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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for July 21st, 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 new security is being implemented for flights to the USA in that any electronic device larger than a smart phone must be checked and may not be allowed in your carry on luggage. Toronto airport is saying you need to arrive for your flight at least 3 hours before your flight. This is a major story in Canada but I guess this will apply world wide.

I also note the major fires in BC and that a contingent of Australian fire fighters have arrived to help out. That's one of the benefits of being in the Commonwealth.

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.

Everything is ancient: Lego broch completed

An Iron Age broch recreated in Lego goes on public display this week.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-40593010>

NHS ranked number one health system

The NHS has been ranked the number one health system in a comparison of 11 countries.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/health-40608253>

Project Umubano is the best of Conservative endeavour

This year marks the 10th birthday of Project Umubano, the Conservative Party's social action project in Rwanda.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/project-umubano-is-the-best-of-conservative-endeavour>

How to prepare for a US-UK trade deal

At the G20 summit last weekend the US president, Donald Trump, repeated his promise of making a free-trade deal with the UK a priority.

Read more at:

<http://moneyweek.com/how-to-prepare-for-a-us-uk-trade-deal/>

The disadvantages of Single Market membership remain as clear as ever

Many of the arguments in favour of the UK remaining a member of the Customs Union or Single Market, by way of EFTA or the EEA, have been resuscitated in the light of the election.

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/disadvantages-single-market-membership-remain-clear-ever/>

Brexiters need a real reason to leave the EU, just look at Italy

Italy is a complete basket case economically, and with €2 trillion worth of public debt, it's still the great bale of straw on the camel's back that could take the whole project down.

Read more at:

<http://www.cityam.com/268613/if-brexiters-need-real-reason-leave-eu-just-look-italy>

What's better? Fracking or Wind Turbines?

Wind energy is good, benign and undisruptive, and that obtaining shale gas by hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' is damaging and disruptive.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=13225

Super seaweed could have major impact on Scotland's burgeoning aquaculture industry

The sector, which includes fish farming and seaweed harvest, is currently worth £1.8 billion to the economy, but the Scottish Government aims to double this to £3.6b by 2030 to make the country a global leader.

Read more at:

<http://www.thenational.scot/news/15416485.Super-seaweed-could-have-major-impact-on-Scotland-s-burgeoning-aquaculture-industry/>

What are the essential ingredients for Brexit?

Brexit was always going to mean a bit of give and take. The process of negotiating our departure from the European Union needs flexibility on both sides.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/what-are-the-essential-ingredients-for-brexit>

Face of ancient Pictish man digitally reconstructed

He died in his 40s, having spent a life engaged in hard work. Now, 1500 years after this Pictish man's death, we have an idea of what he looked like thanks to digital reconstruction.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/face-of-ancient-pictish-man-digitally-reconstructed-1-4507468>

Edinburgh military tattoo to expand worldwide

Organisers of armed forces display plan to visit three cities in China in 2020, with further ambitions to tour the Americas and India

Read more at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/16/edinburgh-military-tattoo-to-expand-worldwide-china>

Electric Canadian

Julie Payette, OC, CQ

The Next Governor General of Canada. Learn about her at:

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/07/13/biography-julie-payette-oc-cq>

Illustrated Historical Atlas of Prince Edward Island

Quite a faint publication but containing lots of maps which are an excellent research resource. You could extract a particular map and likely be able to edit the graphic to make it easier to read.

You can view this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/pei/pei.pdf>

Fishing Industry

The Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters is the National Sector Council for the fish harvesting industry in Canada.

Learn more at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/fishing/fishing.htm>

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 Unfathomable Absurdity of U.S. Public Discourse

<http://www.conradblack.com/1310/the-unfathomable-absurdity-of-us-public-discourse>

Electric Scotland

Brexit

I added a second article about "What are the essential ingredients for Brexit?"

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

Clan Wallace Society

Got in the Summer 2017 newsletter which you can read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/wallace/index.htm>

Montrose Year Book

Added the 1909 edition to the foot of our Montrose page which includes a number of wee articles on various locations in the area.

You can this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/montrose/>

The questionable economics of foreign aid

An article exploring whether aid works in Africa.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/foreignaid.htm>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Edited by Beth Gay

Got in the August 2017 section 2 issue which you can read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/>

Monastic Annals of Teviotdale

The History and Antiquities of the Abbeys of Jedburgh, Kelso, Melrose, and Dryburgh by The Rev. James Morton, B.D.

You can read this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/monastic_teviotdale.htm

An Attempt to explain the Origin and Meaning of the Early Interlaced Ornamentation

Found on the Ancient Sculptured Stones of Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man by Gilbert J. French (1858)

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/stones/attempttoexplain.pdf>

The Story

Balls of Rock-Crystal used as Charms

According to the Rev. C. W. King crystal was extensively used among the Romans for the manufacture of drinking-cups and similar vessels, and for personal ornaments. Mr King also quotes two passages from Propertius as evidence that balls of rock-crystal were carried by Roman ladies to keep the hands cool during the summer heat, a fashion, he adds, which is "kept up by the Japanese to the present day." In neither instance, however, can the passage quoted be understood to bear out his statement.

Orpheus appears to be the only writer of antiquity who ascribes any medicinal virtue to crystal, and he only recommends it as a cure for kidney disease by external application of the stone, and as a burning lens for sacrificial purposes. Pliny recommends a ball of rock-crystal as a cautery for the human body if held up in the rays of the sun. Marbodius recommends crystal powdered in honey for mothers nursing, to increase their supply of milk:—

"Hunc etiam quidam tritum cum melle propinant
Matribus infantes quibus assignantur alendi,

Quo potu credunt replerier ubera lacte."

In various parts of Europe, and especially in England, balls of rock-crystal have been found, mostly in connection with interments of the Iron Age. Many of these balls when found were enclosed within narrow bands of metal, chiefly of silver, but sometimes of gold or bronze. Formerly these balls were considered by archaeologists to have been used for magical purposes, but the general opinion now is that they were worn on the person as ornaments. At a much later period, however, the use of crystal balls for magical purposes appears to have been common in England. In Scotland rock-crystal has been used in the ornamentation of a number of objects of early date, but, with the exception of the superstitious practices associated with the balls described below, I have not been able to find any references to the use of crystal for magical purposes. Lhwyd mentions the use of the crystal balls among the Highlanders, and says they were held "in great esteem for curing of Cattle; and some on May Day put them into a Tub of Water, and besprinkle all their Cattle with the Water to prevent being Elf-struck, bewitch'd, &c."

Dr Anderson has suggested to me that previous to their use as curing-stones, the crystal balls, found in Scotland may have been used as vexilla, and, like the Baul Muluy of St Molio described below, have been borne into battle for the purpose of securing victory. This seems a not unlikely theory, and I think it is supported by the traditional account of the Clach-na-Bratach, and by the name given to the Glenlyon ball of rock-crystal. The account of the former was probably reduced to writing long after the actual facts had become confused by tradition, and perhaps it is not going too far to read in it a record of the discovery of the ball in a grave, and its subsequent use as a vexillum or standard carried by the clan to battle for the purpose of securing victory. According to Pennant, the Glenlyon ball was known as the "Clach Bhuai, or the Powerful Stone," but it is just as probable that the name was Clach Buaidh, or "Victory Stone." There is probably an allusion to the use of victory stones by the Highlanders in a letter to Wodrow the historian from the Rev. John Fraser, Episcopalian minister in the Highlands. The letter is dated 1702, and in it he says: "Ther was a great many fine and pretious stons amongst the Highlanders, many of which they hung about their necks of old, and keepd in their standards, and attributed more vertue to them [than] Albertus Magnus did, and that was too much."

A common name in the Highlands for these rock-crystal balls, which are apparently not common in Scotland, was Leug or Leigheagan.

The Clach-Dearg, or Stone of Ardvairlich, is a ball of rock-crystal, smaller than the Clach-na-bratach, mounted in a setting of four silver bands, with a ring at the top for suspension (fig. 1). It is supposed to have been brought from the East, and the workmanship of the silver mounting is also said to be Eastern. It was formerly held in great repute, particularly in diseases of cattle, parties coming from a distance of forty miles to obtain some of the water in which it had been dipped. The belief in the virtue of this charm continued till within thirty years ago. Various ceremonies had to be observed by those who wished to benefit by its healing powers. "The person who came for it to Ardvairlich was obliged to draw the water himself, and bring it into the house in some vessel, into which this stone was to be dipped. A bottle was filled and carried away; and in its conveyance home, if carried into any house by the way, the virtue was supposed to leave the water; it was therefore necessary, if a visit had to be paid, that the bottle should be left outside."



Fig. 1. Clach Dearg or Stone of Ardvairlich. {1.}



Fig. 2. Clach-na-Bratach, or "Stone of the Standard." {1.}

The Clach-na-Bratach, or Stone of the Standard, is an unmounted ball of rock-crystal $1 \frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter, and is stated to have been in the possession of the Clan Donnachaidh since the year 1315. It has already been twice described in the Proceedings, and is shown the full size in fig. 2.

The commonly accepted account of this ball is as follows:—The chief of that time (1315), on his way with his clan to join Bruce's army before the battle of Bannockburn, observed, on his standard being pulled up one morning, the ball glittering in a clod of earth hanging to the flagstaff. The chief showed the ball to his followers, and told them he felt sure its brilliant lights were a good omen, and foretold their victory in the forthcoming battle. Ever after the stone accompanied the clan whenever it was "out," and was always consulted as to the fate of the battle. Its last outing was at Sheriffmuir in 1715, when a large internal flaw was first observed. In a manuscript account of the ball, written between 1749 and 1780, and communicated to the Society by Sir Noel Paton, a slightly different account is given as follows:—

"There is a kind of stone in the family of Strowan which has been carry'd in their pockets by all their representatives time out of mind. Tradition says that this stone was found by Duncan Ard of Atholl, the founder of that family in Perthshire, in the following manner: as Duncan was in pursuit of M'Dougal of Lorn, who had made his escape from him out of the island of Lochranoch, night came upon him towards the end of Locherichk, and he and his men laid them down to rest, the Standard Bearer fixing the Staff of his Standard in the ground; next morning, when the man took hold of his Standard (as it happen'd to be in loose Spouty Ground near a fountain), the Staff, which probably was not very small or well polished in those Days, brought up a good deal of Gravel and Small Stones, and amongst the rest came up this Stone, which, being of a brightness almost equal to Crystal, Duncan thought fit to keep it. They ascribe to this Stone the Virtue of curing Diseases in Men and Beasts, especially Diseases whose causes and symptoms are not easily discover'd and many of the present Generation in Perthshire would think it very strange to hear the thing disputed."

In another manuscript, written about 1777, it is further stated of the Clach-na-Bratach that "it is still looked upon" in the Highlands "as very Precious on account of the Virtues they ascribe to it, for the cure of diseases in Men and Beasts, particularly for stoping the progress of an unaccountable mortality amongst cattle. Duncan (i.e., Donacha Reamhar) and all the representatives of the Family from Generation to Generation have carried this atone about their persons; and while it remained in Scotland, People came frequently from places at a great distance to get water in which it had been dipt for various purposes."

The last occasion on which this ball was used appears to have been somewhere between 1822 and 1830, when it was dipped with much gravity, by the chief, in a great china bowl filled with water from a "fairy" spring, after which the water was "distributed to a number of people who had come great distances to obtain it for medicinal purposes."

Clach Bhuai, or the Powerful Stone.—Pennant mentions having seen a ball of rock-crystal, or a "crystal gem" as he prefers to call it, mounted in silver, in the possession of Captain Archibald Campbell of Glenlyon, which he says was known as the Clach Bhuai, or the "Powerful Stone," and that good fortune was supposed to attend the owner of it. It appears to have been efficacious in diseases of mankind as well as animal, and Pennant adds that for the use of it "people came above 100 miles, and brought the water it was to be dipt in with them; for without that, in human cases, it was believed to have no effect." The ball is about 4 inch in diameter; and, according to the late Sir James Simpson, "to make the water in which it was dipped sufficiently medicinal and effective, the stone, during the process, required to be held in the hand of the Laird."

In the Fingask Collection, at present exhibited in the Museum of Science and Art, there is another of these balls of rock-crystal, about 1 1/4 inch in diameter, mounted in silver bands, the workmanship of which is probably of the end of the last or beginning of the present century. Unfortunately it has no history.

A fourth ball, also mounted in silver, for use as a charm, was exhibited to the Society on the 14th December 1891, by Mrs Gibson, Bankhead House, Forfar. It measures about 1 1/2 inch in diameter. Unfortunately nothing is known of its history beyond the fact that it has been in the possession of the family of the present owner since the middle of last century at least. The ball may have been found in England, as the first member of the family in whose possession it is known to have been was a schoolmaster in Great Yarmouth. The National Museum possesses a ball of rock-crystal, 1 3/8 inch in diameter, said to have been found somewhere in Fife many years ago. It is unmounted, and may have been found in a grave, like the balls mentioned in Appendix II.

In addition to the balls already described, there are also a number of other charms of rock-crystal, formerly held in high repute for the cure of various diseases.

Keppoch Charm-Stone.—This charm has already been described in the Proceedings by the Rev. Dr Stewart, of Nether Lochaber. He makes no mention, however, of what disease or diseases the stone was intended to cure, nor how the water in which it was dipped was administered to the patient. The charm is "an oval of rock-crystal, about the size of a small egg, fixed in a bird's claw of silver, and with a silver chain attached, by which it was suspended when about to be dipped." The charm was in the possession of the late Angus MacDonell of Insh, a cadet of the MacDonells of Keppoch and the Braes, who emigrated to Australia shortly after 1854, and is believed to have taken the charm with him. The following form of words was repeated as the charm was being dipped in the water

Let me dip thee in the water,
Thou yellow, beautiful gem of Power!
In water of purest wave,
Which (Saint) Bridget didn't permit to be contaminated.
In the name of the Apostles twelve,
In the name of Mary, Virgin of virtues,

And in the name of the High Trinity
And all the shining angels,
A blessing on the gem,
A blessing on the water, and
A healing of bodily ailments to each suffering creature.

"To understand the reference to St Bridget in the incantation, it is necessary to mention that there is a well near Keppoch, called Tobar-

Bhrìde (Bridget's Well), from which a small streamlet issues. It was from this stream that the water was taken into which the charm-stone was to be dipped."

The Marquess of Breadalbane possesses a charm of rock-crystal set in silver, which was exhibited in the Glasgow Exhibition, and has been figured. The setting is an octagonal disc of silver, with the crystal secured to one face, and with eight pearls set round it at regular intervals. The crystal is probably the one referred to in the "Inventar of geir left by Sir Coline not to be disponit upon," as follows:—"Ane stone of the quantitie of half a hen's eg sett in silver, being flatt at the ane end and round at the other end lyke a peir, quhilk Sir Coline Campbell, first Laird of Glenvrquhy, woir quhen he faught in battell at the Rhodes agaynst the Turks, he being one of the knyghtis of the Rhodes." In noticing this entry Cosmo Innes says:—"The jewel so particularly described as the amulet worn in battle by the Knight of the Cross, would seem to have been used as a charm for more homely purposes afterwards." He does not tell us, however, what these "homely purposes" were.

Among the objects in the Sim Collection, presented to the Museum in 1882, is an oblong piece of rock-crystal, 1 5/8 inch in length, 7/8 inch in breadth, and 3/4 inch in height, in a setting of brass, with a loop at one end for suspension. "A memorandum accompanying it, in Mr Sirn's hand, states that it was purchased at Oban on 6th June 1851, from Duncan White, jeweller there, and that it was believed to be an amulet or charm-stone. The memorandum also states that it had been twenty years in Mr White's possession, and during that time he had met with nothing similar, except a very fine one, set in silver and encased with other red stones, for which he wanted a large sum."

An oval polished crystal of a yellowish colour, 7/8 inch in length by 1 1/6 inch in diameter, exhibited by Dr R. de Brus Trotter, of Perth, is said to have been found at Leac-a-Geelie, Carrochtrie, and to have been used like the clear stone of the diviners in Yucatan, mentioned in the Appendix (p. 526), "for seeing things in."

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

Alastair