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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 23rd, 2014

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

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

### Electric Scotland News

#### The Scottish Caucus

I have to say that it seems to me this is a secret society not willing to share anything of their achievements and that's if they have any. I have emailed many of their members and have still to get even an acknowledgement of receipt never mind actually getting a reply.

So what they do I know not. Should any of our American readers have a local senator or congressman that are members hopefully you might contact them to ask what they do on the Scottish Caucus and should you get a reply you might share it with us.

I have tried to contact Congressman Mike McIntyre representing North Carolina's 7th District but to no avail so if anyone is in his district perhaps you could help out? Like I can't send him an email as the site only allows folk in North Carolina to contact him. I have phoned and been given an email address of a Genevieve Fugere but again no response to the email. Phoned again to complain that I hadn't got a response and was told they will follow up with her. I might add that Mike is the co-founder and co-chair of the caucus so it's all the more disturbing to have no response.

And while I am talking about this I might add that the people of North Carolina are also poor communicators. I contacted their historical society and tourism people as I have a lot of text up about North Carolina and also Scots and Scots-Irish connections with the State but wanted to try and get some pictures but no-one is willing to share anything.

Mind you it is my view that the tourism marketing people all over the world are the worst communicators I've ever had the displeasure to deal with. I have at various times tried to get information from the UK including Scotland, various countries in Europe, North America, Asia, etc. and they are all the same... useless!!!

#### European Elections

Today folk in Scotland are voting in the European Elections and the SNP hope to get a third MEP to represent them. We should get the results either later tonight or tomorrow.

### Electric Canadian

#### Muskoka Memories, Sketches from Real Life

By Ann Hathaway (1904)

We have now completed this book which you can read at:

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

#### Nova Scotia Historical Society, Reports and Collections

I added Volume XVIII 1914 which includes...

Wolfe's Men and Nova Scotia, by Beckles Wilson  
Jonathan Belcher, First Chief Justice of Nova Scotia by Sir Charles Townshend, D. C. L.  
Dockyard Reminiscences by Charles Roche  
Early Scottish Settlers in Cape Breton, by Mrs. Charles Archibald  
Artists in Nova Scotia, by Harry Piers  
History of Nova Scotia Postage Stamps, by Donald A. King

You can read this volume at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/novascotia/collections/index.htm>

### **The Indians of British Columbia by Dr. Franz Boas**

During the last seven years my studies of the North American Indians have led me frequently to the coast of British Columbia, into the recesses of its deep fjords and to the storm-beaten shores of its islands. In the following remarks I will describe some of the results of my studies and some experiences, but I will dwell particularly upon the interesting customs which it was my good fortune to observe in a cruise along the coast last winter.

You can read this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/bc/bcindians.htm>

### **Athalmer**

I came across a wee book of this town which is situated about fifty miles south of Golden, in the Columbia Valley, at the head of navigation of the Columbia River, at the foot of beautiful Lake Windermere, sheltered and nestled between the rugged Rockies and the wooded Selkirks. One of the most beautifully located spots in the world. (pdf)

You can read this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/bc/athalmersunnycit00vancuoft.pdf>

## **The Flag in the Wind**

This weeks issue was compiled by Grant Thoms where he is talking about the European elections. No synopsis this week.

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

## **Electric Scotland**

### **Alexander Murdoch (1841-1891)**

A Scottish Engineer, Poet, Author, Journalist

Added a third book called "Scotch Readings: Humorous and Amusing" and we're breaking this down into individual chapters for you to read. We've added two more chapters, "Peter Paterson, The Poet" and "Coming Hame Fou" which you can find at the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/murdoch/index.htm>

Here is how the story of "Coming Hame Fou" starts...

George Shuttle was a handloom weaver in the auld Calton, of Glasgow. He was a man of an extremely douce, canny, and auld-fashioned type—a type of Scottish craftsmen, now all but passed away.

Geordie had a stick-leg, the result of an accident in early life, which added to rather than detracted from the humour of his interesting personality. Geordie was monomaniac on his stick leg. He nursed it like a baby, and found it useful in a variety of ways. His wife, Mattie, was a "managing" woman, and would have managed Geordie as a bit of the ordinary house furniture but for his stick leg, which he usually screwed off as a safe weapon of defence when Mattie was threatening hostilities. In this sense, the screwing-off of his locomotive appendage was to Geordie what the celebrated "Old Guard" was to the great Napoleon—a sort of final and unflinching go-in-and-win reserve force, the mere threat of which usually took the stiff starch out of Mattie.

### **Thomas Dick Lauder**

Hope you are enjoying this book, "Lochandhu". Started on Volume 2 and you can find these at the foot of the page at: [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/lauder\\_thomas1.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/lauder_thomas1.htm) where we've add another couple of chapters.

As this book was published in 1825 it is a great example of what interested Scots way back some 190 years ago.

### **The Book of Scottish Anecdote**

Humorous, Social, Legendary and Historical edited by Alexander Hislop, eighth edition.

Added pages 452 to 501. You can read these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/anecdote>

### **Alan Cunningham**

This distinguished poet entered the world under those lowly circumstances, and was educated under those disadvantages, which have so signally characterized the history of the best of our Scottish bards.

Have now added Other Poems from his 1822 Book in two parts at the foot of his page.

You can read these at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/cunningham\\_allan.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/cunningham_allan.htm)

### **The Northern Highlands in the Nineteenth Century**

Some years ago I published the 2 volumes in this set. Well I have now found a third volume is now available and so have started to work on this.

In 1844 there was great political activity and agitation. The controversy on the Corn Laws was approaching its acute stage, and Factory Legislation was initiated. Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury, made a strong effort to secure a ten hours day, but he did not as yet succeed, although on a resolution he twice defeated the Government. In their bill, however, Ministers successfully resisted the clause, but their measure contained useful provisions regulating the labour of children. The long trial of Daniel O'Connell and his confederates on charges of conspiracy and sedition resulted in their conviction in Dublin, but the judgment was upset by a majority of the House of Lords. Peel passed his Bank Charter Act for England, and there was considerable apprehension of his interference with the Scottish Banking system. Mr Gladstone carried a bill for the improvement of railway carriages for third class passengers. Mr Disraeli was beginning to make his influence felt in the House of Commons. A dispute with France about Tahiti was settled this year. There was much indignation in this country at the repudiation of debts by public authorities in the United States. Socially, the visits to England of the Czar Nicholas and King Louis Philippe excited interest.

In Scotland the expansion of the Free Church was earned forward. New churches were rapidly erected in the Highlands. There was a good deal of friction in connection with sites, but only a few of the northern proprietors refused for any length of time. The first scheme for a railway between Inverness and Perth was put forward. In the town of Inverness there was a warm dispute between the High Church and the Town Council on the subject of seat rents. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited

Blair-Atholl, and the Crown Prince of Denmark and the King of Saxony had a tour in the Highlands, which included Inverness.

You can read this issue at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/highlands/3no2.htm>

### **Henry Dyerre**

Composer, Poet, Journalist and Musician.

Now added the following stories...

Old Gibbie  
Lochiel Cameron

These are great stories which you should really take the time to read. Like Lochiel Cameron who it is said...

After a few years of town life he obtained a situation as gamekeeper, and has served in that or similar capacity in many parts of the Counties of Perth and Fife, including Murthly estate, Rannoch Lodge, Drummond Castle, Abercairney, &c. He has also been several times round the West Coast of Scotland and the Hebrides on yacht cruises with gentlemen fishing and wild-fowl shooting; and was some two years in Ireland during the Fenian agitation. Wherever he went he always kept his mind and eyes open; and now with a splendid stock of reminiscences of men and things which have come in his way through life, has settled down as gamekeeper and fisher in his native district.

With that background his story makes a great read.

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

### **The Millers of Haddington, Dunbar and Dunfermline**

A Record of Scottish Bookselling by W. J. Couper.

We've now mostly completed the account of George Miller.

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

## **Songs by John Henderson**

John sent in a new song, Gairdinin

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerel537.htm>

## **Clan Wallace Society**

Got in their Spring 2014 newsletter which you can read at

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

## **Water-beings in Shetlandic Folk-Lore**

As remembered by Shetlanders in British Columbia By J. A. Tett.

You can read this article at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/shetland/water\\_beings.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/shetland/water_beings.htm)

## **British American Land Company**

Found a pdf file of the charter of this company which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/canada/tradition/britishamericanland.pdf>

## **Poets and Poetry of Scotland from the earliest to the present time**

Comprising characteristic selections from the works of more noteworthy Scottish poets with biographical and critical notices. By James Grant Wilson (1876)

You might say this is probably the best introduction you will find to Scottish Poetry and Scots Poets. Here is the Preface...

### PREFACE

The purpose of this Work is to give a comprehensive view of Scottish Poetry from the earliest to the present time, in a condensed and easily accessible form. Comparatively few persons can command sufficient leisure to enable them to examine thoroughly, in these busy days upon which we have fallen, the wilderness of separate volume% of the Scottish poets, and still fewer can afford to place them on the shelves of their libraries. Many readers regret being thus deprived of the opportunity of becoming fully acquainted in a systematic manner with a body of ^ poetry and song, than which there is none superior in the literature of ^ any land ancient or modern. To all such the present work it is believed it will come as a great boon. It will be found to present selections from the writings of some two hundred and twenty Scottish poets, sufficiently ample in extent to enable the reader to form a precise opinion respecting the style and merits of the authors.

Another purpose of this Work is to supply what has long been a desideratum in Scottish literature—concise biographies of the poets, with notices of their works, and critical remarks upon their writings— to tell, in short, when they lived, what they wrote, and the estimation in which their writings are held by competent authorities. To quote the words of one whose poems are included in this Collection, "We have R undertaken to discourse here for a little on the Poets, what ideas men have formed of them, what work they did."

The two volumes in which this Work is comprised will be found to contain a large and satisfying proportion of all that is truly beautiful among the productions of the best-known Scottish poets. That every reader should find in these pages every one of his favourite poems is perhaps too much to expect; but it is believed that of those on which the unanimous verdict of the intelligent has set the seal of being worthy of preservation, few, if any, will be found wanting. The work covers a period of above six hundred years, the first poem in the collection having been written about the middle of the thirteenth century, and the latest during the third quarter of the nineteenth. Embraced within the time from Thomas the Rhymer to Robert Buchanan will be found more than ten-score names of Scottish singers, not all alike in the measure of their fame, for "one star differeth from another star in glory;" but names that are thought to be worthy of honourable mention among the minstrels of their native land—that noble brotherhood who speak for themselves in tones of harmony, grandeur, and pathos, and upon whom "Wordsworth bestowed his benediction:—

"Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,  
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,—  
The Poets! who on earth have made us heirs  
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!"

The writings of the earlier poets being couched in language not easily understood except by students of ancient literature, it has been deemed expedient to restrict the extracts from their works to short specimens, which, however, exhibit the form in which their thoughts were conveyed.

But to enable the reader fully to understand the nature and scope of these writings, detailed descriptions have been given of their subject matter, with such explanations as seemed to be required. On the other hand, full scope has been given to the more modern

poets, from whose writings very copious extracts have been made; and many admirable and lengthy productions, such as Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," Beattie's "Minstrel," Blair's "Grave," Home's "Douglas," Grahame's "Sabbath," Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope," and Pollok's "Course of Time," appear in full in these pages. Other poems of too great length to be given complete, are represented by such ample extracts that after their perusal the reader will find himself quite at home with the author.

Independently of names like those of Burns and Scott, that stand as landmarks in the world's literature, it may be truthfully asserted that no nation beneath the sun is more abundant than Scotland in local bards that sing of her streams and valleys and heathery hills, till almost every mountain and glen, every lake and brook of North Britain, has been celebrated in sweet and undying song. If it be true, as it has been said, that Scotland has given birth to two hundred thousand poets, the Editor asks for a generous and kindly consideration in his delicate and difficult duty of selecting some two hundred and twenty names from that large number, as well as for such other shortcomings as may doubtless be discovered in a work of this nature.

It is the peculiar good fortune of the compiler of these volumes, the preparation of which has been with him for several years a labour of love, to be able to present to his readers unpublished poems by Robert Burns, William Tennant, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, Henry Scott Riddell, John Leyden, Hew Ainslie, Evan MacColl, and others who find an appropriate niche in this Walhalla. There remains the agreeable duty of returning grateful thanks to the authors who have contributed original contributions to these pages, and to other living writers and their publishers, who have given permission to make use of copyright poems, as well as to many friends who have communicated information and in various ways afforded facilities to the Editor in the preparation of this Work.

There is a passage in an ancient volume which appears to be appropriate as a concluding paragraph to this introductory page. Cotton Mather remarks, in the dedication to his *Decennium Luctuosum*, "Should any petit monsieur complain (as the captain that found not himself in the tapestry hangings which exhibited the story of the Spanish invasion in 1588) that he don't find himself mentioned in this history, the author has this apology: He has done as well and as much as he could, that whatever was worthy of a mention might have it; and if this collection of matters be not complete, yet he supposes it may be more complete than any one else hath made; and now he hath done, he hath not pulled up the ladder after him: others may go on as they please with a completer composure."

New York, January, 1876.

You can read all about them at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/poets/>

### **Memoirs and Adventures of Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange**

Knight, Commander of French Horse, Lord of the Secret Council, and Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh for Mary Queen of Scots (1849)

Though no period of Scottish history has been more elaborately discussed than that of Mary, the author presents these Memoirs to his readers, assured that they cannot fail to become interested in the career of Kirkaldy of Grange.

Without endeavouring to discover the secret springs or impulses which moved the great politicians and turbulent nobles of that age, the author has presented, as distinctly as he can, the life and actions of one of the most remarkable men of the time. He has not ventured upon those elaborate disquisitions which necessarily load the pages of history, but has rather endeavoured to awaken interest by the minute detail of individual action.

By confining a narrative to the history of an individual rather than of a nation, a better idea of the time may be gathered, and striking anecdotes and glimpses given of great men of the day—incidents which the historian, as a recorder of more important events, passes over in silence.

In the days of Sir William Kirkaldy, Scotland was filled with selfish, furious, and bigoted leaders in war and theology, whose hearts were fired by religious fanaticism and military ferocity—men suited to that iron age, which exercised so powerful an influence on the development of the national character and spirit; and for which the gentle Mary Stuart, by her mind and accomplishments, was altogether so unfitted.

Mary was peculiarly unfortunate in living at the period of the Reformation—an event which might not have happened in her time, had not the cupidity of the Scottish barons been excited by the hope of acquisitions from the plunder of the church. For many a gloomy year after that event, Scotland was one vast arena of ambitious intrigue, political rancour, and religious animosity, which the clergy fostered to the utmost, and of which the detestable policy of England made a cruel and fatal use.

In the strife so long waged between two factions of fierce and grasping nobles, the mass of the Scottish people (like the Spaniards of our own day) concerned themselves but little—a fact proved by the small number of combatants ranged under the chiefs on each side.

The author has avoided those perplexing hypotheses concerning the crimes and intrigues of the time, and, without caring to assume the part of pleader for the misguided Mary, the subtle Murray, or the heartless Elizabeth, has confined himself to giving descriptive

accounts of the battles, sieges, and feuds of the period, and to exhibiting the romantic achievements and brilliant adventures of the brave warrior whose Memoirs are now for the first time laid before the public.

Many notices are given respecting the old localities where those stirring events were acted, and of the tactics, cannon, and weapons of the age, when the defensive armour and heraldic cognisances of the days of chivalry were gradually giving place to the military fashions of our own.

The authorities are placed before the reader; many more might have been given, but they would, perhaps, have imparted a tedium to the work. The events of the hero's life, from his debut in his father's house of Halyards to the close of the scene, have been chiefly drawn from rare and privately printed works, which, with other ancient lore delineating our national history, are generally beyond the reach of the reading public.

Some information concerning the Kirkaldys of Grange has been gleaned from an ancient MS. birth-brief of the family, and upwards of thirty MS. charters and other documents preserved in the Record Office, and Office of the Great Seal. For local information concerning them, the author was indebted to the late incumbent of Kinghorn.

A gentleman, holding an official situation in Fifeshire, had in his possession, thirty years ago, a great many of Sir William Kirkaldy's private papers; since then they have unfortunately been lost beyond the chance of recovery.

Notwithstanding that he was for five years governor of Edinburgh castle, no documents concerning him are preserved in the fortress. In the Ordnance Offices in London and Edinburgh there is now no document relating to the castle dated farther back than a hundred years, all the old records and garrison-orders relating to that important stronghold in 1745 (and prior to that period, which is so interesting to Scotsmen) having been committed to the flames some years ago—a piece of strange policy or wanton destruction, which, however, must have emanated in an order from the Master-General of the Ordnance.

Edinburgh, November 1848.

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

### **Biographical Dictionary of the Eminent Men of Fife**

Of Past and Present Times, Natives of the County, or connected with it by Property, Residence, Office, Marriage, or Otherwise by M. F. Conolly (1866).

Sir Robert Sibbald, in his History of Fife and Kinross, informs us that "in the ancient language of the Picts it (Fife) was called Ross, which signifieth a peninsula, and that it was the best part of their kingdom, where their kings had their royal seat." Hence it has been the custom to designate it the "Kingdom of Fife,"—a popular phrase retained to this day; and doubtless there are some little kingdoms on the Continent less deserving of the title.

Fife is an extensive and important county. It is, as above stated, in the form of a peninsula, having the waters of Tay on the north, and the Firth of Forth on the south, and terminating in a point on the east, in the German Ocean, commonly called the "East Neuk." Its total area is about 300,000 acres. It lies between 56° 3' and 56° 25' north latitude. It contains sixty-one entire parishes, besides portions of two others, seventeen Royal Burghs, eight weekly newspapers, a University, and 153,989 of population, per census 1861.

"Fife," as has been well observed, "has always occupied a prominent place in the history of Scotland." Though this prominence may be partly owing to the circumstance that both a royal residence and a University were situated therein, still, much must be due to that energy and enterprise which for centuries have characterised the native inhabitants, who have proved themselves equally ready to defend their country from foes, and to forward its best rights and interests.

In all the contests of the people for the maintenance of their civil and religious liberties, we never find the "men of Fife" behind in the discharge of their proper duties; but on the contrary, always foremost in the path of honour—as patriots, philosophers, and men of renown.

To this fact, an influential foreign journal recently testified in strong terms. Speaking of one of our most eminent hydrographers it says, "He was a native of Fife, a county prolific of illustrious Scotchmen from the earliest period of our national history."

Fife, then, we submit, will compare favourably with any other county in Scotland, in reference to the number of distinguished men it has produced, from the days of Sir Michael Scott to those of Adam Smith, and downwards to Dr Chalmers and Principal Tulloch. It will not, therefore, be denied that Fife affords an ample field for a biography peculiarly its own, as well in respect of its population and importance, as of the illustrious men whose lives such a work must necessarily bring before us—lives which can neither be uninteresting nor unimportant.

Perhaps no species of literature is more interesting to the general reader than biography. It combines the charm of the poem with the

more substantial teachings of history; it frequently verifies the maxim That truth is more strange than fiction and it at all times affords useful and instructive reading. And there are no lives which we peruse with more satisfaction and advantage than those of men belonging to the same soil as ourselves; whose conduct and character have rendered them worthy of being held up as patterns and examples in their native land; at the same time it may add to the interest of the work, if its notices should not be confined to Natives of Fifeshire, but comprehend also eminent individuals who have been connected with the county officially or otherwise.

Gratifying as it is to know that biographical literature is so popular, and so extensively read in Scotland, it is surprising that no work exclusively devoted to the worthies of Fife, has yet appeared. Up to the present time there has been no volume of Fifeshire biography in existence—no collection of lives at once adapted for ready reference and popular entertainment.

To supply such a desideratum, the writer has put together the sketches referred to, in the form of a biographical dictionary. In following out the plan of the work, the writer has aimed at producing something more than a mere compilation. In addition to the lives of persons previously commemorated, among the contents will be found biographies of individuals hitherto overlooked, as well as of men of note, who have recently died, and whose lives have been heretofore unwritten. But, besides these, the author has introduced many sketches of contemporary biography, i.e., notices of living men of our own day. These have been written with brevity and caution, with a strict adherence to facts, and avoiding, as far as possible, matters of opinion; because, until the whole career of a man is finished, it is impossible fairly to estimate his life and character.

On the whole, what the writer has had chiefly in view is, to save parties of the middle classes, and engaged in active life, the expense of purchasing, and the time and trouble necessary in searching for information about men of Fife in Encyclopedias and general biographical dictionaries; to preserve curious scraps and anecdotes, relative to men of mark, which would otherwise be lost and forgotten; and to provide a reliable book of Fifeshire biography, comprised within the compass of a moderate sized volume, and containing about five hundred and fifty names, to be offered at a price which most people can afford to pay. In short, to produce a work which must be within the reach, and not unworthy of a place, in every Fife man's library; embodying a biographical and literary history of the county, and recommending itself to every inhabitant as a record of the honoured and worthy men who have shed lustre on their country's annals, and made Fife respected, through the length and breadth of their native land.

Chesterhill, by Anstruther, July 1866.

I've scanned images of the pages with the Index of Names and below that I have ocr'd in the names. Below that you will find links to each letter where we have split up the pdf into alphabetical sections.

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

### **Tales and Anecdotes of a Pastoral House**

In volume 1 of Blackwood's Magazine there is a story of a shepherd visiting the local minister and relating a fishing story. There is also another story in this series about a Wedding Day and have extracted both for you to read at [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/blackwood\\_shepherd.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/blackwood_shepherd.htm)

### **The Lockhart Papers**

Consisting of memoirs concerning the affairs of Scotland, from Queen Anne's accession to the commencement of the Union; with commentaries, containing an account of public affairs from the Union to the queen's death.

The Lockhart Papers are announced for publication, consisting of memoirs concerning the affairs of Scotland, from Queen Anne's accession to the commencement of the Union; with commentaries, containing an account of public affairs from the Union to the queen's death. All these papers were composed by, and are chiefly in the handwriting of, George Lockhart, Esq. of Carnwath, who was a very able and distinguished member of the Scottish and British Parliaments, and an unshaken disinterested partizan of the fallen family of Stuart. They contain also a register of letters between the son of James II. generally called the Chevalier de St George, or the old Pretender, and George Lockhart, with an account of public affairs from 1716 to 1728; and journals, memoirs, and, circumstantial details, in detached pieces, of the young Pretender's expedition to Scotland in 1745; his progress, defeat, and extraordinary adventures and escape after the battle of Culloden in 1746, by Highland officers in his army. All these manuscripts are in the possession of Anthony Aufrere of Hoveton in Norfolk, Esq. who married Matilda, only surviving daughter of General James Lockhart of Lee and Carnwath, Count of the Holy Roman empire, grandson of the author of the Memoirs. This work will be comprised in two quarto volumes, of six or seven hundred pages each; it admirably connects with the Stuart and Culloden papers, and is calculated to excite and reward the attention of all lovers of national history and political anecdote.

You can read both volumes at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/lockhart.htm>

### **Memorie of the Somervilles**

Being a History of the Baronial House of Somerville by James, Eleventh Lord Somerville in 2 volumes (1815)

As we don't have much information on this name on the site I was delighted to come across these volumes and have added them to

our Somerville page at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/stoz/somervi.html>

## **Robert Burns Lives!**

Edited by Frank Shaw

Burns and North America by Leslie Strachan.

I met Les Strachan many years ago in Columbia, SC during a Burns conference at the University of South Carolina. We have continued to bump into each another at various conferences, and I even have a great picture of Les in Washington, DC as Dr. Robert Crawford signs a copy of *THE BARD* shortly after he won Scotland's Saltire Award for his publication. Les is a "real" Scot, born in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. His upbringing was similar to the many Scottish homes we read about where Burns and his works were regular members of the family. Les served seven years in the British Army and while he pursued other interests, he likes to say Burns "was never far away".

Les has studied Burns since the early 1980s and began giving talks and recitations on Burns to fellow Scots and continues to do so today. After moving to America, Les experienced "a red letter day" in 1973 when he married his wife Nancy. Bedford, VA has been their home since 1974 and living in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains has been a great joy for their family. Les and Nancy have run their own business all these years, along with a non profit charity aiding survivors of the Rwandan Genocide. You can read more about this charity at [www.rwandanhugs.org](http://www.rwandanhugs.org). Les has been a member of the Robert Burns World Federation for 20 years and has been a member of the Robert Burns Association of North America for 15 years. He proudly serves as the USA Director of both these worthy organizations.

In a recent email Les wrote that he had just "popped into the site (*Robert Burns Lives!*) this evening, as I often do...rarely getting away in under an hour. It is in many ways a unique gathering of Burnsiana from the very scholarly to the very personal..." and has "created something in this digital age that will stand the test of time and be long used and remembered." Thanks, Les, for these kind words. RBL! is the product of many people, men and women, who have gone out of their way to make the website what it is today. I'm merely the messenger and *Robert Burns Lives!* is the story of Burns by all of its contributors.

I appreciate Les providing me with a bio sheet from which I gleaned his personal information. The following article was originally delivered by Les at RBANA's 2013 Conference as the Immortal Memory to Robert Burns. (FRS: 5.21.14)

You can read this article at [http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns\\_lives201.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns_lives201.htm)

### **And Finally...**

More from the Book of Scottish Anecdote...

#### **AT HOME AND ABROAD**

A close-fisted Dundee magistrate was rallied by a friend on the shabbiness of his attire.

"Hoots, man," said the bailie, "it's nae matter; a'body kens me here."

The same person met him shortly afterwards in London, attired in the same manner.

"As plain as ever, bailie, I see!" said he to him, with a tone of interrogative surprise.

"Hoots, man, fat's about that," was the magistrate's answer, "naebody kens me here."

#### **WESTERN HIGHLANDERS**

The people in these islands are generally civil, sagacious, circumspect, piously inclined, and given to hospitality. The women are very handsome, and bring forth children at a very great age. One Margery Brimbister, in the parish of Evie, was, in the year 1683, brought to bed of a male child, in the sixty-third year of her age. By reason of the temperance of their diet and wholesomeness of the air, the people usually live very long.

#### **ANCIENT HIGHLAND COOKERY**

The Highlanders, in former times, had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French, whom chance made acquainted with it. The Vidame of Chartres, when a hostage in England, during the reign of Edward VI., was permitted to travel into Scotland, and penetrated as far as to the remote Highlands. After a great hunting party, at which a most wonderful quantity of game was destroyed, he saw these "Scottish savages," as he termed them,

devour a part of their venison raw, without any further preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy; and when the Vidame partook of it, his compliance with their taste rendered him extremely popular.

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

Alastair