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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for August 15th, 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

We have now implemented the Ezoic system so most of you should be seeing our site presented in a new way with new menus, etc. It is still very early days of course and it will take us at least a month to evaluate if this is a benefit for our visitors and ourselves. I will say that just over the past few days we have seen a lift in visitor numbers and this is at a time when we'd expect a decline through the summer months. We have also seen that visitors are spending more time on the site and our bounce rate is well down on what it was. So all positive signs.

The downside of this new way of presenting the site is that I am now unable to publish to the site the way I have since it started and this is a huge challenge for me personally as I now need to work in htm code and ftp over files to the site. I am thus right now very unproductive on getting new content onto the site. I am hoping that Steve can work on this next week to see if he can resolve this for me.

FSA Scot

As you know I use these letters after my name in my signature. I have a page up about the Society of Antiquaries Scotland on the site where I've posted the latest leaflet and application form. The application deadline for new Fellows is the 1st September.

Also, Ian Greig FSA Scot, has contacted the Society with the idea of creating an opportunity for Fellows in North America to meet and share their passion for the history and archaeology of Scotland. Ian has offered to organise a meeting for North American Fellows in Tampa, Florida, in 2015. The idea would be to bring together Fellows for a weekend, starting with an evening reception on the Friday, followed by a day of lectures from leading experts with dinner in the evening, and ending the following day with an optional tour of the city.

To progress plans, they are keen to establish the level of interest within the North American Fellowship for a Society meeting along the lines outlined above. If you would like to register your interest and find out more, please email vina@socantscot.org by the 1st September. They will then pass on your contact details to Ian who will be in touch with you directly with further information.

You can get to their page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/fsascot.htm>

Electric Canadian

Duck Lake

Stories from the Canadian Backwoods By E. Ryerson Young.

Completed the current story and am now working on the short final story from this book.

You can read these at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/ducklake/index.htm>

Video

I posted up a video which I ended up calling "Thinking out of the box". You can see this video at...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQETB7fgVnQ>

Essentially I'd read an account of R F MacKenzie who was an educationist and head teacher in Scotland. He has some radical idea on education, science, religion and the justice system in Scotland. By questioning these systems it allowed us to examine our acceptance of the current systems. I have always been in favour of questioning how we do things as nothing remains static as we move on with our lives and the world changes around us. I am particularly keen that children and young people should challenge the status quo and look to do things in a new and hopefully better way. I was thus moved to do this video to illustrate how new thinking can bring good results by telling of some of my own experiences.

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue was compiled by Grant Thoms where he is talking about the currency debate in the referendum debate. No synopsis this week.

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

Electric Scotland

Thomas Dick Lauder

Hope you are enjoying his book, Lochandhu. Started on the final Volume 3 and you can find these at the foot of the page at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/lauder_thomas1.htm where we've added chapters XI & XII this week.

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.

Now started on Volume 3 and have added Pages 232 to 352 which now completes this volume.

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/music/cunningham/index.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.

Added the issue for 1856...

The war with Russia came to an end early in 1856. In January proposals suggested in Vienna were accepted as a basis of negotiation, and terms were arranged in a Congress at Paris. On the 30th of March the treaty was signed, and ratifications were exchanged on 27th April. The cost of the war to this country was over £50,000,000. At the time of its cessation Britain was in an exceptionally strong position for the continuance of the struggle, a fact ascribed to the vigour of Lord Palmerston.

There was little legislative business during the year. An attempt to establish the principle of life peerages was made in the case of Sir James Parke, who was created Lord Wensleydale without right of succession, but the proposal met with so much opposition in the House of Lords that the Government gave way, and Sir James was made a peer in the ordinary form. The crimes of William Palmer, a surgeon of Rugeley in Staffordshire, known in criminal annals as Palmer the poisoner, excited universal attention and indignation. There were also two sensational cases of fraud, one by a man named Robson, on the Crystal Palace Company, the other by Leopold Redpatn on the Great Northern Railway Company.

The great event affecting the Highlands was the passing of the bill for the construction of the Inverness and Aberdeen Junction Railway, connecting the short line to Nairn with the Great North of Scotland Company at Keith. This, by a roundabout way, was to give Inverness its first through railway communication.

You can read this issue (No. 15) at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/highlands/3no15.htm>

Henry Dryerre

Composer, Poet, Journalist and Musician.

Now added another two Worthies...

Alexander Crichton

John Farquharson

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

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)

Now completed this publication with the final pages, appendices, glossary and index.

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/poets/>

Book of the Old Edinburgh Club

We have acquired copies of 12 volumes of this club's publications and we're going to add one a week.

Now added volume 12 which includes...

Notes on the Names of the Closes and Wynds of Old Edinburgh By Charles B. Boog Watson

The Old Tolbooth: Extracts from the Original Records By John A. Fairley

The Maps of Edinburgh, 1544-1851 By William Cowan

Measured Drawings of Lawnmarket and Castlehill made by Thomas Hamilton, Architect By F. C. Mears

This now concludes this set of volumes.

You can read these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/edinburgh/edinburghclub>

Enigma Machine

Now have up puzzle 74.

You can get to this one at <http://www.electricensead.com/lifestyle/enigma/enigma074.htm>

The Great Floods of August 1829

In the Province of Moray and Adjoining Districts by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.

This week added..

Chapter XII. The River Spey to Abernethy

Chapter XIII. & XIV. The River Nethy

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/moray/floodsndx.htm>

Robert Dick of Thurso

Geologist and Botanist by Samuel Smiles LL.D. (1879).

We're now up to Chapter XIX of this book.

A wee snippet from it I found amusing...

Well, I had got about eight miles out. Some beautiful tufts of Erica Tetralix grew temptingly a few paces off, along the high road. So, without a moment's hesitation, I stepped aside among them, and, stooping down, began pulling at them admiringly. From my reverie of delight, amidst beauties blushing crimson, I was suddenly startled by a rough voice accosting me in Gaelic. I looked round, and saw one of the ugliest-faced Highlanders that ever 'cam doon' staring wildly at me. 'A blowy day,' said I. 'Ach, ach,' said he. A brief silence ensued. 'Why are ye no at sermon?' 'Why are ye no at sermon yoursel?' I replied. 'Eh?' said he; 'oo, ye see I maun mind the beasts.' 'Well,' said I, 'we are very much alike. You mind your beasts, and I mind this (holding up a piece of the beautiful plant I had plucked). We have both our reasons for what we are about.' 'Man!' he said fiercely, 'ye're nae better than a beast, tae be looking for grass on the Sawbath. The cattle there want reason, which maybe you have.' 'Stop, my good fellow,' said I; 'the cattle look at the plants without seeing the least beauty in them; they pick out the grass here and there to fill their bellies; but I look at them for the improvement of my mind.' 'Ach!' he grunted; and then he roared, 'It's a sad thing for a man who has got one wife already, to go after another.' At this coarse outburst I laughed loudly; and after telling him that I had got no wife at all, I suddenly walked away and left the man with his beasts. I wonder what this blind zealot would have done to me if he had the power. The less we know, the more intolerant and tyrannical we become. All the religious persecutions that we read of are merely the result of ignorance, and of the cruelty that comes of ignorance. I wonder whether that man ever thinks of the words the Master he pretends to serve once said to His

disciples—“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

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

The Home Life of Sir David Brewster

Scottish physicist, mathematician, astronomer, inventor, writer, historian of science and university principal.

We're now up to chapter XII of this book.

As I've just download a number of issues of the North British Review I was interested to read in XII the following account of this publication...

About this time it occurred to several gentlemen in Edinburgh that “there was both room and need for a Review of the highest class, the organ of no party, political or ecclesiastical, and which, instead of ignoring or affecting to disown Christianity, was imbued with its spirit.” The North British Review was therefore started in 1844, under the editorship of the Rev. Dr. Welsh. The double coincidence of this event taking place the year after the Disruption, and the Free Church principles of most of its editors, led to the erroneous impression in some quarters that it was the organ of the Free Church. It has never been a sectarian work however; contributors of all denominations were welcome, if their principles were good and their literary talent undeniable.

The success of the undertaking was remarkable from the very first this quarterly took the high place in literature which it has ever since sustained. It has always been under most careful editorial superintendence of a high order—Dr. Welsh, Lord Barcaple, Dr. Hanna, Professor Fraser, Dr. Duns, Professor Blaikie, and Mr. Douglas, having successively managed it—and the interest and variety of its articles have been in proportion to the singular variety and eminence of its contributors. The establishment of this congenial periodical was quite an era in his literary life, and led to his separation from the Edinburgh Review, to which he had long been a contributor, and for which he had written twenty-eight articles. The Rev. James Taylor, D.D., writes that “Professor Napier was deeply hurt and offended when he learned that his old ally had promised his support to the new, and, as he considered it, rival periodical, and remonstrated with him on the subject both by letter and in a personal interview. Sir David, however, was displeased with the attacks which the Edinburgh Review had made on the evangelical doctrines to which he was strongly attached, and informed the editor that he had resolved to give his assistance to the new Review, because he could rely on its defending these doctrines if they should be assailed. A day or two afterwards he related to me this conversation, and said he was sure that Professor Napier would never again ask him to contribute to the Edinburgh Review,—a great loss to him, he added, as his contributions to that periodical were very highly remunerated.”

He threw himself into the North British interests with cordial energy; for upwards of twenty years he contributed an article to almost every quarterly number, and he delighted in beating up for recruits for this service among his most eminently intellectual friends. Professor Fraser writes: “I have many letters received from him during the time of our literary connection, when I was editor of the North British Review in 1850 and the seven following years. In that relation I always found him in the highest degree kind, cordial, and considerate. The freshness of his nature was shown in his extraordinary readiness to sympathise with the life and movement of the age. He was among the most remarkable in a band of contributors which then included the ablest men of the time in Great Britain, not only for the brilliancy and vivacity of his writings, but for the punctual regularity with which they were delivered. He contributed an article to each number during the time I was editor, and in each instance, after we had agreed together about the subject, the manuscript made its appearance on the appointed day with punctual regularity, and its successive instalments were placed by him in the editor's hands with mechanical precision. Some of the articles were the subject of interesting correspondence between us; and I recollect in particular the ardour with which he addressed himself to the thoughtful and very suggestive essay on the Plurality of Worlds, which I had asked him to review, in an article since expanded into his *More Worlds than One*.”

Professor Blaikie, who edited the Review from 1860 to 1863, writes: “Sir David Brewster was ever remarkable for the carefulness of his work, the punctuality with which it was delivered—never behind time, never needing to write to the editor for more time or more space: a model contributor, indeed, in every way, and so full of well-put and attractive information. He was of great use in giving introductions to eminent men, his name being a guarantee that the channel in which they were asked to write would not be unworthy of them.” The secret of the successful execution of this literary work was, that he spared no pains which could possibly perfect an article. Not contented with the book itself, which he had to review, and his own previous knowledge of the subject, he collected fresh information before beginning to write, from every source; he was always specially anxious to obtain particulars of the life and career of the author, so that most of his articles possess a biographical value apart from the intrinsic interest of the subject. The variety is indeed most curious, as is best seen from the four thick volumes which I have before me, in which are collected all these contributions.

Dr. J. H. Gladstone, Ph.D., F.R.S., gave the following graphic description of some of these in his obituary notice before the Royal Society of London:—“The first number of the North British commences with an article by him, on Flourens's *Eloge Historique de Cuvier*; and further on in the same part he discusses the *Lettres Provinciales* and other writings of Blaise Pascal. In the second number he describes the Earl of Rosse's great reflecting telescope; and shortly we find him engaged with such serious works as

Humboldt's Cosmos or Murchison's Siluria; the rival claimants for the honour of having discovered Neptune divide his attention with Macaulay's History of England, or the Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation. With Layard he takes his readers-to Nineveh, with Lyell he visits North America, and with Richardson he searches the Polar Seas. The Exhibition of 1851, the Peace Congress, and the British Association, come in turn under his descriptive notice; or, turning from large assemblies to individual philosophers, he sketches Arago, Young, or Dalton. In one number we have 'The Weather and its Prognostics,' and 'The Microscope and its Revelations' elsewhere he describes the Atlantic Telegraph, whilst in a single article he groups together 'The Life-boat, the Lightning-conductor, and the Lighthouse.' He reviews in turn Mary Somerville's Physical Geography, and Keith Johnston's Physical Atlas; the History of Photography engages him at one time, and at another Weld's History of our Society. Under the guidance of Sir Henry Holland he investigates the curious mental phenomena of mesmerism and electrobiology, and under that of George Wilson he inquires into colour-blindness. He criticises Goethe's scientific works, expounds De la Rive's Treatise on Electricity, and Arago's on Comets; or, turning from these severer studies, he allows Humboldt to exhibit the 'Aspects of Nature' in different lands to the multifarious readers of the Review."

His review of the Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation is one of the most remarkable, and I have heard that it was bound up with the book itself as an antidote, and thus sold in America.

It was one of my father's greatest literary pleasures to peruse carefully each number of the Review as it came out. For many years he had sent to him regularly, by the editors, a list of the authors of the different essays, delighting to copy and enclose it to friends at a distance, who he knew were readers of the work.

An incident connected with the North British Review caused my father so much interest, pride, and pleasure, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. The St. Andrews students had been left very much to their own devices for a good many years, and a state of things had set in which did not accord with the views of a new Principal of reforming tendencies. I believe that the breaches of discipline were not of serious importance, but quite sufficient to bring the University and its authority into some disrepute. Disorderly bands of red-gowned students patrolling the streets, too lengthened "gaudeamuses," unnecessary appeals to door-bells and knockers in the midst of the night, apparitions of tall bearded guisards into quiet families, and such like, were the principal offences, and with characteristic activity the perpetrators were brought before the Senatus, rebuked, and punished, so that a very different state of things soon came about, and St. Andrews students became as orderly as most of their class.

A good many years afterwards my father read an article in the North British, so fresh, so full of vigour and interest, that he at once wrote to Professor Fraser inquiring the name of the author. His delight was extreme—indeed, I scarcely remember his ever showing more complete satisfaction—when he found that it was written by one of his old students of that somewhat stormy period, of whom he had never since heard. He at once wrote him a letter of congratulation on that happy beginning of a now long successful authorship, for the writer of the article was the Rev. John Tulloch, then minister of Kettins, but afterwards Principal of the Divinity College at St. Andrews, and author of The Leaders of the Reformation, English Puritanism, etc. The friendship between the young man and the old was ever after most cordial, especially during the years when they were contemporary Principals in the same University.

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

Calendar Of Documents Relating to Scotland

By Joseph Bain. We have long been missing Volume 1 of this set but now found a copy and adding it to the site.

Added Part 2 (1212 - 1230).

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

Memorandum of John Murray of Broughton

Sometime Secretary to Prince Charles Edward 1740 - 1747 edited with an Introduction, Notes and an Appendix of Original Documents by Robert Fitzroy Bell (1898). A new book we're starting.

we already have an excellent account of Bonny Prince Charlie on the site but this publication contains copies of many letters that illustrate many aspects of his fight to regain the throne of Great Britain so we've decided to bring this to you over the next few weeks.

You can get to this book at the foot of our current page about him at:

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

And Finally...

AFRAID OF THE LADIES

The natives of Barvas, in the Western Islands, retain an ancient custom of sending a man very early to cross Danas River, every first day of May, to prevent any females crossing it first; for that, they say, would hinder the salmon from coming into the river all the

yearrouud. - Martin.

THE SCOT ABROAD

Marshal Keith had command of the Austrian army which long combated the Turkish forces on the Danube under the Grand Vizier, and, after a long and bloody combat, the two generals came to a conference together. The Grand Vizier came mounted on a camel, with all the pomp of eastern magnificence. The Scotch Marshal Keith, from the neighbourhood of Turiff in Aberdeenshire, at the head of the Austrian troops, approached on horseback. After the conference, the Turkish Grand Vizier said to Marshal Keith that he would like to speak a few words in private to him in his tent, and he begged that no one should accompany him. Marshal Keith accordingly went in, and the moment they entered, the Grand Vizier threw off his turban, tore off his beard, and, running to Marshal Keith, said, "Ou, Johnnie, foo's a' wi' ye, man?" And he then discovered that the Grand Vizier of Turkey was a school-fellow of his own, who had disappeared thirty years before from a parish school near Methlic. - Alison

AN EAST LOTHIAN GRACE

In Satan's Invisible World Discovered, written for the purpose of confounding atheists, the following is given as an East Lothian grace, in the time of ignorancce and superstition:-

LORD be bless'd for all his gifts,
Defy the devil and all his shifts.
God send me mair siller. Amen.

BURNS' SENSIBILITY

"I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7," writes Walter Scott to Lockhart, when Burns came first to Edinburgh, but had sense enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given worlds to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with the literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country - the two sets that he most frequented. Mr Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise, I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation; among whom I remember the celebrated Mr Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember was remarkable in Burns' manner was the effect produced upon him by n print of Danbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow - his dog sitting in misery on the one side - on the other, his widow with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath;-

"Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's p1ain.
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew.
Gave the sad presage of his future years
The child of misery, baptised in tears.

Burns seemed much affected by this print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that but myself nobody remembered that they occur in a half forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of the Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure."

And that's it for this week and hope you all enjoy your weekend.

Alastair