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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for February 11th, 2022

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

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

Electric Scotland News

Seems to me that all over the world people are talking about the Canadian Truckers protest. There is now general condemnation about them due to car plants shutting down and thousands of workers both in Canada and the USA being laid off.

As for Covid it now seems that most countries are now looking at easing all restrictions. Around 80% of all Covid cases in hospital are from the non vaccinated. I note some 90% of all Canadians have had the two vaccine shots.

I note also that many reports of Covid deaths are being shown to be only part Covid as Covid is only one factor in the death. In the UK some 125,000 deaths are reported as being mainly caused by Covid.

Lots of snow around these days in North America and Europe. My snow clearing guy is delighted <grin>

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.

Sturgeon's claim about Scottish pensions is utter nonsense - and she knows it
The SNP is effectively admitting that an independent Scotland can't fully fund people's pensions

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/sturgeons-claim-about-scottish-pensions-is-utter-nonsense-and-she-knows-it/>

Canada threatens to unleash Brexit bombshell on UK

CANADA has threatened to unleash a Brexit bombshell on Britain sending alarm bells ringing across the country.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1562577/brexit-news-canada-threaten-unleash-bombshell-Britain-alarms-sound>

Media

By Hamish Mackay in the Scottish Review

Read more at:

<https://www.scottishreview.net/HamishMackay603a.html>

Major breakthrough on nuclear fusion energy

The UK-based JET laboratory has smashed its own world record for the amount of energy it can extract by squeezing together two forms of hydrogen.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-60312633>

The Scottish state's perilous direction of travel under the SNP

THERE HAVE for some time been signs that Scotland is moving in a very worrying direction under the SNP leadership.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2022/02/the-scottish-states-perilous-direction-of-travel-under-the-snp/>

Archaeologists stunned as Scottish history needs rewriting after bombshell discovery

A new study found that the Scottish Islands were likely colonised by women rather than men. By studying the ancient DNA from human remains on the Orkney Islands, the researchers found that during the Early Bronze Age, most of the population was replaced through immigration, but some descendants remain. During the Neolithic period, Orkney was a hugely influential cultural centre as farming first took hold around 5,000 years ago.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1562401/archaeologists-stunned-scotland-history-rewritten-bombshell-colonial-discovery>

How Brexit blew up Indyref2

It's ironic that Nicola Sturgeon has fixed on Brexit as the ostensible reason for 'Indyref2'. Thanks to the EU referendum, we will surely not have another vote without clarifying the terms first. And for the rest of the UK, there's every incentive to make them as onerous as possible.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/how-brexit-blew-up-indyref2/>

I enjoy my Hong Kong-Scottish dual identity

Cheuk-chi Yau remembers the moment, not long after he arrived in Glasgow from Hong Kong with his young family, when he knew they would be OK in Scotland.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-60302591>

Canadian truckers - the movie!

PRINCE HARRY'S timely reminder to look after inner self, with a spot of meditating made me aware of some unprocessed rage bubbling away under the surface, triggered by very particular words. Words like GoFundMe and not passing on money raised and 'intended for Canadian Truckers'. In any order really.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2022/02/canadian-truckers-the-movie/>

Electric Canadian

Canadian Prairies: The Grass Kingdom

The vast, quiet plains of the Canadian prairies are home to some of the most productive ecosystems in North America thanks to a seemingly insignificant organism - grass! Added this video to the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/tourism.htm>

A United Empire

Paper read by Thomas MacFarlane, F.R.S.C. before the Montreal Branch of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, Monday, 21st December, 1885. (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/articles/uepaper.pdf>

The Sunny-Sulky Book

A book for children, By Sarah Cory Rippey (1913) (pdf)

You can read this at:

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

THOUGHTS on a SUNDAY MORNING - the 6th day of Febraury 2022 - INSPIRATIONS, part 2
By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26152-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-6th-day-of-february-2022-inspiration-ii>

New Brunswick Bibliography

The Books and Writers of the Province By W. G. MacFarlane, A. B. (1895) (pdf)

You can view this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/nb/New-Brunswick-bibliography.pdf>

In the Days of the Canada Company

The story of the settlement of the Huron Tract and a view of the social life of the period 1825 - 1850 by Robina and Kathleen MacFarlane Lizars with an introduction by G. M. Grant, D.D., LL.D., Principal Queen's University, Kingston with Portraits and Illustrations (1896) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/Huron-Tract.pdf>

Electric Scotland

Buchan Poetry

Fruits of Time Parings by W. Beattie, Aberdeen. The Text reprinted exactly as it appeared in the Original of 1813 with an Introduction and Glossary (1873)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/poetry/buchananpoetry.htm>

Beth's Video Talks

February 9th 2022 - DNA and Christopher Columbus

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

A Jacobite Stronghold of the Church

By Mary E. Ingram

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/jacobites/stronghold.htm>

The Glenbervie Journals
Edited and Arranged by Walter Sichel (1910) (pdf)

You can read these at:
<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/glenberviejournals.pdf>

Sir Archibald Campbell of Inverneill
By Charles H. Walcott (1898) (pdf)

You can read about him at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/sirarchibaldcampbell.pdf>

The Arms on China of Sir Archibald Campbell of Inverneill
By J. Tavenor-Perry (pdf)

You can read this article at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/armsofchina.pdf>

Notice of a Hebridean Earth-House
By David MacRitchie, FSA Scot. (pdf)

You can read this at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/hebridean-earth-house.pdf>

William de la Cour
Painter, Engraver, and Teacher of Drawing. An unwritten chapter in the History of Old Edinburgh By David Fraser
Harris, M.D., B.Sc. (London).

You can read this at:
<https://electricscotland.com/art/williamdelaCour.htm>

Brands and Scorgie
By Stan Bruce

Another book in Stan's series about Shipbuilding in Aberdeen which you can read at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/aberdeen/Brands-and-Scorgie.pdf>

Buchan
By the Rev. John B. Pratt, M.A., LL.D. (Fourth Edition) Revised by Robert Anderson (1901) (pdf)

You can read about this place at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/gazetteer/Buchan.pdf>

An Historical Account of The Scottish Communion Office
And of the Communion Office of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America with Liturgical
Notes to which is added a reprint in reduced facsimilie of the edition of the Scottish Office of 1764; and also reprints
of the American Communion Office, the Scottish Office of 1637, and the Nonjurors Office (1718) by John Dowden,
D.D. (1884)

You can read this at:
<https://electricscotland.com/history/america/annotatedscottis18841.pdf>

Story

Buchan Poetry

Fruits of Time Parings by W. Beattie, Aberdeen. The Text reprinted exactly as it appeared in the Original of 1813 with an Introduction and Glossary (1873) (pdf)

Introduction

IN bringing this little volume before the public, it may not be altogether inadvisable to say something about the author and his work. This becomes the more necessary when we find that, although his principal poem has long been locally popular, his poems as a whole have fallen into unmerited obscurity, while the author himself has become an object of somewhat doubtful identity. No doubt one of the most influential of the causes which has led to the scarcity of his genuine productions, is the form in which they were given to the public. They were printed and published in 1813 by Messrs. Imlay and Keith, Longacre, Aberdeen, and formed the first part of a large chap book, entitled "Entertaining and Instructive Tales in two parts;" Part I, "Fruits of Time Parings, by W. Beattie."

Of the man himself little can be learned now; and although many inquiries have been made in order to get as much reliable information as possible respecting his life, the little we can get is gleaned from traditional accounts of him handed down from his contemporaries to us. He was born in the sixth decade of last century, and worked during the greater part of his life as a heckler at the Gallowgate-head factory, then a thriving establishment belonging to Messrs. Young of Comhill, and Gerrie of Heathcot. He appears to have been married, and to have lived in the Gallowgate, near the top of the Vennel (now St. Paul Street), in one of those old wooden houses, the last of which was taken down about 26 years ago. His rhyming propensity, which was of no ordinary character, soon became known amongst his fellow-workmen, and called round him a group of jovial and congenial spirits, who loved a stiff glass and a racy song. He wrote and extemporized many pieces of a satirical order—launched at individuals whose actions or general tenor of life was repugnant to the poet or his cronies—but unfortunately none of these effusions are preserved. They were, for the most part, recited or sung at the tap-room meetings in Luxemburg's Close, where his celebrated Good-wife's cap ale had charms to attract less drouthy mortals than the heckler poet. These slight reminiscences are all we have been able to collect, and it is not to be wondered at, when we remember that an entire generation had passed away after his death (about 1815), before any enquiries were instituted respecting him. Moreover, a life like his, passed in a busy workshop, presented little by which to distinguish it from the hundreds of others passed in the same work-a-day circumstances, while those among whom he moved were in general blind to the worth of the man—to them the poet was lost in the heckler.

William Beattie has often been confounded with Alexander Beattie, sometime schoolmaster at Tain. This arises from the fact that the latter gentleman published a volume of poetry in 1832 (about 17 years after the heckler died), mostly of a religious character, but strangely enough containing *The Yule Feast*, *The Brewster Wife* (*The Alewife*), *The Farmer's Winter's Evening* (*The Winter's Night*), *The Frugal Wish*, and *the Medley*. As many suggestions have been made in order to explain this seeming plagiarism, we will give the facts on which our conclusions respecting it are based, and leave the reader to judge for himself.

Alexander Beattie was born near Inverurie about 1780, his father being the owner and cultivator of a small farm in that locality. He was educated at Aberdeen University—left for Ross-shire in 1809, and started an adventure school at Fortrose—was appointed English teacher in Tain Academy in 1812, which position he held till shortly before his death, which took place in Aberdeen in 1840. Let us now compare these facts with certain statements made in the "Yule Feast." It appears from the opening of that poem that the author went on a visit to an uncle, a farmer, in the vicinity of Inverurie ("the length o' Daviot")—and it further appears that this visit had been made shortly after 1797, as mention is made of the tailor's coat being "Camperdown"—a fabric very fashionable for a short time after the celebrated engagement of that name. From the simple facts of the two individuals bearing the same surname, and respectively publishing the same set of poems, a general presumption of kinship had arisen; but when we find, in addition to this, that at the time W. Beattie's visit was made there was a farmer, or small holder of that name* and in the locality indicated, this presumption is greatly strengthened, and seems to point to no other conclusion than that the two individuals were cousins.

As to the reasons which led to the appearance of these poems in A. B.'s volume, all lie beyond the region of human ken; but seeing he had left Aberdeen at least three years before the original issue, and considering the limited area over which the publication would then be spread, it is quite possible he had never been aware of their seeing the

light. When, however, we compare the poems as given by the heckler and schoolmaster respectively, we find greater differences than would at first sight be expected. The alterations and additions made in the copy of 1832 are so extensive that scarcely one verse of the Yule Feast is the same as in the original edition. The same remark, somewhat modified, applies to the "Ale wife," and the whole scene in *The Winter's Night* (*The Farmer's Winter's Evening*) between the pedlar and the lasses is omitted, other verses and incidents being substituted. The extent of these differences, however, can only be properly seen by comparison, which we will leave to those who are curious in such matters. Suffice it to say, that where the phraseology of the original is altered, it is never improved, and that the method of expurgation applied, has been so complete, as to destroy all traces of that masculinity, which is so characteristic of the three principal poems.

The season of jubilee, so vividly described in the principal poem of this volume, has been, from time immemorial, handed down to each successive generation, as a sort of heirloom from its predecessor; so that in endeavouring to trace it to its origin, we very shortly find ourselves lost in the mists of antiquity. As far as can be relied on however this feast called Jul or Yule, was originally held in honour of Frey or the Sun on his return at the winter solstice, and was one of the three great festivals recognised under the Gothic mythology. The leading feature of these gatherings seems to have been the excessive drinking bouts then indulged in, which not only gave colour to the whole affair, but latterly became of such a depraving order as to call for regal interference, in the institution of Guilds or Clubs, of which each and every member became responsible for any excesses which might occur. When Christianity extended its domain and began to encroach on the field of heathendom, the strong social habits which these prior rites and ceremonies had engendered in the people, presented a very formidable barrier to the progress of evangelization. Under such circumstances it was resolved by Gregory the Great that "the festivals of Pagans be gradually changed into Christian festivals, and others made in resemblance of them." Thus by merely changing the names of the beings in whose honour the festivals were held, from Mythological to Christian, an easier method of superinducing the new beliefs on the community was established, although at an enormous sacrifice of purity and simplicity in the principles taught.

In Scotland, prior to 1555, Yule was strictly observed as a holiday, and all its concomitant rites and ceremonies conserved, with that persistence which is always obtained when superstition assumes a religious aspect. After the Reformation, however, every means was used by the clergy to destroy these heathenish superstitions, which had for centuries exercised such a pernicious-influence over the minds of the people. A law was passed compelling the people to remain at work on Yule day, under the most severe penalties in case of non-compliance, while the wives and daughters of the leading reformers span during the day in view of the public. In our City records we find, in 1576, several deacons of trade charged with absenting themselves from work, spending the day in feasting, drinking, and playing; and, "after purging their consciences of the samen, maintaining that they did not hold the said superstitious day nor nocht of their craft," were bound over in a sum of money for the future behaviour, not only of themselves, but of their respective crafts. Again, in 1605, six persons, "after incalling of God, were delatit to the Kirk Session to be fosteraris of superstitioun in going throch the toun maskit and dansing with bellis on Yuill day last at night." The fishers of Footdee stood out against going ' to sea on that and other holidays; while for many years the scholars of the Grammar and Sang Schools kept up a perpetual warfare with their masters owing to the withdrawal of their Yule holidays. The poor bellman of the Old Town, whose duty it was to warn the inhabitants of the breach of law involved in keeping up the old customs, got occasionally severely handled by the "collegenars" who would not only take his bell from him, but put him under the necessity of beating a speedy retreat. This position of antagonism between the people and their governors continued for many years, until gradually matters were allowed to settle down and adjust themselves, individuals keeping Yule, or not, as best suited their tastes. It was customary in our rural districts (where Yule was kept long after it ceased to be anything but a name in our larger towns), to have all kinds of domestic work finished before "Yule even" (see page 32), or should anything, such as spinning, be left in an unfinished condition, it was sprinkled with salt in order to keep off any evil influence. A table was spread inside the door with bread and cheese, to welcome Yule, on the door being first opened that morning; while he who let Yule in, never failed, if he had the good of the family at heart, to come with a full hand, having a peat from the stack, or hay from the "rick," as a guarantee of luck or prosperity for another twelvemonth. (This custom has in some measure been transferred to our New Year morning in the "first foot.") In some cases a member of the family rises before the others, and bakes a bannock or cake, for each person in the house, which has to be eaten by them" in bed, and, should any of the cakes break during the toasting, it is supposed that the person for whom it was intended will never see another Yule. As evening draws on, the friends of the family invited for the occasion, begin to gather, in order to partake of the feast, which during the greater part of the day has occupied the attention of the domestics in preparing. The game of tee-

totum was a peculiarity of this season [see p. 2], and was engaged in more particularly by the younger members of the company, who for weeks previous would collect pins for the occasion.

An instance of another superstition is mentioned at page 31, in connection with the Rowan-tree. This tree was held sacred by the Scandinavians on account of the fact, that under its branches the gods and warriors held their courts of justice. In the North of Scotland the rowan was esteemed as a preventative against sorcery; small twigs of it wound with red thread, being hung over the lintels of byre doors, or attached to anything which would be thought liable to attract evil influences. When sheep or cattle were being driven to the sheelin', rantree sticks were provided for the purpose, while large branches of the same material were placed at the openings of the sheep pens. The belief, in the mystic potency of the wood of this tree, gave rise to the popular rhyme,

“Rantree an' red thread,
Put the witches to their speed.”

That the observance of such days and customs are fast disappearing from society, leaving only here and there fragmentary traces of their former existence, is one of the results of the general spread of intelligence. Yet although the tendency seems to be, to consider all such customs “more honoured in the breach than the observance,” they have played such an important part in the history of human beliefs, as gives them a value, which, however curious in other respects, they would not otherwise have possessed.

A few words anent the present publication. Our text is a faithful reproduction of the original in every particular, even to mis-spellings, no improvements having been attempted which would encroach in the smallest degree on the text as originally given. As specimens of the “broad Buchan,” of that vernacular which lies closest to the heart and feelings of every true “Buchan bairn,” these poems take the front rank; and the hope of being able to give them a permanent form, and to link them more closely than hitherto to their author's name, have been the chief incentives to their present publication. W. P. S. W.

You can read the poems at: <https://electricScotland.com/poetry/buchanpoetry.pdf>

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair
