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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for March 16th, 2018

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

Britain's exports are booming, not that you'd know it from the complete dearth of news coverage on the issue. The latest ONS figures released yesterday show UK exports rose 11.5% to £625.9bn in the past year, with service exports up 10.1% and goods exports up 12.6%.

The ONS described "strong manufacturing figures" as "leading the way in making the biggest contribution to growth", as the UK manufacturing sector recorded its ninth consecutive month of growth - the longest stint of uninterrupted expansion since records began in 1968 - with International Trade Secretary Liam Fox hailing a "period of unprecedented economic opportunity" for the UK.

The UK's trade deficit also shrank by £12.8bn from £41.6bn to £28.8bn, a fall of over 30% in a year, as goods exports rose in all four constituent parts of the UK, including a 19.2% rise in Scotland. If the figures had gone the other way, it would probably have been front page news.

Read an article by Marcus Fysh MP at:  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/03/09/dont-taken-fifth-columnists-pushing-whitehalls-anti-brexite-propaganda/>

Scottish Studies Foundation of Canada

Here are some of our upcoming events that you might find of interest. We are also working on this year's Scot of the Year event and hope to have more information on this soon.

March 13:

Members of the public and university communities are invited to attend the Scottish Studies Roundtable series organized by the Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph. The next seminar will be on Tuesday, March 13, from 14:30-16:00 when Dr Patrick Wadden, Assistant Professor of History at Belmont Abbey College will present: THE FIRST KINGDOM OF THE ISLES: History and Identity on Scotland's Western Periphery, 980-1060. More information at: <http://www.scottishstudies.com/520-roundtable-180202.htm>

April 14:

The Guelph Centre for Scottish Studies 2018 Spring Colloquium will take place on Saturday, April 14, at Knox College at the University of Toronto. Registration commences at noon. Speakers include Dr. Catriona Macdonald, University of Glasgow, Dr. Donald Nerbas, Chair in Canadian-Scottish Studies at McGill University, Dr. Sarah Sharp, University of Otago, New Zealand and Dr James E. Fraser, Chair of Scottish Studies and Director of the Guelph Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph. More information at <http://www.scottishstudies.com/520-spring-colloquium-2018.htm>

September 2:

Once again, the crew of the Empire Sandy, Canada's tallest sailing ship, will be hoisting the sails to get the Scottish Studies Foundation's annual cruise underway on Sunday, September 2, 2018 (Labour Day Weekend). More information at <http://www.scottishstudies.com/940-empiresandy-2018.htm>

Here is the video introduction to this newsletter...

<https://youtu.be/lz-5bCJTEes>

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.

Lab-to-Table Meat

Interesting video with this article.

Read more at:

<https://www.wired.com/story/the-high-cost-of-lab-to-table-meat/>

Ancient kingdom's new Pictish stone is the best Scotland has seen for ages

A Perthshire village's history at the heart of an ancient royal kingdom is being celebrated with the first newly-designed Pictish stone to be carved in the landscape in 1,000 years.

Read more at:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/perth-kinross/614409/ancient-kingdoms-new-pictish-stone-best-scotland-seen-ages/>

Italian election lays bare gaping north-south divide

Also Tensions build in new, explosive German coalition.

Read more at:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-politics-south/italian-election-lays-bare-gaping-north-south-divide-idUKKCN1GL24Y>

Brexit. I am more excited than ever about what the future holds.

Suella Fernandes is Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union, and is MP for Fareham.

Read more at:

<https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2018/03/suella-fernandes-brexit-i-am-more-excited-than-ever-about-what-the-future-holds.html>

Brexit is rightly making us focus on the network and markets of the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings have hardly been Britain's highest priority in recent decades.

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/brexit-focus-network-markets-commonwealth/>

The UK's opportunity to re-invigorate our trading relationship with the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a truly global organisation, encompassing states and citizens from every corner of the earth.

Read more at:

<http://brexitcentral.com/uks-opportunity-re-invigorate-trading-relationship-commonwealth/>

KT Tunstall to be first woman to lead Tartan Day parade through New York

The Brit Awards winner has been unveiled as the Grand Marshal when the event is held for the 20th time next month.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/kt-tunstall-to-be-first-woman-to-lead-tartan-day-parade-through-new-york-1-4704200>

The charmed inner circle of Official Scotland

The point about language is important. The various agencies of official Scotland enjoy considerable powers of 'narrative privilege', a concept that refers to the ability of senior figures to tell their own story in a way that reflects well on themselves.

Read more at:

<http://sceptical.scot/2018/03/charmed-inner-circle-official-scotland/>

Galloway farm dairy champions ethical cheese

It uses milk from cows whose calves are allowed to stay with them to suckle.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-43371591>

Dunblane survivors send emotional message to Florida pupils

It was a day which changed Scotland forever and a tragedy that those who lived through will never forget.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/stirling/video-dunblane-survivors-send-emotional-message-to-florida-pupils-1-4704716>

Sturgeon backs May over Russia response

Nicola Sturgeon said she backed Prime Minister Theresa May's decision to expel 23 Russian diplomats.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-43405126>

UK's best Russian riposte is hiding in plain sight

A more effective punishment would be to rigorously apply a piece of anti-corruption legislation, the Unexplained Wealth Order, which came into force in February.

Read more at:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-russia-breakingviews/breakingviews-uks-best-russian-riposte-is-hiding-in-plain-sight-idUKKCN1GQ2DS>

## Electric Canadian

Transactions of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers

I discovered a lot of volumes of these transaction which are very detailed and note that they are very popular downloads so assume civil engineers are enjoying the details given in these transactions.

I've added the 1928 volume and will add others each week. You can view these at

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

Some of the topics discussed include Aeronautical Research Committee, Aeroplane Flight, Anticosti Island, Bridge River Project, Centenary of The Institution of Civil Engineers, Construction of Isle Maligne, Preservation of Douglas Fir, Forest Conservation in British Columbia, Heating of Rack-Bars in Hydro-Electric Plants, Oil Washing, Obituaries, Portland Cement Mortars, St. Lawrence River Project, Sewer of the City of Montreal, Steel Building Design, Union Station, Toronto, Welland Ship Canal, etc.

Digital Canada 150

A 2017 vision for Digital Canada (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/DC150-EN.pdf>

The Scot at Home and Abroad

Being the substance of a Lecture delivered by The Scottish Canadian Poet, John Imrie of Toronto (1898) (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/Scotland/scotathomeabroad.pdf>

Conrad Black

Mr. Trudeau, if he can, should get serious about running this country

<http://www.conradblack.com/1376/mr-trudeau-if-he-can-should-get-serious-about>

## Electric Scotland

### Filidh

A small collection of Gaelic poems from the Semus Monro collection (1840) and if you can read Gaelic you can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/gaelic/munropoems.pdf>

### The Bannatyne Manuscript

Put up the 4 volumes of this important publication. See the foot of his page for the links. It was compiled in 1568.

You can get to this at: [http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/bannatyne\\_george.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/bannatyne_george.htm)

### Gary Gianotti

I decided to use a page to point to the over 30 articles he's send in for the site. Due to his research work old buttons appraised at \$1200 are now selling for \$45,000.

See his page at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/usgreatseal.htm>

Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland  
By The Reverend Thomas Frongnall Biddin, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty (1838)

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

### Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross

By his son, James Ross with an introduction and notes by J. M. Pendleton (1882) (pdf)

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

### Quartermaster Supply

Added Volume V parts 1 and 2. Sales Stores, Post Exchanges, and Tentage, Miscellaneous Supplies.

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

### Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Added the April 2018 Section 2 and you can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

### Ross Grant, Tenderfoot

By John Garland (1917). A story of gold mining with a follow up story of Ross Grant, Gold Hunter.

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

### The Scottish Highlander

By John Lyle Morison, Professor of History, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario (pdf)

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

## The Story

### UK and Sri Lanka: Bilateral Trade

This has been taken from the House of Lords Hansard Hansard is the traditional name of the transcripts of Parliamentary Debates in Britain and many Commonwealth countries.

### Lord Sheikh (Con)

My Lords, I am grateful for the opportunity to bring this important subject before your Lordships' House. I have been a friend of Sri Lanka for several years and have visited the country on two recent occasions. I have met and spoken to several Sri Lankan government Ministers in London as well as in Sri Lanka, including the President, Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa. I have previously raised issues relating to Sri Lanka in your Lordships' House. I am a vice-chairman of the All-Party Group on Sri Lanka, and I have supported the Conservative Friends of Sri Lanka. I have also enjoyed a highly successful relationship with the Sri Lankan high commission here in London, in particular with the former high commissioner, Dr Chris Nonis, who has been an outstanding representative of his country. He elevated the stature of Sri Lanka in the United Kingdom.

The observations I have made throughout this time have reinforced my view that Sri Lanka is, and should be, regarded as one of our

most important bilateral trading partners. Trading links between the UK and Sri Lanka date back to colonial times. We introduced commercial plantations to Sri Lanka—first coffee, then tea and rubber. Over the years the Sri Lankan export product base has diversified significantly, most notably with articles of apparel and clothing accessories. The UK has increasingly imported a wide variety of items, including electrical equipment, bicycles, jewellery, ceramics and toys. In return, we export to Sri Lanka items such as iron and steel, machinery, paper, beverages, plastics and pharmaceutical products.

Both our political and economic ties have worn extremely well over the past 200 years. Today, Sri Lanka is a major emerging economy in south Asia. It is a market of over 20 million people, but its geographical location means that it can in fact reach a market of over 1.6 billion people. It also serves as a logistical trading and shipment hub for the region. Over the past decade Sri Lanka's gross domestic product has grown at an overall rate of 6.4%. It grew by an astonishing 7.2% in 2013. Sri Lanka now has one of the fastest growing economies in the region and is expected to grow by 7.5% this year. The Sri Lankan stock market is on target to finish among the top 10 performing stock markets in the world this year. It now has a GDP per capita of \$3,200, and the Sri Lankan Government aim to increase this to \$4,000 per capita by 2016. In short, Sri Lanka undoubtedly holds massive potential for UK investors.

We must acknowledge that for nearly three decades Sri Lanka was torn apart by a civil war. Thankfully, that came to an end in 2009. The country has since made significant progress, including meeting many international obligations and engaging with the United Nations on post-conflict matters. A commission was established to strengthen the process of reconciliation and the Sri Lankan Government are currently implementing its recommendations. I have been assured that the Government are committed to the realisation of all human rights to prevent further conflict. I believe that now is the time for any Tamil diaspora which left the country to be encouraged to return and be resettled so that it may once again contribute to the well-being of the country. Sri Lanka's future is undoubtedly looking bright.

Fortunately, we already have a foothold in the country. We are already one of the top five investors in Sri Lanka. The bilateral trade between the two countries has increased by 70% since the turn of the millennium, and we are its number one EU trading partner. In 2013, UK exports to Sri Lanka were valued at £167 million. It should be noted that the balance of trade has risen significantly in favour of Sri Lanka in recent years. In the longer term, we must look to address this imbalance. I would be grateful if my noble friend the Minister could clarify what action is being taken to achieve this.

As important as the volume of trade between the UK and Sri Lanka is the strategic significance of the type of trade. We are one of Sri Lanka's closest business partners for higher education and professional training as well as for partnerships in the technology sector. These are vital skills that will help Sri Lanka to build and strengthen its economy in the long term and anchor the UK as a key partner in trading. There are already more than 100 British companies with operations in Sri Lanka that cross a wide range of sectors. These include HSBC, GlaxoSmithKline and Rolls-Royce. When I visited Sri Lanka, I was able to visit the Brandix factory near Colombo, which makes garments for Marks & Spencer. I found the operations to be very eco-friendly, with excellent working conditions which were commended by all. I have spoken on this point previously in your Lordships' House. Sri Lanka also has many of its own home-grown success stories. During my trip, I also visited Millennium Information Technologies, a fast growing Sri Lankan company which was acquired by the London Stock Exchange Group in 2009. Its systems power several stock exchanges and depositories around the world.

Aside from our historical ties and the strong Sri Lankan economy and business base, there are many other reasons for us to promote and further bilateral trade. English is widely spoken across the country, providing many western countries with an easy means of communication with potential workers. The literacy rate in Sri Lanka now stands at about 92%. The commercial law of Sri Lanka is based primarily on the principles of English commercial law and English statutes, offering many companies a legal framework with which they are already familiar. Sri Lanka is the highest rated country in south Asia in the World Bank's rankings for ease of doing business. Sri Lanka also has free trade agreements in place with India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. These can reduce import tariffs for some goods into those countries and thus help build the Sri Lankan economy further and allow British products to make their way through the supply chain.

Another key consideration is infrastructure. Following the end of the civil war, Sri Lanka is seeing a rapid and wide spread of infrastructure development. Connectivity is being vastly improved through several major road projects linking urban and rural communities. The Government are also improving and upgrading urban infrastructure facilities and basic services in towns and cities.

However, further modernisation is needed and the opportunities for British businesses are vast. The Sri Lankan Government have launched a major infrastructure initiative, entitled Five Hub Programme, which will provide opportunities for us to be involved. There is also an increasing demand for greater expansion in the leisure and tourism sector, including hotels and retail. This is and will continue to be a key growth area for British investors.

Another key area for further investment is education. The Sri Lankan workforce lacks critical job-specific skills, which could serve to undermine both private sector growth and public infrastructure development in the future. We must expand even further our role in providing and investing in higher education and skills training, helping the Sri Lankan workforce to fill the skills gap and become more responsive to the needs of the global market. In particular, I believe we could do more to build university-to-university contacts and

become involved in creating colleges of excellence. There are also calls for greater facilitation of business visas for Sri Lankan entrepreneurs to travel to the UK. I hope that our Government will undertake to look at this. I ask my noble friend the Minister whether that can be considered.

Finally, I commend UK Trade & Investment's recent trade mission to Sri Lanka, which I understand included representatives of 21 British companies. I look forward to learning more about its findings and hope to see more of these delegations in the future.

The future potential for Sri Lanka is huge, but it will be reached only through continued and expanded bilateral trade with countries such as ours.

Lord Naseby (Con)

My Lords, it is a particular pleasure to join this debate and I thank my noble friend for instigating it. I go back 50 years with Sri Lanka, having worked there in 1963 for the Reckitt and Colman Group as a marketing manager, visiting every conceivable market in the year I was there. When I came back, I wrote a pamphlet in 1967 called *Helping the Exporter*. It even had to have a reprint, although there are not too many copies left nowadays. Before I came to the House I was a director of one of the major advertising agencies specialising in overseas trade, so I think I have a reasonable heritage to comment on trade between two countries.

The first thing I want to say is that Sri Lanka is very relevant to our country. The population is roughly 30% of the size of our own. I will not cover the same areas as my noble friend, but it is right to re-emphasise that growth since peace in 2009 has been roughly between 6.5% and the 8% at which it is currently running. I congratulate Her Majesty's Government on the trade mission that was put together at the end of November. I think our high commissioner, who I know is on his last few months there, put together a really good programme, and the feedback from the chamber of commerce in Colombo was very positive. Indeed, I shall quote one sentence from the welcome. Thankfully the high commissioner has put "Ayubowan" which is the traditional welcome in Sri Lanka. He says:

"With a Free Trade Agreement with China to be signed shortly adding to the existing FTAs with Pakistan, India, South Asia and Asia Pacific, Sri Lanka could act as a regional hub to over 3 billion potential customers".

That is what it is all about.

I also inevitably did some research into, for me, a relatively new area, looking in some depth, not at the political scene, which I think I know backwards, but at the trade and commerce side. An excellent article appeared by a man called Jon Springer of *Forbes Asia*. He picks out a number of key determinants why Sri Lanka has such good opportunities for the UK to export there.

First, he picks out government stability. It is true that in 2009, once peace was there, there was stability on the ground. Added to that, there is now a railway system all the way to Jaffna. There are new roads, both up to Jaffna and down to the south-west. There is electricity, without permanent cuts, which was the situation for many years and certainly when I worked there. There is good electricity on tap. I would call that a rising peace dividend.

My noble friends mentioned the stock market. No wonder Sri Lanka is proud if our stock market is using software from Sri Lanka. I would be jolly proud if that happened. A friend of mine, a Tamil, is a director of one of the major companies, MAS, a major clothing manufacturer exporting all over the world. It exports here to Marks & Spencer and other retailers. I went round not only his factories, but the housing developments for some of their people. They are extremely well done. Yesterday, I went to Human Rights Day in the Foreign Office, where there was talk about the need for the corporate sector to show a proper response to its workers and others for whom it is responsible. In passing, I say to my noble friend that I thought yesterday's initiative, Human Rights Day, was very good indeed.

John Springer also picked out a comment that I had also seen from Ceylon Asset Management, which, I admit, is at the far end:

"We expect 25% growth in the equity market on average per year for the next five years. If you think about it, that isn't that much space on 7 to 8% growth in the economy annually. What people don't realise is that on a per capita basis, Sri Lanka is twice as rich as India".

I think that is probably blowing a trumpet a bit, but nevertheless, there is positive note there.

Then, of course, next door there is a big brother, but a very much changed big brother. Modi's India is there with a link for Sri Lanka to be the hub for goods and services on their travels eastward to drop in to the brand new port at Colombo city. There is the additional new port down at Hambantota and the revitalisation of Galle harbour, by kind permission of the Dutch. All that means that this is a real opportunity for growth.

I have been a tourist in Sri Lanka on a number of occasions. I was a tourist in the very early days when if you were on the shore you ate fish curry and if you were up country you ate chicken curry. Today, there are wonderful hotels. I looked at the figures, which are astonishing. This year, it is estimated that there will be 1.6 million tourists and there has been a steady increase in the amount of

money that tourists spend.

Sri Lanka is really becoming a middle-income country, although there are obviously poor parts of it; I think I know where they are as well. The real estate market is moving in Colombo and surrounding areas and that is a positive move. Are there risks? Of course, in every commercial world—and I was in it for quite a long time—there are risks. There is one simple thing that Her Majesty's Government can take on board, which is supported 100%, I am pleased to say, by our high commission. If we want to do more trade with Sri Lanka, we have to speed up the process of issuing visas to those coming on a short-term visit to do business. Although the Foreign Office claims that it is to save money that visas have to be processed in Chennai, that is a nonsense. We even built a building in Colombo to do the processing. It is sitting there idle. What would be the net extra expenditure for a couple of officers to process the proper visas, maybe just for business visitors? That really needs to be looked at. That is my plea to my noble friend on the Front Bench.

There are some other handicaps. I will highlight three. One is the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill going through your Lordships' House. Parts 7 and 8 and Schedule 3 require that shareholders holding 25% or more, or having some control over a company ownership, have to be kept in a register and that register must be made public. Admittedly, this applies only to UK companies, but I have to tell my noble friend on the Front Bench, as one who has worked and lived in that part of the world, as far as the Middle East and south-east Asia are concerned, nobody wants to have their public or any other public look at a register. That leaves them open to creative journalism and, I am sorry to say, one or two creative NGOs. There is ample provision to check on fraud, money-laundering and other provisions. However, I think my noble friend will have to pass on a message to his noble friends that that will cause a huge problem for trade.

I am sure there are those in the Chamber who wonder why I have not even mentioned politics. I have to mention it on a couple of issues, though. Here in the UK there is a challenge from the part of the Tamil diaspora that just pours out propaganda. I must get one or two things a week, telling me that dreadful things are happening every day, and, more importantly, that Eelam is still on the agenda—that is, the independence of the north and possibly the east. Frankly, that does not help anybody. What I find so disappointing about the Tamil diaspora is that the amount of money and investment that is going into the Jaffna region is so tiny that it is almost embarrassing to record how low it is.

Add to that the news we had yesterday or the day before about torture in Guantanamo Bay. There are allegations of torture in Sri Lanka. On my last visit, I did my level best to check with all the independent authorities whether there was any evidence of torture, particularly the ICRC, which said that there was none. However, we keep getting the odd report, without substantiated evidence, that there is torture. We need to take all those with a pinch of salt.

There are also claims that there is religious intimidation. I say to my noble friend that there is not. There is diversity of faith there. Certainly the Sri Lankan Government are not stirring it up one way or the other. Should we not reflect that mosques were burned down in Luton, Bletchley and Birmingham? We do not know who perpetrated that situation but we know that it is wrong. I believe that the Government in Sri Lanka will be equally keen to find out who is responsible there.

Overhanging it all is the OHCHR situation in Geneva, which, frankly, is not recognised by the Sri Lankan Government. Perhaps more importantly, it is not recognised by a number of Commonwealth countries, including India and Australia. We will have to see how objective it is, but sadly the UN does not have a great history of objectivity in what has happened in Sri Lanka.

I conclude by saying that we have a new high commissioner going from here to Sri Lanka. I hope that he will have really good knowledge of commercial matters and will deal with that with energy. Sri Lanka has a presidential election on 8 January. I do not know who will win; I wish whoever does all possible success. I know those elections, as does the Opposition Whip; I am sure it will be a fair and full election. I thank those who have enabled me to take part in this excellent debate.

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

Alastair