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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 13th, 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

I note that the Bank of England Governor has said he now believes that The EU faces more financial stability risk than the UK through the Brexit process and the "scale of risk" to the UK has declined.

I am finding that between reading the global news and working on the SIP project I simply don't have much time to do my more normal history research. I will say I'm very much enjoying reading many of the Brexit articles from many perspectives and also doing the research for the SIP project. However while I'm enjoying this work I'm of course not sure if you are also enjoying the results so you might let me know about your views on this.

I have also been watching the Trump situation in America with a lot of interest. It seems to me he's keen to explore getting better relations with Russia but being attacked for daring to think that way. I also am amused at how the ethics are of divorcing him from his business. For the life of me I can't see how a billionaire global businessman can in any way divorce himself from that. I think America needs to grow up as they need to recognise that you simply can't divorce a businessman from his business. Trump is a one off and hence he needs to be dealt with differently in my view.

I also note that the media often demand resignations of politicians who get things wrong. I thus can't help but wonder why we are not demanding the resignations of those media people that also got it wrong. After all we are meant to get our information from them so if they are steering us in the wrong direction then they should really go.

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.

SNP clearly embarrassed over oil revenue collapse

The SNP has been accused of being clearly embarrassed by the collapse in North Sea oil revenues after it emerged it had failed to publish an analysis of the industry for 18 months.

Read more at:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/342701/snp-clearly-embarrassed-over-oil-revenue-collapse-says-tory-msp/>

Morgan Stanley is 'eating humble pie' over its post-Brexit economic forecasts

Morgan Stanley, one of the world's biggest investment banks, is in its own words eating humble pie about its post-Brexit economic forecasts.

Read more at:

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/morgan-stanley-brexit-economic-forecasts-2017-1>

The Scottish pioneer whose plan for a basic income could transform Britain

In the city where Adam Smith developed the free-market theories that inspired Thatcherism nearly 300 years later, a young Labour politician is pursuing an economic vision that takes a drastically different approach to the wealth of nations

Read more at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/08/universal-basic-income-glasgow-welfare-revolution>

Nicola Sturgeon rules out indyref in 2017

Scotland's first minister has explicitly ruled out holding a second referendum on independence this year.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-38560646>

UK in front seat for US trade deal

A US-UK trade deal would be a priority, Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Bob Corker said after meeting Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-38565192>

Scottish jobs slump to 7-year low

The number of Scots finding permanent work has slumped to a seven-year low and pay levels have flatlined

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/underperforming-economy-sees-scottish-jobs-slump-to-7-year-low-1-4335601>

Carney: Brexit risks now lower

The immediate risk posed by Brexit to the UK economy has declined, the governor of the Bank of England has told MPs.

View a video clip at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-38587625>

Reasons to leave the single market

We need greater distance from the Euro

Read more at:

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read\\_full=12995&article=www.thinkscotland.org](http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=12995&article=www.thinkscotland.org)

Facebook live: future of the fintech industry in Scotland

It is one of Scotland's fastest growing industries but what does the future hold?

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/facebook-live-future-of-the-fintech-industry-in-scotland-1-4337272>

Highland Warriors

Scotland's role in training agents to fight the Nazis

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170111-the-surprising-place-where-wwii-agents-learnt-to-fight-nazis>

Solving the mystery of the Brexit bounce

Why the UK economy has confounded its critics

Read more at:

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read\\_full=12996&](http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read_full=12996&)

Put the family before the state

By Dr Sutherland MacNeill

Read more at:

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read\\_full=12997&](http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read_full=12997&)

## Electric Canadian

Chronicles of Canada

Added Volume 13: The United Empire Loyalists; A Chronicle of the Great Migration

I might add that I've found text copies of these volumes so have added a link to them on the page.

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

Here is a wee story about Newfoundland which you might enjoy...

The Journey

By David Torrance from the Scottish Review

A few months ago I flew via Iceland to Alaska, which is as far west as you can go in North America. En route my no-frills aircraft passed over Greenland and Canada's Northwestern Passages, revealing moon-like landscapes of mountain tops protruding from blankets of snow. I guess we must have flown over the northern tip of Labrador, although I wasn't conscious of this at the time.

I'd already made plans to finish my journey in Newfoundland (the island below Labrador), a Canadian province that had long interested me, not only because it's a relatively new part of Canada (it joined the confederation in 1949, a decade before Alaska joined the United States), but because of its strong Scottish and (particularly) Irish heritage.

I remember hearing Nicola Sturgeon claim during the Scottish independence referendum that no country had ever voluntarily given up its independence. Well, within living memory Newfoundland did precisely that; long a self-governing British dominion, in 1948 its people voted in two separate referendums. In the first, 44.5% supported 'responsible government' (i.e. independence) while 41.5% chose confederation with Canada.

As neither had gained more than half the popular vote, the British government held another ballot which produced 52.3% for confederation and 47.7% for self-government, a Brexit-like margin which produced controversy then and since. Negotiations followed, and once the British North America Act had passed through parliament in London, Newfoundland officially joined Canada at midnight on 31 March 1949.

The backstory, naturally, concerned money, chiefly an extremely high debt load arising from the first world war and construction of the Newfoundland railway. In the capital of St John's, the eastern railway terminus still stands, now a museum devoted to transport on the island, although the railway itself last chuntered westward in the late 1980s. A quid pro quo for the loss of the railway (and the dominion's) independence in 1949 was the transfer of the debt liabilities to Ottawa, but even after confederation the railway struggled to turn a profit.

In its heyday, however, whole families of Scottish immigrants – most notably the Reids – had managed the Newfoundland railway, while the associated fleet of boats, a logistical necessity given Newfoundland's island status, had all been constructed in the riverside cities once renowned for shipbuilding: Glasgow, Dundee, Paisley and Greenock. The Railway Coastal Museum in St John's included beautifully-maintained models of every one, once familiar to generations of Newfies.

But it's Newfoundland's Irish heritage that dominates. Downtown St John's has the biggest concentration of Irish bars I've seen anywhere since Detroit, while the headquarters of the Irish Benevolent Society and the twin spires of St John's Cathedral dominate the Fort Townshend area of the city. More strikingly, many of the locals speak with a distinctly Irish accent. So high was the population flow from southern Ireland that the distinctive pattern of speech embedded itself, passing from one generation to the next.

Judi Dench captured it well in the film of Annie Proulx's novel 'The Shipping News', which also features Kevin Spacey as a small-town reporter. The movie (and I assume the original book) repeatedly emphasises Newfoundland's distinct geography, location and spirit, all of which strike the visitor too. When I was there St John's and the surrounding area was covered in a foot of snow, which the local authorities seemed to be doing little to shift from the roads and pedestrian thoroughfares. I didn't mind so much, for it added to the already considerable atmosphere.

One day a friend of a friend drove me to Cape Spear, with its windswept views of St John's Harbour, and then to Signal Hill, where Marconi received the first transatlantic morse code transmission (from Cornwall) on 12 December 1901. Before that it had witnessed the final battle of the seven years' war.

The French actually still retain territory off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador (as it became in 2001), an overseas 'collectivity' called Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the only remnant of the colonial empire once known as New France. Just over 6,000 'New French' remain on the island, spending their euros and voting in elections to the European parliament, while later this year they'll help elect a new president.

'Newfoundland French', meanwhile, refers to the language spoken on the Port au Port Peninsula of Newfoundland, which can trace its origins to the continental French fishermen who settled there in the late-19th and early-20th centuries rather than the Québécois. The Basque and Portuguese also fished seasonally in the area, further adding to the dizzying array of nationalities packed into the island.

Today there's a secessionist movement of sorts in Newfoundland, mainly based on perceived 'broken promises' arising from the 1949 confederation agreement. Much of it concerns flags, while potential premiers habitually appeal to a strong sense of Newfoundland identity in order to win office, so not so different from another stateless nation I know well.

## Electric Scotland

A History of Secondary Education in Scotland

An Account of Scottish Secondary Education from early times to the Education Act of 1908 by John Strong, M.A., F.R.S.E. (1909)

Read this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/education/historysecondaryedu.pdf>

Due to there being many Scots in New Zealand and Australia I thought I'd bring you large histories of both countries this week...

History of New Zealand

By G. W. Rusden (Second Edition) in 3 volumes (1895) and by Alfred Saunders in 2 volumes

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

History of Australia

By G. W. Rusden (1897) Second Edition in 3 volumes

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/historyaus.htm>

Scottish Innovation Party

Added pages for Devolution, Education and Fiance which you can get to at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/index.htm>

I might add here that this is a longer term project. I am trying to add a page for each major subject with some decent reading material but fully intend to add to these once I get them up.

I thought I'd also create a page for Devolution as it isn't clear to me how having a devolved government has benefited Scotland. In fact there is a dearth of reports on this if you exclude the various political party reports.

It does seem to me that there are two areas where we have done something innovative in that we are building more public housing and have committed to green renewable energy but other than that I can't find any other benefits.

## The Story

Do you believe in fairies? The winged kind? Well I confess I've always believed in the little people myself. In fact as a child my father used to tell me bed time stories about "Earnie the Elf" which I thoroughly enjoyed. And so I thought I'd bring you part of the introduction to the book...

Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales

Selected and Edited with an Introduction by Sir George Douglas, Bart.

It is only within comparatively recent years that the homely stories in the mouths of the country-people have been constituted a brunch of learning, and have had applied to them, as such, the methods and the terminology of science. To doubt a very noteworthy gain to knowledge has resulted from this treatment,—a curious department of research has been opened up, and light has been cast upon various outside things of greater importance than the subject of study itself. But, side by side with this gain to knowledge, is there not, involved in the method of treatment indicated, a loss to the stories themselves? Classified, tabulated, scientifically named, they are no longer the wild free product of Nature that we knew and loved:—they are become, so to speak, a collection of butterflies in a case, an album of pressed wild flowers. No doubt they are still very interesting, and highly instructive; but their poetry, their

brightness, the fragrance which clung about them in their native air, their native soil, is in large measure gone! Well then,—with all due recognition of the value of the labours of the scientific folklorist, the comparative mythologist, whose work I would not for one moment be understood to undervalue,—is there not room, even at the present day, to study these stories from another point of view, and that the simplest and most obvious one—the point of view, I mean, of the story-teller pure and simple? One would hope that the time had not yet come when the old tales, considered on their own merits, have entirely ceased to charm; and it is an undeniable fact that there are still persons among us who would regard it as a real and personal loss could they be made to believe that the ideal hero of their childhood, as he falls heroically, in a bloody battle, wounded to the death, is in reality a myth, or an allegory to embody the setting of the sun; and who would even feel themselves aggrieved could they, be brought to realise that the bugbear of their baby years—their own particular bugbear—is common also to the aborigines of Polynesia. So great is the power of early association. Well then, my proposal is to consider the Tales of the Scottish Peasantry simply from the literary, critical, or story-teller's point of view,—from the point of view, that is, of persons who actually tell them, to whom they are actually told.

I suppose that most nations, whilst their life has remained primitive, have practised the art of storytelling; and certainly the Scotch were no exceptions to the rule. Campbell of Isla, who wrote about thirty years ago, records that in his day the practice of story-telling still lingered in the remote Western Islands of Barra; where, in the long winter nights, the people would gather in crowds to listen to those whom they considered good exponent of the art. At an earlier date,—but still, at that time, within living memory,—the custom survived at Poolewe in Ross-shire where the young people were used to assemble at night to hear the old ones recite the tales which they had learned from their fore-fathers. Here, and at earlier dates in other parts of the country also, the demand for stories would farther be supplied by travelling pedlars, or by gaberlunzie men, or pauper wandering musicians and entertainers, or by the itinerant shoemaker or tailor—"Whip-the-Cat" as he was nicknamed,—both of which last were accustomed to travel through thinly-populated country districts, in the pursuit of their calling, and to put up for the night at farm-houses,—where, whilst plying their needles, they would entertain the company with stories.

The arrival of one of these story-tellers in a village was an important event. As soon as it became known, there would be a rush to the house where he was lodged, and every available seat—on bench, table, bed, beam, or the floor—would quickly be appropriated. And then, for hours together—just like some first-rate actor on a stage—the story-teller would hold his audience spellbound. During his recitals, the emotions of the reciter were occasionally very strongly excited, as were also those of his listeners,—who at one time would be on the verge of tears, at another would give way to loud laughter. There were many of these listeners, by the way, who believed firmly in all the extravagances narrated.

And such rustic scenes as these, as I hope presently to show, have by no means been without their marked effect upon Scottish literature.

In his tour through the Islands, Campbell of Isla —my authority for these particulars—visited one of the old story-tellers in his home. The man was far advanced in years, and he lived in a rude hut on the shore at South Uist. Campbell describes the scene in detail. The hut consisted of one room only. The fireplace was the floor, and the chimney a hole above it,—so that the air was dense with peat-smoke, whilst the rafters were hung with streamers and festoons of soot. The old man himself had the manner of a practised narrator,—he would chuckle at certain places in his story, and, like an Ancient Mariner or like one of the Weird Sisters, would lay a withered finger on the listener's knee when he came to the terrifying parts. A little boy in a kilt stood at his knee, gazing in his wrinkled face, and devouring every word. Whilst the story lasted, three wayfarers dropped in, listened for a while, and then proceeded on their way. The daylight streamed down the chimney, lighting up a tract in the blue mist of the peat-smoke and falling on the white hair and brown wrinkled face of the old man, as he sat on a low stool by the fire, and on the rest of the dwelling, with its furniture of boxes and box-beds, dresser, dishes, gear of all sorts,—until at last it faded away, through shades of deepening brown, to the black darkness of the smoked roof and the corner where the peat was stored.

To turn now from the story-teller to the stories.

Perhaps the most characteristic of the Highland tales are those—somewhat tedious they are, it must be confessed, with all their repetitions of dialogues, all their reproductions of what is practically one situation—which deal with heroes and giants. The shortest kind of popular tale, on the other hand, is that which is concerned with the dumb animals,—by no means dumb, of course, in the stories. The Highlands, too, are particularly rich in these tales; and it is easy to understand how the country-people generally—living so near to nature as they do—may come to have an insight into, and an appreciation of, the character of the brute animals; together with a sympathy with them in their tussle for existence, which is not attainable by those who lead a more artificial life. Some of the apologues and traits of animal life in which this knowledge and appreciative sympathy have been embodied are decidedly naive and quaint. nor do they lack a pungent human application.

The class of stories next to be considered displays a higher degree of fancy. And it must nor be imagined that this quality of fancy is anything less than a characteristic attribute of the minds of many of the Scotch peasantry. It displays itself in its simplest form perhaps in their nomenclature—in the names which they have given either to natural objects, or to places which are characterised by some striking natural feature. In the Highlands, the Gaelic place-names are often very elaborate indeed; but to turn now to the Lowlands, A waterfall up the Selkirkshire hills, where the water, after pouring dark over a declivity, daslies down in white f<iam among rocks, is known as The Grey Mare's Tail; twin hills in Roxburghshire, which have beautifully rounded matched summits, have been christened

Maiden's Paps. Then, the cirrus, or curl-cloud, is in rustic speech, "goat's hair"; the phenomenon of the Northern Lights, among the fishermen of Shetland, is the "Merry Dancers"; the Pleiades are the "Twinklers"; the constellation of Orion, with its star iota pendant as if from a girdle, is the "King's Ellwand," or yard-measure; the noxious froth which adheres to the stalks of rank vegetation at mid-summer is the "Witches' spittle." There is a root of poetry, I think, in this aptitude for giving names; and, as a matter of fact, in the Lowlands of Scotland, rustic poets and rhymesters are far from uncommon. Nor are the peasantry, in their name-giving, wanting in literary allusiveness—allusiveness, that is, to the only book which has ever obtained universal currency among them. For example, among the fishermen of the East Coast, the black mark below the gills of a haddock is "Peter's Thumb"; whilst a coarse plant commonly found in corn-fields, which has its leaves strangely clouded and stained as if with droppings, and is called, I believe, by the botanists, *Polygonum persicgrict*, is locally known on the Borders as "The Flower wh\*ch grew at the Foot of the Cross."

Perhaps the deepest thinkers among a people who have their philosophers as well as their dreamers, are to be found among the hill shepherds. And it is chiefly through the instrumentality of one of these hill shepherds that we can now, in fancy, enter that realm of fancy, the world of Fairyland. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, was one: of those common men, plus genius, who every now and then in the history of literature give to a whole world of floating thought, fancy, tradition, a permanent substantial form. No man in literature is his master in the weird tale. No man, but Shakespeare—not even excepting Drayton—has written so well of the fairies.

Hogg was born in the Arcadia of Scotland, Ettrick Forest, where, as Scott tells us, the belief in fairies lingered longer than elsewhere—about the year 1770. When he was a young man, the spirit of emulation was stirred in his breast by the example of the poet Burns. And so, as he wandered through the pastoral solitudes, keeping his sheep, he carried an ink-horn slung from his neck, and taught himself to write,— and so committed his first poem to paper. And as he thus wandered and mused, he is said to have fallen asleep one day, upon a green hill-side, to dream the dream of Kilmeny, and to bear her image in his heart for ever after.

The story of Kilmeny is that of a girl of poetic nature, a lover of solitude, who, wandering alone at twilight, disappears in a wild glen among the hills. Such is sought for by her friends—at first hopefully, at last despairingly. No trace of her is found. Years pass, and the mystery remains unsolved; but—at the close of the seventh year, in the same twilight hour in which she had vanished, Kilmeny returns to her home. She has been rapt away by fairies, with whom the intervening years have been spent. But in the midst of Fairyland, her heart still yearns tenderly to her home; and when seven years have expired, and the fairies have no longer power to detain her against her will, she chooses to leave the life of pleasure which she leads among them, to return to the common earth. Such is an outline of the story; but the story is the least part of the poem. Its charm lies in its exquisitely flowing and melodious verse, in its suggestion of the twilight world, and of a world of shadows—"a land where all things are forgotten" in its wistful tenderness,—in a word, in the unique and perfect aptness of the style to the subject. So magical, indeed, are the fairy touches throughout the writings of the Ettrick Shepherd, that one might almost be tempted to dream that the experience with which tradition credits Thomas the Rhymer had been shared by this rhymer of a later day.

#### THE FAIRY AND THE MILLER'S WIFE

One day as a mother was sitting rocking her baby to sleep, she was surprised, on looking up, to see a lady of elegant and courtly demeanour, so unlike any one she had ever seen in that part of the country, standing in the middle of the room. She had not heard any one enter, therefore you may judge it was with no little surprise, not unmingled with curiosity, that she rose to welcome her strange visitor. She handed her a chair, but she very politely declined to be seated. She was very magnificently attired; her dress was of the richest green, embroidered round with spangles of gold, and on her head was a small coronet of pearls. The woman was still more surprised at her strange request. She asked, in a rich musical voice, if she would oblige her with a basin of oatmeal. A basin full to overflowing was immediately handed to her, for the woman's husband, being both a farmer and miller, had plenty of meal command. The lady promised to return it, and named the day she would do so. One of the children put out her hand to get hold of the grand lady's spangles, but told her mother afterwards that she felt nothing. The mother was afraid the child would lose the use of her hands, but no such calamity ensued. It would have been very ungrateful in her fairy majesty if she had struck the child powerless for touching her dress, if indeed such power were hers. But to return to our story. The very day mentioned the oatmeal was returned, not by the same lady, but by a curious little figure with a yelping voice; she was likewise dressed in green. After handing the meal, she yelled out, "Braw meal; it's the top pickle of the sin corn." It was excellent; and what was very strange, all the family were advised to partake of it but one servant lad, who spurned the fairy's meal; and he dying shortly after, the miller and his wife firmly believed it was because he refused to eat of the meal. They also firmly believed their first visitor was no less a personage than the Queen of the Fairies, who, having dismissed her court, had not one maid of honour in waiting to obey her commands. A few nights after this strange visit, as the miller was going to bed, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and on its being opened by him, with a light in his hand, there stood a little figure dressed in green, who, in a shrill voice, but very polite manner, requested him to let on the water and set the mill in order, for she was going to grind seine com. The miller did not dare to refuse, so did as she desired him. She told him to go to bed again, and he would find all as he had left it. He found everything in the morning as she said he would. So much for the honesty of fairies.

You can read this book at:

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

And that's it for this week and as the weekend is almost here hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair