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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for November 1st, 2019

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<https://electricscotland.com/scotnews.htm>

Electric Scotland News

Well as you'll now know we are to have an election in the UK on December 12, and already it's hard to decide how to vote. I am of the view that you should support the Brexit Party if you want to leave the EU as the deal Boris Johnson did with the EU was much the same as our last Prime Minister and so if he's willing to accept that kind of deal then he's not fit for the job.

If you want to remain then vote for any party other than the Tory and Brexit parties. Frankly I think voting Labour is very dangerous for the UK but it's up to you. You might like to read a CapX story about "Corbyn's Halloween nightmare for the UK economy" at

<https://capx.co/corbys-halloween-nightmare-for-the-uk-economy/>

I have been adding quite a few religious texts to Electric Scotland of late and that's mainly due to Pat sending me in the services in the Home Preacher. She is doing an excellent job in finding pictures of the various preachers and also some biographies and other information about them. I am certainly very impressed with what these ministers have accomplished and so am more that happy to be adding this new information about them. As a result our Religion section, already quite large, is expanding even more. You can get to our Religion in Scotland section at: <https://electricscotland.com/bible/index.htm>

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 Daily Record, Courier, BBC, Capx, ThinkScotland, 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

Brexit could provide the US huge economic opportunity

Britain's departure from the EU will create a host of extraordinary opportunities. Among them a chance to deepen and expand economic ties between the United States and the UK.

Read more at:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/22/perspectives/brexit-trade-deal/index.html>

The costs of greening

Scottish Power have this week published a partial costing of how much the UK will need to spend in order to achieve the government's stated target of zero net carbon dioxide from human sources by 2050.

Read more at:

<http://johnredwooddiary.com/2019/10/25/the-costs-of-greening>

Church war hero the Tartan Pimpernel honoured in France

Rev Dr Donald Caskie helped thousands of prisoners of war escape a hilltop fort during World War Two.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-50187889>

DC Thomson to launch new Pure radio station for Scotland

DC Thomson, the Dundee-based media company, is investing further in rivals to established commercial radio stations in Scotland.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-50202687>

Governing Germany Is About to Get Messier

In Thuringia, the erosion of support for the centrist parties makes it hard to form a functioning government.

Read more at:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-10-28/thuringia-vote-shows-how-far-german-centrist-parties-have-fallen>

Trudeau victory prompts Wexit talk in Canada's West

Political leaders representing a large chunk of Canada are talking about breaking off from the rest of the country in the wake of Justin Trudeau's reelection and this time they're not primarily in French-speaking Quebec, long known for its independent streak.

Read more at:

<https://www.politico.com/news/2019/10/29/justin-trudeau-victory-canada-wexit-060634>

Meghan Murphy: Canadian feminist's trans talk sparks uproar

A Canadian library has been criticised for refusing to cancel an event hosting a feminist with controversial views on transgender rights.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50214341>

RAF takes delivery of Lossiemouth's first submarine hunter

The RAF has taken delivery of the first of nine new maritime patrol aircraft. The fleet of P-8A Poseidons are to be stationed at RAF Lossiemouth on the Moray coast.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-50233941>

Conservatives have reasons to be cheerful about December's election

In Scotland, Labour have given the Tories a gift - they must make full use of it

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/conservatives-have-reasons-to-be-cheerful-about-decembers-election/>

Scottish Tories offer referendum-free years...

Only the Tories can be trusted to defend the Union after Andy McDonald, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister, reiterated that Jeremy Corbyn won't stand in the way of a second independence referendum.

Read more at:

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18003189.scottish-tories-promise-referendum-free-period-ahead-pitch-voters>

Google given green light for Toronto smart city

Sidewalk Labs's plans to create a smart city in a disused area of Toronto can proceed but on a much smaller scale than it had wanted.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-50234146>

Bombardier NI operations sold to Spirit AeroSystems

The aerospace manufacturer employs about 3,600 people in Northern Ireland.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-50246299>

Electric Canadian

Echoes in the Halls

An Unofficial History of the University of Alberta by the Association of Professors Emeriti of the University of Alberta (1999) (pdf)

I started reading this and an hour later I was still reading so hope you enjoy this look at University life which you can read at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/alberta/echoesinhalls.pdf>

University of Alberta

Gateway Newspaper and lots of old copies on the Internet Archie. It was while reading through some old copies of this newspaper that I discovered the above book. There are loads of copies for you to read on the Internet Archive at: <https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator:%22University+of+Alberta:%22>

The Canadian Crusoes

A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains by Catherine Parr Traill (1881) (pdf)

I read the whole book and it's about two young men and a girl, part of a neighbouring settlement, who get lost in the woods and can't find their way back home. They are thus forced to try and survive and indeed they do by building their own shelter and doing their own hunting. They are joined by a young native Indian woman who also brings new talents with her. Really enjoyed it and it can be read at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/backwoods/TheCanadianCrusoes.pdf>

Shanty, Forest and River Life

In the Backwoods of Canada by the Author of "Three Months Among the Moose" (Joshua Fraser) (1883) (pdf)

Seems this book was well studied as there are lots of pencil marks adding notes and underlining words and phrases. And well worth a read and you can get to this at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/shantyforest.pdf>

Books by Susanna Moodie

Where I've added "Life in the Backwoods" and "Life in the Clearings versus the Bush" to the foot of the page.

Lots of pioneering life this week but I personally enjoy these so if you have the time and are interested in how the Pioneers settled in Canada then you can read these two books on the page of her other book "Roughing it in the Bush" at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/roughing/index.htm>

The Lake of the Woods

A Story of the Backwoods by A. L. O. E. (pdf)

The story starts with the death of the father of a young brother and sister and how they survive by staying with neighbours. Another book in the pioneering tradition which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/manitoba/lakeofwoodsstory.pdf>

Electric Scotland

The Home Preacher

Added service 13 by J.E. Clark

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/bible/homepreacher/week13.htm>

British Library are going to archive electricscotland.org

I am pleased to say that our Community is to be archived by the British Library for which see the post I made in our Community at: <http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/5469-British-Library-are-going-to-archive-this-site?p=19108#post19108>

This means that posts on the Australian Nuclear situation will be preserved for future generations to read and study and of course many other topics that we've discussed over quite a few years.

Short Biographies of the People

By Various Writers and while not all Scotsmen they do include Scots Dr John Abercrombie, James Hamilton, Sir James Young Simpson, George Wishart and Robert Moffat (1800) (pdf)

You can read these at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/shortbiographies07.pdf>

Pershing Edwin (P.E.) MacAllister

August 30, 1918 - October 23, 2019, Obituary.

Quite an account of this gentleman who died recently and am happy to share this with you and it can be read at:
https://electricscotland.com/history/america/macAllister_pershing.htm

Rev. Alexander Fletcher

The Children's Friend, was a Scottish Kirk minister, and later an Independent (Congregationalist) divine in England.

Quite a character and you can read about him at:

https://electricscotland.com/bible/fletcher_alexander.htm

Family Worship

A Series of Prayers with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Passages of Sacred Scriptures for every morning and evening throughout the Year adapted to the services of Domestic Worship by One Hundred and Eighty Clergymen of the Church of Scotland (pdf)

You can read this at: https://electricscotland.com/bible/homepreacher/Family_Worship.pdf

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in Section 1 of the November 2019 issue which is a 42 page bumper edition.

You can read this edition at: <https://electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

Stories of the Cherokee Hills

By Maurice Thompson (1898) (pdf)

Tales of slave owning days which I've added to our American History section.

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/america/storiescherokeehills.pdf>

Willis, The Pilot

A Sequel to "The Swiss Family Robinson" by Henry Frith.

While I have read the Swiss Family book I confess to not knowing about this sequel to it so am happy to add this to the site for myself and others to read. You can get to this at:

<https://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/willispilotseq.pdf>

Tribute to Winter

From "The New York Press", December 16, 1909 (pdf)

I've added a link to this tribute at the foot of our page about him at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/america/winter_william.htm

The Story

Brexit and impeachment are blinding us to the bigger picture

By John C. Hulsman in CapX

There are a number of world-changing forces at play which get barely any press. Today's leaders can learn from Winston Churchill when it comes to assessing what's actually important

A while back, I was talking with an archaeologist friend about our very different professions. For an excavator of the past a basic intellectual skill is extrapolation, of guessing in an educated way as to how past civilisations lived based on the tiniest shards of evidence. Conversely, for a political risk analyst the key trait is prioritising, combing through the oceans of information out there looking for what is actually important and central.

For the problem of modern living is not too little information, but far too much. Trapped as we are in the 24-hour news cycle, there are a limitless number of stories from which we might fill the waking hours of the day. The problem is, of course, that much of this content is utterly trivial. Worse still, even events which are of some importance obscure those that will be the main historical headlines of our age.

Currently, Brexit in the UK (and the December election) and Impeachment in the US fall into this 'important but overrated' category. In the first case, in terms of the UK leaving the EU, the real world historical and policy question comes after the fact; can the UK quickly (in the next three to five years) conclude free trade deals with the growing Anglosphere (the US, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) or not? Yet you would not know this at all if you are read the daily output of the British media, where Brexit myopia holds sway.

Likewise, the US has had, and undoubtedly will continue to have, bad and even ruthless presidents long after Donald Trump has shuffled off this mortal coil. But it is more than a tad ludicrous and short-sighted that the impeachment inquiry—which has in one way or another dominated US news media coverage for years now—comes to a head in 2020, the very year when the American voter can choose to eject the president from the White House if they so choose to.

In both cases, while the stories are surely important, a lot of ink has been spilled in vain. For these are not the events that will be looked back on by historians as holding the keys to the future.

Winston Churchill and the virtues of taking a deep breath

The ability to discern when global game-changing events are happening in real time is to see history moving. It is an invaluable element in mastering political risk analysis. To do so, the analyst must adopt an almost Olympian view, seeing beyond the immediate froth to make sense of what is going on by placing it in the broader tapestry of world history.

It is jarring to compare the lacklustre abilities of today's Western leaders—so far behind the curve in seeing the game-changing rise of Asia and the relative decline of the west, as we enter a new multipolar age—with the past phenomenal analytical abilities of true statesmen of vision.

Winston Churchill, despite being surrounded by monumental events (far greater than the Brexit and Impeachment controversies), still was able to separate the important from the strategically essential, even in December 1941, perhaps the most important month of the twentieth century, and the turning point of the Second World War.

During that brief and momentous time, Stalin's Russia pushed back the Nazi invasion at the gates of Moscow, marking the first time Hitler's vaunted war machine had met with a real setback. But for all that the blunting of Operation Typhoon mattered enormously, it did not change the overall balance of forces fighting the war, whose outcome continued to rest on a knife's edge.

But half a world away, something else did. At 7:48 AM in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the Imperial Navy of the Empire of Japan, attacking without warning as it had done in the Russo-Japanese War in the early days of the century, unleashed itself against the American Pacific Fleet, docked at Pearl Harbour that Sunday morning.

The damage was immense. All eight American battleships docked at Pearl were struck, and four of them sunk. The Japanese destroyed 188 US aircraft, while 2,400 were killed and 1,200 wounded. Japanese losses were negligible. At the same time Hawaii was under attack, there were coordinated Japanese strikes on the US-controlled Philippines, Guam, and Wake Island, and on the British in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

With the American fleet in flames, the Japanese hope was that the devastation at Pearl Harbour would so crush American morale that it would not move against Tokyo. To put it mildly, this strategic rationale shows no cultural understanding of the United States at all. The following day, December 8, 1941, America declared war on Japan.

The Japanese attack on the central US naval base changed the course of the war fundamentally, drawing in America as the decisive force which dramatically changed the balance of power around the world. Stalin, with his back to the wall in the snows of Russia, did not immediately get the game-changing significance of what has just happened any more than Franklin Roosevelt, who was now grimly intent of surveying the wreckage of America's Pacific fleet and marshalling the US public for global war.

These were pressing times and it was entirely understandable why both Stalin and FDR had other more immediate concerns to worry about during those early December days. But Winston Churchill grasped the significance of what had just happened.

In his history of the Second World War, Churchill wrote of that seminal day, "Being saturated and satiated with emotion and sensation, I went to bed and slept the sleep of the saved and thankful". Only America, with its endless resources, industrial might, manpower, and economic clout, could change the highly unfavourable balance of power that had prevailed since the loss of France in 1940, and been only partially ameliorated by Hitler's disastrous invasion of Russia the following year.

On December 11, 1941, Hitler—compounding Tokyo's incredible blunder—inexplicably declared war on the United States, to Churchill's barely disguised joy. Hitler and the militarists running Japan were analytically entirely wrong; Stalin and Roosevelt were preoccupied with the momentous events in front of the gates of Moscow and in the Pacific respectively; only Churchill saw the big picture: the attack on Pearl Harbour had saved the world.

Today's Hidden World Historical Events

The key to getting game-changers intellectually right is to start by asking a very basic question: does the event being assessed change the basic global power equation of the world? By this standard, neither the talked-to-death Brexit or the impeachment of Trump remotely clears the hurdle. Worse, our over-exposure to these important but not seminal events blots out seeing how the world is changing before our eyes.

Like Churchill we have to dig deeper. I think a compelling argument can be made that there are a number of game-changing forces at work just now that get nothing like the press they deserve.

First, we are entering a queer sort of multipolar world, where the US, as was true for Lord Salisbury's Britain, remains the dominant global power by a long ways even as other countries (China above all, but also India, and other emerging market powers) relatively gain on Washington from a low base year-on-year.

Second, in practice this means that China and India continue to rise, Europe is in absolute decline with the United States somewhere in-between, weathering the rigours of the new era better than the old continent, but still watching with alarm as China becomes a peer competitor. Asia is indisputably rising, possessing much of the world's future political risk as well as offering much of its coming economic reward. One way to look at this is that the world historical headline for our time may well simply read that after 500 years, Western domination of the world is at an end.

Third, if this is so, the key political risk question is thrown into sharp focus: Can the US see off Beijing over the next decades—either through accommodation or confrontation—and can it rally India and the other rising Emerging Market powers to its side, even as it renews its alliance with fading but still important Europe?

This, and not the endless drivel about Trump and Brexit, is what those tracing the game-changing forces in the world ought to be thinking about. Like Churchill, we must go beyond the noise, and even beyond the important, to see what truly matters.

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a great weekend. I might also note that Montreal has officially postponed Halloween until Friday due to the wild weather of heavy rain and high winds so please stay safe if you are embarking out with the Kids.

Alastair