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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for April 7th, 2023

### Electric Scotland News

Hope you enjoy the Tartan Day celebrations.

The National Tartan Day New York Committee presents 25th Annual NYC Tartan Day Parade - Saturday, April 15, 2023 at 6th Avenue, New York, NY.

To learn about the New York Tartan Day Parade you can watch an interview at:

<https://youtu.be/zF87MjfqnE>

Tartan Day 2023 Messages at: <https://youtu.be/Q110gb8QhMY>

In Canada, Tartan Day is an annual celebration of Scottish culture and heritage, with the government making it an official day of celebration. The day originated in Canada in the mid-1980s in Nova Scotia and has grown more popular every year, being adopted by diaspora across the globe since the 1990s.

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The SNP are certainly having a tough time. Pity they hadn't voted in Kate Forbes but it was certainly a close call with only 4% separating them. I personally believe if she had won there was a better chance for Independence as she is obviously pro business.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers 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 which I do myself from time to time.

Visitors check out new Tartan exhibition at V&A Dundee

Tartan, the first major exhibition in Scotland for 30 years to focus solely on the iconic textile and pattern, has opened at Dundee's V&A Museum.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-65052454>

Joining the CPTPP delivers a UK pivot towards the Asian-Pacific powerhouse

IGNORE the usual suspects, the fact is Brexit Britain joining CPTPP is a fantastic long term opportunity, representing a globally significant event. It makes re-joining the EU single market simultaneously less likely and less desirable economically.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2023/04/joining-the-cptpp-delivers-a-uk-pivot-towards-the-asian-pacific-powerhouse/>

Jeremy Hansen will be the first Canadian to encircle the moon

Col. Jeremy Hansen, a CF-18 pilot from London, Ont., emerged from a crowd of cheering fellow astronauts, a Maple Leaf patch on the shoulder of his flight suit, to officially join the crew of four that will helm Artemis II, the first trip to lunar space in 52 years.

Read more at:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/jeremy-hansen-will-be-the-first-canadian-to-encircle-the-moon-1.6339981>

King Charles urged to travel more by readers after success of first state visit  
A new Express.co.uk poll has found overwhelming support among readers in favour of the King embarking on more state visits and wielding his power to forge ties with the world.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1754770/king-charles-state-visit-poll-result-spt>

Police remain outside Nicola Sturgeon's home for second day as SNP probe continues  
Peter Murrell, who is married to the former First Minister, was arrested at 8am yesterday after police raided their home in Uddingston, Lanarkshire.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/police-remain-outside-nicola-sturgeons-29644015>

## Electric Canadian

Tales of the Porcupine Trails

By W. Milton Yorke (1911) (pdf)

This is a book of poems which you may enjoy and it can be read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/talesofporcupine00yorkuoft.pdf>

St Thomas, Ontario

Video and other information on the area which you can view at:

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

Scenes in the Wilderness

Authentic Narrative of the Labours and Sufferings of the Moravian Missionaries among the North American Indians  
by Rev. William M. Willett (1842) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/scenesinwilderne00will.pdf>

A Trip to Manitoba

Or, Roughing it on the Line by Mary Fitzgibbon (1880) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/atriptomanitoba01fitzgoog.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 2nd day of April 2023 - Palm Sunday

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26326-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-2nd-day-of-april-2023-palm-sunday>

The Earliest Beginnings of Canada

By J. M. Harper (1901) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/earliestbeginnin00harp.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

Memoirs of Mrs William Veitch, Mr. Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, Mr. Henry Erskine, and Mr. John Carstairs

Issued by the Committee of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland for the publication of the works of Scottish Reformers and Divines (1846) (pdf)

You can read about them at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/memoirsofmrswill00unknuoft.pdf>

Scottish Society of Indianapolis

Got in their March/April 2023 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricScotland.com/familytree/newsletters/indianapolis/index.htm>

John Paterson, Bible Society Pioneer

By the Rev. James M. Alexander, B.D., in two parts

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/john-patterson.htm>

A letter from a blacksmith to the minister and elders of the church of Scotland  
By John Witherspoon from old catalog (1824) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/blacksmith.htm>

Conjuring Tricks

with Coins, Watches, Rings and Handkerchiefs from "modern Magic" by British Professor Hoffman with 57 Illustrations (eighth edition) (1900) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/games/conjuringtricksw00hoff.pdf>

Tricks with Cards

By British Professor Hoffman (1893) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/games/trickswithcards00hoff.pdf>

Clan Grant

Got in a copy of their Spring 2023 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricScotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Grant/Craigellackie-Spring2023.pdf>

Memoirs of the Life, Times, and Writings of Thomas Boston of Ettrick  
Written by himself with Appendices (new edition) (1899)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/other/memoirsoflifetim00bost.pdf>

# Story

Two articles from the Aberdeen University Review...

Sir David Gill.

As supplementary to the short obituary notice, in our second number, of Sir David Gill, who died on 24 January last, we think it fitting to quote part of his Autobiography as contained in his recently issued "History and Description of the Royal Observatory, Cape of Good Hope" which you can read at:

[https://books.google.ca/books/about/A\\_History\\_and\\_Description\\_of\\_the\\_Royal\\_O.html?id=pwExAQAAMAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.ca/books/about/A_History_and_Description_of_the_Royal_O.html?id=pwExAQAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y)

Our extract relates more especially to his early years.

"The eldest surviving son of David Gill of Blairythan, Aberdeenshire, I was born at Aberdeen on the 12th of June, 1843, and attended the Bellevue Academy in that city till about the age of fourteen, when I went to Dollar Academy and came under the inspiring influence of Dr. Lindsay, at whose house I boarded. His teaching filled me with the love of mathematics, physics, and chemistry.

"From Dollar I proceeded to Marischal College and University, Aberdeen, where I was a student under the celebrated Clerk Maxwell, and his teaching influenced the whole of my future life. My father had married late in life, for at the time I was twenty years of age he was seventy-four years old. He was a successful merchant in Aberdeen, as had been his father before him, and he not unnaturally wished me to succeed him in business. I very unwillingly yielded, and, after some years, my father retired, leaving his business in my hands. My heart and my thoughts, however, had always been set upon things scientific. From the time that I entered college I had a little laboratory in my father's house where I made chemical experiments, and, later, under Clerk Maxwell's influence, carried out preliminary essays on the determination of physical constants.

"In those days there was no working physical laboratory in Aberdeen accessible to students, but simply an apparatus-room containing the old-fashioned lecture models of levers, pulleys, pumps, windmills, steam-engines, etc., with some balances, air-pumps, tuning forks, an Atwood's machine, electric machines, a few galvanic batteries, etc., in glass cases; but access to this room was forbidden to students. After the lectures, however, Clerk Maxwell used to remain in the lecture room for hours, with some three or four of us who desired to ask questions or discuss any points suggested by himself or by ourselves, and would show us models of apparatus he had contrived and was experimenting with at the time, such as his precessional top, colour box, etc. These were hours of purest delight to me. Maxwell's lectures were, as a rule, most carefully arranged and written out - practically in a form fit for printing — and we were allowed to copy them. In lecturing he would begin reading his manuscript, but at the end of five minutes or so he would stop, remarking, "Perhaps I might explain this," and then he would run off after some idea which had just flashed upon his mind, thinking aloud as he covered the blackboard with figures and symbols, and generally outrunning the comprehension of the best of us. Then he would return to his manuscript, but by this time the lecture hour was nearly over and the remainder of the subject was dropped or carried over to another day. Perhaps there were a few experimental illustrations — and they very often failed — and to many it seemed that Clerk Maxwell was not a very good professor. But to those who could catch a few of the sparks that flashed as he thought aloud at the blackboard in lecture, or when he twinkled with wit and suggestion in after-lecture conversation, Maxwell was supreme as an inspiration. The less imaginative side of instruction in mathematics and physics was admirably supplied by the extra-mural teaching of Dr. David Rennet.

"In the year 1863 it occurred to me that Aberdeen was very much in need of a standard of accurate time. Some years before that date Piazzzi Smyth had instituted a time-gun at Edinburgh, and the signal was found to be a very useful one. Professor David Thomson, then, and till his death, Professor of Natural Philosophy at King's College, Aberdeen, kindly gave me a letter of introduction to Professor Piazzzi Smyth, and I went to Edinburgh to make inquiry as to the methods employed for firing the gun there. This was my first introduction to an astronomer and an observatory. I was received with every possible kindness, and shown every detail, not only of the time-gun and

timeball arrangements, but of all the instruments at the observatory.

“Clerk Maxwell had given us a few lectures on practical astronomy, in one of which he exhibited a model of a transit instrument (made out of tin-plate and mounted on wooden piers). But he had given us such a clear and interesting account of its purposes, adjustment, and methods of use, that although I had never before seen a real astronomical instrument, I had no difficulty in recognizing the functions of every detail of the transit instrument and mural circle, then mounted in the old Royal Observatory on the Calton Hill. From that moment I took a new interest in astronomy, and, on my return to Aberdeen, told Professor Thomson that I thought we ought to determine our own time in Aberdeen. Professor Thomson said, “Why not?” There had long been what was called “an observatory” at King’s College, Old Aberdeen, and there were strong solid masonry piers. On one of these piers, under one of the two small domes, a portable transit instrument had been at one time mounted, but it had for many years been dismantled and kept in its cases. This we unearthed, mounted and adjusted. My acquaintance with Professor Thomson, which had begun shortly before he introduced me to Piazzi Smyth, soon ripened into close friendship. Every clear evening I used to find my way to his house in Old Aberdeen, whence we adjourned to the observatory and worked with the transit instrument. There was a good sidereal clock, and we added a mean-time clock fitted with arrangements for changing its rate by known considerable amounts, or by small known quantities, so that it could without difficulty be set or kept within a small portion of a second of true Greenwich time. This clock I also fitted with contact-springs, so that it could send electric currents, reversed at each alternate second, to control other clocks in sympathy with the observatory standard. A Bain’s pendulum was procured from Messrs. James Ritchie & Son of Edinburgh, and applied to the turret clock of the College, which was thus controlled to show Greenwich mean time, and at least one other clock in Aberdeen was afterwards similarly controlled.”

He then goes on to tell how he acquired an equatorial telescope, how he made the acquaintance of Lord Lindsay (now the Earl of Crawford) and was offered charge of the observatory at Dunecht.

“I had married in July, 1870, and settled down in Aberdeen near the site of my observatory, working at business all day, and devoting all my spare time at night to astronomy. To accept Lord Crawford’s kind and generous offer was a heavy pecuniary loss, but a gain so great in the prospective interest of my life that I had no hesitation in accepting it gratefully—a decision in which my wife (who shares my every thought) most fully and cordially concurred.

“So soon as I could wind up my business affairs, we went to Dunecht, living at first, in the absence of Lord Crawford’s family, in the Mansion House, and afterwards in a small house about two miles from the observatory until the dwelling-house of the observatory could be erected.”

In 1879 Sir David was appointed H.M. Astronomer at the Cape of Good Hope, a post which he held till 1907. In that year he was President of the British Association, an honour which has seldom fallen to an alumnus of Aberdeen.

END

The “Robbie” Bequest.

No ordinary flutter ran through Aberdeen some weeks ago, when a cable message from Melbourne announced that an Aberdonian called William Robbie had died at Ballarat, bequeathing £30,000 to our University. At once the question arose “who was Robbie?” The University had no information either as to the gift or as to its particular purpose, but it has since been discovered that the donor was a native of Deeside, having been born at Finzean (well known through its proprietor, Dr. Robert Farquharson, late M.P. for West Aberdeenshire). He began life as a shoemaker with his father. Later he started business on his own account in Aboyne, but having saved a little money, he was lured to California and its gold-diggings. Here he led the rough miner’s life for a year or two and then returned to Scotland with a considerable saving. But the rush to the Australian goldfields set in shortly after his return and he sailed for Melbourne. At Ballarat he worked a claim for several years with great success. When the gold fever subsided he bought land and took to sheep-farming, in which also he prospered. Three years ago, when almost a nonagenarian, he sold his land and retired to live a solitary life in Ballarat. It is sixty years since he

went to Australia and he never re-visited his native country.

A subsequent cablegram adds the information that the money is to be devoted to the founding of scholarships in Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, and Mathematics. It is not held polite "to look a gift horse in the mouth," and we ought to be duly thankful for gifts whatever form they take; still, there is no doubt that at this particular juncture the University would have preferred that the money should have come to it without conditions, to be applied to the needs of the moment. If so left, the bequest would have sufficed to found two new Chairs, or otherwise equip the University in departments of study where it is at present somewhat weak.

The singular thing about this legacy is that it has been bequeathed by a man who never was near a University, and to whom a University education must have been a far-off and unattainable ideal. It is highly characteristic of the democratic character of the Scottish Universities that such benefactions are possible and that they are of frequent occurrence. That a working man with comparatively meagre education should lead a solitary life, and deny himself ordinary pleasures in order to accumulate a fortune to found University scholarships, excites not a little wonder. Perhaps it is only a Scot that could carry out such a scheme. In England a similar gift is well-nigh inconceivable. It shows how thoroughly the Scot has become imbued with the love of education; the admiration for learning cuts deep into the lower orders of democratic Scotland.

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you and hope you enjoy some Tartan Day celebrations.

Alastair