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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 2nd, 2016

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

Watch: Nicola Sturgeon's St Andrew's Day message

The First Minister reached out to the millions of Scots across the world as the country celebrates the day of the patron saint.

View at:
<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/320977/watch-nicola-sturgeons-st-andrews-day-message/>

As St Andrews Day was on the 30th November I suspect most St. Andrews Day Dinners will be held this Saturday so hope you've booked your place and enjoy the event.

We do have a page about St Andrew at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/st_andrew.htm

Dr James Wilkie

A few of us have been discussing goings on in the EU and possible ways forward for Brexit. Here is another email in from Jim which you might find interesting...

Dick - I'm in complete agreement about keeping a close eye on Switzerland, which has more lessons for Scotland than even Norway has. I discussed it with Niall on several occasions, and we were in agreement that the highly individual Swiss political and economic system has much that we could take over with advantage. The Swiss have a remarkable record of survival in the middle of a twisted and tormented Europe over the centuries.

Norway is also a mentor for Scotland in so many ways, due to geographical similarities on the NE Atlantic seaboard. Incidentally, at the Swedish embassy by invitation on Tuesday I had a conversation with the ambassador on the prospects for Scotland joining the Nordic Council. She agreed with me that, from the topographical point of view, Scotland is an unmistakably Scandinavian country and would fit very well into the Nordic political and economic system.

Ronnie - I agree with you that there is trouble ahead for the EU. The Deutsche Bank is apparently near to a meltdown, expected by the end of the year (one of the victims of its ongoing downsizing being the second son of my Habsburg friends), and there is talk of disastrous developments affecting the Euro and the Dollar by about the same time. Nobody seems to be mentioning the Pound sterling these days, which may or may not be a favourable sign. I don't know about the EU's chances of recovery this time. Unfortunately, it is in the hands of an ideological faction, well represented by Juncker, who are determinably pursuing their "great power" world goal and have been taken flat aback by the Brexit developments. I can see the Americans getting a lot of egg on their faces before long.

Alastair - In answer to your query about First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's standing in Europe, she was being taken seriously for a time, but that attention has now vaporised in the echoes of her woolly and rambling goings-on about Scotland in the EU even without

independence. On Monday, at a session on the South Tyrol problem, I sat next to an officer from the Defence Academy who just shook his head slowly with a faint smile when the topic arose. His remarks were approximately: "No way; the woman has no idea what she is talking about." I have been telling the SNP that for years, hence the advice at the end of my Scotland in Europe draft that Scotland will have to use the immediate period of hiatus to mount a forceful programme of education on foreign policy and international diplomacy. I am not holding my breath in anticipation. Nicola is supposed to have graduated in international law, amongst others, but we know what her professor thinks of the result.

Many thanks for taking steps to have someone complete my Education policy draft. This is a core in-depth item on the website, and one that can only be completed by an experienced specialist. We have to find someone with the qualifications, as with so many other policies on our website.

Jim

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our ScotNews feed on our index page where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in newspapers such as the Guardian, Scotsman, Courier, etc. you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish.

Nice news

Your favourite stories from around Scotland

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-38082295>

Shock as Scotland's top US diplomat is ordered home

It is understood the 58-year-old was ordered home earlier this month amid a row over how to promote Scotland in its largest overseas exports market.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/shock-as-scotlands-top-us-diplomat-is-ordered-home-amid-political-turmoil/>

Life Chances

Eight things to know about Scotland's population in 2015

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38143598>

Scotland facing unprecedented £1.3bn public spending cuts

The figures lay bare the scale of the challenge facing finance secretary Derek Mackay as he prepares the first Scottish budget to include new powers over income tax.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scotland-facing-unprecedented-1-3bn-public-spending-cuts-1-4304589>

Centralising Scotland

The new super quango

Read more at:

<http://www.scottishreview.net/BrianWilson104a.html>

Change, or go

Business for Britain's Change, or Go includes the first line-by-line analysis of what defaulting to WTO tariffs would actually mean

Read more at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/changeorgo.htm>

May says Tusk letter justifies expat stance

Britons living around Europe would have been left high and dry if the rights of EU citizens to stay in the UK had been guaranteed, the PM has said.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-38156891>

Jim Mellon - The Coming Collapse of the Euro

Jim Mellon, the renowned British investor and book author, talks to a German group of family office principals about his view of Brexit, the Euro, and related subjects. Private event, filmed exclusively for Master Investor.

View the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgM1u9JJKWA&app=desktop>

Philip Hammond rules out Scottish Brexit deal

The UK Chancellor has appeared to rule out a special Brexit deal for Scotland after saying it was not realistic.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38163052>

Public confidence in SNP's handling of services falls

Humza Yousaf has taken criticism for recent ScotRail disruptions.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/poll-public-confidence-in-snp-s-handling-of-services-falls-1-4306023>

New marmalade gin launched to celebrate Dundee's jam history

A new marmalade-inspired gin is set to be launched this weekend, in ode to Dundee's jam-making history.

Read more at:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/dundee/321545/new-marmalade-gin-launched-to-celebrate-dundeess-jam-history-awaiting-new-pic/>

Some thoughts on Brexit from Ireland

Will Ireland come out of the EU? Read this article from the latest issue of People's News

Read more at:

<http://www.people.ie/news/PN-157.pdf>

Electric Canadian

Chronicles of Canada

Added Volume 7 - The Fighting Governor: A Chronicle of Frontenac

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

Pioneer Days in London, Ontario

Some Account of Men and Things in London before it became a City By Cl. T. Campbell, M.D. (1921) (pdf)

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

Toronto Property Market.

A newsletter from Savannah Johnson which you can read at:

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

Our Alaskan Winter, 1949

"Our Alaskan Winter" is a silent film by Harmon "Bud" Helmericks and Constance Helmericks, circa 1949. The film details the Helmericks' lives as homesteaders in the Brooks Mountain Range of Alaska, and as explorers of northern Alaska and Canada.

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/5135-Our-Alaskan-Winter-1949>

Electric Scotland

The Norway Option

Got an email in from Dr Wilkie to explain how the Norway option would be good for an independent Scotland but likely not so for the UK.

You can read his email and also download the pdf report at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/norwayoption.htm>

Scotland in Europe

I've often quoted this paper as the reason I decided against being a member of the EU. Dr James Wilkie has now updated this paper to reflect the recent political changes.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/scotlandineurope2016.pdf>

History and Genealogy of the Family of Wauchope of Niddrie-Merschell

By James Peterson (1858)

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

Scotch Whisky

Added a BBC 3 part documentary on Scotch Whisky produced in 2016 and you can view this from our Whisky page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/food/whisky.htm>

War Record of 4th Bn Kings Own Scottish Borderers and Lothians and Border Horse

With History of the T.F. Associations of the Counties of Roxburgh, Berwick and Selkirk edited by W. Soley Brown (Lieutenant, 4th Bn. K.O.S.B.) (1920) (pdf)

You can download this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/warrecords.pdf>

Wanderings in the Highlands of Banff and Aberdeen Shires

With Trifles in Verse by J. G. Phillips (1881) (pdf)

You can download this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/council/wanderingsbanff.pdf>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in Section 1 of the December 2016 which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

Walks and Scrambles in the Highlands

By Arthur L. Bagley (1914). Includes a good description of Ben Cruachan in the lands of the MacIntyre's.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/travel/walksandscrambles.pdf>

Ross-ter Newsletter

Doug Ross sent in his newsletter for the year ending November 2016.

You can view this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/ross/Ross-terReport_34.pdf

Making an Upland Farm Pay

The Glenlivet Experiment (1961)

You can read this report at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/agriculture/glenlivetfarm.pdf>

The Story

Pete North Politics Blog

<http://peterjnorth.blogspot.ca/>

This week I was told about this Blog and so I visited it to have a read. One story in particular set me thinking so I thought I'd bring it to you this week.

To halt Putin we must solve our own existential quandary

As a commenter on this blog put it to me just recently, "Putin is a symbol of patriotic anti-liberalism (as in modern lefty-liberalism, not

traditional liberalism). For modern liberals he must be defeated, so that their world view can continue to triumph. This isn't a matter of principle based on Putin's character deficiencies but merely another fight between modern liberalism and conservatism. That is why trying to introduce some rationality into the debate is bound to fall on deaf ears".

There is a lot of truth in that. Putin is a very much a self-styled anti-liberal and the attacks in recent years on LGBT rights are a strong signal to that effect. While it horrifies western liberals, majority-Orthodox countries in Eastern Europe are paying very close attention. There is a battle for the soul of eastern Europe in which the West is cack-handedly imposing social mores and that is why the West is losing.

The first step to sorting out a mess is to realise that you are making a mess and to stop doing those things that make it worse. John R. Schindler, a former National Security Agency analyst and counterintelligence officer, remarks that "if Trump decides to get the State Department out of the business of exporting our sexual mores to countries where they're not wanted, that might cool things down with Moscow somewhat. However, the hard-wired strategic rivalry between the West and Russia will remain, no matter what pleasantries get exchanged between our leaders".

That is exactly as I see it. It is unlikely we are going to reconcile our differences with Russia but we can at least normalise relations and cool down the stalemate. That is the best we can hope to achieve and if it averts a new cold war then it would be a much needed foreign policy win. We are presently at a crossroads where things could go either way.

Schindler notes this week the Iskander-M missiles systems deployed to Kaliningrad, which Moscow has said was merely part of a military exercise, will be staying there permanently. Since those missiles can launch nuclear or conventional warheads as far as 300 miles with stunning accuracy, Russia now holds a powerful military advantage over NATO in the Baltic region.

"Predictably, the Kremlin maintains that moving state-of-the art missiles into Kaliningrad is a response to American ballistic missile defenses which have been deployed in Eastern Europe. As usual, Moscow depicts all its military moves, even ones which are destabilizing to regional security, as cosmically defensive, so great is the Western threat to Russia".

If I recall, the US missiles deployed to Eastern Europe were more at the behest of the US defence industry than at the request of Poland. Russia's pretext is not entirely without justification. But then this very much is a game of chess, where Putin is playing the long game establishing beachheads with a view to annexing former Soviet states. This has already succeeded in Ukraine and there is nothing we can do about it except to take up a firm position of deterrence.

But this is where our own culture war comes into play. Our own liberal establishment, which is imposing unwanted liberal impositions on the popular morality domestically as well as abroad, is losing moral authority. They are very much testing the tolerance of their populations to the limit while at the same time cultivating an authoritarian and illiberal regime where if one has a different opinion you make sure you keep it to yourself.

That in some way explains the spike in what we now call hate crimes in that Brexit and the election of Trump once again allows for open debate and the free expression of politically incorrect opinion. In the west we live under the conceit that we have changed attitudes when in fact all we have done is stifled free speech and buried all opposition to the liberal narrative. Hardly surprising then that we are seeing a backlash.

It is said that Russian propaganda in the West is responsible for turning populations against the establishment - but is in fact merely articulating attitudes that already exist that our state broadcaster will not even debate. So much so that popular politically incorrect BBC comedies from the 1970's have been all but erased and sent down the memory hole. Our own establishment is terrified by mere ideas.

As it happens most people are ok with homosexuality. Most people are tolerant and most people in the end would not wish to see persecution of gays, violent assaults or discrimination in the work place. Where social conservatives draw the line is the fact that gay marriage was effectively brought about by a diktat without debate and we have become so openly "liberal" that if you look at pictures of London Gay Pride marches, we are bordering on normalising sexual deviancy.

For the virtue signalling liberal youth its all jolly good fun and a chance to parade one's right-on credentials but it is in fact a collective gloat in that anyone who thinks it is over the top is no longer even entitled to a public opinion on the subject. Certainly not if they wish to keep their social standing in polite society.

Where I stand on this particular matter is neither here nor there, but in all honesty I am not wholly convinced that homosexuality and bisexuality is occurring genetically as is the established view, and the increased instances we see in the West are a product of an ever more confused culture and could in fact be a Darwinian population stress response in societies where house prices are high and the cost of raising children is prohibitive. There are any number of social factors which have not been properly explored because of a politically correct kosh hanging over academia.

I expect even now this post has raised some eyebrows because what I am saying here is not something presently inside the spectrum political acceptability, and to merely discuss it is a deviation and therefore bigotry. That is where we are at now, where even questioning an orthodoxy out of genuine enquiry is considered impolite and bigoted. As it happens I don't actually care either way but the point is that rather a lot of people do, and if we want a liberal society then we have to change minds through open debate rather than bury ideas.

The socially conservative among us are rightly concerned that we do not end up in the mess America is in where there are dozens of genders, and gender identity issues leading to all manner of psychological illnesses. We first need to know if we are seeing a genuine medical issue or socio-political psychological disorder - for want of better terminology (sounds a bit nazi!). The confusion we are now sowing in young people is leading to depression and suicide and when you look at Caitlyn Jenner, and the fawning cult built up around her, I genuinely wouldn't be surprised if provincial Poles and Ukrainians would rather go back into the Russian sphere than to become the degenerate mess that is now the USA.

Effectively, said with some mirth, we have become godless heathens in no position to be exporting our values. Furthermore the idea that we can export our so-called democratic values is also up for question in that we are increasingly electing either the intellectually subnormal or the criminally insane. The West is in a right old mess and our "democracy" is broken. Perhaps Turkey looking East is symptomatic?

In this, Putin is setting himself up as the defender of Christian values (whatever those are these days) where his authoritarianism is the equal and opposite of our own. Putin is pointing to the West and making a case that we have become so embroiled in our own navel-gazing that we have lost the capacity to adequately respond to existential threats such as Islamism where the inevitable consequence is the massacres in Paris. Correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't Melanie Phillips make that case?

Some observe that the propaganda efforts of Putin are now to sow just enough confusion that there is a tacit mandate for him to pretty much do as he pleases - and if that is the case then it seems to work. The fact Putin is murdering his way through his political opposition and jailing journalists doesn't seem to count for much these days.

It seems to me that the political elites of the West have become so far detached from their own citizenry that the values they export are those imposed on the us rather than judeo-christian values which are probably stronger than anyone still suspects. Through wealth and general slovenliness though we have abandoned faith and given way to a weak secularism that allows any old values to fill the vacuum. We have no answers.

Now at this point, if you're thinking this post is a load of rambling introspection, then you're absolutely right. (You may have another word for it). The purpose of this post is to explore how some of these issues interrelate. If the West wants to make a principled defence of liberty in the face of Russian illiberalism and aggression then Western leaders need to get back in touch with their peoples and we need a no holds barred debate about all of the politically correct assumptions we have been living under for the last three decades. Just how liberal are we really?

As much as Putin is able to exploit our military disarray he is able to exploit the West's own existential funk. This is why to my mind the weakening of the EU could not have come sooner. The Commission is no longer able to act as a rogue non-state actor and it is now only one voice among many now that Brexit has emboldened Poland, Romania and Hungary to speak up in their own names.

The decision as to whether we stand up to Putin in all things has to be one taken by common agreement rather than it being the geo-political DNA of a dysfunctional and dying supranational project. In this I believe there is common ground to be found with Russia that the European Commission could never find. There may be a way to pause the escalation and there may be a way forward where our allies do not have to choose between the dead hand of Russian authoritarianism and the death spiral of the West.

It seems to me that we have few remaining chances to dissuade Russia from further destabilising Europe. To my mind that means cutting our losses where we have already failed but reinforcing our deterrent to ensure that state of hard-wired rivalry does not spiral into something that we will all live to regret. The election of Trump is a sign that America can meet Russia half way now that hyper-liberalism is dead. There may even be a way for UK to broker a new settlement. Whatever that looks like - it looks a lot better than war.

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

Alastair