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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for August 18th, 2017

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/>

Electric Scotland News

The Scottish Tartans Authority Update - August 2017

Dear Friends

On the 29th September 2017 we will hold the 21st Annual General Meeting of The Scottish Tartans Authority at the Smith Art Gallery and Museum in Stirling. Formal notification of this meeting will be with you shortly and, in the meantime, I thought I would take this opportunity to provide a short update in advance of our AGM.

I am very aware that while the profile of The Scottish Tartans Authority continues to grow across Scotland's culture, heritage, tourism and business sectors, this may not be apparent to some long-standing members. We are determined to communicate more in the year ahead and I do hope that members will be pleased with our detailed Annual Report that will be available online in the next few weeks – it tells a tale of high activity and new partnerships, all in pursuit of our charitable purposes with the aim of promoting, protecting and preserving our most cherished and iconic national fabric.

Highlights over the past year have included...

National Tartan Centre - progress continues in partnership with Stirling Council and we expect to hear the outcome of their City Deal Bid towards the end of the year.

Braemar Royal Highland Society - the STA is now represented on the project team that will deliver a Highland Games Centre in 2018.

Tartan Marque - the STA continues to act as a point of co-ordination for a group of members with an interest in creating a marque for "Tartan Woven in Scotland". Engaging with a full range of industry members and partners (those for and those against such a marque) is vitally important as, in concept form, a marque means different things to different audiences.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo - the STA provided a great deal of support to the organisers, ensuring that this year's "Splash of Tartan" theme was both colourful and accurate.

Research, Media & Enquiries - activity in this area has exploded in the last 12 months. A number of artefacts of historical significance have been located across both public and private collections and some high level detail is included within our forthcoming Annual Report.

Fundraising - a targeted campaign was launched in 2016 with approaches made to 300 or so Trusts and Foundations across the UK. The initial trawl has drawn in funds amounting to £30,000 with hopeful feedback for future approaches.

I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to our AGM in September and I'd be delighted to hear from anyone interested in providing feedback or contributing ideas about how we might develop and grow our charity, including fundraising, in the future. Please don't hesitate to contact me at chairman@tartansauthority.com or Grant MacKenzie, our Director, at admin@tartansauthority.com.

I do hope you will enjoy the attached article, "Preserving the Fabric of a Nation" that will appear in the Braemar Gathering Annual programme next month and thank you all for your continued and unstinting support.

Read the article at <http://www.electricscotland.com/tartans/newsletter/index.htm>

Very best wishes

John F McLeish
Chairman - The Scottish Tartans Authority

Dig it! 2017 Hidden Gems

As part of Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology (YHHA), Dig It! 2017 has worked with partners across the country to celebrate Scotland's six UNESCO World Heritage Sites with six unique events. The Dig it! team then set out to unearth six of Scotland's equally extraordinary Hidden Gems.

Unlike the World Heritage Sites, you won't find these places featured in many travel guides, postcards or Instagram feeds. They might be a little bit quieter, harder to find and rougher around the edges. You'll have to step off the beaten track to see some of them with your own eyes; it's all part of the experience. Your reward is a piece of the past that will surprise, delight and inspire you.

After two months and over 12,000 votes on Facebook, the six Hidden Gems sites have been revealed:

Govan Stones
Ardrossan Castle
The Howff
James Watt Cottage
Campbeltown Picture House
Lincluden Collegiate Church

Each is eligible for a unique event delivered by Dig It! during Scottish Archaeology Month. For more information and to take part in future events visit

<http://www.digit2017.com/discover/scotland-in-six-hidden-gems/>

5000 years of Scottish History in 25 objects

Compiled by an expert panel for the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology (YHHA), the 25 objects cover over 5000 years of Scottish history and the length and breadth of the country from Shetland to Dumfries and Galloway. The objects were chosen based on chronological and geographic spread alongside their individual interesting stories. The final 25 objects were chosen by a panel that included representatives from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), National Museums of Scotland (NMS), the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and VisitScotland.

To find out which 25 objects were chosen and read more about each one and how it changed Scotland's history visit <http://ebooks.visitscotland.com/25-objects/>

New free online Hillforts Atlas resource launched

Dotted across the landscape of Britain and Ireland, hillforts have been part of our history for millennia. Recently launched at a conference in Edinburgh University, a new online atlas captures all of their locations and key details in one resource.

With the help of numerous citizen scientists, a research team funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has spent the last four years sifting and recording information on all the hillforts across Britain and Ireland which met its criteria. This has resulted in 4,147 confirmed and possible hillforts, details for every one being available on a website that uses the latest mapping technology and is freely accessible to the public online (<https://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk>).

The team, which has now stood down, was led by Professors Gary Lock (University of Oxford) and Ian Ralston FSA Scot (University of Edinburgh) and was based in the two universities together with partners at University College Cork who assisted with the Irish data. Edinburgh's Professor Ian Ralston said: "Standing on a windswept hillfort with dramatic views across the countryside, you really feel that you're fully immersed in history. This research project is all about sharing the stories of the thousands of hillforts across Britain and Ireland in one place that is accessible to the public and researchers."

This unique resource provides free access to information about world-famous sites as well as many previously little-known hillforts, helping ramblers, cyclists, naturalists, and local history enthusiasts discover all the sites in their local area. It also provides downloadable information for professional and amateur researchers with specific local or regional interests in aspects of these sites. In many ways, the new online resource is seen as a starting point from which people can access and obtain data to form the basis of their own research into these fascinating and enigmatic monuments.

Through the citizen science initiative, around 400 members of the public collected data about the hillforts they visited, which was later analysed by the research team. This process fed into the resulting database but also helped to develop the knowledge and skills of volunteers and enthusiasts.

The online resource will also soon be accessible through Wikipedia where images of hillforts can be uploaded. The atlas database is accessible on mobile devices and as such can be used while visiting a hillfort. A paper atlas is also in development, to be delivered to the publisher in summer 2018.

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.

The Italian highlanders who may have Scottish roots

Thousands of Italians emigrated to Scotland in the 20th Century, but it seems that 400 years earlier a group of Scots may have settled in a village in the Italian Alps.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-40865981>

The housing crisis: an act of devastating economic self-harm

The housing crisis has caused more damage to GDP than any event since the Black Death

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-housing-crisis-an-act-of-devastating-economic-self-harm/>

Scots band triumphs at World Pipe Band Championships

Inveraray and District Pipe Band won the contest, beating Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band who came second.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-40912441>

Reversing the Clearances bit by bit

A new phase of Highland history is unfolding in Sutherland as land still owned by the family of the man blamed for the Highland Clearances is to be sold to descendants of those he evicted.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-40898868>

World's fastest knitter to attend Inverness festival

Shetland-born Hazel Tindall earned her title by knitting 255 stitches in three minutes in 2004.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-40924665>

The real costs of wind energy defeat the case for having it

THERE ARE COSTS and benefits to everything in life. The costs of wind energy are high and the benefits few.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read_full=13261

A nation of snoopers

A new, dedicated information-sharing bill has finally been introduced to parliament in a bid to remedy defective sections of the

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which were overturned by the Supreme Court last July for failing to comply with data protection and human rights laws.

Read more at:

<http://www.scottishreview.net/AlisonPreuss301a.html>

Scientists discover a new flower of Shetland

A delicate golden bell of a flower, its throat flecked with tiny, blood-red spots - colours echoing the Lion Rampant.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-40935666>

Caithness digs deep to discover secrets of its brochs

They are a style of building unique to the north of Scotland and a rare insight into how society organised itself more than 2,000 years ago.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/future-scotland/tech/caithness-digs-deep-to-discover-secrets-of-its-brochs-1-4533401>

Don't believe the Brexit hysteria

The Remoaner narrative is at odds with reality

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/dont-believe-the-brexit-hysteria/>

Electric Canadian

In Toronto, a police officer bought a shirt and tie for a shoplifter he was called to arrest. Constable Niran Jeyanesan realised when he arrived at the Walmart outlet that the 18-year-old had been attempting to steal the items for a job interview, so he decided to release him and buy the clothes for him instead. Speaking to a local news station, Jeyanesan explained that the young man 'has been facing his own difficulties in life and he was looking to straighten out all that by providing for his family and trying to get a job.' The officer's actions have been widely praised online and backed by his staff sergeant.

Nafta needs reforming

Just not in the way Trump thinks

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/nafta-needs-reforming-just-not-in-the-way-trump-thinks/>

Diamond Tolls

By Raymond S Spears (1920). This is a novel but interesting history along with it.

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/DiamondTolls.pdf>

Experience is Everything

By Raymond S. Spears. A kind of Grandfather know best tale which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/ExperiencesEverything.pdf>

The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe

Wife of the First Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, 1792-6 with Notes and a Biography by J. Ross Robertson (1911) (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/simcoe/DiaryofMrsSimcoe.pdf>

Forest and Stream Weekly Journal

Where I now have the first issue available. Very large download of over 100Mb and I have found a few other issues which I'll add at a later date.

You can get this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/forestandstream.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.

Canada is failing to see the North Korea crisis clearly

<http://nationalpost.com/opinion/conrad-black-canada-is-failing-to-see-the-north-korea-crisis-clearly>

The Media 'In Crowd'

<http://www.conradblack.com/1320/the-media-in-crowd>

Electric Scotland

Yes In My Back Yard

How To End The Housing Crisis, Boost The Economy And Win More Votes by John Myers (pdf)

You can download this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/sip/YIMBY.pdf>

Charters, Writs and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh of Dundee

1292 - 1880 with Inventory of the Town's Writs Annexed (1880) (pdf) Added a link to this book at the foot of our Dundee page at:

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

The African Colony

By John Buchan (1903) (pdf). Added a link to this book to the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/africa/africandx.htm>

Charters and Documents relating to the Burgh of Peebles

With extracts from the Records of the burgh A.D. 1165 - 1710 (pdf) which you can download at:

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

Life of Major-General Thomas Munro

In three volumes by G. R. Gleig which I've added to the foot of our Scottish Regiments page at:

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

The Marquis of Montrose

By John Buchan (1913) (pdf). Added a link to this book at the foot of our Montrose page in the Scottish Nation at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/montrose.htm>

A Visit to Auch Melvich

By Sir Thomas Dick Lauder (1847) from the Edinburgh Magazine which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/Melvich.pdf>

Preserving the Fabric of a Nation

An article fro the Scottish Tartans Authority

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/tartans/newsletter/index.htm>

Uses of Highland Plants

Found this interesting old article and have added it to the foot of this page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/gardening/plantlife/>

New York State's Progressive Men

An Encyclopedia of Contemporaneous Biography compiled by Mitchell C. Harrison (1900) in 2 volumes. in which you'll find Scots and Scots-Irish folk as well.

You can read these volumes at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/newyorkmen.htm>

The Story

I wanted to promote this story as it seems to me it is a great opportunity for Scotland but is below the radar for most people.

The real green energy, thorium. Nuclear energy without the waste

Use of thorium instead of uranium in reactors can allay virtually all public concern over weapons proliferation, radioactive pollution,

toxic waste and fuel that is costly and complicated to process. Thorium is the most abundant, most readily available, cleanest and safest energy source on earth; yet it remains unknown by both the public and politicians. Novel reactor design, the liquid fuel thorium reactor (LFTR), uses thorium fluoride as both coolant and fuel. It has enormous advantages over the use of uranium in nuclear power; it is the fuel of the future.

Thorium is as abundant as lead and four times more abundant than uranium. It is barely radioactive with a half-life longer than the age of the universe. Transport safety is thus not an issue. Major reserves are found in friendly countries like Australia, USA, Brazil and there are seams in Wales and Cornwall. It occurs as only one isotope and thus avoids the necessary and costly enrichment processes that are required for uranium. The reactor needs small amounts of start-up radioactivity. An alternative design uses a small proton accelerator to initiate nuclear reaction. Uranium reactors require ten times the amount of priming material to initiate reaction. The thorium reaction is self-sustaining and apart from small annual additions of thorium fluoride, feeds itself to completion. One tonne of thorium can produce as much energy as 200 tonnes of uranium and 3.5 million tonnes of coal. Energy generated by an LFTR is cheaper than coal.

99% of the thorium is used up in the LFTR. Current uranium reactors use less than 1% of uranium before costly transport and reprocessing is necessitated. The 1% thorium waste can be processed and sold after ten years and after 100-300 years is at or below background level, unlike uranium waste that must be stored for 300,000 years. The thorium nuclear reaction does not produce plutonium as a by-product unlike uranium reactors and cannot be used for weapons or weapons proliferation. The first thorium reactor was designed, built and operated in the USA in the sixties but its failure to generate plutonium required for nuclear warheads was the primary reason that further research was cancelled and its proponents sacked. Had research not been abandoned, it is estimated that the USA would have been self-sufficient in energy by the year 2000.

Thorium is the closest thing to a really green energy. The known reserves of thorium are sufficient to fuel the earth for many thousands of years. Although environmentalists claim wind and solar as green and clean these always require fossil fuel back-up emitting CO₂ because of variability in the source. The LFTR uses far less concrete and steel/kWhr than required by wind turbines and its operating cycle generates no carbon dioxide.

The safety of LFTRs is unparalleled. There is zero risk of meltdown, any untoward event such as an earthquake can be controlled by a freeze plug that melts and drains the material into an underground chamber where it is air cooled. None of this requires electricity. By not using pressurised water, the accumulation of hydrogen gas that caused the problem at Fukushima is avoided. LFTRs operate at atmospheric pressure with little possibility of explosion or containment breach. The radioactive products remain attached and are chemically bonded to the fluoride salt preventing spread of radioactive material. LFTRs operate at high temperature allowing use of higher-efficiency, reheat power cycles employing nitrogen or helium as the working fluid rather than steam to drive turbines, thereby raising efficiency from 35 to 50%.

Development of thorium reactors is underway in China, India, USA, Israel and Russia. Norway is considering using thorium-generated electricity as a replacement for oil. A recent report to the Westminster government exhibited typical, conservative unwillingness to consider further research into thorium, by favouring the present uranium reactor construction with its disadvantages. This report signally failed to recognise the concerns of the populace about present uranium nuclear technology. A 5-10 year research programme on thorium to fill minor technical gaps and construct a reactor prototype would cost less than one gas-fired power station.

Societies that expand and improve the efficiency of their energy supplies supersede those that don't. The aim of both Westminster and Holyrood has been the generation of expensive unreliable electricity instead of promoting abundant supplies of cheap reliable energy and facilitating its distribution and consumption. More cheap energy equals more cheap power equals more wealth. The political establishment in all parts of the UK has championed policies that do the complete opposite and will most surely accelerate economic decline. Attitudes to thorium become a touchstone that mark out those optimistic countries and populations that grasp the future from those who are fearful of it and become a backwater of history.

Professor Anthony Trewavas FRS FRSE, Scientific Alliance Scotland, 7-9 North St David Street, Edinburgh EH2 1AW

The 'green' targets have led to a money-making charter for landowners and multinational generating companies. There has been no manufacturing benefit to Scottish jobs since all the turbines are imported.

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

Alastair