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ARTICLES
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BUSINESS
CHILDREN'S STORIES
CLANS & FAMILIES

CULTURE & LANGUAGE
DONNA'S PAGE
ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET
FAMOUS SCOTS
FAMILYTREE
FORUMS
FOOD & DRINK
GAMES

GAZETTEER
GENEALOGY
HISTORIC PLACES
HISTORY
HUMOR
JOHN'S PAGE
KIDS
LIFESTYLE
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER
PICTURES
POETRY
POSTCARDS
RELIGION
ROBERT BURNS
SCOTS IRISH
SCOTS REGIMENTS
SERVICES

SHOPPING
SONGS
SPORT
SCOTS DIASPORA
TARTANS
TRAVEL
TRIVIA
VIDEOS
WHATS NEW

HELP TERMS OF USE CONTACT US

Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for August 14th, 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

A LITTLE BREATH OF SCOTLAND

We are sorry to advise you that after fifty years on the radio, Toronto's longest running radio show with the same host, "A Little Breath of Scotland" will be going off the air.

Radio host, Denis Snowdon met with AM740 station manager Dan Hamilton and music director Neil Hedley after Sunday's show, and was told that the show would be reduced to one hour per week from its traditional two hour time slot and that only half the shows would be broadcast live. He was told that the other half of his shows would be broadcast as "the best of" shows, taken from previously archived shows, which would contain no local news or information. Mr. Snowdon was not consulted about the proposed changes.

Mr. Snowdon feels that the position of Am740 is completely unacceptable, and undermines the integrity of a show that has served a loyal listening audience since 1965. He accordingly has told the station that the August 9th show was his last on AM740.

They say that all good things must come to an end and Mr. Snowdon would like to thank all of his listeners and advertisers for their loyalty and support over the past 50 years.

If you feel you would like to let the station know your feelings on their decision, they may be contacted as follows:

Mr. Moses Znaimer,
AM740 Radio,
70 Jefferson Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M6K 1Y4
Phone: 416-367-5353

E-mail:

Dan Hamilton: d.hamilton@mzmedia.com

Neil Hedley: n.hedley@zoomermedia.ca

Cocoa Mountain

I listened to a wee item on this company on Talk Scotland on Tuesday and thought I'd mention them in the hopes you might try their products or even invest in their business.

Simply the finest cocoa and fresh Scottish ingredients, inspired by our extraordinary and beautiful Highland landscape and passion for quality. Our unique chocolates are lovingly made by hand and dispatched worldwide - with your choice of ribbon and personal greeting attached.

Paul and James founded Cocoa Mountain in June 2006 with the simple aim to produce the most delicious, fresh, and innovative chocolates on the planet. We are probably the most geographically remote chocolate producer in Europe, and feel that the beauty of

our surroundings should be reflected in the quality of our products. We are fortunate to be able to produce a fantastic product that makes people smile and be happy - and as a small but growing team, we all take satisfaction and enjoyment from our daily work!

Visit their web site at: <http://www.cocoamountain.co.uk/> and treat yourself!

SNP MPs good parliamentarians

The Speaker in the House of Commons has said many of the SNP's 56 MPs were "already proving to be very good parliamentarians".

John Bercow said the SNP members deserved respect for the way they turned up in large numbers to support each other in the chamber.

But he said he did not believe the party had yet changed the parliament.

Mr Bercow was speaking at an the Edinburgh Festival Fringe organised by Edinburgh University's business school.

The SNP won 50% of Scottish votes in the general election to secure an unprecedented 56 of the country's 59 Westminster seats.

Asked how the Scottish nationalists - who now form the third largest party in the Commons - have changed the parliament, the Speaker said: "The significant thing is not how the SNP have changed parliament, because I don't think yet that they have.

"I think the significant thing is that, whatever you think of the SNP, their parliamentary party has said something very significant by its behaviour since May about group solidarity.

"They turn up in large numbers, they turn up very regularly, they turn up to support each other and a lot of them are already proving to be very good parliamentarians.

"It's not for me to support the SNP or oppose the SNP and I wouldn't dream of doing so, but I'm simply saying respect where it's due."

Mr Bercow said Nicola Sturgeon's party had scored a "notable political victory" when it was credited with forcing the Conservatives to shelve plans to water down the hunting ban in England and Wales.

In a wide-ranging discussion, Mr Bercow also indicated that the House could change its stance on applause within the chamber if MPs so wished.

In May, the Speaker told SNP MPs to stop clapping during a response from the party's Westminster leader Angus Robertson to the Queen's Speech.

Asked why they were not allowed to applaud, Mr Bercow said: "I think my attitude to that is if the House wants to change its procedures, it can, if they vote to do so."

New Zealand selects 40 designs for new flag

New Zealand has published 40 designs, one of which could become its new national flag.

Prime Minister John Key first mooted the change last year. He called for the Union Jack to be removed as it represents the country's colonial era "whose time has passed".

He also complained that New Zealand's flag looks too much like Australia's.

See some of the designs at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-33851165>

Scots glen that inspired Charles Darwin 'at risk'

A FAMOUS Scottish glen that inspired Charles Darwin is at the centre of a row amid plans to strip it of its protected status.

The iconic Parallel Roads of Glen Roy persuaded Darwin to switch his research from evolution to geology.

Read about this at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/heritage/scots-glen-that-inspired-charles-darwin-at-risk-1-3856840>

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 XLVI.

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

Enigma Machine

The whole collection can be found at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma>. We're currently working on puzzle 113

National Film Board of Canada

I came across them last week and found a few more that are worthy of a place with us which include...

For King and Country, A series of videos about Canadians who gave their life in Word War II.

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/kingcountry.htm>

Treasure of the Forest. This archival film is about the industries that draw their wealth from the raw material supplied by Canada's forests.

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/videos/timber.htm>

The Water Dwellers. This short documentary introduces us to a town where no one pays rent.

http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/videos/water_dwellers.htm

St. James Priory

This Toronto based Priory of the Knights Templar has produced a booklet about the order and it can be downloaded at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/religion/StJamesTemplarInformation.pdf>

Electric Scotland

Lucy Bethia Colquhoun

Added Chapter XIII and XIV. to this book which you can read at:

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

The Origin of the McLendon Family Name

Got in this account from the Chief Executive of Clan MacLennan which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/m/mclendon.html>

John MacPherson (1882-1951)

Styled The Coddie (sometimes The Coddy), and described by Compton Mackenzie as "the outstanding character in Northbay."

You can read about him at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/coddie.htm>

Mackie

Two very interesting families in Dunfermline, Fife MACKIE and SYME where a member of each of three generations contribute significantly to Scottish literature in prose, poetry and history. We've also added a variety of books that they wrote and you can read all this at:

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

One of the publications is a Biography written in the belief that the life of Duncan McLaren exalted individual public service as at once the privilege and glory of a free people the foundation of the well-being and safety of the commonwealth; and that a faithful record of his long and arduous career, as merchant, citizen, councillor, and statesman, illustrating the chivalrousness of spirit in which his public work was undertaken, the heroism and fidelity with which it was carried on, and the substantial public benefits it secured, may not only stimulate public-spirited men to self-sacrificing efforts for the common good, but, in these days when the principle of self-government is being universally applied, in county as well as in municipal and national administration, be read with a sense of encouragement as well as gratitude. The best guarantee for the future prosperity of the country, under the extension of the conditions of national life established in 1832, is to be found in the increased purity and efficiency of administration and the more actively beneficent tendency of legislation which were introduced with the first Reform Act.

An Inquiry into the causes and effects of Emigration

From the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland with Observations of the Means to be Employed for Preventing it, By Alexander Irvine, Minister of Ranoch (1802).

This is one of these old books where the letter s is written as an f so a wee bit challenging to read but well worth the effort.

You can download this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/emigration.pdf>

History of Abby Johnson Kendrick Robinson Gooch
A history of this Mormon lady and her extensive family.

With some of the names there must be some Scots-Irish ancestry here but I was struck with how as a family they were brought up in Mexico and in their youth seemed to have a great life but then due to the revolution they had to leave the country to go back into the USA and then they had a tough time making ends meet. You rarely find an account like this which is why I've added it to the site.

The conclusion of the book says...

I am writing this for mother:

My dear children, at this time, April 7, 1971, I would like to tell you I love you all dearly. Be understanding and forgiving of each other and try to live the gospel as best you can. I would like to say at this time I have much to be thankful for and am grateful to my Father in Heaven for all of you. At this time I have 25 grandchildren, 39 great grandchildren, 37 living, and 1 great great grandson.

Your Grandma Gooch

Good-bye

Passed away November 4, 1974.

Reading this book you will see she and her family had a tough life but with perseverance made it through. Her own Mormon faith was a great strength to her.

You can download this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/abby.pdf>

John G. Paton

We have a short article about this missionary to the head hunters but have now found a 3 volume autobiography about him which I've added to his page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/paton_john.htm

Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie

Added this book in 3 parts plus the bibliography and index as part 4. Also added A Carnegie Anthology and you can read these at:

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

Our thanks to John Henderson for sorting out these pdf files for us.

A Tour in Tartan-Land

By Cuthbert Bede (1863)

Came across this book quite by chance and enjoyed reading it so have added it to the site at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/travel/atourintartanland.pdf>

He comments in Chapter II how James the First took a month to travel from London to Edinburgh but now it takes under a day to travel from London to Glasgow by train.

A Concise System of Theology

On the Basis of the Shorter Catechism by Alexander Smith Peterson, A.M. (1881).

While working on a biography of a missionary I first came across reference to this book which was made in very complimentary terms. I thus thought I should try and find it and having found it have added it to our Religious section. In the Preface it says...

THE Author of the following work, Mr ALEXANDER SMITH PATERSON, was the elder son of the late Rev. Alexander Paterson of Dundee, and nephew of the Rev. Dr Paterson, one of the ministers of Montrose. He was educated at the Grammar School and Marischal College, Aberdeen, where his family resided after the death of his father. Although a singularly laborious student, he evinced no small anxiety in the prospect of appearing before the Presbytery for examination. This apprehension was, in a great measure, the occasion of leading him to draw up very ample notes on the topics connected with Ecclesiastical History, which were afterwards posthumously published under the title, "History of the Church from the Creation of the World to the Nineteenth Century." The present work was composed with a some what similar object; and it is supposed that the intensity of mind which he brought to bear on both,

in some measure hastened his premature and lamented death, which took place on the 12th of September 1828, in the 25th year of his age. The "Analysis of the Shorter Catechism" was left by Mr Paterson in a state of entire preparation for the press, but various circumstances have delayed its publication. It is now presented to the public entirely on account of its intrinsic merit. The manuscript was submitted to several distinguished ministers, who expressed their opinions in terms of the most unqualified approbation. In particular, the Rev. Dr Brewster of Craig described it "as being one of the most beautiful, complete, and accurate expositions of the Shorter Catechism which has ever appeared, unfolding the meaning of the answers to each question, with a clearness and minuteness of detail hitherto unequalled in works of the kind." Another gentleman of great literary experience, stated, that it "had been prepared with such elaborate care, that, after a critical perusal, he could not suggest the addition or diminution of a single word." Strong as these testimonies are, the Publisher confidently anticipates that they will be amply borne out by an examination of the work itself.

The annexed admirable Paper on the History and Arrangement of the Shorter Catechism, by the Rev. Duncan Macfarlan of Renfrew, appeared some time ago in a periodical publication, and is transferred into this volume with the obliging permission of the author.

You can get to this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/shortercatechism.htm>

Hugh MacDiarmid

As most of his work is copyright I am a bit limited on what I can tell you about this important Scottish Poet but here is some information I have gleaned...

Hugh MacDIARMID (C.M. Grieve) was born in Langholm and after war service settled in Montrose as a journalist, with his Scottish Chapbook (1922-23) promoting the Scots language. Scotland's most influential and controversial writer of the 20th century, he urged the regeneration of all aspects of Scottish literature and culture. *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926), with its synthesis of Braid or Lowland Scots and other sources, is generally cited as the masterwork of modern Scottish poetry. In 1928 he was a founding member of the National Party of Scotland. His *Collected Poems* and many volumes of prose have been published over the past decade. *The Watergaw*, from *Sangshaw* (1925), uncannily links the rainbow to the expression on the face of a dying friend.

I did however find that there are quite a few videos of him on YouTube and so took three of them to add to the page.

You can learn more about him at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/macdiarmid.htm>

THE STORY

I've noted over the years how Scots have made their way to various remote places in the world and always seemed to make a great impression on the local people. I thus bring you a story of one such this week...

The White Head Hunter
By Graham Ogilvy

HE RETURNED home to a hero's welcome and fleeting celebrity in the best Orcadian seafaring tradition.

When young Jack Renton arrived back in 19th century Stromness, he had beguiling tales to tell of astonishing adventures in the faraway Pacific.

Renton amazed Victorian society with his account of how he was shanghaied, captured by South Seas head hunters, and - against the odds - survived for eight years in "the most savage place on Earth" before escaping on a slave ship to civilisation.

The spear he brought back with him still has pride of place in an Orkney collection and a gruesome souvenir, a necklace of 64 human teeth, lies in the National Museum of Scotland.

But new research has revealed a grim truth that Renton could not admit and Victorian society did not want to hear: he survived his encounter with the famously brutal tribes of the remote Solomon Islands by taking human heads.

The sanitised picture Renton drew of himself has been destroyed as a result of the oral history of the Solomon Islanders, who today still talk about the white-skinned head hunter who lived in their midst and became a revered warrior.

According to Mike McCoy, an Australian biologist who lived among the modern-day islanders for 26 years: "There is no doubt that Renton became a head hunter. He would have had to for his street credibility. The islanders recall even now what a strong warrior he was."

Renton's story is to be retold in a new book, *The White Head hunter*, by a researcher who spent several years collecting an oral history of the people of Malaita, an island in the Solomon group, east of New Guinea, where the Scotsman arrived as a captive in the

1868.

Like many 19th century Scottish islanders, Renton took to the sea to make his living and he was just 20 when he was shanghai-ed along with four other sailors in San Francisco. Their subsequent decision to escape in an open boat ended in disaster. The men drifted for about 40 days before being cast ashore on a coast shunned by all mariners of the time because of its ferocious headhunting tribes.

Three of his emaciated companions died from the effects of their ocean ordeal but the fourth was clubbed to death by one tribe of Solomon Islands natives. Renton had a stroke of luck, being captured by a rival tribe that had previously held a white man prisoner.

He was taken to their home island of Sulufou, stripped of his clothes and possessions but kept alive by the chief initially for his "novelty value".

When he demonstrated his willingness to go native, while enhancing his value by passing on the net-making, sailing, fishing and gardening skills he had learned as a boy in Orkney, his captors grew to accept him.

It was a process eased by his closeness to the chief of the tribe who eventually adopted him, describing him as his "first born son". He protected Renton from bullying by young warriors until he had mastered the language and he remains revered on the island to this day.

"It is amazing," said McCoy. "The paramount chief has a huge blown-up photographic portrait of Renton in his hut. When I showed people another picture of Renton from the Australian national library, one old woman reached out her hand to touch it and murmured 'Jackie, Jackie.' It was unbelievable and so moving."

But the Orcadian's involvement with his new hosts did not stop at teaching them farming and fishing skills. The tribe, known as the 'salt-water people', lived on a tiny, artificial island built over five centuries ago by resourceful Melanesians to escape the malaria-infested jungles of the principal island of Malaita. They were perpetually at war with the 'bush people', cannibals who inhabited the main island, and Renton frequently took part in head-hunting expeditions.

McCoy said: "Renton was accepted into male society and lived in the men's long house. He apparently killed several people from inland and, by his own admission, took heads. His warrior prowess and closeness to the salt-water people chief, Kabou, led to the bush people putting a bounty on his head. When he went to his favourite spots - one was an idyllic-looking natural swimming pool on the main island - he always had an armed guard to protect him."

Renton became a hero to the Malaitans and helped prepare them for their forthcoming inevitable collision with white 'civilisation'. But after eight years of more or less permanent warfare, tit-for-tat raiding and headhunting, he grasped a rare opportunity for freedom. A 'Blackbirder', one of the dozens of South Seas slave-trading vessels, anchored at a safe distance offshore at Sulufou. Renton persuaded Kabou to allow him to contact the slave ship.

He wrote a poignant message in charcoal on a piece of driftwood that read: "John Renton. Please take me off to England."

The message, written in a childish hand, was taken out to the 'Blackbirder' by islanders and is now in the National Library of Australia.

"Malaitan oral history has it," revealed McCoy, "that Renton was picked up by his uncle, a Captain Mori. In fact, it was a Scottish ship's captain called Murray. He left but promised to return to the island with goods to help the islanders build an easier life."

When he arrived back in Australia he was an instant celebrity and the subject of extensive newspaper coverage.

Throughout his disappearance Renton's father had always believed that young Jack was still alive and had made several attempts to trace him. Young Renton's return to Stromness was triumphant and is still commemorated in the town's museum.

But Renton could not adjust back to the cold northern climate and began longing for the South Seas. He also had a promise to keep and within six months he was back on Sulufou with sheets of iron roofing, axes, hammers, barrels of nails and a grindstone that was used up until the 1960s.

With his language skills, Renton was also hired as part of the Queensland government's campaign to regulate the 'Blackbirders', whose sickening human trade had become the scourge of the South Seas. It was during this period of his life, in 1878, that Renton met the fate he had so carefully tried to avoid. When his ship arrived at Aoba in the New Hebrides, en route to Australia, Renton, aged 30, and a colleague went ashore for fresh water. When they failed to return, a party was sent to investigate. They found the bodies of Renton and his companion - minus their heads.

"When the news got back to Sulufou," said McCoy, "the 'salt water people' were furious. They formed a war party and demanded to be taken to the New Hebrides to wipe out the perpetrators. It was a measure of the esteem that Renton was held in and still is. His name will live forever in the folklore of the Malaitan people."

Having read this you might also enjoy reading the following books....

James Chalmers: Missionary to Cannibals by Christa G. Habegge. His fearlessness won the respect of the cannibals; his compassion, their loyalty and friendship. You can read this book at:

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

John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides in 3 volumes at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/paton_john.htm

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

Alastair