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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 30th, 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

I hope you all enjoyed your Christmas and now looking forward to the New Year.

I was looking at the updates on the SDA web site and found this article...

Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP Criticised by eminent Law Professor

Nicola Sturgeon's former law lecturer has said the 'obedient adulation' of her MSPs has contributed to Scottish Legislation being among the worst in Europe. Alistair Bonnington, a former honorary law professor at Glasgow, launched a stinging attack on the SNP hierarchy's grip on their members, as well as their failure to grasp the basics of constitutional law. He said SNP MSPs "slavishly" followed orders, meaning government bills were "afforded obedient adulation, no matter how flawed". And he added: "This results in Scotland producing the lowest quality legislation in Europe". Mr Bonnington, who taught Ms Surgeon in Glasgow, also argued that the Government had encroached on the independence of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. He added: "I seem to have failed to install in her (Sturgeon) the most basic rules of how institutions of government work in the free world"

The statement by Ms Sturgeon's former law lecturer, surely explains why the SNP Government blindly pressed ahead with the introduction of the "Named Person Legislation", widely condemn by all sectors of Scottish society as having the real potential to undermine parents, and allow the state unlimited access to pry into the privacy of families in their homes. Also, the SNP hierarchy's grip on their members, explains the slavish obedience, by the majority of those members and supporters, to the SNP's decision to support the REMAIN campaign in the recent EU referendum, which is undoubtedly the main reason why 62% of the Scottish electorate voted to remain in the EU, while the UK as a whole voted to leave.

SIP

I've made a start at the SIP (Scottish Innovation Party) section. As I mentioned last week I'm trying to demonstrate the problems that we have in Scotland and using videos trying to clarify the situation and then add comments to illustrate the things we might consider to fix those problem. This week I've started on the Health of Scotland which is a devolved responsibility of the Scottish Government.

Within the Health section I have an article about the Amma Canteens. As it happens the story this week is how during WWI the UK also had their own public canteen system.

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

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.

MSPs demand action after catalogue of errors over CAP

The Scottish Parliament's public audit and post legislative scrutiny committee has written to the Scottish Government to state its frustration at the catalogue of errors with the CAP Futures programme.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/business/companies/farming/msps-demand-action-after-catalogue-of-errors-over-cap-1-4324462>

It's no surprise Spain has already blocked Nicola Sturgeon's half-baked Brexit plan

It should come as no surprise that the Spanish government has so swiftly rejected Nicola Sturgeon's proposal of a bespoke Brexit deal for Scotland.

Read more at:

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/12/no-surprise-spain-already-blocked-nicola-sturgeons-half-baked-brexit-plan/>

A Harry Potter fan's guide to Scotland

With stunning Highland landscapes and historic cities, even mere muggles can see how magical Scotland is.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/film/a-harry-potter-fan-s-guide-to-scotland-1-4325416>

Scots tycoon warns indyref2 foolhardy

Sir Tom Hunter has warned that Brexit uncertainty would mean a second indyref would be foolhardy

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scots-tycoon-warns-indyref2-foolhardy-amid-brexit-uncertainty-1-4324805>

Queen's Christmas message

Small acts of goodness inspire

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-38427380>

Lord King says Brexit brings real opportunities

Lord King, the former governor of the Bank of England, has said that the UK should be self-confident about leaving the European Union.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-38421769>

Scottish curling: life on the ice for almost 500 years

Every winter, it is hoped this will be the year for a frost so hard it will allow curling to return to its natural home on Scotland's lochs and ponds.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/scottish-curling-life-on-the-ice-for-almost-500-years-1-4325801>

Reforms damaging pupils potential and demotivating teachers

The reforms imposed on Scotland's education system is demotivating teachers and preventing pupils from achieving their academic potential

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/education/reforms-damaging-pupils-potential-and-demotivating-teachers-1-4326717>

Clean Brexit could boost UK economy by £24bn a year

Change Britain claimed a clean Brexit would benefit the UK economy by 24 billion pounds a year.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/clean-brexit-could-boost-uk-economy-by-24bn-a-year-1-4326216>

Remembering lost tradition of Hogmanay Boys

With Hogmanay looming, DJ MacIntyre, Gaelic officer at the University of the Highlands and Islands, highlights a tradition once popular on South Uist

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-38377402>

Hidden Glasgow Central platform to be re-opened after 50 years

A derelict platform in the bowels of Scotland's busiest station is to be restored to its heyday a century ago to enhance popular behind-the-scenes tours of the complex.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/hidden-glasgow-central-platform-to-be-re-opened-after-50-years-1-4327355>

Review of the Year 2016: a political year like no other

It was the year which saw Brexit, the departure of David Cameron as Prime Minister, the election of Donald Trump as US President and the SNP launch a consultation on a second Scottish independence referendum.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/review-of-the-year-2016-a-political-year-like-no-other-1-4327658>

Electric Canadian

Chronicles of Canada

Added Volume 11 The Wining of Canada: A Chronicle of Wolfe

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

Am Bràighe

Am Bràighe (the higher ground) was a Scottish Gaelic cultural newspaper that was headquartered in Mabou, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. Approximately one-fourth of the articles were in Scottish Gaelic and the remainder in English.

Copies can be read at: <http://collections.stfx.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/AmBraighe>

Cape Breton Magazine

Here are all of the 74 issues of Cape Breton's Magazine which you can read at:

<http://www.capebretonsmagazine.com/>

Electric Scotland

The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland

From A.D. 1403 to A..D. 1621, with a brief Introductory Sketch by Donald Gregory, Second Edition (1881)

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/council/historyofwesternisles.pdf>

US Flag Constellation Origins

By Gary Gianotti FSA Scot

You can read this article at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/USFLAG-BONNIE_TARGE.pdf

Letters of Dr John Brown

With Letters from Ruskin, Thackery and Others, Edited by his son and D. W. Forrest, D.D. and with biographical Introductions by Elizabeth T. M'Laren (1907)

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

The Otago Witness

Local newspaper from Otago in New Zealand from 1851 to 1915.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz/early/otago.htm>

New Zealand Journal

Added Volume 3 1842 and Volume 4 1843 to the end of our New Zealand page at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz>

The History of the Scottish Society of Indianapolis (1983-2016)
By Carson C. Smith, FSA Scot

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/indianapolis/>

Scottish Innovation Party

My launch of this section of the site where I am going to present innovative thinking on how we might improve our lives in Scotland by saving money and doing things better. My first subject is to do with our Health.

You can view this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/index.htm>

Otakou

Early Days In and About Otago Harbour by Hannah M. Chapman-Cohen.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz/otago4.pdf>

The Story

This story fits very well with the article I put up under the SIP section on the Amma canteens.

How We Lived Then

A sketch of Social and Domestic Life 1914-1918 by Mrs C. S. Peel, O.B.E.

Public canteens were set up to feed people during World War One - and they proved hugely popular. Could today's food banks learn from them, asks Adam Forrest.

A bowl of soup, a joint of meat and a portion of side vegetables cost 6d - just over £1 in today's money. Puddings, scones and cakes could be bought for as little as 1d (about 18p).

These self-service restaurants, run by local workers and partly funded by government grants, offered simple meals at subsidised prices.

In 1917, ministers in Lloyd George's government had agonised over the best way of combating hunger while Germany's U-boats disrupted Britain's food supply.

The government was keen to avoid the stigma of poverty associated with soup kitchen hand-outs, but also wanted to utilise the volunteer-run community kitchens springing up in working class communities to help deal with food shortages.

A popular fix was found - a network of public cafeteria known as "national kitchens".

The Ministry of Food instructed that the kitchens "must not resemble a soup kitchen for poorest section of society". They should feel like places "ordinary people in ordinary circumstances" could sit down together at long canteen tables for a cheap meal.

Now there are efforts to bring them back. Bryce Evans, a senior lecturer at Liverpool Hope University, has researched the WW1 kitchens and believes there are parallels with today's food banks.

"Some of the bigger kitchens were feeding up to 2,000 people a day, and the efficiency really helped cut down on waste," he says.

"Great efforts were made to make sure they were attractive places run along business lines and avoided the taint of charity. It encouraged middle-class professionals like clerks and office workers to come in and sit alongside working class families."

It was an egalitarian approach to meeting people's needs, which I think we can learn from today."

Bryce Evans, Liverpool Hope University

Evans's new research, funded by the Wellcome Trust, shows how the government's national kitchen programme grew out of grassroots community kitchens run by charities and trade unionists.

The Ministry of Food seized on their potential for efficiency. Wholesale purchasing and the collective preparation of food, they

reasoned, would help cut out waste.

So local authorities were urged to open up public cafeterias wherever possible. If an outlet followed Ministry of Food guidelines, the local authority received a Whitehall grant covering half the costs.

In May 1917, Queen Mary opened the first government-backed national kitchen on Westminster Bridge Road in London. By the end of 1917, national kitchens were popping up in almost every British town and city.

A 1918 Scarborough Post story about a national kitchen in Hull emphasised the ambition of the typical urban outlet: "The place has the appearance of being a prosperous confectionery and cafe business. The business done is enormous."

The Ministry of Food handbook criticised the "appalling ignorance" of British people when it came to preparing food, advising that more vegetables should be introduced to the diet through national kitchen menus.

The handbook also advised that each kitchen "bow to prejudice" by offering meat dishes. Gravy was to be made the "British way", by using juices and fat from the meat. The ministry also recommended any kitchens in rural settings like village halls should have food which could be "taken into the field", like Cornish pasties.

At the height of their popularity in 1918, 363 national kitchens were doing business across the country. Wartime civil servants at the Ministry of Food eagerly discussed whether national kitchens might become a "permanent national institution".

Yet the bold experiment was not to last.

The restaurant trade was not happy at the threat to private enterprise. The introduction of full rationing toward the end of the war apportioned food to each individual, damping demand for communal eating. And after the war ended, local authorities were reluctant to help fund kitchens any longer.

Within six months of Armistice Day, 120 of the kitchens had closed.

Evans believes the national kitchen movement has been too easily dismissed as merely an emergency expansion of dingy soup kitchens.

"The national kitchens were a great example of government supporting and building upon good work going on at the grassroots," he reflects.

"They were also an admirable attempt to bring people together. It wasn't a service only for the very poorest - it was an egalitarian approach to meeting people's needs, which I think we can learn from today."

Inspired by the past, the historian has now set up his own project in Liverpool called Manna Community Kitchen. Manna volunteers visit housing associations and other community spaces in the city to create a pop-up lunchtime cafe.

Meals at Manna are made using surplus food. Soups and "scouses" (a local lamb or beef stew) are sold for 50p, and people from all walks of life are encouraged to take recipes home, or even help with the cooking.

Turning back to communal kitchens, it would be extremely difficult to avoid the stigma of it feeling like a service for the poor.

Evans thinks community kitchens like Manna might act as an alternative to food bank hand-outs, which are used by a rising number of people.

The Trussell Trust network has grown to 445 food banks, and the charity's most recent annual figures also show a 19% year-on-year increase in food bank use. Around 500,000 different people are thought to have received help over a 12-month period.

According to the charity, the most common reason for food bank use has been benefit payment delays and sanctions. But more than a fifth of food bank users - 22% - were referred because of low incomes, including people in low-paid, zero-hours or part-time work.

Most of the food banks run by the Trussell Trust charity only have the storage facilities to hand out non-perishable items like pasta, cereal and cans, though a small number do offer fresh fruit and vegetables too.

Evans hopes community cafes might inspire food banks to rethink how they currently operate.

"There are some wonderful people who give up their time to volunteer at food banks," he says. "But I think simply handing over plastic bags of tinned and dried goods is a very limited approach. It's a wasted opportunity to do more with the huge amount of fresh

food being wasted."

"I think food banks need to evolve into places with kitchens for people to cook fresh food and social spaces for people to eat together. We can do better."

Yet not everyone agrees the seeds of a new communal dining movement lie in the home front hardship of the WW1.

"Turning back to communal kitchens, it would be extremely difficult to avoid the stigma of it feeling like a service for the poor," says Martin Caraher, professor of food and health policy at Centre for Food Policy at City University.

"If they build up quite organically from a community choosing to set it up, perhaps the stigma can be overcome. But if it feels anything remotely like charity or state provision, people will feel like they're going cap in hand."

Evans argues community kitchens could also help address the nation's poor diet. At a time of rising obesity rates, he thinks it would be useful to have local authorities helping subsidise cheap cafes which only have healthy food on the menu.

"I'd like to see supermarkets get involved too by donating fresh produce," he explains.

"Community kitchens, by providing cheap and healthy meals, could really help improve nutrition."

"I would love to see community kitchens blossom," adds the historian. "We have a history of egalitarian eating. Why couldn't we do it again?"

Download the book How We Lived Then in pdf format at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/howwelivedthen.pdf>

And that's it for this week and wish you all a Happy New Year and if you need the words for Auld Lang Syne you can find them at

<http://www.electricscotland.com/burns/langsyne.html>

Alastair