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AGRICULTURE & WILDLIFE
ARTICLES
BETH'S FAMILY TREE
BOOKS
BUSINESS
CHILDREN'S STORIES
CLANS & FAMILIES

CULTURE & LANGUAGE
DONNA'S PAGE
ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET
FAMOUS SCOTS
FAMILYTREE
FORUMS
FOOD & DRINK
GAMES

GAZETTEER
GENEALOGY
HISTORIC PLACES
HISTORY
HUMOR
JOHN'S PAGE
KIDS
LIFESTYLE
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER
PICTURES
POETRY
POSTCARDS
RELIGION
ROBERT BURNS
SCOTS IRISH
SCOTS REGIMENTS
SERVICES

SHOPPING
SONGS
SPORT
SCOTS DIASPORA
TARTANS
TRAVEL
TRIVIA
VIDEOS
WHATS NEW

[HELP](#) [TERMS OF USE](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for November 24th, 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

Time is sure going fast these days. It seems like only yesterday I did the last newsletter. And the Summer seemed to go very fast and next thing it will be Christmas and then we're into the New Year.

I think part of the reason that time is going so fast is that I am reading many of the books I am putting up on the site. I'm getting quite involved with a number of the books I'm reading and in particular the Canadian books about journeys around Canada. I'm not sure how many in these days would be fit enough to do these journeys.

I read the Laird of McNab and was quite horrified on how badly he looked after his people and how he took advantage of them. Was glad it all came out ok but it took too many years to get to a resolution.

I also enjoyed the Journal of a Voyage from Okkak on the Coast of Labrador to Ungava Bay.

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.

UK and Canada lead global alliance against coal

The UK and Canada have launched a global alliance of 20 countries committed to phasing out coal for energy production.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42014244>

Sir James Dyson: Brexit is a disaster for Europe, not Britain

The business magnate has made no secret of his pro-Brexit views and he does not believe Britain should be fazed about the prospect of walking away from the negotiating table without a deal.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/881043/brexit-news-eu-uk-james-dyson-europe-disaster-no-deal-talks>

EU need us Jacob Rees-Mogg warns

EU will be insolvent without Britain's cash

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/881380/brexit-latest-news-jacob-rees-mogg-brussels-no-deal-harm-eu-theresa-may-barnier-davis>

The 15,000 Scots children shipped to Canada

Researchers in Canada are supporting families to secure the records of those transported by charities. Comments also contain interesting information.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/the-15-000-scots-children-shipped-to-canada-1-4616584>

In pictures: new book of men in kilts launched

A new book has brought together 101 men from all walks of life in Scotland and photographed them wearing kilts.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/in-pictures-new-book-of-men-in-kilts-launched-1-4618298>

New scanner like 100 MRIs in one

A new kind of scanner which has been likened to 100 MRIs in one has been developed by a team at the University of Aberdeen.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-42054305>

British businesses anticipate increased global trading

According to economic modelling carried out by American Express, the US tops the list of untapped trading partners for the UK. This comes as 39 per cent of UK businesses which currently trade internationally said they planned to increase operations over the next 12 months. Half of those surveyed also said they are looking to trade with new countries in the coming year.

Read more at:

<http://www.cityam.com/276126/british-businesses-anticipate-increased-global-trading-us>

We are doubting the point of negotiations after the destructive EU asked for more money

Do we want to be an independent free-trading nation thriving among the rapidly growing economies of the wider world or a bullied client state of the Brussels bloc?

Read more at:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4969702/the-sun-says-eu-negotiations-are-a-farce-after-demanding-more-money/>

The Scottish war poet who should rival Wilfred Owen

The words of Ewart Alan Mackintosh are inscribed on one of Scotland's most prominent war memorials but his name is largely unknown

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-42065875>

Peter Pan for grown-ups revived

A second play inspired by the Dumfries gardens where JM Barrie played as a child is returning to the stage.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-42066487>

Ulva island buyout wins support in Australia

Hopes for a community buyout of Ulva have been boosted by a number of donations from Australia and several pledges from those keen to relocate and invest in the future of the tiny island.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/ulva-island-buyout-wins-support-in-australia-1-4619639>

Britain's Standing on the World Stage

By and large Britain is viewed with warm respect for its vibrancy, culture, entrepreneurialism, and openness, and as an exemplar of liberty and democracy.

Read more at:

http://www.these-islands.co.uk/publications/i256/britains_standing_on_the_world_stage.aspx

Barra flag wins official recognition

A flag representing the remote island of Barra has been officially recognised following an emotional community campaign.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/barra-flag-wins-official-recognition-after-long-campaign-1-4621080>

Canadian firm buys Fife laundry firm Fishers

Fife laundry business Fishers has been sold to the largest provider of laundry and linen services in Canada in an eight-figure deal.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/business/companies/canadian-firm-buys-fife-laundry-firm-fishers-1-4621053>

Electric Canadian

Industrial Canada

Added volume 9 which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/industrial/index.htm>

Musical Canada

Added volume 10 to our collection which you can read at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/music/musical_canada.htm

Strathcona Horse

Speech by Nicholas Flood Davin at Lansdowne Park on the occasion of the First Parade of the Strathcona Horse (1900) which you can read at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/strathconahorse.pdf>

Life and Work of D. J. MacDonnell

Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Toronto with a selection of Sermons and Prayers edited by Prof. J. F. McCurdy, Ph.D., LL.D. (1897)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/MacDonnell.pdf>

The Lure O' The Kilt

Dedicated to the Band of the 134th Batt., C. E. F. In attendance at the Ceremony in Westminster Abbey, commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Confederation of the Provinces of Canada, in the presence of Their Majesties the King and Queen. Words by George Cox, Music by Kingsley O'Tay (1963)

Read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/music/lureofthekilt.pdf>

Journal of a Voyage from Okkak on the Coast of Labrador to Ungava Bay

Westward of Cape Citudleigh undertaken to explore the Coast, and visit the Esquimaux in that unknown Region by Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Knoch Missionaries of the Church of the Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren (1814).

FOR these many years past a considerable number of Esquimaux have been in the annual practice of visiting the three missionary establishments of the United Brethren on the coast of Labrador, Okkak, Nain, and Hopedale, chiefly with a view to barter, or to see those of their friends and acquaintance, who had become obedient to the gospel, and lived together in Christian fellowship, enjoying the instruction of the Missionaries.

These people came mostly from the north, and some of them from a great distance. They reported, that the body of the Esquimaux nation lived near and beyond Cape Chudleigh, which they call Killinek, and having conceived much friendship for the Missionaries, never failed to request, that some of them would come to their country, and even urged the formation of a new settlement, considerably to the north of Okkak.

To these repeated and earnest applications the Missionaries were the more disposed to listen, as it had been discovered, not many years after the establishment of the Mission in 1771 that that part of the coast on which, by the encouragement of the British government, the first settlement was made, was very thinly inhabited, and that the aim of the Mission, to convert the Esquimaux to Christianity, would be better obtained, if access could be had to the main body of the Indians, from which the roving inhabitants appeared to be mere stragglers. Circumstances, however, prevented more extensive plans from being put in execution; and the Missionaries, having gained the confidence and esteem of the Esquimaux in their neighbourhood, remained stationary on that coast, and, by degrees, formed three settlements, Okkak, to the north, and Hoped ale, to the south of Nain, their first place of residence.

In consequence of the abovementioned invitation, it became a subject of serious consideration, by what means a more correct idea of the extent and dwelling-places of the Esquimaux nation might be obtained, and a general wish was expressed, that one or more of the Missionaries would undertake the perilous task of visiting such places as were reported by the Esquimaux themselves to contain more inhabitants than the southern coast, but remained unknown to European navigators.

The Synodal Committee, appointed for the management of the Missions of the United Brethren, having given their consent to the measure, and agreed with Brother Kohlmeister, by occasion of a visit paid by him to his relations and friends in Germany, as to the mode of putting it into execution, he returned to Labrador in 1810, and prepared to undertake the voyage early in the spring of 1811.

For several years a correspondence had taken place between the Missionaries in Labrador and the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, established in London, relating to the manner in which the voyage should be performed. Opinions were various on the subject; but it was at length determined, that a steady intelligent Christian Esquimaux, possessing a shallop, with two masts, and of sufficient dimensions, should be appointed to accompany one or two Missionaries, for a liberal recompence; and that the travellers should spend the winter at Okkak, to be ready to proceed on the voyage, without loss of time, as soon as the state of the ice would permit of it. Brother Kohlmeister proposed in this view, the Esquimaux Jonathan, of Hopedale, and the brig employed to convey the annual supply of necessaries to the three settlements, was ordered to proceed first to Hopedale, partly with a view to this negotiation. She arrived safe with Brother Kohlmeister at this place, on the 22d July, 1810. On the same day, he proposed to Jonathan the intended expedition, laid before him the whole plan, with all its difficulties and advantages, and found him immediately willing to undertake the voyage, and to forward its object by every means in his power.

This was no small sacrifice on the part of Jonathan. An Esquimaux is naturally attached to the place of his birth; and, though he spends the summer, and indeed great part of the year, necessarily, and from inclination, in roving from one place to another in quest of food; yet in winter he settles, if possible, upon his native spot, where he is esteemed and beloved. This was eminently the case with Jonathan. He was a man of superior understanding and skill, possessed of uncommon presence of mind in difficulties and dangers, and at Hopedale considered as the principal person, or chief of his nation. But he was now ready to forsake all, and to go and reside at Okkak, among strangers, having no authority or pre-eminence, and to undertake a voyage of unknown length and peril, from whence he could not be sure of a safe or speedy return, before the ice might set in, and confine him upon an unknown shore, during the whole of a second winter. There was, however, one consideration which outweighed every other in his mind, and made him, according to his own declaration, forget all difficulties and dangers. He hoped that the proposed voyage to visit his countrymen in the north would, in time, be a means of their becoming acquainted with the gospel of Christ, and partakers of the same blessings which he now enjoyed. This made him willing to accept of the call without any hesitation.* Nor did he ever, during the whole voyage, forsake that generous principle, by which he was at first influenced, but his cheerful, firm, and faithful conduct proved, under all circumstances, most honourable to the character of a true convert to Christianity.

Brother Kohlmeister being, after seventeen years residence in Labrador, complete master of the Esquimaux language, and deservedly beloved and respected both by Christians and heathens, and possessing an invincible zeal to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare, was a man eminently qualified to undertake the commission, and to conciliate the affections of unknown heathen. He had also previously made himself acquainted with the use of the quadrant, and with other branches of science, useful on such an occasion.

Brother Kmoch, his companion, joined to other essential qualifications, great cheerfulness and intrepidity.

All the parties having met at Okkak, in the autumn of 1810, the winter was partly spent in preparations for the intended expedition, and Jonathan's boat put into the best possible state of repair.

You can read this book at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/journalofvoyage.pdf>

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.

Trump is already the most successful U.S. president since Ronald Reagan

<http://www.conradblack.com/1350/trump-is-already-the-most-successful-us-president>

Hillary's Version

<http://www.conradblack.com/1351/hillary-version>

Electric Scotland

Clan Wallace Society - Worldwide

Got in their Fall 2017 newsletter which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/wallace/index.htm>

MacDuffee Clan Society of America

Got in a copy of their October 2017 newsletter which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/macduffee/index.htm>

The Last Laird of MacNab

An episode in the Settlement of MacNab Township, Upper Canada by Alexander Fraser (1899)

Pretty horrendous what this Laird did to his people. You can read this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/m/macnab.html>

An Historical Account of the Ancient Rights and Power of the Parliament of Scotland

By Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1823) which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/anhistorical.pdf>

Jubilee Chronicon

A Valedictory Address delivered on the occasion of retiring from the Chair of the Medico-Chirurgical Society on 7th January 1875 by P. D. Handyside, M.D.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/medical/handysideaddress.pdf>

Diary of George Ridpath

Minister of Stichel 1755-1761 Edited with Notes and Introduction by Sir James Balfour, C.V.O., LL.D. (1922) (pdf)

Of the two MS. volumes containing the Diary, of which the following pages are an abstract, it was the second which first came into my hands. It had found its way by some unknown means into the archives in the Offices of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh; it had been lent about 1899 to Colonel Milne Home of Wedderburn, who was interested in the district where Ridpath lived, but he died shortly after receiving it. The volume remained in possession of his widow, who transcribed a large portion with the ultimate view of publication, but this was never carried out, and Mrs. Milne Home kindly handed over the volume to me. It was suggested that the Scottish History Society might publish the work as throwing light on the manners and customs of the period, supplementing and where necessary correcting the Autobiography of Alexander Carlyle, the Life and Times of Thomas Somerville, and the brilliant, if prejudiced, sketch of the ecclesiastical and religious life in Scotland in the eighteenth century by Henry Gray Graham in his well-known work. When this proposal was considered it was found that the Treasurer of the Society, Mr. C. S. Romanes, had another volume of the Diary dealing with the years immediately preceding these contained in the volume first discovered: this Mr. Romanes with characteristic generosity has put at my disposal. But however interesting the two MSS. might be, it was found impossible to publish them in extenso in one volume, regard being had to the much increased cost of printing and the limited resources of the Society. They had therefore to be shortened in some way, and on consideration it was decided to omit all or almost all passages dealing with events outside the subject of Scottish life and character. The sacrifice was made unwillingly, as the period treated of includes part of the Seven Years War and the war with the French in Canada. But such information can always be got in the ordinary history books, and Ridpath generally confines himself to a bare statement of the news of the day taken from the journals; he does not indulge in many commentaries on them. If it is objected that with these omissions we are left with a chronicle of very small beer, it may be replied that it is just this small beer that we need and that is so refreshing. Reports of the big things in life are easily found, but it is less easy to get information as to the daily life of the people, their reading, their dinners and drinkings, their quarrels and reconciliations, their loves and hates, their little jaunts, painfully accomplished for the most part on horseback over very inferior roads, and, generally, the home life of the period. All this is chronicled for us in the pages of the Diary, written without the slightest idea of ultimate publication by one who, though he might be described as an obscure country minister, was nevertheless a man of rare culture, a friend of the most celebrated Scots literati of the time, and an earnest student in many branches of science. But we must consider him somewhat more in detail.

You can read this at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/ridpath_george.htm

The Story

The White Head Hunter - Graham Ogilvy

HE RETURNED home to a hero's welcome and fleeting celebrity in the best Orcadian seafaring tradition.

When young Jack Renton arrived back in 19th century Stromness, he had beguiling tales to tell of astonishing adventures in the faraway Pacific.

Renton amazed Victorian society with his account of how he was shanghaied, captured by South Seas headhunters, and - against the odds - survived for eight years in "the most savage place on Earth" before escaping on a slave ship to civilisation.

The spear he brought back with him still has pride of place in an Orkney collection and a gruesome souvenir, a necklace of 64 human teeth, lies in the National Museum of Scotland.

But new research has revealed a grim truth that Renton could not admit and Victorian society did not want to hear: he survived his encounter with the famously brutal tribes of the remote Solomon Islands by taking human heads.

The sanitised picture Renton drew of himself has been destroyed as a result of the oral history of the Solomon Islanders, who today still talk about the white-skinned headhunter who lived in their midst and became a revered warrior.

According to Mike McCoy, an Australian biologist who lived among the modern-day islanders for 26 years: "There is no doubt that Renton became a headhunter. He would have had to for his street credibility. The islanders recall even now what a strong warrior he was."

Renton's story is to be retold in a new book, *The White Headhunter*, by a researcher who spent several years collecting an oral history of the people of Malaita, an island in the Solomon group, east of New Guinea, where the Scotsman arrived as a captive in the 1868.

Like many 19th century Scottish islanders, Renton took to the sea to make his living and he was just 20 when he was shanghaied along with four other sailors in San Francisco. Their subsequent decision to escape in an open boat ended in disaster. The men drifted for about 40 days before being cast ashore on a coast shunned by all mariners of the time because of its ferocious headhunting tribes.

Three of his emaciated companions died from the effects of their ocean ordeal but the fourth was clubbed to death by one tribe of Solomon Islands natives. Renton had a stroke of luck, being captured by a rival tribe that had previously held a white man prisoner.

He was taken to their home island of Sulufou, stripped of his clothes and possessions but kept alive by the chief initially for his "novelty value".

When he demonstrated his willingness to go native, while enhancing his value by passing on the net-making, sailing, fishing and gardening skills he had learned as a boy in Orkney, his captors grew to accept him.

It was a process eased by his closeness to the chief of the tribe who eventually adopted him, describing him as his "first born son". He protected Renton from bullying by young warriors until he had mastered the language and he remains revered on the island to this day.

"It is amazing," said McCoy. "The paramount chief has a huge blown-up photographic portrait of Renton in his hut. When I showed people another picture of Renton from the Australian national library, one old woman reached out her hand to touch it and murmured 'Jackie, Jackie.' It was unbelievable and so moving."

But the Orcadian's involvement with his new hosts did not stop at teaching them farming and fishing skills. The tribe, known as the 'salt-water people', lived on a tiny, artificial island built over five centuries ago by resourceful Melanesians to escape the malaria-infested jungles of the principal island of Malaita. They were perpetually at war with the 'bush people', cannibals who inhabited the main island, and Renton frequently took part in head-hunting expeditions.

McCoy said: "Renton was accepted into male society and lived in the men's long house. He apparently killed several people from inland and, by his own admission, took heads. His warrior prowess and closeness to the salt-water people chief, Kabou, led to the bush people putting a bounty on his head. When he went to his favourite spots - one was an idyllic-looking natural swimming pool on the main island - he always had an armed guard to protect him."

Renton became a hero to the Malaitans and helped prepare them for their forthcoming inevitable collision with white 'civilisation'. But after eight years of more or less permanent warfare, tit-for-tat raiding and headhunting, he grasped a rare opportunity for freedom. A 'Blackbirder', one of the dozens of South Seas slave-trading vessels, anchored at a safe distance offshore at Sulufou. Renton persuaded Kabou to allow him to contact the slave ship.

He wrote a poignant message in charcoal on a piece of driftwood that read: "John Renton. Please take me off to England."

The message, written in a childish hand, was taken out to the 'Blackbirder' by islanders and is now in the National Library of Australia.

"Malaitan oral history has it," revealed McCoy, "that Renton was picked up by his uncle, a Captain Mori. In fact, it was a Scottish ship's captain called Murray. He left but promised to return to the island with goods to help the islanders build an easier life."

When he arrived back in Australia he was an instant celebrity and the subject of extensive newspaper coverage.

Throughout his disappearance Renton's father had always believed that young Jack was still alive and had made several attempts to trace him. Young Renton's return to Stromness was triumphant and is still commemorated in the town's museum.

But Renton could not adjust back to the cold northern climate and began longing for the South Seas. He also had a promise to keep and within six months he was back on Sulufou with sheets of iron roofing, axes, hammers, barrels of nails and a grindstone that was used up until the 1960s.

With his language skills, Renton was also hired as part of the Queensland government's campaign to regulate the 'Blackbirders', whose sickening human trade had become the scourge of the South Seas. It was during this period of his life, in 1878, that Renton met the fate he had so carefully tried to avoid. When his ship arrived at Aoba in the New Hebrides, en route to Australia, Renton, aged 30, and a colleague went ashore for fresh water. When they failed to return, a party was sent to investigate. They found the bodies of Renton and his companion - minus their heads.

"When the news got back to Sulufou," said McCoy, "the 'salt water people' were furious. They formed a war party and demanded to be taken to the New Hebrides to wipe out the perpetrators. It was a measure of the esteem that Renton was held in and still is. His name will live forever in the folklore of the Malaitan people."

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

Alastair