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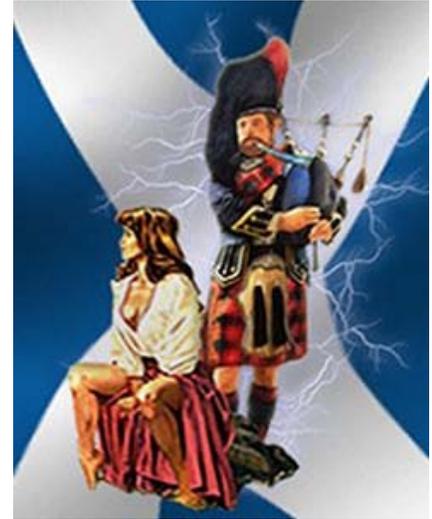
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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 20th, 2013

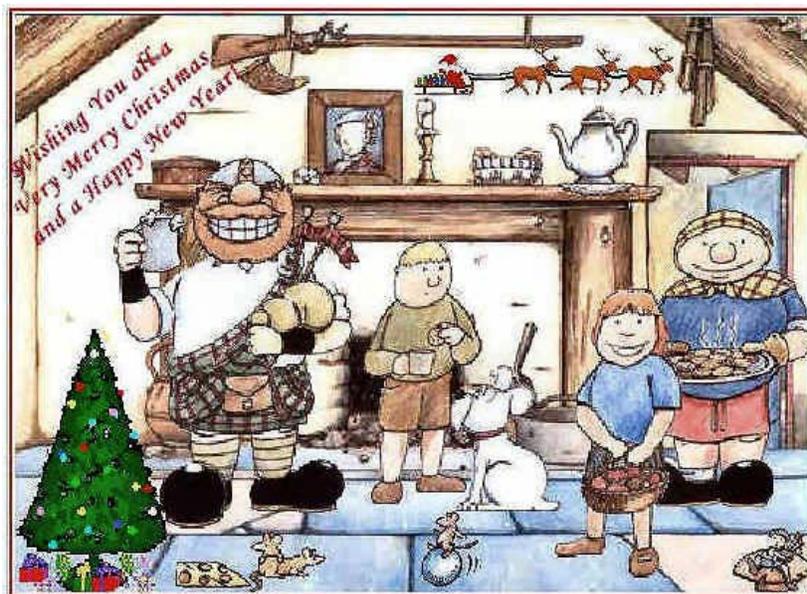
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Electric Scotland News

Would like to wish you all a Very Marry Christmas.



Here is a wee Christmas Rhyme...

I've been feelin' awfu' worried,
Since I heard my mither say:-
"The sweep's been awfu' busy
An' hisnae' been oor wey."
She tried her best tae get him,
But the mannie couldna' come,
An' fine I ken that Santa Claus
Will no' come doon oor lum!

I've heard him on a windy nicht,
Gang whistlin' ower the hoose,
An' I've been guid as guid could be,
An' quiet as ony moose.
But I've got an awfu' feelin'
That Santa winna come tae me on Christmas mornin'
'Cause we've got a dirty lum!

I've written letters every nicht,
An' telt him whaur I bide,
An' that I want a spitfire,
Wi' a hale air crew inside.
But, if he comes, I'm awfu' feart,
He'll maybe no' get oot.
The sweep's no' been,
An' maybe he'll be chokit wi' the soot.

So, maybe if ye see him,
Or hear him ony nicht,
Telt him I'm behavin',
An' daein' my lessons richt.
An' say it's no my mither's blame,
She'd aye the sweep afore.
So, would he bring my aeroplane,
An' jist – jist leave it at the door?

I eventually found a way to restore our RSS feed for our What's New and ScotNews feed. Steve was unable to figure out how to install the program we had so I decided to look around for another option and found one. It's mostly the same as the old feed but with this software there is actually no restriction on the amount of items displayed.

This means you can actually go back to June 11, 2013 on the ScotNews feed. Not sure if this is worthwhile or not but will leave it as is for now.

Not sure if you have read the Canadian Templar newsletter but if not you might like to have a read as there is a very good Christmas story in it. You can get to it at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/CanadianGrandPrioryNewsletterDec2013.pdf>

In fact as it is Christmas here is one of the stories for you to read here...

This Is What Christmas Is All About
Sent to us by email from Jeanie Francis, author not known.

A dear friend shared this precious Christmas Story with me, and it touched me so much, I, in turn, wanted to share it with you...

Pa never had much compassion for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been

enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible.

After supper was over I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read Scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up again and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity.

Soon, Pa came back in. It was a cold, clear, night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what...

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was, we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. We never hitched up this sled unless we were going to haul a big load. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high side boards on. After we had exchanged the sideboards, Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood - the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing?

Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jakey was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. Shoes, they're out of shoes. Little Jakey just had gunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

We came in from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt, could we come in for a bit?" Widow Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp.

"We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children - sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last. I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. He turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring in enough to last awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks with so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak.

My heart swelled within me and a joy that I'd never known before, filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people. I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God Bless You," she said. "I know the Lord has sent you. The children and I have been praying that He would send one of His Angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after

Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it.

Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their Pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two brothers and two sisters had all married and had moved away. Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, May The Lord Bless You, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your Ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your Ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that, but on the way I saw little Jakey out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand."

I understood, and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children. For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.

Don't be too busy today. Share this inspiring message.

May God Bless You!

As I believe we have a number of readers from Nova Scotia you might be interested to know that a Preceptory has been started in Halifax. There are so far 3 members but am told several more are interested. Should you be interested in becoming a Knight or Dame of the Knights Templar then you can find an email address at the foot of the newsletter. And if you do contact Anne then do mention that you learned of them from Alastair at Electric Scotland. I might add that Anne is the daughter of the Vicar General of the International order and past Grand Prior of Canada.

If you are still hunting for a Christmas present or have run out of money to buy one then Jeanette Simpson came up with some ideas that you might like to explore and you can read her suggestions at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/lifestyle/gifts/>

Here is one of her suggestions...

A friend of mine gave me bags of party mix at Christmas last year. It disappeared very quickly in our house.

Party Mix

1/2 c. margarine or butter
1 1/4 tsp. seasoned salt
4 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 c. Corn Chex
2 c. Rice Chex
2 c. Wheat Chex
1 c. Bran Chex
1 c. salted mixed nuts or pretzel sticks
Garlic salt to taste

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Heat margarine in a large shallow roasting pan (about 15 X 10-inch) in the oven until melted. Remove from oven; stir in seasoned salt, garlic salt, and Worcestershire sauce. Add Chex and nuts. Mix until all pieces are coated. Heat in

oven 1 hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Spread on absorbent paper to cool. Makes 9 cups. This may be frozen. Thaw at room temperature in the container in which it was stored.

Bryant Park, in New York City, will welcome two 15 ft tall scale models of Glasgow-born artist Andy Scott's 'The Kelpies' sculptures from March 19th to April 22nd next year, in the lead up to the internationally acclaimed week of Scottish celebrations in the city.

The Kelpies - two 100ft steel horses heads which are the largest equine sculptures in the world - are the centre piece of the £43 million Helix land transformational project between Falkirk and Grangemouth in central Scotland and are expected to attract an additional 350,000 visitors a year to Falkirk - a town just 30 minutes' drive from Glasgow and Edinburgh. They will also boost the central Scotland economy by around £1.5 million per annum and provide the area with its second 'top ten' UK tourist attraction.

The Helix will transform under-used land between Falkirk and Grangemouth into a thriving urban green space. Once complete, it will be an outdoor recreational area open to all, offering easy access to picturesque woodland, a central park with a lagoon, linked walking paths and cycleways.

Thanks to terrific support from The City of New York Parks and Recreation, Bryant Park Corporation, and the American-Scottish Foundation, the scale models (known as the Maquettes) will be seen by more than 250,000 people a day during the period they are on display next spring.

In addition, a program of lunchtime concerts is being planned around the sculptures on Bryant Park's Fountain Terrace as part of next year's celebration of Scottish arts and culture in the heart of Manhattan.

See <http://www.thehelix.co.uk/>

Electric Canadian

The Young Voyageurs

Or Boy Hunters of the North by Captain Mayne Reid. This is a book for younger readers and we'll be adding a chapter per day until complete.

We're now up to Chapter XXV and here is a wee bit from Chapter XXIV to give you a flavour of how the book is progressing...

About ten days' rapid travelling down the Elk River brought our party into the Athabasca Lake—sometimes called the “Lake of the Hills.” This is another of those great bodies of fresh water that lie between the primitive rocks of the “Barren Grounds,” and the more fertile limestone deposit upon the west. It is nearly two hundred miles long from west to east, and is only fifteen miles in breadth, but in some places it is so narrow and full of islands that it looks more like a broad river than a lake. Its shores and many of its islands are thickly wooded, particularly upon the southern and western edges; and the eye of the traveller is delighted with many a beautiful vista as he passes along. But our voyageurs took little heed of these things. A gloom had come over their spirits, for one of their party had taken ill, and was suffering from a painful and dangerous disease—an intermittent fever. It was Lucien—he that was beloved by all of them. He had been complaining for several days—even while admiring the fair scenery of the romantic Elk—but every day he had been getting worse, until, on their arrival at the lake, he declared himself no longer able to travel. It became necessary, therefore, to suspend their journey; and choosing a place for their camp, they made arrangements to remain until Lucien should recover. They built a small log-hut for the invalid, and did everything to make him as comfortable as possible. The best skins were spread for his couch; and cooling drinks were brewed for him from roots, fruits, and berries, in the way he had already taught his companions to prepare them. Every day François went forth with his gun, and returned with a pair of young pigeons, or a wood-partridge, or a brace of the beautiful ruffed grouse; and out of these he would make delicate soups, which he was the better able to do as they had procured salt, pepper, and other ingredients, at the Fort. They had also brought with them a stock of tea—the real China tea—and sugar; and as the quantity of both was but small, this luxurious beverage was made exclusively for Lucien, and was found by him exceedingly beneficial during his illness.

To the great joy of all the invalid was at length restored to health, and the canoe being once more launched and freighted, they continued their journey.

You can read this book at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/voyageurs.htm>

History of the Cunard Steam Ship Company

A Canadian started the company along with two Scotsmen.

You can read this account at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/cunard.htm>

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue was compiled by Fraser Hudghton in which he's reviewing the Q & A event that the SNP held on the White Paper.

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

Electric Scotland

The Scottish Historical Review

We are on Volume 14 and have now added the July 1917 issue. You can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/volume14.htm>

There is an interesting article on "Duel between Sir George Ramsay and Captain Macrae" and another one on the "Glasgow Burghal Records, 1718-1833"

The later article begins...

WHAT place will burghal records ultimately hold in the study of history in Great Britain? That the store of national fact of all kinds, but especially regarding the social phenomena of successive periods, must in future be more and more drawn from municipal sources seems certain. Whether for their politics, their industries, or their civic amenities, grievances, or aspirations, it is only in the autobiographies of the cities and burghs that the central movement of action and thought is reflected with the constant variety and the frequent vicissitude which the unending forward thrust of mankind makes inevitable. The work which over so many years Dr. Robert Renwick has been doing for the City of Glasgow in editing the minutes of the town councils and the relative charters and papers of the municipality is in its essence the editing of a biography, self-recorded from century to century in the registers of the town's business.

Another article is "A Hitherto Unprinted Charter of David I".

The record of any transaction in which a king of Scots was concerned during the first half of the twelfth century must, from the rarity of such documents, be of interest; the unusual length of the charter printed below, together with the number of witnesses, renders it of particular value. The original text is unfortunately lost, but an early fourteenth century copy is preserved in the Registrum Antiquum in the Muniment Room of Lincoln Cathedral. The Registrum Antiquissimum the cartulary of that foundation dating from the early part of the thirteenth century, contains none of the Paxton charters. One may fairly argue from the appearance of Alwin in the attestation clause as chaplain that the charter was issued some time between the year 1124, when David became king of Scots, and 1128, the year in which Alwin, the king's confessor, became first abbot of Holyrood.

You can read the previous issues at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/>

Songs Of Scotland, Prior To Burns

This book is by Robert Chambers who is famous for collecting old Scottish Songs.

Added another three songs...

False Love, And Ha'e You Played Me This?

Can Ye Sew Cushions?

The Siller Croun

You can get to this book at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers_robert.htm

Enigma Machine

This is where we are publishing this set of puzzles created by Doug Ross which can now be found in Doctor's Surgeries, Old Folks Homes, etc.

Added Enigma Machine 45 puzzle which you can get to at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/enigma045.htm>

The other puzzles we've already published can be found at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/index.htm>

I might add that if you follow the Enigma Machine thread in our Community you can work with others on figuring out each puzzle. You can get to these messages at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forumdisplay.php/17-Thistle-amp-Whistle>

Hugh posts each new puzzle in there and then by the end of the week will provide the answers and then add the next one. He also gives the odd hint to help you solve the puzzle.

Merchant's Guide to Stirling & District

You can find this book towards the foot of our History of Stirlingshire page.

Added this week the final chapter of this book...

The Forth Bridge

You can get to this book which we'll be adding to over the next few weeks at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/stirlingshire>

Scotland, Picturesque: Historical: Descriptive

This is a book we're serialising from the author of Historical Tales of the Wars of Scotland And of the Border Raids, Forays and Conflicts by John Parker Lawson (1839)

You need to scroll down the page to get to this book where we've now added...

Argyllshire

You can get to this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/wars/>

David Herschell Edwards

His 16 volumes of modern Scottish Poets is probably the most massive collection of poetry by anyone in the world and it's all about Scots poets which makes it all the more amazing. Each volume portrays around 100 poets and each poet has their own wee biography, a critical assessment and a few examples of their poetry.

Added volume 16 which now completes this collection.

You can get to this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/edwards_david.htm

Robert Louis Stevenson

A weekly serialisation of this intimate two volume biography of Robert Louis Stevenson by his cousin Graham Balfour.

Added this week...

Chapter XV. Vailima 1891 - 94

You can read these chapters towards the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/rlstevenson.htm>

The Story of the Royal Scots

By Lawrence Weaver.

This week we've added the following chapters...

Chapter VIII - The Spanish Main; The Seven Years War; The 'Forty-Five, 1740-1755

Chapter IX - Canada and the West Indies, 1756-1792

Chapter X - The Prince of the Great French War, 1793-1799

Chapter XI - The Napoleonic War, Egypt, 1801-1803

Chapter XII - St. Lucia, West Indies, India, America, 1801-1816

Chapter XIII - The Third Battalion in the Peninsula, 1808-1814

Chapter XIV - The Crushing of Napoleon, 1815

In Chapter VIII we learn that disasters also occurred...

In the spring of 1738 it was clear that the long reign of peace, during which Walpole had directed British policy, was coming to an end. The Spaniards had been guilty of depredations in the South American seas, and English opinion was rising to fever heat. War was declared, and a minor naval success by Admiral Vernon's squadron in the attack on Porto Bello, in the Spanish West Indies, inflamed

enthusiasm for a vigorous policy. The admiral attempted to seize Carthagena, but failed, and asked for eight thousand troops to help him.

Six thousand were embarked on August 14 under Lord Cathcart, with Wentworth as second in command. Everything went wrong from the first. An infectious fever raged in the convoying fleet, and the men died like flies even before they set sail.

By March 1741, however, the troops had landed near Carthagena under the guns of Vernon's fleet. Cathcart had meanwhile died of dysentery, and Wentworth, an amazingly incompetent general, bungled everything. The assault on Carthagena failed miserably. The British force had dwindled from six thousand six hundred effectives to three thousand two hundred by battle and sickness; the attempt was given up. Still they did not sail away, and when they did, the nominally fit were only seventeen hundred, and those actually ready to fight a bare thousand.

Returned to Jamaica, the commanders conceived a descent on Santiago de Cuba. Arrived at the island at the end of August, they quarrelled until December, by which time three hundred men were left fit for duty. It is a miserable story, and the reader may well be spared all the sickening details of bungling and suffering. But some reference is necessary because in February a reinforcement of three thousand men arrived, and amongst them a battalion of The Royal Scots. Hitherto, except on rare occasions, both battalions had served together, but it seems that both now contributed men to a service battalion which in the Irish Orders is referred to as a battalion, but in the English Orders appears as the first. Probably what happened was that the second battalion was brought up to strength for foreign service from the first, of which ten companies, doubtless skeletons, remained in Ireland.

When the first battalion reached Jamaica, the men were healthy, but yellow fever soon got to work. Wentworth's army buried fifteen men a day, but by March they set sail for Porto Bello on a new expedition. In the nineteen days' voyage nearly a thousand men were sick or dead, and the ill-fated convoy returned to Jamaica to find that five hundred sick, whom Wentworth had left in hospital, had been moved to the graveyard.

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

First Impressions of England and its People
By Hugh Miller (1851). A new book we're starting.

There are many books about Englishmen visiting Scotland and commenting on us that when I saw this book about a Scot visiting England I thought I just had to include this on the site. In the final paragraph of the Preface the author tells us...

It does matter considerably in some things that a man's cradle should have been rocked to the north of the Tweed; and as I have been at less pains to suppress in my writings the peculiarities of the Scot and the Presbyterian than is perhaps common with my country folk and brother Churchmen, the Englishman will detect much in these pages to remind him that mine was rocked to the north of the Tweed very decidedly. I trust, however, that if he deem me in the main a not ill-natured companion, he may feel inclined to make as large allowances for the peculiar prejudices of my training as he sees me making on most occasions for the peculiar prejudices of his; that he may forgive me my partialities to my own poor country, if they do not greatly warp my judgment nor swallow up my love for my kind; that he may tolerate my Presbyterianism, if he find it rendering a reason for its preferences, and not very bigoted in its dislikes; and, in short, that we may part friends, not enemies, if he can conclude, without over-straining his charity, that I have communicated fairly, and in no invidious spirit, my First Impressions of England and its People.

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

Electric Scotland Calendar's for 2014

Here you will find two pdf files which when downloaded and printed will provide you with an annual calendar for 2014. One in Portrait mode and the other in Landscape mode.

You can get to these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/calander2014.htm>

Independent Scotland 'would have to reapply' to EU

To my great regret I have to agree with van Rompuy. The SNP position on the EU is absolutely nonsensical from start to finish. I wish to god that they would shut up on the subject before they do even more damage to the independence campaign.

You can read this article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/131204.htm>

Christine McKelvie's Column

Got in her column for 13th December which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/131213.htm>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in Section 1 of the January 2014 edition which you can read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft>

And finally...

Having Mother Over To Dinner

Brian invited his mother over for dinner. During the course of the meal, Brian's mother couldn't help but notice how beautiful Brian's roommate, Jennifer, was. Brian's Mum had long been suspicious of the platonic relationship between Brian and Jennifer, and this had only made her more curious.

Over the course of the evening, while watching the two interact, she started to wonder if there was more between Brian and Jennifer than met the eye.

Reading his mum's thoughts, Brian volunteered, 'I know what you must be thinking, but I assure you Jennifer and I are just room-mates.'

About a week later, Jennifer came to Brian saying, 'Ever since your mother came to dinner, I've been unable to find the beautiful silver gravy ladle. You don't suppose she took it, do you?'

Brian said, 'Well, I doubt it, but I'll send her an e-mail just to be sure. So he sat down and wrote:

Dear Mum,

I'm not saying that you 'did' take the gravy ladle from the house, I'm not saying that you 'did not' take the gravy ladle. But the fact remains that one has been missing ever since you were here for dinner.

Love, Brian

Several days later, Brian received an email back from his mother that read:

Dear Son,

I'm not saying that you 'do' sleep with Jennifer, I'm not saying that you 'do not' sleep with Jennifer. But the fact remains that if Jennifer is sleeping in her own bed, she would have found the gravy ladle by now.

Love Mum

And I guess this one depends on which side of the referendum debate you are on...

A Scotsman died and went to heaven. As he stood in front of the Pearly Gates, he saw a huge wall of clocks behind him. He asked, What are all those clocks?

St Peter answered, Those are Lie clocks. Everyone who has ever been on earth has a Lie clock. Every time you lie, the hands on your clock move.

Oh said the man. Whose clock is that?

That's Mother Teresa's replied St Peter. The hands have never moved, indicating that she never told a lie.

Incredible said the man, and whose clock is that one?

St Peter responded, That's Abraham Lincoln's clock. The hands have moved twice, telling us that Abraham told only two lies in his entire life.

Where's Alex Salmond's clock, asked the man.

St Peter replied, we are using it as a ceiling fan!

And that's it for this week and I hope you all have a great Christmas.

Alastair