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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for July 14th, 2017

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

Over the past couple of years I'd tried to contact Neil Fraser but my emails to him didn't get replied to. I was contacted by a friend as he also was trying to contact his wife Marie who is a genealogist for the Clan Fraser. He sent me their address and asked if I might try to contact them.

Long story short but I eventually found that Neil had died in March this year in BC and so guess they must have moved there from their Toronto home.

I remember when I came to Canada both Neil and Marie took me out for lunch at the RCMI in Toronto and I met them quite regularly at the various Scottish Studies events in Toronto and Guelph.

Both had contributed articles to the site and you can see a page about them at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/canada/fraser_neil.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.

Texan's bid to save ancient castle on Loch Lomond island

A 16th Century castle on a tiny island in Loch Lomond is to be preserved following a Texan's 20-year project to protect the remains of his clan's ancient seat.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/texan-s-bid-to-save-ancient-castle-on-loch-lomond-island-1-4496970>

The International Civil Service Effectiveness (InCISE) Index 2017

Canada, New Zealand and Australia top a brand-new index that ranks countries according to their civil service effectiveness.

Read more at:

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/international-civil-service-effectiveness-incise-index-2017>

Five things to know about a customs union

As politicians debate what sort of Brexit we want, Alex Stojanovic says there is still a lot of confusion on the key concepts of a customs union.

Read more at:

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/five-things-know-about-customs-union>

Worldwide sales of British cheeses up 29% as exports rise

Exports of cheese from Britain have increased in the first three months of the year with worldwide sales up 29% to almost £143 million.

Read more at:

https://www.farminguk.com/news/Worldwide-sales-of-British-cheeses-up-29-as-exports-rise_46883.html

Scottish Government accused of meddling with Audit Scotland report

The Scottish Government has been accused of control freakery after it emerged senior civil servants attempted to water down a critical report on the NHS produced by Scotland's public spending watchdog.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-government-accused-of-meddling-with-audit-scotland-report-1-4497956>

World's first whisky-powered car makes debut trip

Scottish scientists developed a way to turn leftover residue from the distillation process into fuel that can be used in any petrol or diesel car.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-40538081/world-s-first-whisky-powered-car-makes-debut-trip>

Highlands peninsula marked for spaceport

Rockets streaking over the skies of north Scotland could be a familiar sight after US aerospace giant Lockheed Martin confirmed plans for a launch base near Tongue.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/regions/inverness-highlands-islands/remote-highland-peninsula-earmarked-for-satellite-launchpad-1-4498984>

Will circular runways ever take off?

Could circular runways be the future of air travel? Video journalist Dougal Shaw went to meet aviation expert Henk Hesselink of the Netherlands Aerospace Centre.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/magazine-39284294/think-again-will-circular-runways-ever-take-off>

Meet the Guides encouraging girls into science and tech

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is updating its image with a number of new achievement badges aimed at encouraging young women into science and technology.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-40506620>

Scottish unemployment rate hits 25-year low

The jobless rate fell to 3.8% in the period March to May, having stood at 4.5% in the previous quarter.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-40568413>

PR outfit Beattie targets Canada with new joint venture

Communications consultancy Beattie today said it was creating a springboard for global growth by forming a new company alongside Canada's Tartan Group.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/business/companies/media-leisure/pr-outfit-beattie-targets-canada-with-new-joint-venture-1-4501382>

Scotland's tiny terracotta tartan army

A tiny terracotta army has been created in a community project in the Highlands.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-40580301>

Scotland's oldest book on display at Edinburgh Book Festival

It is almost 1,000 years old and illustrated in vivid reds, green, purple and gold.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/scotland-s-oldest-book-on-display-at-edinburgh-book-festival-1-4498077>

It's time to rethink foreign aid

There are also problems with aid delivery and the negative impact of foreign aid on the spread of democracy.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/its-time-to-rethink-foreign-aid/>

Electric Canadian

What is Canada really good at?

Canada is a country with a relatively small population of just about 36 million people, but its citizens have still been busy inventing, innovating and entertaining.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40510614>

Zorra Boys at Home and Abroad

by Rev. W. A. MacKay

We already have up his book about Zorra so when I spotted this book I figured I had to get it to add to his page.

Three of them are to-day millionaires, or within sight of that coveted goal; three are senators in the United States; two are presidents of colleges, one in England and one in the United States; one is a professor in an American college and one in a Canadian college; another was appointed to a professor's chair but death intervened; one was a member of the Dominion Parliament, and after him, a second; and on his death, a third was elected, and he is to-day a member of the Dominion Cabinet; one is at the head of the largest departmental store in the world; one is a liberal patron of the fine arts; one is the most famous missionary in the world, while two others are intimately associated with him in the same work; one is "Ralph Connor," the popular author; one is an inventor of wide reputation; several are prominent lawyers; two or three dozen are physicians, and about twice that number are clergymen. Of the latter, six have the degree of B. A., four that of M.A., two Ph.D., and nine D.D.

You can read this book from a link as the foot of the page at:

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

WWII Canadian Propaganda Films

Also added a major film about the Battle of the Atlantic which was obviously a close run thing. In fact I am becoming more aware of how little I know of both world wars. To me it seems that it was mainly thanks to Canada that we won WW1 and until recently I simply wasn't aware that Canada had played much of a role in that war. Then watching the Battle of the Atlantic documentary I realised what a close shave we had and how close we came to being defeated.

You can watch these at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/ploughshares.htm>

The Armed Forces of Canada 1867 - 1967

A century of achievement edited by Lieutenant-Colonel D. J. Goodspeed (pdf)

This book is on loan to the University of Victoria Library from the United Services Institution of Vancouver Island for the purpose of promoting the study of Military History and Strategic Studies for future students .

You can download this book from <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/armedforcesofcanada.pdf>

I might add that when adding the above book to the Armed Forces page I found two of the videos were no longer available so removed them and added two more. One is a documentary about Canada in Afghanistan and the other on the Canadian Special Forces.

The Canada Company

This is a summary about what Guelph has to offer settlers and can be read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canadacompany.pdf>

History of Presbyterianism on Prince Edward Island

By Rev. John MacLeod (1904).

Some 60%+ of residents on this island are of Scots descent and so this should be of particular interest to Scots and you can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/pei/historyofpresbyterianism.pdf>

Conrad Black

I've always had a lot of time for Conrad Black and so as he writes from Canada on a number of issues of interest from around the world I'm intending to include links to his writings for you to view. This week there are no new stories to bring you.

Electric Scotland

The People's Year Book for 1922

An annual of useful information prepared by the Co-Operative Press Agency. Added the 1922 edition

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

A History of Rowan County, North Carolina

Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men with an Appendix by Rev. Jethro Rumble (1881)

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

Archibald R. Adamson

Got in a wee biography of this author which you can read at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/adamson_archibald.htmThe Celts

The Celts

A 6 part TV series about the Celts from the BBC. I did have this on the site but it was taken of YouTube but now see it is back. And so if you'd like to view this perhaps do it sooner rather than later in case it gets taken off again.

You can view this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/magazine/octnov2002/celts.htm>

Old Glasgow

The Place and the People, from the Roman Occupation to the Eighteenth Century by Andrew MacGeorge (1880) (pdf)

I added this book to our collection of material about Glasgow which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/glasgow/oldglasgow.pdf>

Brexit

Added a Brexit page to our SIP section. The idea here is to provide factual information on various aspects of the negotiations.

You can get to this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/brexit.htm>

Robert Burns Lives!

Edited by Frank Shaw

Reading Burns in Installments: the Hidden History of Part-Publication by Patrick Scott.

My good friend Patrick Scott, retired professor at the University of South Carolina, has a way of writing articles that show up like gifts under a Christmas tree, but there is one huge difference - his gifts show up more than once a year! Such is the case with this article on the Bard that will bring you joy and tickle your heart. I could write much more on Patrick, his adventures and publications, but all I need do is refer you to the many articles in the Robert Burns Lives! index he has posted over the years. Take your pick of them or read them all and you will be a better person for learning about this amazing husband, father, grandfather, scholar, teacher, professor, author, and noted speaker, the many shoes he has filled over his career. You are a lucky person indeed if he is listed among your friends. Enjoy this article and know there will be others from this gifted and talented writer in the future. (FRS: 7.10.20)

You can read this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns_lives256.htm

The Achievements of the Knights of Malta

by Alexander Sutherland in two volumes (1831). Added a link to these two volumes to the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/kt7-2.htm>

A Season in Sutherland

By John E. Edwards-Moss (1888) (pdf). Added a link to this book at the foot of our Sutherland page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/sutherland/>

I would say that if ever there was a need for colour pictures this would be at the top of any list.

The Story

I mentioned the other week how our folk-lore is being ignored by our young people these days which seemed to me to be a great shame. I feel fortunate to have collected a great deal of it on this site. One of the great collectors of our folk-lore was recorded in the Gaelic and then translated into English by the Rev. Walter Gregor who was for many year Minister in Tiree. The following Introduction gives you a flavour of his work...

The Folk-Lore of the Noth-East of Scotland

By the Reverend Walter Gregor (1881)

I HAVE paidt in its burns and tumbled on its fairy hillocks. I have wandered through its woods by day and by night. I have trudged over its moors and mosses. I have lain below its rocks, dreaming with open eyes of the past. I have climbed its hills in sunshine and in mist, in calm and in storm; in fair and in foul, when the tiny stream that flowed down the hill-side was swollen into a roaring torrent of foam, and "deep was calling unto deep." I have seated myself on the hill-top, and looked out on the great sea of hills, billow on billow, with their grey, broken crests and purple sides streaked with patches of glittering snow, with many a tarn looking out from below the rugged brows of the hills — eyes gazing with calm, steadfast gaze to Heaven with here and there a lake shining as molten gold, fringed with black from the dark fir wood, with here and there a stream dancing and sparkling in the sun, now shut out from view by an intervening hill, now coming into sight round the base of another; the sea in the distance, calm and grand, glancing in the summer-sun, beautiful as a child at play, and carrying on its breast many a brave vessel, round which floated mothers 'and wives' and children's prayers, and lovers' vows, and merchant-men's hopes and fears; and between the hills and the sea, fair, fruitful fields, and villages and towns, with all their joys and hopes, with all their earnest endeavour and honest work, with all their devotion and self-denial, with all their loves and hatreds, with all their pain and misery.

I have seen the sun go down, and the darkness creep over the lowlands and up the hill-sides, inch by inch, till only the hill-tops shone in purple splendour for a few minutes, and they too, then, were clad in darkness, and the stars came out one by one, larger and brighter than when seen from the plains. I have stood at midnight on the mountain-top, and heard only the dull sough of the wind, broken by the bark of the fox or the croak of the ptarmigan. I have guided my steps over its ridges by the midnight stars. Wrapped in a plaid, I have crouched beneath a stone on a bed of fresh heather, and have fallen asleep with the music of a Gaelic song and the murmur of the streams falling over the mountain side—the one the counterpart of the other—sounding in my ears. I have sat in the hut beside a blazing fire, and, amidst the roar of the tempest and the rush of swollen waters, listened at midnight to tales of witchcraft ; of compacts with the Devil, of fightings with the same dark being, of the same being blowing to the four winds of Heaven wicked men, with their hut, their guns, and their dogs ; of fair women and infants carried oif by the fairies ; of dead-candles, of death-warnings, of ghosts, and of all the terrible things of the realm of spirits, till an eerie feeling crept over me, and I began to question with myself whether such tales might not be true. I have taken my seat beside the reputed witch, in her dark turf hut, and, with the faint glimmering light of a small candle, witnessed her perform with her long skinny fingers her incantations.

I have sailed the Firth in boat and in vessel, in sunshine and in storm, and I have listened to the tales of the fishermen and sailors as the ship rocked lazily under the falling darkness. The North, with its hills, and vales, and woods, and rocks, and streams, and lochs, and sea with its fairies, and waterkelpies, and ghosts, and superstitions—with its dialect, and customs, and manners, has become part of myself. Everything is changing, and changing faster than ever. The scream of the railway whistle is scaring away the witch and the fairy, and the waterkelpie, and the ghost. To give an account of the olden time in the North, as seen by myself and as related to me by the aged, is the task I have set before me. It is true some of what is related has not yet passed away. If I fall into error, I can only say, with the Roman comedian, "Si id est peccatum, peccatum imprudentia'st," and with Richard Rolle de Hampole:—

"And if any man that es clerk
Can fynde any errour in this werk,
I pray hym he do me that favour
That he wille amende that errour;
And if men may here any errone se.

Or if any default in this tretice be,
I make here a protestacion,
That I will stand til the correction
Of ilka rightwyse lered man,
That my default here correcte can."

He produced a wee book of folk-lore about Millers and Bread and here are a few wee stories from it...

When a farmer or crofter took home from the mill a "mailyer o' meal," i.e., the quantity of meal ground at one time, sometimes a little of it was mixed with sugar and whisky and each of the household got a small portion of the dainty morsel. It was a sort of inauguration of the meal. It was then carefully packed into the "meal-kist" or "meal-bowie," according as it was a chest or barrel.

Tom-more, a place not far from Abergeldie Castle, was a favourite haunt of fairies. On one occasion two men laden with meal pokes were returning from the Mill of Coel to Kintoce (?). Passing Tom-more they heard music and dancing. One of them, led by curiosity, went to the place whence proceeded the sounds of mirth. On seeing the dancers he joined them, and danced with the bag on his back. His companion called on him to stop dancing and to come along with him. It was in vain. Dance he must. His companion at last left him and went home. Twelve months after he returned and found his friend still dancing with the sack on his back. He rushed among the dancers and called out, "God save's a'." The fairies fled, and the man stopped his dancing, and nothing would persuade him that he had danced so long.

Fairies often borrowed from man. What they borrowed was given back most punctually. Meal was an article they often borrowed, and they always asked a fixed measure, a "hathish-cogfull." If offered more they would not take it. This borrowing was usually made in the gloamin, and by the females. In a parish on the coast of Buchan, one wild night in winter, in the gloamin, a Httle woman dressed in green went into a farm kitchen and begged for a "hathish o' meal" from the gueedwife. She told the beggar that she was somewhat afraid to give away so much, as the stock was well nigh exhausted, and grain had been just taken to the mill, and it would be some time before a new stock could be laid in. Besides, the weather was stormy, and everything betokened a long snowstorm. It was forecast to last thirteen weeks. Still the gueedwife gave the little woman the meal. Not many days after the little woman returned in the gloamin and gave back the meal. At the same time she asked how much meal was in the giral. On getting an answer that there was not much, she gave strict orders to gather into one corner what of it remained, add to it what she returned for the loan made to her, and always keep it well packed together. She at the same time told them that a snowstorm was coming that would last thirteen weeks. The storm came down, the roads were blocked, and no meal could be carried from the mill; yet the meal in the corner never grew less, notwithstanding the household had the usual supply all through the thirteen weeks the snow lay on the ground and blocked the roads.

A kind of bread used to be baked of mashed potatoes and oat meal. It was baked in the usual way, and had the name of "tatie bread" or "tatie scones."

When baking is going on children are fond of breaking off small pieces of the hot cakes on the "girdle" and eating them. Some women when baking do not allow this practice, whilst others do. Two wives were neighbours. Both had families. One mother would not allow her children to "nip" the cakes. The other did, and her children grew up healthy, strong, and fit for their work. The children of the other were not so strong. Both wives happened on one occasion to be working together on the field with some members of their families. The woman that allowed her children to break off and eat the hot cakes, along with her children, kept ahead of the other woman and her children at the work. Seeing how matters stood, in her joy of beating her neighbour, she called out: "Come on, nip-cakes, an lat hehl breed staan".

A farmer's wife was baking one day when a little man dressed in green came in and asked a little piece of bread. She gave it. The little man then told her that neither she nor hers should ever come to want. He went up a hill near the farm and disappeared in it.

And that's it for this week and I hope you all have a great weekend.

Alastair