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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 4th 2013

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#### Electric Scotland News

Let me first of all wish you all a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year. I hope it will be a good one for you all.

I managed to get a little time off over the Festive season to think about what I should be looking to achieve in 2013. One comment that I get quite regularly is that the site is too big. I really don't know why that should be a concern as we do have a site search engine allowing everyone to search for whatever they want. Certainly quality feedback is very much lacking these days which is why I hoped that by adding the comments system late last year would be a help so we'll see how that develops during this year.

I plan to continue my work on doing the histories of places in Scotland and as I'm around half way through my list of towns I do hope to complete that work during the year.

The next push will be to work on Septs of Clans. I suspect this will take up the next few years but definitely want to start work on that this year. What this means is working my way through the individual clans and take their list of Septs and try and find any information on the names.

I will also be publishing other books. One of the benefits of working on the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness was the number of books mentioned in their papers. Where a book sounded interesting I did a search for it and if found got a copy of it for evaluation. So I actually have a lot of books to work through to see if they should be published on the site.



I spent a lot of time during 2012 working on the Electric Canadian site. The idea was to get up a lot of good information to give folk a good start at learning about Canadian history and I think I've already achieved that. That means I won't be spending nearly as much time on that site during 2013 which allows me to do more work on Electric Scotland.

Towards the end of last year our Electric Scotland Community got attacked by spammers. That made me make it more difficult for spammers to get an account but that also meant it also made it more difficult for real people to get an account. Such is life. However during the year we will be upgrading our system from v4.0 to the new v5.0 with all the improvements that should bring.

As to our servers. During 2013 we will be moving our servers to Simon Fraser University and once installed and tested they will become our primary host for our domains. They will also take some responsibility for fixing problems and installing new services. As I am leaving the sites to them in my will I will be working with them to make sure they are fully aware of all aspects of the service we offer so they will be able to install security patches and upgrades.

I have asked before but should any of you have any ideas on what you'd like me to work on I'd be happy to receive your suggestions.

And so from a content point of view more on towns in Scotland, work on finding histories of Septs of Clans with a mix of other content as I come across it.

## Electric Canadian

### Canada in Flanders

By Sir Max Aitken MP (1916)

We're now up to Chapter 8 of this book and here is how chapter VII starts...

Between the close of the battle of Festubert, on May 26th, and the beginning of the great conflict at Loos, on September 25th, there was a series of minor engagements along the whole British front, in which Givenchy stands out as another red milestone on Canada's road to glory.

The brief mention of Givenchy in the official despatch in which Sir John French reviewed the operations of the British Army between Festubert and Loos, conveys no idea of the desperate fury or the scope of the fighting in which the Canadians again did all, and more than all, that was asked of them.

That in the end they were forced to fall back from the fortified positions they had won with so much heroism and at so much cost, was due to difficulties in other portions of the field, which prevented the 7th British Division from coming up in time.

Givenchy may appear but an incident in a long chain of operations when one is taking a bird's-eye view of the campaign on the Western Front as a whole, but it was in reality a very considerable and sanguinary battle, the story of which should appeal to every Canadian heart.

You can read the rest of this chapter at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/flanders/chapter07.htm>

The other chapters can be read at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/flanders/index.htm>

### The Gael in Canada

From the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness which you can read at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/gael.htm>

### A Treatise on the Six-Nation Indians

by James Bovell Mackenzie

As knowledge of the traditions, manners, and national traits of the Indians, composing, originally, the six distinct and independent tribes of the Mohawks, Tuscaroras, Onondagas, Senecas, Oneidas, and Cayugas; tribes now merged in, and known as, the Six Nations, possibly, does not extend beyond the immediate district in which they have effected a lodgment, I have laid upon myself the task of tracing their history from the date of their settlement in the County of Brant, entering, at the same time, upon such accessory treatment as would seem to be naturally suggested or embraced by the plan I have set before me. As the essay, therefore, proposes to deal, mainly, with the contemporary history of the Indian, little will be said of his accepted beliefs, at an earlier epoch, or of the then current practices built upon, and enjoined by, his traditionary faith. Frequent visits to the Indian's Reservation, on the south bank of the Grand River, have put me in the way of acquiring oral data, which shall subserve my intention; and I shall prosecute my attempt with the greater hope of reaping a fair measure of success, since I have fortified my position with gleanings (bearing, however, solely on minor matters of fact) from some few published records, which have to do with the history of the Indian, generally, and have been the fruitful labour of authors of repute and standing, native as well as white. Should the issue of failure attend upon my effort, I shall be disposed to ascribe it to some not obscure reason connected with literary style and execution, rather than to the fact of there not having been

adequate material at hand for the purpose.

You can read the rest of this article at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/sixnation.htm>

### **Handbook of the Indians of Canada**

By the Geographic Board of Canada (1913)

#### FOREWORD

In 1907, the Bureau of American Ethnology published Part I (972 pages) of the Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico and, in 1910, published Part II (1221 pages). This work which can be correctly characterized as monumental, was begun in 1873, and was completed in 1910, thirty-seven years later. The history of the undertaking is set forth in the Preface and need not be repeated here.

As it contained an enormous amount of information relating to the Indians of Canada, geographical as well as ethnological, it was decided that the Geographic Board would republish this portion. Mr. F. W. Hodge having courteously accorded permission to reprint, the undersigned volunteered to supervise the publication.

In publishing this work some changes have been made to bring the orthography into accord with English usage. Thus the 'u' has been inserted in such words as colour, favour, labour, etc. The forms discs, boulder, draughtsman, etc., were substituted for disks, bowlder, draftsman, etc.

As, in the original publication, the articles respecting Treaties, Dept. of Indian Affairs and Indian Reserves dealt almost altogether with the United States, new articles relative to Canadian conditions have been inserted, also a list of Indian reserves in Canada. Where in the original, minor errors of geographical description were noted, the corrections were inserted without special note but historical statements that the editor deemed erroneous are corrected in foot-notes.

A new map showing the territory occupied by the Aborigines of Canada, Alaska and Greenland has been compiled by the editor. It is a revision of the map -prepared for the Atlas of Canada, 1906, but was printed before Mr. Stefansson's return from the Arctic. The information furnished by him, has, therefore, been noted in red by an over-printing.

Maps showing the areas in which the Indian title has been quieted by treaties with the native inhabitants have been compiled for this volume.

It is hoped that this work will form the basis of a more comprehensive publication which will deal with the Indians of Canada in greater detail than the scope of the present work permits.

JAMES WHITE

I have ocr'd in the Preface of the book but then offer the whole book as a pdf download which you can get to at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/handbook.htm>

### **The Jews in Canada**

Made a start at the history of this ethnic group.

The first settlers came from Spain, where they had been wealthy, industrious, peaceful and law-abiding. In 1768 descendants of the exiles from Spain and Portugal settled in Montreal, bringing with them the noble, chivalrous inheritance of their fore fathers, and, with their usual energy organized the first synagogue.

I came across an old book in pdf format, "The Jews in Canada", and while it is not in good condition it is still readable so thought I'd make it available for you to read at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/jews/index.htm>

### **The Flag in the Wind**

This weeks edition was Compiled by Jim Lynch and lots to read in this first issue of the year.

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

### **Electric Scotland**

#### **The Scottish Historical Review**

We are working on adding volume 1 of this and have added 2 more pdf files for you to read.

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/>

## House of Green Shutters

Journalist, Teacher, Novelist, Short Story Writer, Critic

We've now added more chapters to the "House of Green Shutters" and now up to chapter XXVII.

You can read these at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/brown\\_george\\_d.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/brown_george_d.htm)

## Songs from John Henderson

### Sma Oors

Lyrics composed by John Henderson on the 31st of December, 2012  
to Mabel Wayne's 1949 music for the song, '[A Dreamer's Holiday](#)'.

Tak a richt guid willie waught an' hansel the New Year;  
Dince aroon tae guid Scots teens an' mak an unco steer  
In the hoose an' doon the street wi' ilka tristy fiere,  
Fyle ye're stappin' cantily.

Chap the doors o' neebor fowks an' mak an unca din;  
Ne'er they'll be unceevil like an' nae inveet ye in,  
Fur ilk chiel maun welcome ye, anse yon wud be a sin  
Int sma oors o' New Year's Day.

Dinna bide lang 'fore meeivin';  
Ae dram wull be aneuch  
Tae kep yer auld-heid frae spinnin',  
An' mak yer moo neist morn ow'r reuch.

Mynd thit at the skreek o' day tae tak a wee bit snooze;  
Dinna ging oan quaffin' drams o' guid Glen-malted booze,  
Fur fan comes yer denner-time ye'll wint tae be fair croose,  
Fyle ye aet oan New Year's Day.

Repeat!  
And tak guid heed!

You can read more of John's songs mostly in the Doric language at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

## Sir David Brewster

We continue to add chapters and this week have added...

Chapter XII - Notes of Life from 1844 to 1850

Chapter XIII - Notes of Life in 1850-51

You can read these chapters at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/brewster.htm>

## Old Scottish Customs

By E. J. Guthrie (1885)

I'm now up to Chapter XIV with this book. Here is one of these longer snippets for you to read here...

### LAMMASTIDE CUSTOMS AT MID-LOTHIAN.

IN the first volume of the *Archaeologia Scotica*, published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1792, there is a very good description of the manner in which the Lammas festival used to be celebrated in Mid-Lothian about the middle of the eighteenth century. From this paper it appears that all the herds within a certain district towards the beginning of summer associated themselves into hands, sometimes to the number of a hundred or more. Each of these communities agreed to build a tower in some conspicuous place near the centre of their district. This tower was usually built of sods, though sometimes of stones. It was for the most part

square, about 4 feet in diameter at the bottom, and tapering to a point at the top, which was seldom above 7 feet or eight feet from the ground. In building it a hole was left in the centre for admitting a flag; on which were displayed their colours on the great day of the festival. This tower was generally commenced about a month before Lammas, being seldom entirely completed till close upon that time. From the moment the foundation of the tower was laid it became an object of care and attention to the whole community, for it was reckoned a disgrace to suffer it to be defaced. As the honour that was acquired by the demolition of a tower, if effected by those belonging to another, was in proportion to the disgrace of suffering it to be demolished, each party endeavoured to circumvent the other as much -as possible. To give the alarm of the approach of an attacking party, every person was armed with a tooting-horn.

As the great day of Lammas approached, each community chose one from among themselves for their captain. They marched forth early in the morning on Lammas Day dressed in their best apparel, each armed with a stout cudgel, and, repairing to their tower, there displayed their colours in triumph. If news was brought that a hostile party approached, the horns sounded to arms. Seldom did they admit the approach of the enemy, but usually went forth to meet them. When the two parties met they mutually desired each other to lower their colours in sign of subjection, and if there appeared to be a great disproportion in the strength of the parties, the weakest usually submitted to this ceremony without much difficulty. But if they were nearly equal in strength none of them would yield, and the meeting ended in blows, and sometimes in bloodshed. When they had remained at their tower till about mid-day, if no opponent appeared, or if they themselves had no intention of making an attack, they then took down their colours and marched with horns sounding towards the most considerable village in their district, when the lasses and all the people came out to meet them and partake of their diversions. Boundaries were immediately appointed, and a proclamation made that all who intended to compete in the race should appear. A bonnet ornamented with ribbons was displayed upon a pole as the prize of the victor. The prize of the second race was a pair of garters, and the third a knife. When two parties met and one yielded to the other, they marched together for some time in two separate bodies, the subjected body behind the other; and then they parted good friends, each party performing their races at their own appointed place.

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

### **Slum Life in Edinburgh**

Or Scenes in its Darkest Places by T. B. M. (1891)

Have now completed this book by adding chapters through to VIII.

In the final chapter it starts...

In putting together in the shape of these sketches some of our experiences in the slums of Edinburgh, we have endeavoured to follow out a certain plan. The conditions of life there are so varied that any attempt to describe them without, at least, some sort of rough classification, would result in utter bewilderment alike to writer and reader.

The classification we adopted was this. In "The Poor Man at Home," and the two subsequent sketches, we outlined the mode of life in one-roomed dwellings rented on the weekly system. Taking a step lower in the social scale we came to the dwellers in furnished lodgings, a class even more shiftless and improvident than the others. A step still lower brought us to the region of the common lodging-house, from which we made further descents to trampdom and the retreats of the homeless.

Each of these divisions might be broken up into many sub-divisions, every one with its separate tale of woe. Indeed, we are painfully aware that we have but touched the fringe of the subject; merely skirted the margin of this morass of misery in which so many thousands of our fellows are floundering without hope of extrication. Those persons whose knowledge of slum-life has been derived from sources other than actual contact with it, cannot summon before their imagination any accurate representation of existence there. Their general ideas of extreme misery may be vivid; but they do not produce the alternating sensations of loathing, pity, and despair that a close survey of the details of degradation arouse.

You can read the rest of this chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/slum/chapter08.htm>

You can read this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/slum/index.htm>

### **Some Reminiscences and the Bagpipe**

By Alexander Duncan Fraser

As this is quite a long book I thought I'd make available the first chapter for you to read here to set the scene...

THIS little book is the first serious attempt made to put the Story of the Bagpipe upon a proper footing, to trace its origin from ancient history, and to examine the claims of Greek and of Latin to its invention.

The task has been to me a fascinating one, and although still far from completion, I sigh farewell to it, with keen regrets.

Some one of more scholarly attainments may one day—nay, will—I hope utilize my labours as a stepping-stone to better things.

I have dallied with the subject for years, for very love of it; not caring much whether I ever finished the book or not.

My Highland instinct discovered the importance of the task before it was well begun; kept me at it— in a fitful manner it is true!—when its magnitude dawned upon me and all but dispirited me; and has guided me in my treatment of it right through the book.

But if not a complete treatise on the Bagpipe, still as a small contribution to the subject it should appeal to the true Highlander, be he situated where you will amidst the busy haunts of men in some great city, or on the confines of the mighty empire, in some secluded spot, the solitary sentinel of civilization.

There are Highlanders, it is true, who have proved themselves false to the old ideals. Such, when they become citizens of the world, deem the two citizenships incompatible, and deliberately sink their national characteristics in the great maelstrom of life, assimilating themselves to their new surroundings like the chameleon, and nervously afraid lest something in dress, manner, speech, or bearing, should betray them, and make known the truth, that they are not quite “like unto these.”

These are the men who, believing a sacrifice necessary, have sacrificed the past to the present; have forbidden Gaelic in the house; made the name of the '45 anathema, maranatha; suppressed all references to the brave deeds of their forefathers; and tabooed “the tales of old.”

These are the Highlanders who have, in short, turned their backs for ever on the old life, with the pinch and the toil in it, the little pleasures, and the poor monetary rewards; who have preferred for themselves and for their children the stuffy atmosphere of a dingy, ill-ventilated office in some crowded city to the sweet airs, with healing on their wings and fresh from heaven's hand, which blew round the old homestead ; and who see more beauty in the piles of yellow gold upon the dusty counter, gathered often so wearily and at such a price, than in the glorious purple mountains, girdled by the sea.

There are others who go further than this, and scoff at the land which gave them birth.

Some little time ago I was dining along with a number of other Highlanders in the Grand Hotel, Glasgow. The man on my left roused my curiosity. He seemed out of place in such a gathering although he wore the kilt. I noticed that the kilt was of—we will call it—MacWhamle tartan. He was a tall, stout, rather handsome-looking fellow, with refined—I had almost said overrefined— manners. His speech was very Englified in tone, with here and there a dash of the Cockney in it, and he dropped, or tried to drop, I verily believe, his h's occasionally, but not with much success. There was not the slightest flavour of peat-reek about him anywhere. Who are you, and what are you doing here? Why are you making yourself uncomfortable in a kilt?—were some of the questions which I put to myself, but without evoking a reply; for I could see that he fidgetted about in the strange dress a good deal during dinner. At the interval between the second and third courses I was introduced to the stranger as Mr MacWhamle from London.

MacWhamle then was his name, and MacWhamle was his tartan.

“You are from London,” I said.

He bowed largely.

“But I suppose,” I said, looking at his dress, “you came from the Highlands first?”

“I left the Highlands when I was but a boy,” he replied.

“Do you visit the old home occasionally?”

“Never been there since I left.”

“I am glad at all events,” I remarked, “to see you still wear the kilt.”

“Yes,” he answered; but, turning to me as if for sympathy, added quickly, “a d-d uncomfortable dress though! ”

And I could see that he spoke feelingly. A kilt never sits well on a “corporation”; and his kilt kept creeping higher and higher, and growing tighter and tighter, in a way that a kilt alone can do, as dinner proceeded, until goaded to desperation, he stood up and unfastened the waist straps and took the chance of a catastrophe.

One other remark I ventured on to Mr MacWhamle: “Do you like the Bagpipe?”

“Yaas! oh yaas! at a distance”—pause on the word distance—“and the greater the distance the better.”

This was cheery for a Highland Gathering, wasn't it? It made me feel as if there were something wrong, something out of joint: the Highland Gathering had no right to be there, or friend MacWhamle had got, so to speak, into the wrong shop.

In the King's Arms Hotel, Kyle Akin, I met another Mr MacWhamle in the following autumn.

He amused himself at dinner-time by running down the Highlands, or perhaps I should say, the Highlander, with a self-assurance in his own wisdom, and with an air of infallibility, that ought to have made—but didn't—any doubter of this "Daniel come to judgment" blush for shame at his own temerity.

He had one doubter in my daughter, who sat on pins and needles, while this slanderer of the people she loved, rambled along in his pompous way. It was only by constant pressure of the foot under the table that I could restrain her impetuosity. She was boiling over with indignation at each fresh insult, and yet this Solomon blundered along, quite unconscious of how near he was to a living volcano.

And so it came about, that when he appealed to her for confirmation of some heresy, worse than another, not knowing that she was a Skye lassie,—born on the island—he got a look from her that would have annihilated a less sensitive person, and a contradiction along with it as flat as words could make it.

He appeared highly astonished at being pulled up so sharply, and more than a little indignant that any one should venture to question the wisdom, not to say the truthfulness, of his remarks, and dare to tell him plainly that all his fine talk was little better than so much ignorant twaddle. A little colour mounted to his brow,—a small sign of grace I took it to be—as he realized that he had been snubbed, and that he had himself invited the snub; and for a time the smooth flow of his words became broken—his speech halted and limped along painfully.

After a time, however, he seemed to recover his equanimity, and "went" for the poor Skyeman as viciously as before. He would "clear every mother's son of them out of the island." He would make Skye a desert, except—oh ! notable exception—for three months in the summer. "To suit the convenience of tourists like yourself?" I put in. He paid no heed to my interruption, but rattled on, heaping abuse upon the islanders. Idle, lazy, ill-fed, ill-clad, content. Oh, the scorn in this rich man's voice as he said content!

That these people whom he affected to despise, because they preferred the fresh air and the quiet, and the contentment of the country, to the smoky atmosphere, and the noisy streets, and the seething discontent of the town—a people in whose life his unseeing eye could detect no colour but a dull grey; uniform, constant, unvarying—should dare to be content, pained the good man exceedingly.

"Contentment is better than riches," I ventured to remark; but again he took no notice: he turned a deaf ear to me, and refused to be drawn into a discussion.

He had but one rule, by which he measured everything, the rule of the almighty dollar; the rule of the golden thumb. "Why," he said, "I had a man rowing me on the loch all day, and he was content with the two shillings which I paid him. If that man went south, sir, he could make thirty shillings a week in the mills, and here he is content to take two shillings for a day's work."

The table listened in silence to the well-fed, well-dressed, sleek-looking man as he preached his money gospel.

I did not ask Mr MacWhamle, as perhaps I should have done, why he, a rich mill owner, had refused a millhand's wage to the old Highlander who rowed him about the loch so patiently all day.

Such are not true Highlanders, and it is not for such that this book is written. The true Highlander, methinks, is one who forgets not the good blood which flows through his veins in spite it may be of a lowly upbringing ; who forgets not to visit the friends of his boyhood's days, because they have preferred the old and simpler life; who forgets not that his ancestors followed Prince Charlie, not blindly, but with eyes wide open and with ultimate failure staring them in the face, preferring a lost cause with honour to success without it. The true Highlander is one, methinks, for whom not distance from home, nor length of years, can destroy the constant yearning for the old life among the hills ; whose ear detects and loves the soft sweetness of the old tongue; whose heart warms at the sight of the tartan ; and who knows no music, with the story in it, and the charm in it, like the rude wild Pibroch.

And of all Highland things, what is more Highland and what more worthy of being preserved than the Bagpipe?

It grows handsomer as it grows older, and it is as useful to-day as when it led the Roman legions of old. It is as Highland in the streets of London, or in the suburbs of Melbourne, as in the wilds of Stratheric, or in the backwoods of Canada; and will be with us when the tartan is faded and the Gaelic tongue is silent, a signpost to an unbelieving world, reminding it that there once lived north of the Grampians an old and a gallant race—a race of warriors as brave as the world has ever seen.

You can read this book as we get it up at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/bagpipe>

### **Tommy MacPherson**

To have had a price put on his head by Nazis and Communists was a rare distinction, and as highly prized as the Military Cross and two bars, the Legion d'Honneur and the Croix de Guerre this most buccaneering of British soldiers was awarded for his extraordinary exploits.

You can read this article at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/tommy\\_macpherson.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/tommy_macpherson.htm)

### **Harry Lauder**

We have added more of his songs for you to listen to at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/henderson/lauder>

### **Songs Of Scotland, Prior To Burns**

A new book we're starting where you get the words of the songs, a background and information about the song and the sheet music. This book is by Robert Chambers who is famous for collecting old Scottish Songs. His publishing house produced numerous very important works many of which he authored himself. On the page for this book is a biography of him along with another song book he published.

You can get to this book at the foot of the page at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers\\_robert.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers_robert.htm)

### **Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow**

Found the first 2 volumes of their Transactions which you can read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/gaelic>

### **The Cuthberts of Castlehill**

From an article in the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness.

The recent valuable analysis of the names of the population of Inverness, compiled by Rector Macbain, shows that the predominant surname in the town at present is that of Fraser. That of Mackintosh was predominant in last century, and before then was the once leading name of Cuthbert, now disappeared, like those of Waus and Barbour.

The name Cuthbert is a very ancient Saxon name. St Cuthbert was popular both in England and Scotland, and many churches were dedicated to him.

You can read this article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/atoc/cuthbert2.html>

### **Early Travels in Scotland**

An article from the Transactions of the Gaelic Society.

When your secretary asked me to read you a paper, I was quite at a loss for a subject; but being much interested in the references made from time to time as to the visits of early travellers to Scotland, I thought a few notes collected and thrown together might interest you, and give some light on the position occupied by Scotland in the minds of the travellers of the past. I fear I cannot offer you any original matter. I shall therefore briefly run over the names of the best-known writers, and make a few quotations from their works.

You can read this article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/travellers.htm>

### **Some Highland Fishermen's Fancies**

An article from the Transactions of the Gaelic Society.

Fishermen of all ages and of all places are said to have been superstitious, and, when the nature of their calling is considered, it is no wonder that they should be so.

In most people there is a superstitious vein, and the means by which people seek to pry into the unknown and unknowable-future, to ward off danger and misfortune, and to ensure safety and success, are very varied and intensely interesting to those who themselves neither use these methods nor entertain these beliefs. It is no wonder that Highland fishermen should have strong and peculiar notions as to how luck is ensured, when they sometimes find that boats within a stone's throw of them on either side have in the morning large hauls of fish, while they themselves are blank; and that this happens day after day, when to all human appearances there is no difference in the circumstances.

You can read this article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/fisherman.htm>

### **An Inverness Merchant in the Olden Time**

An interesting article taken from the Transactions of the Gaelic Society.

From the earliest period of which we have any historical knowledge, Inverness has been the principal town in the territory which we



now know as the Highlands. In the sixth century it was the capital of the kingdom of the Northern Picts, and at or near it was the king's palace, to which St Columba made his memorable journey in 565. From its position at the head of the Moray Firth, and at the crossing of the ancient routes from the east to the west and from the north to the south, its standing as a trade centre must always have been an important one. Long before the Norseman or the Saxon visited our shores Pictish merchants bought and sold within its narrow bounds, and supplied the men of the hills and glens with such rude wares as were at their command, in exchange for the produce of the country and the spoils of the chase.

The union of the kingdoms of the Picts and the Scots introduced fresh blood, greatly to the advantage of trade; and the little town's prosperity was further increased by the settlement of Flemish and Frisian immigrants. The remote community was favoured and protected by the early Scottish kings, and charters bestowing exceptional rights and privileges on the burgh were granted by William the Lion and his successors. After that king's time Saxon names prevailed among the burgesses, but Celts are also found—descendants of the old inhabitants, remaining Pictish in blood, but now speaking the Gaelic instead of the Pictish tongue. The foreign settlers intermarried with native families, and in time became more Celt than Saxon. The view that Inverness was a Saxon colony is only partially correct, and there is no ground for the assumption that the general Highlander was an enemy to the community. A Lord of the Isles or an Earl of Ross might, in the course of his wars and feuds, attack Inverness Castle and the town which flourished under its wing, just as he attacked the castles of Urquhart and Ruthven and the districts protected by them. But the Highland Capital existed for the benefit and convenience of the Highlands, and the fact was fully appreciated by chief and clansman alike.

For a long period, it is true, the Saxon took more kindly to trade than the Celt, who rejoiced more in the free and open life of the country; but the Celt's prejudice against town life and commercial pursuits gradually wore away, and by the sixteenth century we find men of Gaelic names generally engaged as merchants, churchmen, and lawyers, not only in our burgh, but all over the Highlands. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while we meet such well-known Inverness names as Vass, Cuthbert, Schivez, Dunbar, Barbour, Hossack, Alves, and Inglis, which reveal their Saxon or at least their southern origin, although they were frequently borne by men in whose veins much Celtic blood flowed, we also find that the great majority of the traders and business men bore Gaelic names, or names which had come to be considered Gaelic. Many of those Highlanders were small lairds, or the younger sons of larger lairds. The families of Mackintosh and Grant gave prominent merchants to Inverness; the Chisholms of Sfrathglass, the Cummings of Dulshangie in Glen-Urquhart, and the Macleans of Dochgarroch, gave merchants and lawyers; and as an instance of historical repetition, I may be allowed to mention that my own great-great-grandfather, John Mackay, laird of Achmonie, in Glen-Urquhart, practised law in Inverness from about 1680 till after 1715, and that he acted as solicitor in connection with the Grant estates in that glen, as I happen to do today. . The Forbeses of Culloden and the Robertsons of Inshes found the ancient burgh a profitable field of enterprise; and among the gentlemen who came from a greater distance was Alexander Stuart, of the family of Kinchardine in Strathspey, who settled as a merchant in Inverness about the middle of the seventeenth century, and whose son, Bailie John Stuart (or Steuart, as he wrote the name), was a merchant of position in the town from about 1700 till 1752.

You can read the rest of this quite long article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/merchant.htm>

### **Fire in Chatham**

Had a fire 2 doors down from me and my utilities were down for 6 hours as a result. As I couldn't do any work while it was all going on I decided to take a wee video and some pictures which you can see at [http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada\\_bits.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada_bits.htm)

### **Beth's Newfangled Family Tree**

Clan Blair AGM 2013

A Celtic Cyber-Convention! First ever, we think.

The Clan Blair Society Board has decided to embrace the 21st century and deploy technology as a method to conduct the Annual General Meeting in 2013.

With the realization that economics and family commitments make personal attendance by members at locations across the country a challenge, we have decided to hold next year's AGM event as a cyber-meeting. All the details need attention, but our thought is:

1. Hold the AGM via cyber-technology sometime after Labor Day 2013.
2. Invite all 200+ members to participate in a Webex or Go To Meeting webinar scheduled for 2-3 hours on a Saturday.
3. Develop an agenda that includes education about the Clan and our Scottish Heritage, discussion about genealogy exploration and the DNA project, the Annual Board meeting report on Clan business and reports from Clan members across the country.
4. Of course we will end the meeting with a toast and wee-dram – members will need to provide their own.

We have much work to do in designing an agenda that will attract members to participate for a few hours. The education sessions will be of interest to all family members and we hope you will plan to participate via technology in the AGM.

The Board is developing a survey tool to gather member's input regarding subject matter for the Cyber-AGM – a first of its kind! We will be in touch with you in the first quarter 2013.

For further information, contact: Jim Blair, president, 7200 S Prince Street, Littleton, CO 80120. Call 303 795 9754. Email: [jeblair@msn.com](mailto:jeblair@msn.com) President

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Clan Ramsay said goodbye in December to Henrietta Ramsey Hendrickson.

Henrietta was born in 1921 and was a member of "The Greatest Generation". She retired from Union Carbide where she was a computer programmer and worked in the Radiation Shielding Information Center. During WWII she worked at Oak Ridge and was part of the massive effort to develop the first atomic bomb.

Henrietta was the mother of Clan Member John Hendrickson our DNA research administrator. She was a great lady and we will miss her.

John Ramsay, president.

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Ruaraidh MacThomais (Derek Thomson) died at the age of 90 on 21` March last year. He was equally at home as a poet, a professor, a publisher and an editor, MacThomais revolutionized Scottish Gaelic studies and literature.

He was the author of numerous books including An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry, Gaelic Poetry in the 18th Century: A Bilingual Anthology and European Poetry in Gaelic. His collected poems Creachadh na Clarsaich (Plundering of the Harp/Clarsaich) shared the Scottish Book of the Year Award in 1983.

In 1984, he won the Oliver Brown award for his service to Gaidhlig. He edited The Companion to Gaelic Scotland. His English-Gaelic Dictionary was published in 1981. He has published seven collections of Gaelic Poetry in all, with many English translations, including Meall Garbhy/The Rugged Mountain (1995) and Smeur an Dochais.

He was at the helm of Gairm magazine (and the publishing house of the same name) for over 50 years.

Sadly, since he retired from Gairm, nothing else seems to have replaced it, as a long-term all—Gaidhlig magazine or newspaper. Both Gath and An Gaidheal Ur attempted to fill the gap, but both have since folded.

He also wrote, or was involved in numerous works which introduced Scottish Gaelic culture to the wider Scottish public, including Why Gaelic Matters.

In the 1970s, he was Chairman of the SNP's Gaelic Committee. He was a proud Leodhasach, a supporter of independence and a seminal figure in the Scottish Gaelic Renaissance.

He has left a great legacy and one we can rightly be proud of. Cuirear clach air ur carn.

On a happier note, his fellow poet Aonghas MacNeacail (Aonghas Dubh) from Uig, Skye, recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. An entire issue of North Words magazine was dedicated to him. Meall ur naidheachd, Aonghais.

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I'm getting brave. Am ordering a Microsoft Word 2002 book to get better on this as I've only used Word for letters and that kind of thing. When I was made Honourary Member of Clan Forrester, they wrote on my certificate that I was more stubborn than a mule. Yep. Will get my paper going again or bust trying.....

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Locating Lost or Missing Ancestors  
Bryan L. Mulcahy

When it comes to tracing our ancestors, overcoming dead-ends or brick walls, is an occupational hazard with genealogists. These challenges are an inevitable part of the genealogical research process. Some would argue that if one does not encounter these issues,

the facts may need to be double checked for accuracy. The good news is that many dead-ends can be overcome with patience and good detective work. Most genealogists often find methods or strategies to overcome these roadblocks. The process involves creativity, knowledge of history of the ethnic group, and having confidence in your gut feelings.

One of the most common issues involves dealing with your ancestor failing to appear in any records for the locality or county where he or she is supposed to be. Where do I go from here? While frustrating this is a fairly common challenge. County and state boundaries have changed over time. This applies in all 50 states. The best source for verifying if the county was in existence at the time your ancestor resided in the area is Everton's Handybook for Genealogists. The Fort Myers-Lee County Library has the 10th edition of this title. However, if your library has an earlier edition, that would be sufficient in terms of historical data pertaining to the formation of counties.

Another good strategy is the 25-50-75 mile radius study. If you are certain that your ancestor or their family resided in a given area and the records are not showing up in the county where you began the initial search, draw a circle with a 25 mile radius around your ancestor's home. Any county, even if it is in another state, that falls within this radius should be considered a potential candidate for research. If the 25 mile radius fails, expand outward 50 and finally 75 miles in all directions.

If the ancestor does not turn up within the 25-75 mile radius, check to see if a railroad or waterway passed through the area. If so, follow the route of migration that was most relevant during the time period. County histories can be good sources for determining this type of information. If neither option applies, this may necessitate going back and examining the facts for errors. It can certainly help if the source of the original information can be identified. That fact alone may help determine the accuracy of the facts.

In other cases, the problem may be caused by the type of record you are seeking. Kory Meyerink, AG, and senior partner of ProGenealogists.com, advises that researchers must take the time to fully understand the record. One example he often cites is the need to know some religious affiliation information. For instance, if your family is Catholic, you probably will not find them in Lutheran cemetery records.

Sometimes the reason you're unable to locate them could be a simple matter of misspelling or a variation of the name was used for any number of possible reasons. An example would be when a patron recently mentioned the difficult time she had in tracing her grandmother's ship passenger records until naturalization papers revealed her name as Era instead of Eva. Another set of records recorded her name as Ava. A third spelling later turned up with the name spelled Avalon.

BLM 12/5/2012 Bryan L. Mulcahy, Reference Librarian Fort Myers-Lee County Library,

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### **And finally...**

Drunk and Dumb

Proof that Glasgow's late-night buses are populated by the drunkenly half-witted comes from a conversation on Saturday night when one young chap slurred to his pal after examining his work pass:

"Whit does the J in yer middle name stand fir?"

"Genius," his pal replied .... perhaps unwittingly proving he was anything but.

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Roll Up! Roll Up!

When Karen Dunbar was asked what she would bring to the role of Sleeping Beauty in her first panto this year at the King's Theatre, she replied: "Sliced Sausage."

And that's it for now and hope you all have a Happy New Year

Alastair