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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for October 15th, 2021

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

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

Electric Scotland News

Why local?

Local government does less and less. Councillors have less and less influence on what local government still does. Do we still even need them?

I was interested in this article and thought I'd highlight it for you and it can be read at:

<https://tomforth.co.uk/whylocal/> where there is also 1 comment which is also of interest.

Oblige sans noblesse

Our future King is doing more practical good on the housing crisis than the Government. Read this article at: <https://thecritic.co.uk/oblige-sans-noblesse/>

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 and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers 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 which I do myself from time to time.

Is New Zealand headed for coronavirus disaster?

JACINDA ARDERN has announced New Zealand will be switching from its long-standing Covid elimination strategy to an approach focussed on virus suppression

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1501536/new-zealand-coronavirus-jacinda-ardern-evg>

Heated exchange for Scotland's homes

Transforming the way Scotland's buildings are heated is set to be one of the defining challenges of this decade, at a vast cost to government, commerce and mainly to home-owners.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-58842528>

Human tragedy of patients waiting for surgery

Dr Caroline Whitworth, of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, said bed occupancy was now consistently 100% with thousands in pain while on hold for procedures. A&E waiting times have been at record levels since mid-August.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-58833752>

Lithium 'gold rush' tipped to fuel Global Britain powerhouse
LITHIUM can power Boris Johnson's post-Brexit, Global Britain vision, an industry expert has predicted, while comparing the situation with the goldrushes of the 19th century.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1503274/brexit-news-lithium-mining-boris-johnson-global-britain-electric-cars-cornwall>

4,000 years of UK history exposed with revolutionary technology
ARCHAEOLOGISTS with the National Trust have identified more than 120 new sites in Northumberland using cutting-edge aerial lasers.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1502880/archaeology-breakthrough-4000-years-uk-history-lidar-national-trust-wallington-estate>

Pope Francis censored by Vatican staff after calling Scotch whiskey the real holy water.
POPE FRANCIS has been censored by Vatican staff after calling a bottle of Scotch Whisky 'the real holy water' for a BBC documentary about Scottish seminarians in Rome.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1503292/pope-francis-vatican-whiskey-rome-bbc-documentary-censor-real-holy-water-news-ont>

The UK-UAE tech partnership is a promising sign of things to come
Close collaboration with the UAE will only strengthen British national security interests

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-uk-uae-tech-partnership-is-a-promising-sign-of-things-to-come/>

Minimum alcohol pricing in Scotland had minimal impact on crime
Research from Manchester Metropolitan University analysed Police Scotland data to understand how MUP, introduced in May 2018, affected various crimes. It found no significant statistical changes in alcohol-related crime, disorder and public nuisance offences

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-58871427>

The Inuit knowledge vanishing with the ice
The Inuit are famous for their ability to survive extreme conditions, having inhabited the Arctic for millennia. But as the ice recedes, this hard-earned knowledge is being lost.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211011-the-inuit-knowledge-vanishing-with-the-ice>

Latest A&E waiting times worst on record again
Just 71.3% of patients were seen within the target time, below the 95% the Scottish government aims for. This has not been met since July 2020.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-58887585>

Clock ticking on bid to save Burns and Scott works for the nation
An appeal was launched earlier this year when it was announced that manuscripts held in the Honresfield Library were being put up for auction

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd8v14jz3m9o>

How the first African American doctor fought for women's rights in Glasgow

James McCune Smith was the first African American to receive a medical doctorate from a university. Born in 1813 to a poor South Carolina runaway slave who had escaped to New York City, he went on to attend Glasgow University during the 1830s. When he returned to America, he became a leading black physician, a tireless abolitionist, activist and journalist.

Read more at:

<https://sceptical.scot/2021/10/how-the-first-african-american-doctor-fought-for-womens-rights-in-glasgow/>

One million domestic abuse cases unreported every year

Up to one million incidents of domestic violence may go unreported in Scotland every year, according to experts, who warn the sheer scale of the crisis threatens to overwhelm police, prosecution and support services.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/one-million-domestic-abuse-cases-unreported-every-year>

UK and Italy kick off talks on 'win-win' trade partnership

THE UK has begun talks with Italy on a new export and investment partnership aimed at boosting trade and cooperation between the two countries.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1505253/Brexit-news-Britain-UK-Italy-trade-partnership-talks-eu-latest>

Time to grow more of our own food

By John Redwood MP. I notice in my local supermarkets a keen enthusiasm to display the Union flag on many foods the retailer can claim are home grown.

Read more at:

<https://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2021/10/14/time-to-grow-more-of-our-own-food>

Electric Canadian

Thoughts on a Sunday morning - the 10th day of October 2021

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26098-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-10th-day-of-october-2021>

Pioneers of Montreal

Souvenir of the Seventh Annual Convention of Telephone Pioneers of America September 10th and 11th 1920 (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/quebec/rbsc_pioneers-montreal.pdf

The Promise of the Future

Excellency Mary Simon as we continue to recognize important stories, the people they represent, and those who proudly share them.

Read more at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/promise.htm>

Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto

Annual Report 1922-1923 Transaction No. 23

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/Womens-Canadian-Historical-Society-Toronto23.pdf>

Wooded Lands in Ontario
From 20 Cents to 50 Cents all along the line of the Railway.

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

Videos about the Gaels of Nova Scotia

Added a selection of videos from YouTube to our History of Nova Scotia page which you can view at:
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/novascotia/index.htm>

Electric Scotland

Beth's Video Talks

Beth has another video for you for October 13th 2021 - Be Careful of What You Throw Away

You can watch this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft>

Nynia in Northern Pictland

By Archibald Black Scott (pdf)

An article from the Scottish Historical Review which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/nynia.pdf>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in the November section 2 issue.

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

The Lord's Day

Substance of a Speech delivered at a meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow on Thursday, 16th November, 1865 by Norman MacLeod, D.D.

He was apparently criticised quite heavily for a talk he gave but as it was reported out of context he felt he needed to explain it better and as he'd only made notes to aid his talk he decided to try to explain more fully and this was the result.

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/macleod/The_Lord_Day_Substance_of_a_Speech_Deliv.pdf

Minute Book of the Board of Green Cloth 1809—1820

With Notices of the Members (1891) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/glasgow/Minute-book-of-the-Board-of-Green-Cloth.pdf>

My Bondage and My Freedom

Part I. - Life as a Slave Part II. - Life as a Freeman by Frederick Douglas with an Introduction by Dr. James M'Cune Smith (1855) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/america/negro/mybondagemyfreedom.pdf>

Scottish Society of Indianapolis

Got in their October 2021 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/indianapolis/index.htm>

The Scottish Ancestors of President Roosevelt

An article from the Scottish Historical Review of July 1904 which I added to our page about him around half way down the page at:

https://electricScotland.com/history/america/teddy_roosevelt.htm

Scottish Industrial Undertakings before the Union

By W. R. Scott (1904) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/business/industrial.pdf>

Story

Side Lights from the Dunvegan Charter Chest

R. C. MacLeod

An enormous number of documents are preserved at Dunvegan, the ancient seat of MacLeod of MacLeod in Skye. I have, however, no intention of giving any detailed account of these papers in the present article.

Interestingly though they may be to members of the family containing such things as charters, instruments of seisin, grants of non-entries, and the like are apt to be somewhat dull reading. I propose rather to lay before the reader such selections from these papers as seem likely to be interesting from the quaintness of their phraseology, from their reference to historical events or from the light they throw upon the conditions of life which prevailed in the Highlands and Islands during the 16th and 17th centuries. A perusal of such papers impresses on one's mind the utter lawlessness which prevailed during this period in this part of Scotland.

Thus in 1527 letters of apprising were issued in the King's name against Alexander MacLeod of Dunvegan, and the Sheriffs were told to summon the King's lieges to assist them, 'because ye said Alexander duellis in ye Hieland where nane of ye officeris of ye law dar pas for fear of yair lyvis.

Skye, like Galway at a later period, was assuredly 'west of the law'. Again, on the death of William MacLeod of Dunvegan in 1553, the family estates passed, legally speaking, to his daughter Mary, who was thus one of the greatest heiresses in Scotland. The nobles of Scotland were vying with each other for the privileges attached to the guardianship of so wealthy an heiress. The Earl of Huntly, Lord Kintail, and the Earl of Argyle each in turn obtained her wardship, and she was married by the last-named peer to a relation of his own, Campbell of Castle Swinney. But though Mary was the undoubted owner of the estates in the eye of the law, her uncle, the male heir, took possession of them and held them in spite of her legal rights, and at length, about 1570, she recognised the futility of persisting in her claims, and — all right to the property, receiving a dowry of £1000. Her descendants were constantly endeavouring to substantiate their claims, alleging some flaw in her resignation, but they never succeeded in doing so.

As a matter of fact, however, a very large part of the Highlands was de facto in the hands of owners who de jure had no claim whatever. Sometimes the Kings of Scotland created jealousies and strife between the great chiefs by granting the lands of one werful laird to another, and even making simultaneous grants of the same estates to different people. In 1498 James the Fourth granted the Bailliary of Trotternish to both MacLeod of Dunvegan and to MacLeod of the Lewes, leaving them to fight it out between them. In 1542 James the Fifth granted the estates which had been for centuries the property of the MacDonalds of Sleat to MacLeod of Dunvegan, a grant which was the cause of endless disputes between these powerful clans.

The Kings of Scotland were directly responsible for the turbulence and unrest which prevailed in the Highlands at this period. As long as they were united under the strong rule of the Lord of the Isles, the Highlanders lived at peace among themselves, but were an unceasing cause of anxiety to their rulers at Edinburgh. Long after the final forfeiture of the Island Lords their representatives were constantly endeavouring to regain their lost power. As late as 1545 seventeen of the chiefs entered into negotiations with Henry VIII. with a view to transferring their pane to the English monarch. This shows the reality of the peril the Scottish Kings had to face, and it may well be that they considered

any policy justifiable which would sow dissensions among the members of a confederacy which had been for two hundred years an unceasing source of danger to the kingdom.

I take almost at random some other instances showing the lawlessness which prevailed during the period under consideration. In 1674 proceedings were taken to obtain payment from M'Neil of Barra of some money due from him to a merchant in Glasgow for 'certaine merchand wear' bought by him, and an unfortunate messenger named Munro was sent to serve legal letters on M'Neil. The results were disastrous, for Rorie M'Neil in hie and proud contempt of His Majesties authoritie did deforce molest trouble and persew the said messenger and notar, and did most cruellie and inhumanlie dischaige foure scoir shott of hagbutts muskets gunns and pistols at them, and threw great stones frome the house whereby they were in hazard of being brained and so durst not for thair lyvis approach nearer to have left copies at the principall door thereof, as use is, so they left them on the ground, on — informed of which Rorie M'Neil and others to the number of twentie all armed with hagbutts guns pistols and other invasive and forbidden weapons, being thieves robbers sorners and broken men did persew and follow after the said messenger and notar to the yle of Fuday and ther did take and apprehend ther persones, and did detaine them captives and prisoners ther the space of two dayes, still threatening and menacing them and did most proudlie and insolentlie robb the wreits they had then in their compayne from them and in high contempt of his Majesties autorite did rend and ryve the samen.' Rorie M'Neil, however, did not get off scaithless. He was tried at Edinburgh in 1679, and fined £1000, and to be imprisoned till the fine was paid, while one of his dependants named Donald Gair was also condemned; 'his haill moveable guidis and gear were escheat,' and he was imprisoned during the King's pleasure.

In 1587 Rorie M'Leod of Dunvegan seems to have been guilty of an act of piracy on the high seas, in that 'he reft spulzied and took certaine wairs guidis and geir out of a bark at ye mouthe of Loch Long.' In this case, though justice was very slow, the delinquent had to pay the value of the goods taken, £500. The discharge is dated December, 1604, and sets forth all the circumstances.

In 1618 we have a very curious account, relating how certaine Kenneth M'Alayne of Glenelg did wrang in his wrangous violent and masterful spoliation away takyng recepting and withholding by himself his servants complices and utheris in his name, of his caussing sending out command reset and assistance and ratifikatione fra Alexander Duff Johnstone Burgess of Inverness furth of his merchand built in Inverness upon the twentie first day of November, off the particular quantitie of guidis geir and merchandeice particularlie under wrettin of the pryce particularlie under specifeit.'

Then follows a long list of the articles stolen. This includes 'gryt blew bonnates' worth £12 Scots a dussein, 'less bonnatis' worth £10 the dussen, kourdes (which, I suppose, is cord), 'beutting clothes' which cost thirty shillings, groceries, and other miscellaneous goods. Besides all these, a quantity of money was stolen, including an item of 'forty fyve aucht schyllinge pieces pryce of the everyone of themn nyne schylliages'. There is no evidence to show whether the unlucky complainer ever got back his property or the value of it.

It would be easy to multiply instances showing the lawless condition of the Highlands during the 17th century, and, as will be seen further on, letters written at the period are full of references to tumults, robberies, and crimes of all kinds. Perhaps one great cause of this was the appalling ignorance which vailed in all ranks or life. The clergy were more or less educated, and in 1559 the Earl of Argyle signed his name to a bond of manrent, which is among the Dunvegan papers, but his writing is phenomenally bad, and a few years earlier not one of the seventeen chiefs, who signed the commission referred to above authorizing their envoy to treat with Henry VIII., could write their names.

The usual form of signature was 'with my hand led at the pene by ye notar becaus I can writ nocht, by my command.' Even Marie MacLeod, who, as is proved from the Lord Treasurer's accounts, was, about 1560, attached to the Household of Queen Mary, could not write. Her uncle, Tormod, is said to have been educated at Glasgow, but, if this be true, writing cannot have been included in the curriculum, for he signed in the usual form. His son Rorie Mor was the first chief who could write, and he always used the Erse character; his wife, a daughter of the house of Glengarry, was, however, illiterate.

In 1609 Bishop Knox succeeded in getting the Western chiefs to accept the Statutes of Iona, the sixth of which provided that the eldest sons of the upper classes should be educated in the lowlands; and we find from that time forward among the bills and discharges preserved at Dunvegan a large number for tuition, board, and lodging at

Glasgow and Edinburgh. Towards the end of the century, Mr. Martin, the historian, was governor to the young lairds at Dunvegan, and the chiefs' daughters were educated at Edinburgh, learning music, dancing, and painting in much the same way as to-day.

In the eighteenth century, but not earlier, we begin to find among the estate accounts items relating to the salaries of school masters maintained for the instruction of the masses. One is somewhat surprised to find from the places at which documents were executed how much travelling was done in the seventeenth century. The Chanonrie of Ross, now called Fortrose, seems to have been a great place for transacting business, many deeds being dated there. Rorie Mor died there in 1626, having probably gone there on business, and is buried in the Cathedral, and the same chief frequently visited Glasgow, and once went to London, as is proved by a letter from King James to the Council in Scotland, dated 1613.

There were, of course, no roads in the West Highlands, but there was an excellent breed of ponies, as is mentioned in the notes attached to a curious map of Skye made about 1650, and even in the south at that period wheeled conveyances were not much used. But no doubt most of the travelling was done by sea. In a charter, dated 1498, MacLeod is required to keep ready for the King's service one galley of 36 oars and two of 16 oars. The young Captain of Clanranald married Moir MacLeod in 1613, and she received as tocher, in addition to 'nine scoir of gude and sufficient quick ky (i.e. 180 living cattle), ane gailley of twentie foure airis with her sailling and rowing geir de and sufficient.'

The fact that almost all the instruments of seisin were dated in May and none of them in winter, probably points to the difficulty of winter travelling, and no doubt locomotion was slow and uncertain. One letter, towards the end of the seventeenth century, says what a wonderfully quick eer the writer had, having actually come from Edinburgh to Dunvegan in a week.

After the restoration, Rory Matkand went to London. His 'Taylor's bill' in 1661, amounted to something like £3000 Scots, about a fourth of his rental, and this was for an outhit to go to Court. The clan had suffered very severely at Worcester, and I dare say he thought the King would confer on him some signal mark of Royal favour. But Charles never even referred to the sacrifices the clan had made in his cause, and MacLeod returned north much mortified. He is said to have declared that never again should clansmen of his draw sword for the ungrateful Stewarts. They certainly never did. There are letters extant from James II. and Dundee, in 1690, imploring their assistance, and no effort was spared to attach them to the Stewart cause in 1715 and 1745, but they took no part in any of these risings.

There seems to have been no regular post at all. The letters contain very frequent references to the opportunities which some chance traveller gives of sending a letter, and to the expense of sending a special messenger. Frequently a letter is an answer to one dated several months before. Probably the lack of postal arrangements accounts for the small number of letters dated before the beginning of the eighteenth century. The earliest is a missive anent we addressed by a certain Ronald M'Alayne to Rory MacLeod of Dunvegan in pei 1596. A dispute as to the ownership of one third part of Glenelg had been going on ever since the early years of the sixteenth century between Lord Lovat and MacLeod. From this letter it appears that MacLeod's instrument was 'tint,' and that great efforts had been made by both parties to find it, the one party intending to 'keep it weel other to ryve and burne it.' The phraseology is deliciously quaint, but the letter is too long to give in full.

A letter, dated November 24th, 1666, from a tailor in Edinburgh, regrets that he can get no holland 'worthie your Honours wear, the merchants being afrayd to take in mair by reason of the great trubble yat is happening heir.' This refers to the Pentland rising and the Battle of Rullion Green.

Another letter from Edinburgh, in October, 1667, says: 'There is account of internal trubbles in the next countrie. Tweddale has gone to Court. The Douglass Regiment is recalled to France. The French King has adopted our King's mediation between him and Spain in the affaits of Flanders, and hath been asked by the Holland ambassador to mediate lykways; however he is strengthen with 150,000 men against the next season.'

A letter from D. M'Kinnon in 1677 is very curiously worded. 'These are shewing that I had a continual motion since leaving your honours house, but I hope it will with Gods grace rest in ye proper center if yair cum not greater opposition, but it also empties ye bottom of my purse. It is uncertaine qhat will befall the Duke of Lauderdale, but we

expect he will cum frie off.'

The timber merchant who, in 1672, agrees to sell 600 'dealls' at £42 per 100, but begs MacLeod to tell everyone he paid £48, is somewhat naive. its ending is rather amusing. 'Right Honourable your Honour's everlasting servant to command while I am.'

A certain Alexander MacLeod, referring to an invitation his daughter has received to stay with a friend, is most anxious that she should go, because he is 'fully persuaded of her opportunitie to attain to some more breiding by the society of your virtuouse bed fellowe.'

The same writer in another letter asks for 'ane gallon of ye best liqour which is for the use of some tender persones.'

MacLeod, on August 23, 1690, writes to his father, saying 'all the professors at the Edinburgh University are to be deprived next Wednesday. No man can lay his mind to his book in this town by reason of the tumults and confusion.' Thomas Fraser, writing from Beaufort in 1691, is afraid his letter 'cannot com safely in your hands the way meme so dangerous by robbery'

He also refers to a fire at Whitehall, which has done damage to the extent of £100,000. The fire which destroyed Whitehall took place in 1698, but this was the earlier fire of April, 1691, when it was partly burnt.

References are made to the Battle of Steinkirk, and to, projected French descent on Scotland in 1692. The tax of 14 for every hearth is also referred to in a letter about the same date.

In 1692 an account is given of a great earthquake in Flanders and France, 'when the erth was visibly seen moving like the waves of the sea.'

There are many other points on which an old charter chest has much light to throw, such as the tenure and value of land, and the prices of commodities, both home-grown and imported, but the space at my disposal forbids my entering on these matters in the present article.

END.

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

Alastair
