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WHATS NEW

## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 23rd, 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

Electric Scotland's Christmas Page  
Have set up our annual Christmas page which you can get to at:  
<http://www.electricscotland.com/index98.htm>

#### News sources and ISP

It's increasingly difficult to get hard facts from the newspapers and many of us have taken to reading blog posts. The only problem with this is that there is a tendency to only read posts that you agree with. I believe it is very important that you read at least one blog where there are counter views to your own.

For example I used to read only the western press and then I also discovered Sputnik which gives news and views from a Russian perspective. By reading this service I have learned how Russia is ramping up their presence in the Arctic and building new ice breakers. As it happened I watched a documentary on the BBC where it was following the US Icebreaker which was very old and breaking down. I know also that Canada really doesn't have much of a presence there either. So to my mind it looks like the US and Canada need to step up their efforts there.

I have also taken to reading top news stories from other countries to see their perspective on matters. It is through reading those that I discovered general discontent with the EU.

I now read the Chokka Blog from Kevin Hague who to my mind is doing an outstanding job in explaining Scotland's finances. He is quite scathing of the last Scottish Budget and explains that he believes the SNP are trying to hide information from the Scottish public and explains in great detail why he thinks so.

Right now I am starting to look for other sources of good factual information on various other matters pertaining to Scotland.

All of that said I am thinking of starting a new political party (just pretend that is) which I might call the Innovative Scotland Party (ISP).

My thinking is that over time I'd present articles on all aspects of the Scottish economy where I think Innovative thinking could make Scotland a better place to work and live.

I mean let's be honest here... what has the devolved government in Scotland actually done for Scotland? If you are honest you can see we have the largest debt to GDP ratio of all countries in the EU. Our education system is failing our children with our standards in steady decline. Our NHS is lacking investment and again standards are in decline. Our Justice system and police service are just not performing and costing us a lot more money. We seem to lack a decent Energy policy and when was the last time you saw any innovative thinking from any of the Scottish governments? In other words Labour, Lib Dems, and the SNP have not served Scotland well at all. I only exclude the Tory party because they have never been in power in Scotland since devolution.

I'd like to consider a new political system where all MSP's are Independent. They must serve their constituents first and if they don't then we should be open to finding a way to remove them before their 5 year term in up. I also wonder if we might follow the US presidential model in that MSP's can only serve a total of 10 years maximum.

I say this due to the SNP telling their MSP's to vote to remain but then we have found out several actually voted to leave while others only voted to remain to hold the party line.

You must have read or viewed content to do with food waste which is now in the billions. There must surely be something we can do about this? Then we learn that obesity is costing our health service a small fortune and again surely there are ways of tackling this and thus saving hundreds of millions for the health service. This could then be put to better use by hiring more doctors and nurses and at the same time giving them more time to actually interact with their patients. Over medication is a real cost and so taking more time to talk to our patients perhaps we can find better ways to treat them and thus reducing our costs. These are just a couple of items we could look at.

How about a completely new banking system and one where we could produce our own credit card that would have a much lower interest rate? We could explore all kinds of options but we would need people with real knowledge and expertise to come up with ideas. Nothing should be ruled out.

I would be open to suggestions on how we might go forward on this and perhaps out of it we might find a better way forward. And I might add that I certainly don't rule out being an Independent country.

So what do you think of this idea and do you are someone you know help with this project?

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

A roundup of the week's good news from around Scotland

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-38340607>

American tourist's 25 observations of Scotland

Chris DeBaun's fascinating reflections of his holiday to Scotland reveals how others see us and not all of it is entirely complimentary

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/american-tourist-s-25-observations-of-scotland-1-4231632>

Spinning the Scottish Budget

I haven't had time for more than a cursory look at this and am indebted to the ever-diligent Fraser Whyte for pointing out this latest example of presentational spin by the Scottish Government

Read more at:

<http://chokkablog.blogspot.ca/2016/12/spinning-scottish-budget.html>

James Skinner: Canada sees our post-Brexit potential and so should we

The Canadian Government's optimism and confidence in our nation is something to be acknowledged

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/james-skinner-canada-sees-post-brexit-potential/>

Australia offers to help the UK all it can after Brexit

The great opportunities of Brexit have been championed by the Australian High Commissioner to the UK Alexander Downer.

Read more at:

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/744712/brexit-uk-australia-alexander-downer-bbc-sunday-politics-eu-european-union>

Britain will be front of the queue for trade deal with US

Donald Trump's commerce secretary has made securing a free trade deal between the US and Britain one of his top priorities

Read more at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/17/exclusive-britain-will-front-queue-trade-deal-us-donald-trumps/>

Britain has struck new trade links with South Korea

A string of deals are expected to flow from the first major deal secured by International Trade Secretary Liam Fox

Read more at:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2424427/international-trade-secretary-liam-fox-strikes-new-trade-deals-with-south-korea-leading-to-post-brexit-jobs-and-exports-boost/>

Scots income tax

Challenges over Administering the new Scottish rate of income tax when it comes into force next year will present significant challenges, a watchdog has warned

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38369882>

Fishing does not need single market

The UK's fishing industry does not need the European single market to thrive, Scottish fishermen have told MPs.

Read more at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/dec/19/uk-should-not-fear-trade-tariffs-post-brexit-says-fishing-chief>

Fifth of Scots struggling on pay below real living wage

The number of Scots struggling to get by on low pay is on the rise prompting fresh calls for the Scottish Government to get to grips with poverty among people in work.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/fifth-of-scots-struggling-on-pay-below-real-living-wage-1-4320841>

A dozen of BrexitCentral's Greatest Hits

20th December marks 100 days of BrexitCentral! Aside from providing a comprehensive summary of each day's Brexit-related news

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/dozen-brexitcentrals-greatest-hits-first-100-days/>

Scottish government's post-Brexit plan

Here is a summary of the 49-page long Scotland's Place in Europe paper.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38379916>

The plight of the fishermen

Photographer Joanne Coates has for three years been recording the lives of those working in the fishing industry in Scotland

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-38249308>

Theresa May pours cold water on hopes for Scots Brexit deal

Prime Minister Theresa May has played down the prospects of Scotland obtaining a separate Brexit deal from the rest of the UK.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/uk/theresa-may-pours-cold-water-on-hopes-for-scots-brexit-deal-1-4322276>

How a US-UK free trade deal could revolutionise world trade

By Iain Murray is vice president of strategy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington DC.

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/iain-murray-us-uk-free-trade-deal-revolutionise-world-trade/>

Figures showing rise in child poverty branded a scandal  
A new report shows there has been a rise in child poverty across Scotland

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/figures-showing-rise-in-child-poverty-branded-a-scandal-1-4323451>

Spain quick to reject Nicola Sturgeon's plan for bespoke Scottish Brexit  
Nicola Sturgeon's grand plan to keep Scotland in the EU single market after Brexit has been flatly rejected by Spain.

Read more at:

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/uk-regions/scotland/news/81919/spain-quick-reject-nicola-sturgeons-plan-bespoke-scottish>

Impact of UK Austerity on Scotland's 2017-18 Budget  
I've taken the time to study the actual figures in some detail, and it's clear that attempting to blame UK Government austerity for cuts in Scotland's 2017-18 budget is nothing short of blatant deception.

Read more at:

<http://chokkablog.blogspot.ca/2016/12/impact-of-uk-austerity-on-scotlands.html>

Fisheries management is coming home!  
Brexit changes everything!

Read more at:

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read\\_full=12986](http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read_full=12986)

Where now for Scottish Education?

By Keir Bloomer

Read more at:

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read\\_full=12987&](http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read_full=12987&)

## Electric Canadian

Food waste: How much food do supermarkets throw away? (CBC Marketplace)  
David Common goes dumpster-diving at Walmart to reveal how big grocery stores throw good food into dumpsters, part of a \$31 billion a year problem in Canada.

Read more at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLqkV8cP4xs>

On The Road In Canada - First Nations

I watched the BBC Hardtalk show this Wednesday where they were looking at how so many thousands of First Nations people have committed suicide and have gone missing.

You can see some clips of this episode at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3ct0c4g>

As a new Canadian myself I tried to find out more about the First Nations people but I have to say that none of the ones I've tried to approach are willing to provide any background. There is a perception here that the First Nations people take advantage of the system to get hand outs from the Canadian Government but use the money for drink and drugs.

I think what is needed is total transparency about how a First Nations Tribe is run in great detail. We need to understand the problems in far greater detail so that we can come up with solutions.

Chronicles of Canada

Added Volume 10 The Passing of New France: A Chronicle of Montcalm

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/chronicles/chronicles10a.pdf>

Missionary History of the Pacific Northwest

Containing the Wonderful Story of Jason Lee with Sketches of Many of His Co-laborers and Illustrating the Life of the Plains and in

the Hountains in Pioneer Days by H. K. Hines, D. D.

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/missionaryhistory.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

Thirty Years of Broughton Place Church  
Published in 1914 and have added this to our Religion section.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/Broughton.pdf>

The Gordons and Smiths at Minmore, Auchorachan and Upper Drumin in Glenlivet  
By John Malcolm Bulloch (1910) (pdf) which I've added to our Gordon page at:  
<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/dtog/gordon.html>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree  
Got in section 1 of the January 2017 issue.

You can read this issue at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

The Scotch Society in the American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century  
By Rev. Hnry . Sefton, B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/scotchociety.pdf>

Dissertation on Heirs Male  
When used as a clause of Remainder in Grant of Scotch Perages with some Incidental Discussions by Alexander Sinclair (1837)

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/Dissertation.pdf>

The Highlands and Highlanders of Scotland  
By James Cromb (1888)

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/highlandsandhighlanders.pdf>

Clan Leslie Society of New Zealand & Australia  
Got in their Christmas 2016 newsletter which you can read at:  
<http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm>

Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing in the River Tweed  
By Wiliam Scrope (1885)

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

## The Story

While this is a children's story I'm sure many adults will enjoy it as well...

Fraser, the Christmas Dragon

Fraser lived in a huge, but very dark and damp cave, way up in the northeastern part of Scotland. His dark purple scales kept him warm most of the time, but when the snow fell in the heart of winter, he would often get so cold that he would shiver. To make matters worse, Fraser didn't have any friends. None of the other animals in Thistleberry Glen wanted to be friends with a dragon.

Fraser spent most of his days cooking and baking. This helped keep his cave a bit warmer. He was quite a good cook too. He made the best caramel shortbread in the whole glen. On days when he went down to the river for a drink, if he was lucky enough to see a fish or two, he'd catch them with his sharp claws, take them back to the cave, and make fishcakes. He'd add a little onion and mashed potatoes and fry them up to perfection.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, Fraser spent the whole day baking Christmas sweeties. He made tablet and fudge, dumplings and cakes, pastries and biscuits. "It's almost Christmas Day. I'll bet some of the other animals in Thistleberry Glen would enjoy a few Christmas

sweets," he smiled. He divided them into five portions, wrapped them in red and green striped paper and tied a big golden ribbon around them. As soon as the sun set below the heather-covered hills, Fraser put the packages in a big brown bag and headed into the woods. "This will make their Christmas brighter," Fraser giggled. Even though none of the animals ever spoke to him, he enjoyed being nice to everyone.

"Aha, there's Carly, the highland cow," he whispered. She was sleeping. Her long, shaggy, reddish-brown hair hung to the ground and was touching the snow. Her eyes were shut and she was snoring! Fraser, being such a big dragon, had to be careful that his sharp horns didn't bump into the tree branches. He had to watch out for his long, pointed tail too. Sometimes it knocked over bushes or bumped into rocks. Silently he approached. He opened his big brown bag and took out one of the packages. He hung it carefully on Carly's long, handlebar horn. He giggled with joy as he snuck back into the woods. "Hee, hee, hee. She'll be surprised when she wakes up!"

A few minutes later he spotted Siobhan, the highland sheep. She was standing in a meadow filled with wildflowers. Her thick fleecy wool looked nearly black in the evening sky. "I'll set the package on her wool. It's so thick that she'll never even feel it," he chuckled. He crept towards her, taking her package out of his big brown bag. Very carefully, he put it down on her wool and then snuck back into the woods. "Hee, hee, hee. She'll love all the sweets!"

Rabbie, the raccoon, was snoozing in one of the ancient oak trees. The dragon nearly bumped into a branch with his horns! "Whew, that was close," he frowned. "I'd have woken him up and then it wouldn't have been a surprise." He took Rabbie's package out of his big brown bag and put it in a hole in the trunk of the tree, near Rabbie's paw. "Hee, hee, hee. When he wakes up, he'll see his sweets right away." He tiptoed quietly into the woods, giggling the whole time.

Harry, the hedgehog, was curled up in a ball under a bush. The sharp claws on Fraser's huge feet nearly crunched him as he walked through the woods. "Oops! I almost didn't see Harry sleeping down there." He bent over and heard Harry snoring. "Hee, hee, hee. I'll just set the package down right here in the bush and when he wakes up, he'll see his sweets." Fraser took the package out of his big brown bag, put it down in the bush and then crept away.

He had one more package in his big brown bag and went walking through Thistleberry Glen, looking for Gillian, the grouse. Gillian was in her nest, curled up. Her brown and black feathers were tucked away nicely under her body to keep her warm. She heard the noise of snapping twigs and opened her eyes. Coming towards her was a huge, black shape. "What's that?" she gulped. Just then she saw that it was Fraser. "Och, no! It's the purple dragon that lives in the cave? Is he coming to eat me? What should I do?" she whimpered softly. She was too afraid to move, in case the dragon saw her. She sat frozen with fear in her nest as Fraser came closer and closer. She saw him take something out of a bag. "What's he doing?" she mumbled. His big hand with sharp claws moved towards her. "He's going to smash me and rip me to shreds with his claws!" she sobbed, but was surprised when Fraser put a lovely package down on the ground next to her nest. He was giggling and tiptoed away. "What was that all about?" she wondered.

She climbed out of her nest and picked up the package. She took a sniff of it. "That smells lovely," she said. Gillian pulled the ribbon and took the wrapping off. "Why, the big dragon has made me some sweets." She read the tag that was attached to the package. 'Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas! Here are some sweets from your secret friend!' "Well, isn't that nice of him. Maybe he's not such a bad, scary dragon after all.

Fraser crept back to his cave and curled up in the corner. Water dripped from the ceiling and he shivered all night long.

The next morning, Gillian flew around Thistleberry Glen. She saw Carly, Siobhan, Rabbie and Harry standing talking. She flew down and landed next to them. "What's going on here?" she asked.

Carly moaned, "In the middle of the night, someone delivered a package of sweets to each of us. We don't know who it was!"

Gillian smiled. "I know who it was!"

Siobhan went baa. "Tell us. Who would do such a nice thing? I've never tasted such delicious tablet, shortbread and pastries before."

"It was Fraser, the big purple dragon that lives in the cave. I saw him myself," Gillian answered.

"Fraser? That clumsy dragon?" Harry squealed.

"Surely you're mistaken," Rabbie added.

"No, I saw him. He left me a package too. I think we should do something nice for him. I imagine he must get chilly in that damp cave," the grouse said.

"I've got a splendid idea," Siobhan said. "Let's use my wool. It's nice and thick and warm, and we'll make him a blanket. You can all

knit, can't you?" she asked the others.

They all nodded. They spent the day plucking wool from Siobhan's back and knitting. When they were done, they sewed each strip together. "That's lovely," Carly said, looking at the finished blanket. "It will keep him warm all winter long."

Rabbie wrapped it in some beautiful silver and gold paper. Harry tied a golden ribbon around it. "Let's get him a tree too," Harry said. "I'll make the decorations if you'll find the tree."

Carly and Siobhan found a wee pine tree. Harry and Rabbie hung nuts and rowan berries on it. Gillian used some of her feathers to decorate it. "That's lovely," she said as the finishing touches were added. On Christmas Eve, after the sun went down, the five animals carried the tree and the wrapped blanket and set them down outside of Fraser's cave.

Christmas morning came around. Fraser was feeling rather sad. His fingers were cold and his claws were almost frozen like icicles. His horns had frost on them and he couldn't feel his tail, which had been lying on the ground. He stood up and rubbed his arms and went outside. "What's this?" he gasped. He picked up the package. "It's a Christmas present," he laughed. He opened it up. "Oh, a lovely woolen blanket. Who made this?" he wondered. He looked at the tree. "Rowan berries, nuts and feathers. How pretty! It's the best Christmas tree I've ever had!"

He went back inside and turned on his oven and started to make himself a Christmas meal. As he was chopping the leeks, he heard a noise coming from the entrance to his cave. "Can we come in?" Carly asked.

Fraser was surprised. He had guests on Christmas Day! "Come in, all of you. I'm about to fix supper. Would you like to stay?" he asked.

Carly, Siobhan, Rabbie, Harry and Gillian spent the rest of the day in the cave with Fraser, nibbling on his leeks and potatoes, haggis, sausages, bacon, sweets of every sort imaginable, bannocks, raisins and boiled eggs. "This is the best Christmas I've ever had," he sighed, happily. "Thank you for the blanket. There'll be no more cold nights for me now." He noticed that Siobhan didn't have as much wool as usual and smiled at her. "Merry Christmas to you all," he shouted.

"Merry Christmas to you too, Fraser," they replied.

From then on, the other animals in Thistleberry Glen stopped by Fraser's cave for tea and caramel shortbread whenever they were nearby and even invited the dragon to their houses, even though he was too big to fit inside.

More Christmas stories can be read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/stories/xmas.htm>

And that's it for this week and wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Alastair