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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 5th, 2015

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 Charles Kennedy Story

Lib Dem leader Charles Kennedy led his party to their best ever election result in 2005 but, battling a drink problem, had to resign a few months later. After his death at the age of 55, here's a look back at the life and career of one of the most influential politicians of his generation.

Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32972470>

Politics in Scotland

Brian Taylor, Political editor, Scotland

In the Holyrood chamber, Nicola Sturgeon is facing questions about the impact of her government's spending on health, education and the rest.

The questions are pointed. Indeed, those from Labour's Kezia Dugdale once more resemble a test paper in that she asks the FM, successively, what has happened to the uptake of...

- a) modern languages
- b) Chinese
- c) and Gaelic.

Hint: the figures, according to Ms Dugdale, are not good. Ms Sturgeon stresses the importance attached by her team to the acquisition of language skills.

In her turn, Ruth Davidson for the Conservatives claims that NHS staff are themselves succumbing more and more to illness, driven by work-related stress. Liam Macarthur for the Liberal Democrats detects a comparable problem among teachers.

To each, Ms Sturgeon offers reassurance, taking care to praise the efforts of teachers and health professionals.

So far, so familiar. Legitimate questions, substantive answers. But, at the same time down in Westminster, there are other exchanges which affect the dialogue at Holyrood.

The Chancellor announces further departmental spending cuts of £4.5bn (including the sale of Royal Mail) not for the future but for the current financial year. Scotland's share of those cuts is to be £177m. It is possible for the Scottish government to defer the reductions for one year - although the economies still have to be found eventually.

John Swinney, the Scottish Finance Secretary, is less than pleased - and plans to express the same when he meets George Osborne on Monday for pre-Budget talks. (Today was just a trail: the Budget comes later.)

'Lack of respect'

Mr Swinney deploys the competing mandate argument which I have rehearsed previously on this site. He argues that the people of Scotland demonstrably voted against austerity in the recent election. Yet further austerity, in his view, is being applied in an unwarranted fashion.

He says that the announcement today demonstrates a complete lack of respect for Scotland and the Scottish government, in contrast to the promise delivered by the Prime Minister.

To which the UK government makes three points....

The share of the cuts being borne by Scotland is relatively small - because the NHS and schools are protected. Together, these make up, proportionally, a more significant share of the devolved budget than the UK one.

It is essential to tackle the UK deficit and long-term debt. The quicker this is addressed, the more effective the action.

Holyrood already has tax powers - and will gain more from next April, with more still planned. If MSPs genuinely do not like spending constraint - and genuinely believe Scotland cannot stand it - then they have the option of raising tax. Put up or shut up, as Mr Osborne rather bluntly commented.

Why now? Why cut now rather than wait for the coming Budget in a few weeks time? A range of motivations suggest themselves with, perhaps, two to the fore.

Getting out the bad news about spending now allows Mr Osborne, perhaps, to offer a few goodies to those who voted for the UK government and its policy programme.

Secondly, it is possible that the Chancellor anticipates that it might be even more difficult than previously thought to find the promised £12bn of savings in the welfare budget - particularly as the PM keeps denoting areas which he regards as sacrosanct, such as child benefit.

However, the Treasury insists that today's announcement is not designed to offset decisions on welfare.

Reflections on the EU referendum challenges to come

This is an interesting article from Newsnet.scot and as I note America is getting concerned about a possible UK exit from the EU it may be worth a read to understand more. You can get to this at:

<http://newsnet.scot/2015/05/reflections-on-the-eu-referendum-challenges-to-come/>

Edinburgh Festival Fringe launches biggest ever line-up

Edinburgh Festival Fringe has announced its biggest ever line-up for this summer.

There will be 50,459 performances of 3,314 shows from 49 countries in 313 venues during August.

The Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world and has been held in the city every August since 1947. Its programme includes theatre, dance, circus, comedy, music, musicals, opera, cabaret and variety, children's shows, exhibitions, events and spoken word.

Fourteen new venues will host shows this year and overall there is a 3.8% increase on last year's programme.

Kath M Mainland, chief executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, said: "Every year we think we know what it's going to deliver, but every year it surprises, delights, amazes and inspires. The Fringe is a festival like no other."

Blocked Sewer

Not a subject I would normally talk about but I hit lucky I this week as I got a leak in my basement and it was traced to a blocked sewer pipe. The lucky part was contacting the company that fixed it as they are the only local company that actually have a map of all sewers in Chatham, And so within a few minutes of them arriving they referred to their laptop and measured the driveway and with a little digging found the sewer pipe. They used their spider to fix the problem.

That said I found out after the event that if you are unblocking a sewer line then you are advised to contact ON1Call on 1-800-400-2255 to check to see if your gas line intersects the sewer line before proceeding with the work. <http://www.on1call.com/>. So the company that dealt with my line already had the information.

I guess this would apply in other parts of the world so should this ever happen to you it might be worth checking with your own local

authority which is why I thought I'd mention this.

Electric Canadian

Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the last Fifty Years
Continuing to add more chapters to this book.

We are now up to Chapter VI in which it starts...

In the month of July we were ready for sea again. In the meantime Captain Ward had got together a new list of passengers, and we more than doubled our numbers by the addition of several Roman Catholic gentlemen of birth and education with their followers, and a party of Orangemen and their families, of a rather rough farming sort, escaping from religious feuds and hostile neighbours. A blooming widow Culleeney, of the former class, was added to the scanty female society on board; and for the first few hours after leaving port, we had fun and dancing on deck galore. But alas, sea-sickness put an end to our merriment all too soon. Our new recruits fled below, and scarcely showed their faces on deck for several days. Yet, in this apparently quiet interval, discord had found her way between decks.

We were listening one fine evening to the comical jokes and rich brogue of the most gentlemanly of the Irish Catholics above-mentioned, when suddenly a dozen men, women and children, armed with sticks and foaming at the mouth, rushed up the steerage hatchway, and without note of warning or apparent provocation, attacked the defenceless group standing near us with the blindness of insanity and the most frantic cries of rage. Fortunately there were several of the ship's officers and sailors on deck, who laid about them lustily with their fists, and speedily drove the attacking party below, where they were confined for some days, under a threat of severe punishment from the captain, who meant what he said. So this breeze passed over. What it was about, who was offended, and how, we never could discover; we set it down to the general principle, that the poor creatures were merely 'blue-mowlded for want of a bating.'

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

First Nations

I did some work this week on the First Nations by adding a new page and updating another...

Algonquin People

I found I didn't have a page for these people and so create one to provide background information and a few videos.

You can get to this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/algonquin.htm>

Métis

I found I didn't have much information on them so spent a day or so doing some research and so again added more information and videos.

You can get to this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/metis/index.htm>

Zebedee Nungak's page

I got an email in about this person along with some links and so I explored these and as a result have added some additional information and a few videos.

During this process I re-read his account of finding his Scottish family and so I decided to make this the story for this week.

You can get to his page at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/zebedee/index.htm>

Canadian Templar

As you'll know I am the newsletter editor for this publication and so the June 2015 edition is now available at the foot of the page at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/kt.htm>

I might add the Canadian Update section was greatly expanded for this issue. In addition I got in a few newsletters of the Grand Priory of England & Wales which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/ktew/index.htm>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

This was the big talking point this week in Canada.

There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.

You can learn more about this at:

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=26>

Electric Scotland

A Tour in Sutherlandshire

With extracts from the field-books of a Sportsman and Naturalist by Charles St. John, Esq. in two volumes 2nd Edition (1884).

We have now completed this book.

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

Transactions of the Institution of Engineers in Scotland

Found 4 volumes of these transactions so now making them available with volume 7 (which is the third volume I found) now up for you to read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/business/engineers.htm>

Songs by John Henderson

Added four more songs from John which I've added to the foot of his page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

Ancient Scotland

Found a series of films on Ancient Scotland and I added the first video to our Community pages at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/4869-Ancient-Scotland>

Scottish Society of Indianapolis

Got in a copy of their Summer 2015 newsletter which you can get to at:

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

Angus Heritage

Added a link to this site on our Angus Council page as it contains some excellent guides that can be downloaded.

You can get to this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/council/angus.htm>

Stories in the Scottish Dialect

This is a collection of stories we'll be adding over time from the pen of Alexander (Black) Harley. We've added a section for these at the foot of his page and have the first 3 stories up now.

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

Life and Anecdotes of David Ritchie

By William Chambers (1820) (pdf). Added this book about him to his page in our The Anecdote of Glasgow at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/glasgow/anec124.htm>

Robert Wallace

Minister, M.P., Journalist which we've added to our Famous Scots section.

Robert Wallace was a Scottish writer who had a remarkably varied career as a classics teacher, minister, university professor, newspaper editor, barrister and finally a member of parliament. He was born on 24 June 1831 at Kincapple near St. Andrews, Fife, and was the second son of Jasper Wallace, a gardener, and Elizabeth Archibald. He was educated at the Geddes Institution, Culross, Fife, and at the University of St. Andrews where he graduated M.A. in 1853. He was awarded the degree of D.D. by Glasgow University in 1869. He married Margaret Robertson (died 1898) on 10 March 1858 and they had six sons and one daughter. While he was minister at Old Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, he was involved in attempts to reform and modernise the Church of Scotland. As a result, his fitness to be a minister was questioned and presumably this controversy influenced his decision to leave the clerical profession. He died in London on 6 June 1899.

I ocr'd in the Preface to the book and then made it available to download and you can find this at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/wallace_robert2.htm

Born Fighting: The Scots-Irish

This was what I consider to be an excellent video and some years ago it was available for viewing on YouTube and so I embedded it on our index page for the Scots-Irish. Some time later I learned that it had been removed and despite emailing the author was never able to discover if it was still available.

To cut a long story short I discovered it again in two parts so have now added links to both parts to our index page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotsirish/scotsirishndx.htm>

This Northern Ireland documentary follows American Senator Jim Webb, author of Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America, as he charts the incredible story of the Scots-Irish, and discovers how they helped build one of the most powerful nations in the world.

Born Fighting sees Senator Webb, himself of Scots-Irish heritage, travel from his home in the United States to Scotland and Northern Ireland, where he visits Belfast, Carrickfergus, Newtown Stewart and Londonderry, to tell the story of the Scots-Irish and how they shaped present day America.

Dramatic reconstructions take viewers through key historical moments such as Bannockburn, the siege of Derry and the American Civil War, and we hear from leading historians such as Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald from the Centre for Migration Studies in Omagh.

"For the first time ever, this series has captured all three elements of this historic journey, from Scotland to the north of Ireland and finally into America, in a way that shows both the struggles of the Scots-Irish and their incredible impact on American culture and government.

"I wrote Born Fighting after many years of thought and painstaking research," noted Senator Webb. "It is a pleasure to have been able to work with UTV, STV and the Smithsonian Chanel, to bring the essence of this book into a powerful visual format."

I might add there is mention of the Scots-Irish Congress and on the above page I have several volumes of their transactions for you to read.

THE STORY

Part Qallunaaq:

From Hudson Bay to the Firth of Tay: Searching for My Scottish Grandfather by Zebedee Nungak

It is a fact of life all over the Inuit homeland in Arctic Canada that the progeny of Qallunaaq (White People) have existed for generations amongst Inuit. The earliest forbears of these were explorers, whalers, traders, policemen, and numerous assorted others. Very few of these ever left a name, address, or some other tangible reference by which their Inuit descendents could touch, feel, and know their Qallunaaq ancestor.

In recent years, interest in Qallunaaq ancestry has been heightened among Inuit people related by such ancestry from far-flung locations finding each other. Some have come across each other through research triggered by enlightened curiosity. Others do so literally by accident. Detective work is the order, and it is mostly hit and miss. Some who suspect shared ancestry from one individual can never be absolutely sure. Names, dates, and records can be very sketchy, if they exist at all.

Inuit of mixed ancestry have endured a variety of social and personal stresses. People of mixed Inuit/Qallunaaq parentage are so common today that it may seem odd to consider that any tension ever existed among full-blooded Inuit and half-breeds. But such tensions have been an obvious fact of life in Inuit society for as long as such people have been around. This tension is very hard to describe in clinical exactness, because its manifestations are as diverse as human nature, personality, and character.

In my parents' generation, it took the form of being looked down upon, of being made to feel not quite whole. If one had the misfortune to be part Qallunaaq, it was not unusual to be treated as a psychological outcast. One was made certain to know how you were not really, truly, an Inuk. In addition to the petty cruelties inflicted upon half-breeds for being born as such, there was the obviousness of illegitimacy. Most unions producing such offspring were not based in Holy Matrimony.

As a result of enduring these stresses during some part of their lives, Qallunaaq (part Qallunaaq half-breeds) compensated by "out-Eskimo-ing the Eskimos" in many aspects of life.

Half-breeds were generally more indiscriminate and deliberate in the practice of traditional life; from eating the most rotten igunaq

(fermented meat), to possessing respectable repertoires of unikkaatuaat (stories and legends), and being expert in the ancient skills. No revenge was sweeter than to demonstrate by living example that they were as human beings just as valuable as any who might have felt superior.

From where do I speak of this? My late mother was the daughter of an Inuk mother and a Scottish father.

William Mackenzie Peter was a Scotsman who worked for the French trading company, Revillon Frères, in the 1920's. He had a sister named Winifred, for whom he insisted my mother be named. He is remembered as being very friendly to Inuit; that, he certainly was to my grandmother. He left, as did so many others, leaving no trace other than the child he fathered by an Inuk woman. His biography, as far as we knew it, was his name, and his country of origin.

All her life, my mother carried an un-fulfillable desire to know her biological father. She insisted that my first-born son be named William Mackenzie, after the father she was destined never to have. One of my mother's great pleasures was being able to say, "Ataataak! (Father!)" to my son.

What would it take to find that piece of paper, that photograph, in which I would find a missing piece of myself? A visit to France to search out Revillon Frères records? A trip to Scotland to publicize the tattered scraps of his biography? Scores of families across the Arctic who share such unfilled blanks in their family picture also had such questions echoing in their lives.

As grandchildren of this man, my siblings and I never had the slightest interest in knowing about the man for most of our years. This wasn't because of any hard feelings; just indifference made normal by never having known anything about him, other than his name. With so little to go on, searching for him seemed a Mission: Impossible!

Originally, the idea of a search was for my mother's sake. But, as I took on the task, it transformed into pursuit of fulfillment for me, my brothers and sisters, and our growing crowd of grandchildren. I had no illusions about the daunting challenge of finding anything. Even holding a photograph would do in the event of finding nothing else. In a quest such as this, even little would be plenty!

This is the story of my search for my family's Scottish roots...

You can read his account at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/zebedee/> where I've also added an article from him and a few videos that he talked about.

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

Alastair