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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for October 27th, 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

The 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will cement the shared aims of good governance, sustainable growth, and inclusive social and economic development, Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said today.

The Commonwealth is home to 2.4 billion people, a third of the world's population, with developed and developing countries, small states and vulnerable nations and where 60% are under the age of 30. This is the first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting under the leadership of Secretary-General Scotland.

"The wonderful thing about the Commonwealth is that we are a family of 52 nations spreading across six regions," she said. "What motivates us as a family, and what has guided us, are the shared aims of good governance, sustainable growth, and inclusive social and economic development, aided by our common language, common laws, common parliamentary and other institutions, as well as our cultural ties.

"We are singularly well-placed and have connections and mechanisms which can help us devise shared approaches to the opportunities and challenges we face together.

"I've found that there's always a spirit of goodwill, which makes it possible to work collaboratively and get straight to the nub of a matter when it is considered within a Commonwealth setting and by Commonwealth partners. This is what the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held in the UK, will reinforce, a true global partnership to tackle the issues facing us today and come up with solutions.

"In a ministerial roundtable last Friday, coordinated by the Secretariat, which brought together more than 40 member states, representative of all six regions, it was agreed that a key aim will be to increase intra-Commonwealth trade, building on the "Commonwealth advantage". Trade among Commonwealth countries is projected to increase to US\$1 trillion by 2020.

Her Majesty the Queen is the Head of the Commonwealth and attends the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

She has devoted much of her reign to reinforcing the links which bind this community of nations. In a radio broadcast recorded on her 21st birthday, Her Majesty made a commitment to the citizens of the Commonwealth, saying: 'I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service.'

Since then, she has undertaken more than 200 visits to Commonwealth countries and keeps in touch with developments through regular contact with the Commonwealth Secretary General and the Secretariat.

The Commonwealth's strength lies in its unique network of people-to-people links and organisations that celebrate and strengthen the vibrancy of Commonwealth citizens.

Members are united around shared Commonwealth commitments to democracy, human rights, equality and good governance; values that are set out in its charter and upheld by the Commonwealth Secretariat and its Secretary-General Patricia Scotland.

Throughout its existence, the modern Commonwealth has had a lasting impact on the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights.

It helped to bring about an end to apartheid in South Africa and to violence and emergency rule in Pakistan in 2007. It has observed over 140 elections in more than 40 countries since 1980.

The Commonwealth is home to nearly one billion of the world's young people, half of its top 20 emerging cities and provides almost half of the UN's peacekeepers.

Taken together, the Commonwealth's common legal systems, language and administrative systems mean that intra-Commonwealth trade benefits from what is recognised as the 'Commonwealth Advantage'.

This means that when both partners are Commonwealth countries, trade and investment flows are increased by up to 20% and the cost of doing business reduced by up to 19% more than would otherwise be the case.

See a video about the Commonwealth at

https://youtu.be/So4kP_Krv4c

Read the Brexit and Commonwealth Trade Briefing at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/BrexitandCommonwealthTrade.pdf>

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.

No, we're not getting poorer. Here's why

Official earnings numbers have failed to capture the boom in self-employment

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/no-were-not-getting-poorer-heres-why>

What are the SNP hiding over public project finance?

Good luck with getting any answers

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/brian-wilson-what-are-the-snp-hiding-over-public-project-finance-good-luck-with-getting-any-answers-1-4591473>

Public or Private?

Let's not worry about the colour of a cat that catches mice by Jim Sillars

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=13331

Poll reveals anxiety over Scottish smacking ban

According to the poll of 1,010 Scottish adults, 80 per cent of men do not want to see smacking criminalised compared with 70 per cent of women.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/poll-reveals-anxiety-over-scottish-smacking-ban-1-4593305>

SNP must ditch tired old approach to economy

Enterprise in Scotland must be allowed to flourish for the sake of jobs for future generations, writes Brian Monteith.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/brian-monteith-snp-must-ditch-tired-old-approach-to-economy-1-4593832>

5 of the best Scottish soup recipes for winter

Winter is on its way and with it comes ample opportunity to enjoy some truly delicious Scottish soups.

Read more at:

<http://foodanddrink.scotsman.com/food/5-best-scottish-soup-recipes-winter/>

National park idea has fallen from favour

It's 14 years since the second national park was created, and it's likely to be the last, writes Martyn McLaughlin

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/martyn-mclaughlin-national-park-idea-has-fallen-from-favour-1-4595485>

Scotland's health is not improving, auditors warn

The watchdog's annual report lists concerns over missed targets, longer waiting times, stalled improvements and growing pressure on budgets.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-41749237>

Electric Canadian

Agnes Macphail

According to humorist Will Ferguson Agnes Macphail was funny, took no guff from men, but most importantly, she had an immense impact on Canadian politics.

Agnes Macphail was the first woman in Canada to break into the House of Commons, and she was far more than a token female politician during her long career serving her constituents.

Born in rural Ontario, Macphail overcame the conservative expectations of her family and made a career for herself as a teacher, working at several rural postings. But she soon found her calling in politics.

Macphail was raised by farmers and was acutely aware of the issues they faced. She was elected to represent them in 1921 — the first woman elected to the federal government.

Thus followed a productive political career in both federal and provincial politics during which Macphail fought tirelessly against a barrage of gender discrimination through which she had to constantly prove herself worthy. Even with this added pressure, Macphail championed issues such as worker's rights, prison reform, seniors' pension, and gender equity, making great headway in many areas.

Writer and humourist Will Ferguson admires Macphail over other gender pioneers because of her progressive take on gender equity. Unlike persons case champion Emily Murphy and Nellie McClung, who fought for women's vote, Ferguson says Macphail did not subscribe to the then-prominent maternal feminist camp that serves to further divide the genders. Maternal feminists argue that women deserve a place in politics due to their more gentle, pure and nurturing natures, which would have a positive effect on political doings.

"Agnes Macphail[']s approach] was very much equal rights, which is the fact that women deserved the vote not because they're angels and not because they're special, but because they are people with those rights, and equal rights are an end in themselves," Ferguson explains.

Ferguson commends Macphail for standing her ground in a hostile environment, which she addressed with humour.

"What I really admire about her is that she took no guff from the men, and she was quite quite funny," he says. "But most importantly she had an immense impact."

"She went into politics for what she could do, not what politics could do for her."

Macphail sets the example of a fearless politician that had the courage of her convictions, Ferguson says. She should be respected for standing her ground and keeping touch with her goal, which was to help those she represented.

"She went into politics for what she could do, not what politics could do for her. So there is an integrity to her that we sadly lack in today's leaders," Ferguson says. "The politicians always start off with these great principles but they soon sacrifice them on the altar of expedience, which Agnes Macphail never, never did."

Industrial Canada

Added volume 5 which you can read at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/industrial/index.htm>

In the Land of The Moose, The Bear, and The Beaver

Adventures in the forests of the Athabasca by Achilles Daunt (1885) (pdf)

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

Musical Canada

Added volume 5 at http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/music/musical_canada.htm

John Bethune

An article about Ontario's pioneer Presbyterian preacher which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/JohnBethune.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.

The Last Hope for Those Desperate to Invalidate the 2016 Election

<http://www.conradblack.com/1342/last-hope-for-those-desperate-to-invalidate>

Quebec's Transformation from Grumbling Freeloader to Beacon of Astute Economic Policy

<http://www.conradblack.com/1343/quebec-transformation-from-grumbling-freeloader>

Electric Scotland

Fast Facts on the Commonwealth

A briefing for journalists (2017) which you can view at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/fastfactsonthecommonwealth2017.pdf>

Scotland in Pagan Times

By Joseph Anderson, LL.D. in the Bronze and Stone Ages and the Iron Age in two volumes.

You can read this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/anderson_joseph.htm

St Michael and Inveresk

Edited by James Wilkie, B.L., S.S.C.

THIS book is, in some respects, unique in character though not in aim. It is unique in so far as it is a combination of talent, which, it is hardly likely, will ever be brought together again. The writers and artists—some of them of worldwide fame—have had free scope in the choice of their subjects, but most of them, having in view the special object of the book, have dealt with scenes and events closely associated with the Parish.

You can read this book at the link at the foot our Inveresk gazetteer page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/gazetteer/vol4page296.htm>

The History and Antiquities of Roxburgh and Adjacent Districts

From the Most Remote to the Present time in 4 volumes by Alexander Jeffrey (1855). Added links to these volumes at the foot of the page at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/borders/>

Videos of Tom Devine speaking about Scottish History

Added a wee range of his videos. Sir Tom Devine is thought to be Scotland top historian so his views are of interest.

You can view these videos at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/tomdevine.htm>

Political Survey of Britain

Being a series of Reflections on the Situation, Lands, Inhabitants, Revenues, Colonies, and Commerce of this Island intended to show that we have not as yet approached near the Summit of Improvement, but that it will afford Employment to many Generations before they push to their utmost Extent the natural Advantages of Great Britain in two volumes by John Campbell, LL.D. (1774)

This is a significant publication as it's written at the start of the Scottish Enlightenment period. It's just a pity that at the date of publication the letter f is used for the letter s as it makes it more difficult to read.

You can read these volumes at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/politicalsurvey.htm>

Iona and the Ionians

Manners, Customs and Traditions, with a few remarks on Mull, Staffa, and Tyree By W. Maxwell (1857)

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

The Story

Canada's great debt to Scotland

Scots didn't just map the country and build its institutions, they instilled in Canada the core belief in pluralism

September 18, 2014

In uptown Toronto, if you look east across the street from the Royal Ontario Museum, you will see an elegant building that symbolizes what the Scots have done for Canada. It also suggests why, in light of today's divisive referendum, Canadians should take a moment to think of their Scottish cousins. Originally, this stately, three-storey structure formed part of the University of Toronto. Today, the main tenant is Club Monaco, a clothing-store outlet geared to young professionals. If you step inside on a Saturday afternoon, you will marvel at the ethnic and linguistic diversity swirling around you.

What does that have to do with the Scots? I would argue: everything. The architect who designed this building, working with philanthropist Lillian Massey, and as part of an architectural firm owned by G.M. Miller, was my wife's grandfather—a Scottish immigrant named William Fraser. Few people know his name. The Scottish architect has become invisible. Yet, when you look around from inside this neoclassical edifice, you realize that the architect is all around you. So it is with Canada. The Scottish architects are invisible. But if we stop and look around, we realize that they played a preeminent role in shaping our country. Nobody owes them more than we do.

Obviously, Canada is not just a land mass bordering on three oceans and a superpower. It is a cultural, political, and economic entity. It is a web of interconnected governments, businesses, institutions, organizations, and individuals—a complex interweaving of social programs, cultural networks and communications and transportation systems. That is why we can think of it as being "invented." Canada is a multifaceted creation, one that, more than a decade ago, Richard Gwyn rightly identified as the world's first postmodern nation.

Today, there are almost as many Canadians of Scottish heritage (4.7 million) as there are Scots in Scotland (5.3 million). Scottish Canadians constitute only 13 per cent of the Canadian population, and have never exceeded 16 per cent. Yet their shaping influence has proven wildly disproportionate. No matter how you approach the history of Canada—through exploration, politics, business, education, literature—you find Scots taking a leading role.

They led the way in mapping the west and the north, in running a railway across the country, in creating a system of spectacular national parks, and in establishing banks and universities. In the struggle for women's rights, Scottish Canadians such as Nellie McClung, Agnes MacPhail, and Therese McDonald Casgrain led the charge. In literature, they produced superstars from Lucy Maud Montgomery to Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro.

But today, with Scots going to the polls, and in keeping with my architectural analogy, I think we should highlight how Scottish Canadians fostered the pluralism that is the hallmark of postmodern Canada. Of this country's 22 prime ministers, for starters, 13 claimed at least some Scottish heritage, or almost 60 per cent. These include Sir John A. Macdonald, William Lyon Mackenzie King, John George Diefenbaker and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Would anybody suggest that these figures made no difference?

Consider John Buchan, who served not as a prime minister but as a governor-general of this country (1935-1940). "I believe every Scotsman should be a Scottish nationalist," he said at one point. "If it could be proved that a Scottish parliament were desirable . . . Scotsmen should support it." This Scotland-first attitude kept him out of the British cabinet. Buchan recognized relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada as "the most intricate of the country's problems." Speaking at Annapolis Royal, he said, "I want to see the French tradition cherished and maintained, for, as a Scotsman who, like all Scotsmen, has an old friendship for France, I regard it as an essential part of Canadian nationalism."

Buchan has sometimes been accused of anti-Semitism. But on the eve of World War II, he furiously denounced anti-Semitic propaganda and brought a group of 500 skilled glass workers from the Sudetenland to western Canada—an action that led to further Jewish immigration. Again and again, Buchan insisted that the strongest nations are those made up of different races. In 1936, for example, he told a gathering of Manitoba farmers, "You will all be better Canadians for being also good Ukrainians." He added,

“Every Briton, and especially every Scotsman, must believe that the strongest nations are those made up of different racial elements.”

In Halifax, Buchan told an audience that there are “two characteristics which you [Canadians] share with Scotland. You are a mixed people [and] . . . you are a far-wandering people.” Clearly, he understood that, with people as diverse as Canadians, any attempt to impose a single, uniform identity could only undermine national unity.

After Buchan, from the mid-1940s onward, Scottish Canadian novelist Hugh MacLennan used such works as *Two Solitudes* and *Return of the Sphinx* to explore the Canadian tension between identity and pluralism. In the 1970s, he judged Canada’s chances of survival to be excellent, despite the country’s proximity to a superpower 10 times its size. For this he cited one main reason: “We obstinately refuse to become a melting pot.” Canada, he argued, remains “a light shining in the darkness of an almost universal tendency” to homogenize and reduce a citizenry to sameness.

This idea found a political champion in yet another product of the old Scottish-French alliance. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau set up a royal commission to examine “the whole question of cultural and ethnic pluralism in this country and the status of our various cultures and languages.” Nine years later, during Canada’s first referendum battle, he responded to a Quebec nationalist taunt about his mixed, half-Scottish heritage by proclaiming that the Elliots had come to Canada more than two centuries before: “My name is a Quebec name, but my name is a Canadian name also, and that’s the story of my name.”

In 1982, the aggressively federalist Trudeau gave Canada a constitution that recognized both individual rights and multiculturalism. And with that, a hybrid Scottish Canadian finished the political job begun in 1867 by a Scottish immigrant, Sir John A. Macdonald. Constitutionally independent for the first time, Canada emerged as the world’s first postmodern nation, a pluralistic entity designed politically to share power among different levels of government—to practise what the Scots call “devo-max” or “maximum devolution.” That is what the majority of Scots want as they launch into their referendum campaign. And that, certainly, is what their forebears invented in Canada.

—Ken McGoogan, author of *How the Scots Invented Canada*.

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

Alastair