although the historical sketch of a township, and the biographical notices of some of its first settlers as well, must necessarily, from their very nature, to be of merely local interest, yet I have been ambitious enough to imagine that this work might reach and perhaps interest a much wider circle of readers.

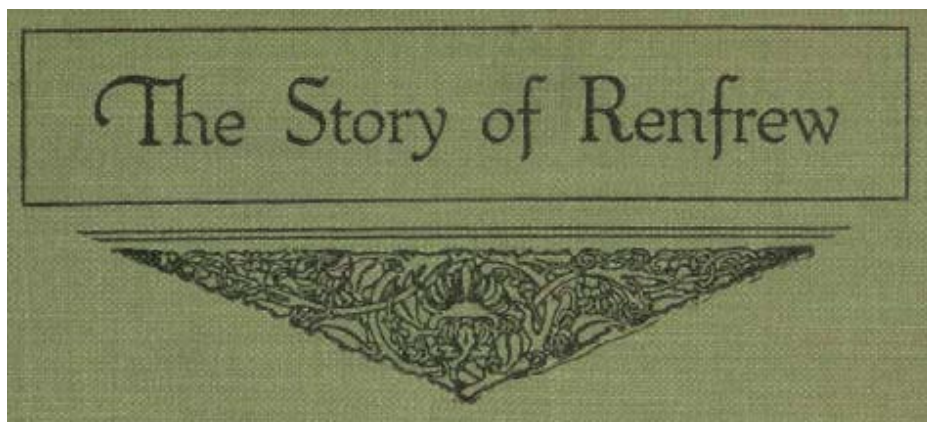
For the accomplishing of this object I have strewn through these pages descriptive passages, illustrative of those phases of backwoods life which were common to it, not only in my own neighborhood, but in every part of the province. The log house and the backwoods shanty, like the ox team and the sled, the logging bee and the country spree, were inseparable from pioneer life everywhere. Inseparable from it, too, were those hardships and privations which seem almost incredible to the generation of to-day, and which give a lustre and a tinge of heroism to the lives of the men and women of that period not easily to be forgotten. A backwoodsman myself, and one who has spent many of the best and perhaps the happiest of his days in the bush, I can claim that intimate acquaintance with pioneer life which only actual experience can give. I have drawn the sketches which I have described from the life. If I have in the pages of this book in any way failed in the adequate representation of them, I have failed not from lack of will but from lack of ability.

William Johnston,
River Road, Blanshard.
St. Marys, August 24th, 1899.

You can read this book at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/blanshard/index.htm>

The Story of Renfrew

From the coming of the first settlers about 1820 by W. E. Smallfield & Rev. Robert Campbell.





This is a very interesting book with many pictures of the early settlers. This is a pdf version of the book which you can download at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/storyrenfrew00smaluoft.pdf>

Native Trees of Canada

By Boyd R. Morton

This is a pdf file of a book about the Native Trees of Canada and makes an excellent reference resource. Contains many maps of the areas where you can find these trees. You can read the Introduction and download the book at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/lumber/nativetrees.htm>

Banff

Rich in culture, diverse in experience, responsible in action.



Banff National Park, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, attracts roughly 3 million visitors each year. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Town of Banff in the southwestern corner of the park, about 90 minutes west of Calgary via the Trans Canada Highway.

The Hamlet of Lake Louise is 50 minutes further west, also within Banff National Park.

The town is only four square kilometers, bordered on all sides by wilderness. It's not uncommon to see wildlife, such as deer and elk, in your backyard.

The town is a service centre for park visitors and offers everything from five-star accommodation to fine dining, lively nightlife to museums and galleries, shopping for essentials and nice-to-haves, plus a long line up of special cultural and sporting events.

You can download an old document about Banff that I've tidied up and provides some good information on things to see around Banff at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/alberta/banff.htm>

Manitoba

Landmarks and Red Letter Days 1610 - 1920 by Holly S Seaman (1920). Again this is a pdf book which provides bullet points on the highlights of the Province. You can download the book at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/manitoba/manitobalandmark00seamuoft.pdf>

Diary of Nicholas Garry

Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1822-1835. A detailed narrative of his travels in the Northwest Territories of British North America in 1821 with a portrait of Mr. Garry and other illustrations.

I always enjoy these books where we get a first hand account of a person in these pioneering times and one that can give us an overview of the circumstances at the time. This is a pdf file which can be downloaded at

http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/nicholas_garry.pdf

The Lake of the Woods

By George Bryce LL.D.

Its History, Geology, Mining and Manufacturing.



I found this wee account of the area and so have ocr'd it in for you to read at

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/manitoba/lakeofthewoods.htm>

The Average Canadian

A look at the average Canadian as per MacLean's Magazine in June 2012. I scanned in part of this article in 2 graphics which you might find of interest and you can view this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/average.htm>

The Flag in the Wind

This issue was Compiled by Garry Knox.

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

The Working Life of Christina McKelvie MSP

Got in a report from Christina this week in which she's involved with Armed Forces Day which also included a visit to the Falkland Islands. You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/120628.htm> and included with this report is a pdf file which is a report "Meeting the advice needs of the Armed Forces community in Scotland".

The Bards of Bon Accord 1375 - 1860

By William Walker

Added Andrew Shirrefs and his Contemporaries

William Farquhar

William Beattie

William Brown

Alexander Watson

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

Northern Notes and Queries

We've managed to find other issues of this publication and so now continue the series by adding the September 1891 edition. **Note:** In the pdf version of the newsletter I am placing a graphic of the Contents page so you can see what is included in each issue.

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This issue can be viewed at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/northern/index.htm>

Scenes and Legends of The North of Scotland

or the Traditional History of Cromarty by Hugh Miller (1869)

We're now up to Chapter XXI. and Chapter XVIII starts...

"He whom my restless gratitude has sought
So long in vain."—Thomson.

Early in the month of April 1734, three Cromarty boatmen, connected with the custom-house, were journeying along the miserable road which at this period wended between the capital of the Highlands and that of the kingdom. They had already travelled since

morning more than thirty miles through the wild highlands of Inverness-shire, and were now toiling along the steep side of an uninhabited valley of Badenoch. A dark sluggish morass, with a surface as level as a sheet of water, occupied the bottom of the valley; a few scattered tufts of withered grass were mottled over it, but the unsolid, sooty-coloured spaces between were as bare of vegetation as banks of sea-mud left by the receding tide. On either hand, a series of dreary mountains thrust up their jagged and naked summits into the middle sky. A scanty covering of heath was thrown over their bases, except where the frequent streams of loose debris which had fallen from above, were spread over them; but higher up, the heath altogether disappeared, and the eye rested on what seemed an endless file of bare gloomy cliffs, partially covered with snow.

The evening, for day was fast drawing to a close, was as melancholy as the scene. A dense volume of grey cloud hung over the valley like a ceiling, and seemed descending along the cliffs. There was scarcely any wind, but at times a wreath of vapour would come rolling into a lower region of the valley, as if shot out from the volume above; and the chill bleak air was filled with small specks of snow, so light and fleecy that they seemed scarcely to descend, but, when caught by the half perceptible breeze, went sailing past the boatmen in long horizontal lines. It was evident there impended over them one of those terrible snow-storms which sometimes overwhelm the hapless traveller in these solitudes; and the house in which they were to pass the night was still nearly ten miles away.

The gloom of evening, deepened by the coming storm, was closing around them as they entered one of the wildest recesses of the valley, an immense precipitous hollow scooped out of the side of one of the hills; the wind began to howl through the cliffs, and the thickening flakes of snow to beat against their faces. "It will be a terrible night, lads, in the Moray Firth," said the foremost traveller, a broad-shouldered, deep-chested, strong-looking man, of about five feet eight; "I would ill like to hae to beat up through the drift along the rough shores o' Cadboll. It was in just such a night as this, ten year ago, that old Walter Hogg went down in the Red Sally."—"It will be as terrible a night, I'm feared, just where we are, in the black strath o' Badenoch," said one of the men behind, who seemed much fatigued; "I wish we were a' safe i' the clachan."—"Hoot, man," said Sandy Wright, the first speaker, "it canna now be muckle mair than sax miles afore us, an' we'll hae the tail of the gloamin' for half an hour yet. But, gude safe us! what's that?" he exclaimed, pointing to a little figure that seemed sitting by the side of the road, about twenty yards before him; "it's surely a fairy!" The figure rose from its seat, and came up, staggering apparently from extreme weakness, to meet them. It was a boy scarcely more than ten years of age. "O my puir boy!" said Sandy Wright, "what can hae taken ye here in a night like this?"—"I was going to Edinburgh to my friends," replied the boy, "for my mother died and left me among the freme; but I'm tired, and canna walk farther; and I'll be lost, I'm feared, in the yowndriftr—"

You can read the rest of this chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/cromarty/chapter18.htm>

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

The Life and Work of James Abernethy, C.E., F.R.S.E.

Past President of the Institution of Civil Engineers by his son John S. Abernethy (1867).

Added this week are chapters on...

Swansea, 1849-93

Falmouth, 1860-3

Italy—Turin and Savona Railway, 1862-6

Grand Canal Cavour, 1862-7

Austria, 1866-8

Hungary, 1866—River Theiss

The chapter on Italy—Turin and Savona Railway, 1862-6 starts...

IT was not until the year 1862 that he was called upon to execute any engineering scheme of importance in foreign countries, but during the next four years the scene of his principal work shifted to Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Egypt. The project of the Turin and Savona Railway originated in Italy, and the route had already been carefully selected and surveyed by M. Peyron, and an influential Italian Council of Administration formed, with Signor Rarratri, a Member of the Chamber of Deputies, as Chairman. It was to England, however, that the promoters looked for the raising of the requisite capital, and with the many distinguished names which appeared on the Italian Council, their expectations were in a short time realized and operations commenced. Raising the capital in England naturally involved the formation of an English Committee of Shareholders, and several gentlemen of good position were selected. Previous to the formation of the English Committee, however, the Italian Council had entered into a contract with certain Italian bankers, Messrs. Guastalla, to construct the line for the sum of £2,408,000, a premature arrangement which led to great pecuniary difficulties before the railway had been completed.

You can read the rest of this chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/abernethy/chapter11.htm>

You can read the other chapters at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/abernethy/index.htm>

St. Kilda, Past and Present

By George Seton (1848)

This is a new book we're starting.

PREFACE

ONE of the earliest writers on St Kilda concludes his account with an apology for what some of his readers might regard as prolixity, and justifies his narrative by asserting that "the St Kildans may be ranked among the greatest curiosities of the moral world." Concurring in that opinion, the author has long turned his attention to the vital and social statistics of the remote islanders; and the large amount of public interest in their lonely rock which has been aroused by the recent appearance of numerous letters and articles in the columns of the Scottish press has induced him to compile the present volume. Upwards of twelve years ago, he prepared a lecture on St Kilda, which he delivered in various parts of the country; and since that time, he has collected a number of additional facts bearing upon its history and circumstances, and has, moreover, visited the island during the past summer. In referring to the rare appearance of strangers on its distant shores towards the beginning of the present century, Dr Macculloch says that every avatar of that nature was well remembered, and that he who had no other means of reaching the temple of fame had only to find his way to St Kilda, in order to be recorded in its archives. Even in these later days of rapid locomotion and increased intercourse, the visitors to the island are comparatively few and far between; and for one that has landed on its rocky coast, probably tens of thousands have accomplished the hackneyed "Swiss round," or even penetrated the wilds of Norway.

With the exception of the incidental notices of Macculloch, Wilson, and one or two later writers, nearly all the accounts of St Kilda were published before the end of last century; and hitherto no work has appeared which embraces anything like a detailed description of the island and its primitive inhabitants. Besides a careful perusal of all the known literature on the subject—most of which is comparatively scarce — the author has examined the various official documents relative to St Kilda in the custody of the Registrar-General, and has been favoured with a number of notes and verbal statements by several friends who have visited the island during the last twenty years, of whom he must specially mention Captain F. W. L. Thomas, R.N., formerly engaged on the Admiralty survey. He has also been furnished by Mrs M'Vean of Killin, a native of St Kilda, with an interesting series of Reminiscences.

For some of his most attractive illustrations, the author is indebted to the sketch-books of Mr Alexander Carlyle Bell (kindly lent to him by Lord Young) and of the Rev. Eric J. Findlater of Locheamhead; while the groups of women and children are from photographs taken by Captain Thomas in 1860.

St Bennet's, Edinburgh,
15th December 1877.

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

Slater's Royal National Directory of Scotland

I came across this directory and decided to make the 1911 edition available on our site. However there are other versions available for different dates and I've added links to those at the foot of our Scottish Records page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/records/index.htm>

Frank Emanuel Sutherland MBE

A brief biography of a Significant Scot in New Zealand. You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz/sutherland.htm>

Clan Wallace

Got in the Summer 2012 newsletter which includes good information on the RCMP. You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/wallace/index.htm>

A Curious Herbal

Containing 500 cuts of the most useful plants which are used in the practice of Physick by Elizabeth Blackwell (1738).

Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal* is notable both for its beautiful illustrations and for the unusual circumstances of its creation. A

herbal contains illustrations and descriptions of plants, their medicinal preparations, and the ailments for which they are used. The first herbal was written by the Greek physician Dioscorides in the first century AD.

Elizabeth Blackwell was born in Aberdeen in about 1700, but moved to London after she married. She undertook this ambitious project to raise money to pay her husband's debts and release him from debtors' prison.

Blackwell's *Herbal* was an unprecedented enterprise for a woman of her time. She drew, engraved and coloured the illustrations herself, mostly using plant specimens from the Chelsea Physic Garden.

The *Herbal* was issued in weekly parts between 1737 and 1739, each part containing four illustrated plates and a page of text. It was highly praised by leading physicians and apothecaries (makers and sellers of medicines), and made enough money to secure her husband's freedom.

You can download both volumes at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/medical/curious_herbal.htm

Lislebourg and Petit Leith

An article from the Scottish Historical Review on the name for Edinburgh. You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/lislebourg.htm>

John Gregorson Campbell

I finally found the other two books he wrote, "Superstitions of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland" and "Witchcraft & Second Sight in the Highlands & Islands of Scotland".

If it hadn't been for the very few people like him so much of this history would have been lost. In this time period we only had the oral tradition and so if they hadn't taken down these stories so much would have been lost. As it is vast stores of knowledge have been lost for all time which is very sad indeed.

Here is the Preface from the "Superstitions of the Highlands Island of Scotland" so that you might better understand from where the author has gathered his material and dealt with it in his book...

Preface

The object aimed at in the following pages is to put before the reader a statement, as complete and accurate as the writer can attain to, of the Superstitions and Antiquities of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. In other words, the writer has endeavoured to gather full materials relating to that subject, and to arrange them in a form that may prove of some scientific value. In pursuit of this object, it has been deemed advisable to derive information solely from oral sources.

Books have been purposely avoided as authorities, and a rule has been laid down, and strictly adhered to, not to accept any statement in print regarding a Highland belief, unless also found current among the people. In the few books there are, having any reference to Gaelic lore, the statements have been so frequently found at variance with popular beliefs that this rule has been a necessity. There are a few honourable exceptions, but in general what is to be found in print on this subject is not trustworthy.

A want of acquaintance with the Gaelic language or with Highland feelings and modes of thought, is usually the cause of error. The writers think in English, and are not careful to eliminate from their statements thoughts derived from English or classical literature, or to keep from confusing with Celtic beliefs ideas derived from foreign sources, and from analogous creeds existing elsewhere. This gives an unconscious tinge to their statements, and (what is more to be regretted) sometimes makes them fill up with extraneous and foreign elements what seems to them gaps or blanks in beliefs they but imperfectly understand.

The writer's information has been derived from widely separated districts in the North, West, and Central Highlands, and from the Islands. Naturally, the bulk of the information was obtained in Tiree, where the writer had most opportunity of making inquiries, but information from this or any other source has not been accepted without comparison with the same beliefs in other districts. The writer has not been able personally to visit all parts of the Highlands, but his informants have spent their lives in districts far apart. The reader will fall into a mistake who supposes that the whole information is within the belief, or even knowledge, of any one individual, or of any one district.

The beliefs of one district do not differ essentially from those of another. In one or two cases several versions of a tale are given to show to some extent the nature of the variations of popular tradition. The writer has thankfully to acknowledge, and he cannot but remember with pleasure, the readiness and courtesy, and in very many cases the great intelligence with which his inquiries have been answered. Some of his informants have shown a quickness and retentiveness of memory which he could not but envy, and an

appreciation of, and an acquaintance with ancient lore that seemed to him to indicate in those who were strangers to the world of letters powers of mind of a high order.

The objection to books and print as authorities has also been extended to written correspondence. No doubt much that is additional and interesting could be obtained through these channels, but if the account given is to serve any purpose higher than that of mere amusement, strict accuracy is of such importance that all these sources of possible error have been avoided; they cannot be sifted by cross-examination and further inquiry so readily or thoroughly as information obtained by word of mouth. The whole has thus passed through the writer's own hands directly from what he has found current among the people.

Care has been taken that no statement be made conveying an idea different in the slightest from what has been heard. A popular Gaelic saying can be quoted as applicable to the case:

"If it be a lie as told by me, it was a lie as told to me" (Ma's breug bh'uam. e, is breug dhomh e). It is as free to another as it has been to the writer, to draw his inferences from the statements given, and it is thought no genuine tale or oral tradition will be found to contradict the statements made in the following pages.

In the translations given of Gaelic, the object aimed at has been to give the corresponding English expression, that is, one conveying the same meaning to the English reader that the Gaelic expression conveys to the Gaelic reader. Accuracy has been looked to on this point rather than grace of diction. Where there is anything striking in the Gaelic idiom the literal meaning is also given. In poetry there is consequently a baldness, to which the original is a stranger; but this, it may be urged, is a fault inherent in all translations, however carefully executed. The transference of ideas from one language to another weakens the force and beauty of an expression; what is racy and witty, or musical and expressive in one, becomes tame and insipid in another. This trite observation is made to deprecate unfavourable opinions being formed of the genius and force of the Gaelic language from the translations given.

I have added these books to the foot of our Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition Page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/waifs/index.htm>

The Lord Lyon and his Jurisdiction

Documents and analysis pertaining to the judicial powers of Lord Lyon in Scotland, in particular relating to nobility, chiefs of clans, and precedence. As by Scotland court of Session by Liam H.

This is an article that came in as I was just completing this newsletter. It's certainly interesting and for those interested in heraldry and in connection with the clans it's worth a read. You can get to this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/jurisdiction.htm>

And finally...

Home From Home

A friend of mine in his fifties was hoping that his family didn't think he was having a mid-life crisis when he revealed his new girlfriend was in her thirties.

"What does she do for a living?" asked his sister.

"She works in an old folk's home," he told her.

His sister replied sweetly: "On a recruitment drive, is she?"

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

Alastair
