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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 14th, 2013

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Electric Scotland News

We lost our ScotNews Feed and What's New Feed for 24 hours due to a software glitch but ok now.

Made extensive use of YouTube videos this week to provide some good educational videos. Must have added around 50 videos in all. Quite a number of clan historical videos, some on Scottish Towns, the game of Shinty, a 17 part video on Canadian history, some Scottish golf videos and a couple pertaining to Australia and New Zealand. Also added a few videos on Crofting and a few instructional videos on how to wear a kilt and get measured for one. Have provided more information on these below.

Most of what we have on the web site is text and I figure a lot of younger readers probably won't take the time to read whole books so I figured it is time to make available more videos available on various topics.

My take on Clan Societies

This is a quite lengthy article but hope it will contribute to the discussions going on on how to improve the performance of clan societies and help them to both retain members and attract new ones.

I note that Barrie Leslie has asked for someone to take over doing the clan newsletter and has done so for several years and yet no one has stepped forward. You can read his latest newsletter at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/index.htm>

It was reading the current CLANZ newsletter that made me once again think of clan societies.

This is really symptomatic of a wider problem within the clan system in that few are stepping forward to get involved and help their clan. Often it is the older clan members that do most of the work and fewer younger members are stepping forward.

It has always been my view that few Clan Chiefs really deserve our support as they were often the ones that kicked people of their lands which lead to huge emigration from Scotland to all over the world. However a clan is a family and even though a clan chief might not deserve our support the clan society is still a way to keep connected to family ties and ties to Scotland.

Let's look at clans... the Clan Chief's power was in the number of men he could bring to battle. That meant in most instances the chief had to engage his clan members to ensure they stuck with him. However, after the Battle of Culloden, the raising of men for battle was no longer of interest. Most of the chiefs found they could make more money from their lands by replacing their people with sheep. However, if you really examine this time period it has been shown that in most cases they would have been better off if they had encouraged their people to farm their land better. Quite a small farm could not only have fed the family but given them some cash crops to pay their rent.

See <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/crofting/> for further information where I have also added three videos about crofting in Scotland.

I confess that in Scotland I was totally ignorant of Scottish clans until my father purchased a book about Clan MacIntyre which I read but then forgot about it. It really wasn't until I came to North America that I realised the depth of interest in Clan roots. In fact the first Highland Games I attended was in Florida and I was totally amazed at the sheer number of Scottish flags flying and the large number of clan tents. I remember writing at the time that "The Scots are alive and well and living in America."

Alas some Highland Games are also closing their doors as the people that organise them are getting older and can no longer continue. I am often told by members of Clan societies that they have difficulty in retaining members or getting new members.

I have no magic crystal ball as to how to improve the situation but it does seem to me we also need to look outside the clan to help enthuse clan members. To me my first pride is actually being a Scot as the Scots have achieved so much all over the world. Some 75% of Scots have no clan allegiance at all. Of the current generation of Scots in Scotland some 800,000 have left Scotland to work in England, Wales and N. Ireland. You often hear of their pride in being a Scot but very rarely will you hear them saying they are proud of their clan.

I'm not really aware of any clan society doing much to portray "Scottishness" as being part of their clan. When you read the history of the pioneers you will read of them having a soft spot for their "Auld Country" but again rarely do you hear them saying anything about their clan.

However all that does not mean the clan society can't prosper but I think they need to move beyond their clan to do so. They really need to show what relevance they have in today's society.

As I see it most clans seem to charge around \$25.00 or \$35.00 for a years membership and all most offer is a quarterly newsletter. Yes some will put on events but often not that many turn up for them. Most newsletters I've read have much to say about the Highland Games they've attended and in some cases that is the bulk of the newsletter. I'm really not sure that that would enthuse most clan members or potential members.

The trouble really is that Scotland as a country is not engaged with the clans. Scotland does have a huge opportunity to use Highland Games around the world to promote Scotland for tourism and business but they simply don't do that. To me that is the height of stupidity. Nothing of modern Scotland is shown at most Highland Games. This to me is a totally wasted opportunity and the Scottish tourism and business leaders must be the dumbest people on earth to squander that opportunity.

To me it's a drill down matter. First you need to enthuse people of their Scottish roots and only then work on the clan side. A clan society is just like any other membership society in that to have a good membership base you need to offer something that makes members want to continue to be a member and see a benefit in being a member.

I can't help but wonder if anyone has bothered to do a survey of their membership to ask the hard questions. Like how are we doing? What benefits do you see in being a member? Is there anything else we could offer that would help to increase the benefits you get from your membership? Would you pay a higher annual membership fee if we provided X or Y? How about phoning them to have a chat? How about persuading them to pay a special monthly fee that over say 5 years would actually pay for them and their families to have a holiday in Scotland? So a two week holiday would cost say \$3,500 then how about them paying \$50 a month towards that trip? Open a trust account where the money would be secure and they'd have confidence in paying in towards that.

Again how about raising the annual fee to \$100 and then think what that could buy and so you send each member a special annual gift of real perceived value. Perhaps a set of 6 whisky glasses with a bottle of special malt whisky one year? Like do you track family memberships? How many of a family do they have and what are their ages and sex? You could then customise a gift so everyone in the family gets something. I am sure that if you got this going then bulk purchase would reduce the costs.

How about a one off joining fee where when they join they get a book about their clan, a clan badge, a T-Shirt or Golf Shirt, a tartan tie or scarf, a lapel pin, and a book about the Scots? How about providing them with a memory stick on which you place a pdf book or books about Scotland and the clan along with lots of great pictures of Scotland and clan lands and perhaps a Scottish singalong? How about a signed letter from the Clan Chief welcoming them to the society?

Frankly you can do very little with \$25.00 so you need to think out of the box about how to not only engage your membership but keep them engaged. That in my mind needs a joining fee of at least \$100.00 and a membership fee that reflects an annual gift to them of perceived value. And it doesn't need to be a "clan" product as a "Scottish" product would be equally well received. How about sending them a mixed pack of old Scottish boiled sweets that we all used to enjoy?

I once got a suggestion that each member should get a special certificate of membership that would be signed by the clan chief and sent to them in a tube so it could be framed and in that a personal letter from the chief that was signed by him or her. Then there would be enough of a border around the certificate that each year you renewed your membership you have a wee sticker sent to you to put around the certificate showing the number of years you'd been a member.

Then these days we are blessed with so many ways of getting the membership fees. You could take out a PayPal Business Account and with that you can email them an annual subscription link that would automatically pay their membership dues each year. You can now also get a free credit card reader for a smart phone and so be able to swipe a card while you are at a Highland Games. You can even arrange that your Society Bank Account can take deposits from anyone you designate while not giving access to take out money.

And then you really need to have a much better web site where you can post great hi-res pictures of events you put on or attend. But you also need to get that site updated on a regular basis so it's worth their while to visit at least once a month if not more often. A picture in a newsletter is often not that interesting as you often can't make out the people in it and limited space doesn't do justice to an event.

You also need to engage your membership and encourage them to get in touch when they've done anything significant. Like did their son or daughter do anything special at school that they'd like to boast about? Has the father or mother started a new business or joined a new company? Would any of the membership be willing to offer advice on any special topic to a fellow clan member?

And topics on the clan web site need not be restricted to clan affairs. Where a member has special knowledge on a topic perhaps they could do an article on that topic that would then go up on the web site?

Electric Scotland can help provide dynamic content to clan web sites. By simply creating a new page on your site you could embed our own ScotNews and What's New feeds at Electric Scotland onto your own web site. We provide a wee bit of java code that you just need to post onto the page. Then.. when anyone visits the page they get the latest news and thus once setup you don't need to do anything else to keep it running.

You also need to know that while Scots are a friendly bunch they often know little about clan matters. I often think more time should be devoted to educating local Scots on the role of the clans and telling them how important Diaspora Scots see them. That could mean if a local Scot with links to Clan Leslie might then contact the Clan Leslie Society in New Zealand as he is going there for business and can get some advice on the best place to stay or possible companies to visit. All that would be needed is someone willing to devote a wee bit of time to a fellow clan member.

So why are your members members? What motivated them to join and why should they continue to be members? You need to find out and do something with the answers.

And if you are already a member of a clan society then perhaps you could make suggestions to the society on what you would like to see. Should you feel you are not getting value from your membership then you need to tell them that. Are you enjoying the newsletter or not? Again tell them if you don't see value from the newsletter and suggest what else they might do to keep your interest. Mind

that many clans that produce a newsletter often use the same format year after year but often that is because no-one is giving them feedback.

Also remember that it's a big world out there and so often working together with other web sites and organisations can be beneficial. Remember what I said earlier in this article... most Scots are not really engaged with the Scottish clans and hence if you would qualify to be a member of Clan X that doesn't mean you will bother to find out anything about your clan. So by reading about it on another web site or social network they might take the trouble to visit your site and perhaps become a member.

One such organisation that can help is...

COSCA that are holding a clan meeting at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games where some Clan Chiefs and representatives of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs will be in attendance. As a clan society you really should make every effort to attend that event. See <http://www.cosca.net/05/cosca/>

COSCA was founded in 1976 by Dr. Herbert MacNeil and a handful of other dedicated volunteers for the purpose of supporting Scottish Clan organizations and preserving Scottish heritage. The initial meeting was held at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, NC and they continue to honor this tradition by gathering on the mountain annually.

Today COSCA welcomes all kinds of Scottish American organizations as well as interested individuals to join in their work to strengthen and energize the Scottish American Diaspora and to preserve our Scottish heritage."

Visit <http://www.cosca.net> to find out more about them.

I might add there is a similar organisation for Canada, Clans And Scottish Societies Of Canada, at: <http://www.cassoc.ca/>

However people like COSCA, with the support of the clan societies, could do a survey at a Highland Games. Much like you see researchers in the street stopping people to ask questions. Why can't that be done at some of the Highland Games? It is critical. that some proper research is carried out not only with members but also the general Scots Diaspora.

Another point to be considered... does a person actually need to be associated with your clan to join it? Why couldn't someone "adopt" your clan as their own even if they had no clan connection? I have often seen huge "Sept" lists on clan sites with the obvious aim to appeal to as many people as possible to join the clan. However I believe that can be a bad move as that's what the list can look like... a society that is trying to get as many people to join as possible and picking names out of the air. I have never yet seen any clan provide any information at all as to why a Sept name is a member of the clan. And I know for a fact that at least some clan chiefs don't know either. So some transparency is needed to back up these lists and not to do that is really being dishonest.

And of course Electric Scotland can help if you send us copies of your newsletter we can add them to the site and even make announcements in this newsletter. We also added a comments system to every page of our site so you could use that to report on things to do with your clan. Use it to tell people of a clan event or a tent you will be running at a Highland Games. But do also come back to give a report on how it went.

While Electric Scotland does have a whole ton of information on Scottish clans by no means everyone comes to the site to read about clans. We have a huge resource of Children's stories so many will just come to read these but they can go on to read other material. Our Robert Burns section is also huge with much unique content. Then of course being a huge history site people will come to learn about a history of a place in Scotland or some aspect of Scottish history like sport, music, farming, and loads of other topics. We have over 100 popular Scottish Songs on the site and many use that to help them put on a Scottish themed party. So while they didn't come to read about your clan they might just check it out while they are here and of course we do provide links to any clan society we are aware of.

I hope this lengthy article is of interest and I'd just encourage clan societies and their members to get more involved with each other. I have created a thread in our Electric Scotland Community where you can contribute your thoughts on this. See <http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/3999-Clan-Societies-Where-are-they-going>

Welcome to TinyURL!™

Was told about this service and thought I'd share it with you.

Are you sick of posting URLs in emails only to have it break when sent causing the recipient to have to cut and paste it back together? Then you've come to the right place. By entering in a URL in the text field below, we will create a tiny URL that will not break in email postings and never expires.

See the site at <http://tinyurl.com/>

Tourism

I was looking at tourism figures this week to see how Scotland is doing. This was as a result on getting an email on the statistics for the USA...

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Commerce today released travel and tourism data on annual 2012 arrivals, and a new forecast that suggests continued strong growth in arrivals through 2018, following a record-breaking year for international travel and tourism arrivals and spending in 2012.

International travel and tourism spending reached a record \$168.1 billion, up 10 percent from 2011. The increase was the result of a surge in international visitors to the United States: in 2012, a record 67.0 million international visitors came to the United States, an increase of 4.3 million from the year before.

Highlights of the 2012 arrivals data show that Canadian visitors set a record with 22.7 million visitors, up 6 percent. Mexico was second with a record 14.5 million arrivals, up 8 percent. The U.K., (-2 percent), Japan (+14 percent), and Germany (+3 percent) rounded out the top five.

For additional information on international travel and tourism spending, arrivals, or the forecast for travel to the United States for 2012-2018, visit <http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/index.html>.

From Scotland I was able to glean that 2012 showed around a 4.6% decline. See http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/tourismstatistics.aspx

Clearly Scotland has a problem attracting visitors and I suspect that is partly because the Scots Diaspora is now more divorced from Scotland. The older generation of Scots who still had direct ties with Scotland are dying off and the younger generation don't have the same enthusiasm for Scotland that their parents and grand parents had. The other reason would be the major growth of tourism not only in the US but the emerging markets of Asia. People today have more choice than they ever had before.

As I mentioned in my above post on Clan Societies this is a time when Scotland needs to have an official presence at the Highland Games in North America and Australasia. These events can attract 10,000 to over 100,000 visitors per event and a lot of them could travel to Scotland and could do business with us. To ignore this market is just stupid and I really don't understand how we can appoint such inept and stupid people to run our tourism and business organisations. I mean to have an official presence at Highland Games in North America might cost around £5 million to setup but much less than that annually thereafter but it could well deliver £5 billion in new revenue for the country.

Seems this is a week where I am giving advice so enough of that and onto the rest of what is happening with us.

Electric Canadian

Canada and its Provinces
Now added The Pacific Province Volume 22 - Section XI.

You can get to this collection towards the foot of our Canadian History page at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canada/index.htm>

Black Watch of Canada
I found a quite lengthy video about the Black Watch of Canada and have made it available at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/bwatch/blackwatch_videos.htm

Canadian History Videos
This is a series of 17 x 1 hour and 40 minute videos about the history of Canada produced by the CBC and available on YouTube. I

have organised this page so that each can be viewed in order.

I am aware many younger people don't want to take the time to read lots of history and so I thought this series of videos would make it easier for them to learn about the history of Canada.

You can view these at http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canada/canadianhistory_videos.htm

I also added an overview video of Canada to our index page which is around 1 hour in length which you can view at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/>

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks edition was compiled by Margaret Hamilton with a couple of interesting articles from her and also several good articles in the Synopsis.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org>

Electric Scotland

The Scottish Historical Review

We have now started on Volume 8 and added this week the January 1911 issue. You can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/volume08.htm>

There is a good article "Edinburgh in 1544 and Hertford's Invasion" which makes a good read. In it we learn...

For thoughe the Englysshe men brinne our houses we care lytell therefore; we shall make them agayne chepe ynough; we axe but thre days to make them agayne, if we may gete foure or fyve stakes and bowes to cover them.' Sturdy Scots!

So only three days to build a house in those days!

Another article about the adventures of two Glasgow merchants, as revealed in the documents preserved in the Public Record Office, London, and the French Foreign Office, Paris, not only add some touches to this interesting sketch, but also throw fresh light on the condition of affairs at home which sent not a few Scots into voluntary or enforced exile.

You can read the previous issues at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/>

Songs Of Scotland, Prior To Burns

This book is by Robert Chambers who is famous for collecting old Scottish Songs.

Added this week are...

When She Cam Ben She Bobbit

My Auld Man

Robin Redbreast's testament

You can get to this book at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers_robert.htm

Songs of John Henderson

Got in two more songs, Trystin' Wi' Chrissie and The Toon Ha' Dince.

You can read these at the foot of the page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

The Annals of Scottish Natural History

Now added Volume 13 1904.

You can read this at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/nature/natural_history.htm

Caledonia Monthly Magazine

Have added additional articles from this magazine...

A Dissertation on "The Fairies" by an Old Highland Seer
Shanks-Naigie

You can get to these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/newspapers/caledonia>

Christina's Column

Got in her column for 5th June 2013 which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/130605.htm>

Her other columns can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/index.htm>

Tasmina's column

Got in her column for 3rd June 2013, Playing by the Rules

You can read this weeks issue at <http://www.electricscotland.com/lifestyle/tasmina/130603.htm>

The rest of her columns can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/lifestyle/tasmina>

Scottish Stories for Young Readers

Now made a start on the book "Scottish Stories from the Treasure Chest" in which the fourth story is about "Mother's Love" which can be read at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/stories/mothers_love.htm

You can get to the other stories in this section at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/stories/>

A History of the Parish of Neilston

By David Pride (1910)

Have now completed this book by adding the final seven chapters.

You can get to these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/neilston/index.htm>

Andrew Lang, writer and journalist.

We are starting a profile on him and some of his works.

Have added more stories from his book on "A Batch of Golfing Papers"...

Dr. Johnson on the Links

By Andrew Lang

Concerning the Caddies of St. Andrews

By R. Whyte Gibson

You can get to this page and the stories at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/lang/>

Thomas Dykes

(1850, Dundonald, Ayrshire - 1916, London, England) Journalist and Author

This week we added to his book "All Round Sport with Fish, Fur and Feather"...

The Puddleton and Ground v The Cotton Spinners

Wild Duck Shooting on the Border

You can read these at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/dykes_thomas.htm

History of West Calder

Compiled from various sources of information by a Native (1885)

No up to chapter 12 of this book.

The history of West Calder would not be complete without reference to the oldest and most historic family in the parish, viz.— The Douglases of Badds.

The history of this family (who still possess part at least of the ancient patrimony) is a very interesting one, and deserves a chapter to itself.

You can read this chapter at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/westcalder/chapter08.htm>

You can read the other chapters at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/westcalder/index.htm>

Scottish Clans

I spent some time on YouTube this past weekend and found quite a few historical videos on several Scottish clans. This list includes Clan Johnston, Clan MacKenzie, Clan Campbell, Clan Fraser, Clan MacLeod, Clan MacDonald, Clan MacGregor, Clan Gordon, Clan MacLean, Clan Armstrong, Clan MacNeil, Clan Cameron, Clan Robertson, Clan Scott, Clan Leslie, Clan Hamilton and Clan Colquhoun. Almost all the videos are around thirty minutes playing time but a few have been split into 3 x 10 minute segments.

I've embedded these videos on the individual clan history page. To find your clan go to:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/clanmenu.htm>

Robert Burns

I found a very good documentary film about Robert Burns done by the BBC and is some 1.5 hours in duration and you can watch this at http://www.electricscotland.com/burns/burns_video.htm

Scots-Irish

Also found a good documentary about the Scots-Irish which is some 1 hour 40 mins in duration and done by Senator Jim Webb. You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotsirish/scotsirishndx.htm>

Australia

I added a link to a video on Australian History to our index page for Australia... it's the second link down and can be viewed at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/australia/index.htm>

I was looking on YouTube for a good meaty video on Australia but couldn't find one so if any of you out there know of one please let me know. I'd like it to be at least 50 minutes in length.

New Zealand

Thomas Devine: The Lowland Clearances and the Scottish Exodus to New Zealand.

This is a one hour talk given by Tom Devine and I added it to the top of our New Zealand history page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nz/index.htm>

I also have a video about New Zealand at the foot of their index page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/newzealand/index.htm>

Shinty

While I have some very good information on the game of Shinty I am aware that perhaps many people have never seen it played. So I found a YouTube video on the game of Shinty and have added that to our site at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/sport/shinty1.htm>

And I thought you might be interested in listening to this song by a Former shinty player who is a bizarre internet star with a referee tune.

You can view this at:

<http://youtu.be/bEsZa9426aE>

Scotland in Europe

We got in an update on this very important paper and anyone that can vote in the Scottish independence referendum should read it.

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

I might add there was also an update on the paper on "The EFTA Side of the European Economic Area" which you can read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/efta.htm>

Videos on Tartan

I found a few videos about Tartan. One about how tartan is made but also a video on How to Wear a Full Formal Kilt Outfit with All Accessories. Then I found a couple of useful videos on how to sit in a kilt and also how to measure yourself for a kilt.

You can view these at http://www.electricscotland.com/tartans/tartan_videos.htm

Scotland's Towns and Cities

Found some good video on a few of Scotland's towns and cities that are around 24 minutes in length. They include, Kelso, Kirkcudbright, Stirling, Elgin, Paisley, St Andrews, Dumfries, Rothesay and Edinburgh.

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

Scottish Golf

Added a few videos about Scottish Golf. They include, "The Way Golf Began", "The Old Course", "History of the Open" in four parts and "Moray Golf Course:.

You can view these at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/sport/golf_videos.htm

The Book of Arran

I came across this publication in 2 volumes and added it to our Arran page. While on that page I viewed once again the beautiful video of the island.

You can get to see these volumes and enjoy the video at:

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

Learning Gaelic

Started a page based on a YouTube series on learning Gaelic. This can be seen at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/gaelic/learning_gaelic.htm

And finally...

THE OFFICIAL TEXAS SHERIFF EXAM

A young Texan grew up wanting to be a lawman. He grew up big, 6' 2", strong as a longhorn, and fast as a mustang. He could shoot a bottle cap tossed in the air at 40 paces. When he finally came of age, he applied to where he had only dreamed of working: the West Texas Sheriff's Department.

After a series of tests and interviews, the Chief Deputy finally called him into his office for the young man's last interview.

The Chief Deputy said, "You're a big strong kid and you can really shoot. So far your qualifications all look good, but we have, what you might call, an "Attitude Suitability Test", that you must take before you can be accepted. We just don't let anyone carry our badge, son." Then, sliding a service pistol and a box of ammo across the desk, the Chief said, "Take this pistol and go out and shoot: six illegal aliens, six lawyers, six meth dealers, six Muslim extremists, six Democrats, and a rabbit."

"Why the rabbit?" queried the applicant.

"You pass," said the Chief Deputy. "When can you start?"

Snap!

I heard about a keen amateur photographer attending a dinner party who was enthusiastically showing all his moody pictures from a trip to the Highlands. The dinner party hostess kept telling him as she looked at the pictures: "These are great! You must have a very good camera."

The photographer got his own back when he was leaving, by telling the hostess: "What a lovely meal! You must have some very good pots and pans."

And that's it for now and hope you all have a great weekend

Alastair