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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for March 22nd, 2024

Electric Scotland News

This is an article from CapX which is mainly about the house building crisis in the UK and thought you might find it interesting. At the end is a link to a pdf of a report on house building which makes an interesting read.

News of Lee Anderson's defection to Reform UK was not what Rishi Sunak was hoping to wake up to on Monday morning. For a bit of background, Anderson, who served under Sunak as Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, recently lost the whip after accusing Mayor of London Sadiq Khan of being under the control of 'Islamists'.

Since Anderson's move to Reform, his common refrain has been that he 'wants his country back', something he no longer feels the Tories are capable of delivering. But what would Anderson's renewed Britain look like? According to a recent post on X, it would be a nation characterised by hard coppers, doing away with 'woke rubbish' and 'putting British people first' by lowering immigration. There are other suggestions, but these are the highlights.

Now, while this is a message that will understandably resonate with many, it also reads like a cartoon version of mid-century Britain.

Of course, a national revitalisation is definitely in order. But if Anderson really wants to transform Britain, then he surely ought to have a more up-to-date prospectus – not least by campaigning to address our broken housing market.

Benjamin Disraeli, the paterfamilias of the modern Conservative Party, warned of the emergence of 'two nations' within Britain. In the 1870s, when Disraeli was Prime Minister, that described the disparity in living standards between monocled aristocrats and juvenile chimney sweeps. But these days, the glaring division between the haves and have nots is home ownership. And the latter group is disproportionately populated by the young.

Bridging this gap is central to boosting Britain's prosperity. As my colleagues at the Centre for Policy Studies have endlessly highlighted, Britain is currently building homes at a fraction of the rate that we did in the 1960s, despite our growing population (and an even smaller fraction of the rate before Labour nationalised planning in the 1940s). But the desire for a place to call your own hasn't diminished. This mismatch between supply and demand has caused house prices to surge, plunging a generation of young Brits into despondence over the fear that they may never own a home.

At the root of this quagmire is a planning system which has remained largely unchanged since the Town and Country Planning Act was introduced in 1947. The Act, which stipulated the preservation of green belt land to halt urban sprawl, has created a perverse environment in which local residents with an affinity to an old tree have more power to block vital housebuilding than developers have to build it.

The housing market this has engendered is subsequently rigged in favour of those who happened to be born when homes were cheap and plentiful. This is not a model for British success, and its reform is essential. But apparently this isn't something that concerns our man in Ashfield.

Of course, insufficient housing isn't the only barrier to 'getting our country back'. Economic growth has slowed to the point where we celebrate anything with a positive sign in front of it and our productivity has plummeted since the 2008 financial crash. Our complex tax code is also hampering our international competitiveness and repelling much-needed investment.

While the package of deregulation required to tackle these chronic issues might not cohere with Anderson's soundbite analysis of what Britain needs, we won't restore our nation without it. What we need is an economy that works just as well for those inheriting it as it did for those who designed it.

Joseph Dinnage Deputy Editor, CapX

See also the report at:

https://cps.org.uk/research/the-case-for-housebuilding

One in four primary school pupils and a staggering four in ten secondary school students were "persistently absent" from classes in Scottish schools. Tory MSP Liam Kerr said: "While the SNP insist that education is their number one priority, their record is one of persistent failure."

Got my heat pump installed so look forward to getting some savings on my energy bills. My AC unit was 26 years old and my furnace was 14 years old.

And Spring has finally arrived or at least here in Canada last Tuesday was the official first day of Spring. As I write this it is bright sunshine and -1C. The forecast says there will be periods of snow on Friday and there is a chance of flurries for Saturday.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

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 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.

Here is what caught my eye this week...

Number of births in Scotland plummets according to latest government report New statistics released by the National Records of Scotland, a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Government, have revealed that the birth rate dropped towards the end of 2023

Read more at:

https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/number-births-scotland-plummets-according-32341860

Must we keep failing universities alive?

History is full of institutions which could not justify their own existence

Read more at:

https://thecritic.co.uk/must-we-keep-failing-universities-alive

The scandal of Scotland's illiberal hate crime law

From next month in Scotland you'll be able to drop into a sex shop, make an anonymous accusation of hate crime against someone you dislike and potentially see your bete noir locked up. You think I'm joking that this is an April Fool come early. I only wish it was. In two weeks' time, this will be the law of the land in Scotland under the SNP's iniquitous Hate Crime Act which makes 'stirring up hatred' a criminal offence punishable by 7 years in jail.

Read more at:

https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-scandal-of-scotlands-illiberal-hate-crime-law/

Attacks, threats and sexual assault - the daily hell faced by shopworkers that shames Scotland

Physical attacks on shop staff skyrocketed in 2023 with almost a fifth of staff experiencing an assault - and seven in 10 facing verbal abuse

Read more at:

https://www.scottishdailvexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/attacks-threats-sexual-assault-dailv-32342582

The songwriter beating men at their own videogame

Songwriter Siobhan Wilson will be flying the flag for Scotland - and women - later this week at the international gaming Oscars.

Read more at:

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-68427175

Cook jacket potato in 10 minutes

The handy tips have ben hailed as 'life changing' for people cooking in their kitchen.

Learn more at:

https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/chefs-life-changing-technique-cooks-32383897

Conrad Black: Globe and Mail fails on Trump

The paper's portrayal of the upcoming election is completely off base

Read more at:

https://archive.is/7v9hM#selection-1959.0-1959.69

MSPs urged to increase minimum alcohol pricing to 65p per unit

The Scottish Parliament must vote as a whole by the end of April to pass the new regulations on minimum pricing or the policy will come to an end.

Read more at:

https://news.stv.tv/scotland/organisations-call-for-minimum-alcohol-pricing-to-increase-to-65-pence-per-unit

Scottish wildlife law passes final vote

A new wildlife law aimed at protecting birds of prey and regulating the grouse shooting industry has passed its final vote at Holyrood.

Read more at:

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-68619141

How these Canadian cows are burping less methane

Canadian dairy farmer Ben Loewith is among the first farmers to start genetically breeding cows to produce less methane, a potent greenhouse gas produced when cows burp.

Watch this at:

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68602575

Electric Canadian

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1908

By J. Castell Hopkins (eighth year of issue)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canadatoday08torouoft.pdf

The Canada Gazette

The official newspaper of the Government of Canada. You can learn about new statutes, new and proposed regulations.

Canada's official newspaper has its roots in the beginnings of a nation. The creation of the Canada Gazette, its history and its future are intertwined in the growing pains of an entire country. Through times of war and peace, of prosperity and depression, through innovations that turned the industrial world upside down and shrunk the global world to a village, the Canada Gazette has remained one constant. Collectively, its pages mirror aspects of an evolving nation — its words define who we are as Canadians.

Learn more at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/canadagazette.htm

Canada

Descriptive Atlas (1925) (pdf)

You can view this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/canadaatlas.pdf

The Canadian Handbook

Issues for:

1961 at http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/canada1961.pdf

and

1986 at http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/canada1986.pdf

showing how progress was made in a quarter of a century.

Brand Canada

The Beef Industry - A government publication.

You can view this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/agriculture/brandcanada.pdf

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 17th day of March 2024 - Fear By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26473-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-17th-day-of-march-2024-fear

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs Got a copy of their 1905 volume which you can read at: http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/annual/index.htm

Canada in the Netherlands Produced by Veterans Affairs Canada

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/netherlands-canada.htm

Flectric Scotland

An American Tramp in Scotland By Weary Ben (Ben Goodkind) (1897) (pdf))

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/america/americantrampins00good.pdf

The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland

Volume XI. This Volume contains the Acts and Proceedings of five successive Sessions of the Parliament of Scotland, holden during the reign of Queen Anne, between the period of Her Majesty's Accession to the Crown in the year 1702, and that of the Union of the Kingdoms of Scotland and England in the year 1707. (1831) (pdf)

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/actsfromthescottishparliament.pdf

Airdrie, Scotland

By Christine Alexander (pdf)

A wee book which you can read at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/gazetteer/airdriescotland00willgoog.pdf

Cyberwhisper it!

Increasing numbers of hard-pressed businesses view online as so toxic they're thinking of quitting the Internet for good by Bill Macgee.

You can read this article at:

https://electricscotland.com/magee/article006.htm

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Thomas Dickson, Curator of the Historical Department of the General Register House, Volume 1 A.D. 1473 - 1498 (1877) (pdf)

You can read this volume ar:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/Accounts_of_the_Lord_High_Treasurer_Vol01.pdf

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, FSAScot, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Volume 3 A.D. 1506 - 150713 (1902) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/accountsoflordhi03scot.pdf

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, FSAScot, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Volume 4 A.D. 1507 - 1513 (1902) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/accountslordhig04.pdf

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, FSAScot, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Volume 5 A.D. 1515 - 1531 (1902) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/accountslordhig05offigoog.pdf

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, FSAScot, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Volume 7 A.D. 1538 - 1541 (1907) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/accountslordhig07offigoog.pdf

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland

Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, FSAScot, Lord Lyon King of Arms, Volume 8 A.D. 1541 - 1546 (1908) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/records/accountslordhig08unkngoog.pdf

I was unable to find volumes 2 and 6 so if you can locate them for me I'd be happy to add them to the site.

Clan Rattray

Update of trademark activity and other information.

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/webclans/ntor/rattray_trademark.html

An Awful Video About Some Of The Best Pubs In Dundee

Continuing our 'Pubs of Scotland' series, here is our less-than-successful visit to Dundee! For many reasons it wasn't the easiest to pull together but we hope you still enjoy it:)

You can watch this at:

https://youtu.be/8inSTf6LlbM?si=05HtkPInm57_yghW

British Enterprise Beyond the Seas

Or The Planting of Our Colonies by J. H. Fyfe (1863)

You can read this book at:

https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/britishenterprise.htm

The British Admirals
With an introductory view of the Naval History of England by Robert Southey, LL.D., Poet Laureate, in 4 volumes (1833)

You can read these volumes at: https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/britishenterprise.htm

Scottish Society of Louisville
Got in their March 2024 newsletter which you can read at:
https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Louisville/index.htm

Story

HOW THE MACKAYS HELD STRALSUND An Episode in the History of Lord Reay's Regiment in the Great Thirty Years' War.

A GREAT struggle was at hand. Tidings brought to King Christian that Stralsund, one of the free cities of the Hanseatic League had been besieged by the Imperialists, under Marshal Arnheim. It had remained neutral during the war, pursuing those habits of peaceful industry which had secured it so many privileges from the Dukes of Pomerania; but its noble harbour, and its vicinity to the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, made its possession of great importance to the conqueror. Wallenstein, then the generalissimo of the Emperor, had declared he would sweep the shores, and also the waters of the Baltic; and in pursuance of this plan resolved to seize Stralsund. He sent an officer requesting the burghers to receive an Imperial garrison, which they declined; he then asked for permission to march his army through the city, but the burgomaster was too wary, and this also was refused; then the gates were closed, and cannon loaded — the city stood upon its defence, and Marshal Arnheim was commanded to begin the siege at once. The burghers of Stralsund thereupon sent a message to the King of Denmark, humbly begging for his assistance. This he at once promised, for he knew if Stralsund fell into the hands of the Imperialists, the free navigation of the Baltic would be lost, and the Danish islands, as it were, at the mercy of the conqueror. He selected Lord Reay's Regiment for the hazardous duty, "having had sufficient proof of its former service ... so that before others they were trusted on this occasion." Orders were given that they should at once proceed to Stralsund. Lieutenant-Colonel Seton having returned from Holland, was instructed to take shipping direct from Funen, with the three companies which had been left in that island; while the four companies which were stationed in Laaland were to march to Elsinore and embark there. Lieutenant-Colonel Seton, with the three companies, must have entered Stralsund on the 24th or 25th of May; for Munro, who arrived with the other four companies on the 28th, says, we were "no sooner drawne up in the Market place, but presently we were sent to watch at Franckertdore, to relieve the other Division that had watched three days and three nights uncome off* that being the weakest part of the whole Towne, and the only poste pursued by the enemy, which our Lievetenant-Colonell made choice of, being the most dangerous, for his Countries credit.

For the space of six weeks their duty in defending the town was hard and unremitting. During this time, "neither officer nor souldier was suffered to come off his watch, neither to dine or suppe, but their meate was carried unto them, to their poste." And Munro says, that in these six weeks his "clothes came never off, except it had been to change a suite or linnings"—[linens]. The town's people, too, were very surly and inhospitable, or as Munro expresses it, "ungrateful and unthankful"; and this added considerably to the discomfort of the soldiers.

Day after day, and night after night, the Highlanders were kept at their posts without any respite. They had to keep double watch, and their position was being constantly assailed by the enemy. The Franken-gate, which was their especial charge, was at the weakest part of the city wall, and the enemy, as a matter of course, directed most of their efforts to carry that point. Attempts were made by the Highlanders to strengthen their

position; but they had to work, so to speak, with spade in one hand, and pike or musket in the otner, for the Imperialists were constantly on the alert to attack them at any moment. Many of the defenders were killed, and many more wounded. "When cannons are roaring and bullets are flying, he that would have honour must not feare dying: many rose in the morning, went not to bed at night, and many supped at night, sought no breakfast in the morning." So writes Munro, and then he adds "some had their heads separated from their bodies by the Cannon, as happened to one Lievetenant and thirteen Souldiers, that had their fourteen heads shot from them by one Cannon bullet at once. Who doubts of this, he may go and see the reliques of their braines to this day [1636, about eight years after the siege], sticking on the walles, under the Port of Franckendore in Trailesound"

Wallenstein was so annoyed that the siege should last so long that on the 26th of June he arrived in the camp for the purpose of conducting the operations himself. He examined the walls, and swore "he would take the place in three nights, though it were hanging with Iron chaines, betwixt the earth and the heavens." "But," as the historian writes, "forgetting to take God on his side, he was disappointed by Him who disposeth of all things."

Between ten and eleven o'clock that night the assault was made,, and the post guarded by Mackay's Regiment, being, as I have already mentioned, the enemy's efforts were directed chiefly against it. But it was known that Wallenstein was in camp, and the Highlanders were prepared for more than an ordinary attack on their position. The sentries were doubled, and posts strengthened; and when the enemy advanced, "above a thousand strong, with a shoute of sa, sa, sa, sa, sa, sa!" the sentry gave fire, the defenders were at once called to arms, and after a severe struggle of an hour and a half, the assailants were repulsed. But they had reliefs at hand, and were at once succeeded by a storming party of equal numbers, and these again by others, and so on until morning, when day breaking, a last and desperate effort was made to force the gate. They got within the outworks, but were beaten backe againe with greate losse, with swords and pikes and butts of muskets, so that they were forced to retire, having lost above a thousand men, while the Highlanders lost neare two hundred, besides those who were hurt. The moat was filled with the dead bodies of the enemy up to the banks. The works were ruined and could not be repaired, which caused the next night's watch to be the more dangerous.

The defence was conducted by Major Munro, who was severely wounded; and he tells us that, "during the time of this hot conflict, none that was whole went off at the coming of the reliefe, but continued in the fight assisting their Camerades, so long as their strength served." He remained till wearied and grown stiff with his wounds, he was assisted off. The number of Highland officers killed and wounded was very heavy.

The Regiment was badly treated. They asked for assistance, but although nearly all the force of the enemy was directed against their position, no support was sent them. But just before the last assault was made, Colonel Fritz, who had recently arrived in Stralsund from Sweden, went to the help of the Highlanders "with foure score musketiers." Colonel Fritz was killed, and also his Major, who was named Semple; and his Lieutenant-Colonel, MacDougall, was taken prisoner, and was missing for six months.

It is reported of Wallenstein, that he was so eager to get into the town, that, when his wounded officers retired, he ordered them to be shot, branding them as cowards for leaving their places so long as they could stand,

Munro very drily remarks on the shouts, "Sa sa, sa sa, sa sa!" made by the Imperialists, when entering on an engagement—"Shouting like Turkey as if crying would terrifie resolute Souldiers: No truely . . . seeing we were more overjoyed by their coming than any wise terrified; and we received them with Volees of Cannon and Musket in their teeth, which faire and Wellcome was hard of digestion unto some of them. . . . True courage consists not in words . . . but in the strength of the Valiant Anne, and not in the Tongue. . . . It may well be said of them as the Proverbs is, that the dogges did barke more than they did bite."

The following day Lieut.-Colonel Seton visited the wounded Major at his lodgings, and gave him particulars of

the loss the Regiment had sustained. So few men were left that were really fit for service that Munro advised that they should all be put into the Colonel's company, so as to form one strong company in the meantime, and when the recruits came from Scotland, the companies should then be formed anew. When night came, the enemy made another furious assault, and the Highlanders had for a time to abandon their outworks and retire to the ravelin; but as soon as the morning light shone, led by their officers, and armed —some "with corslets, head-pieces, with halfpikes, morgan sternes, and swords," they rushed out "Pell mell amongst the enemies, and chased them quite out of the workes againe, and retiring with credit, maintained still the Triangle or Raveline." The loss of life was again great on both sides.

Wallenstein, finding he could not take the city so easily as he imagined, sent a trumpeter to know if the defenders would treat with him upon terms. Lieut.-Colonel Seton (in the absence of Colonel Holke, the governor of the city), was glad of the offer, and an armistice of fourteen days was agreed upon to draw up the terms of a treaty, and to give time to ascertain the King of Denmark's views on the subject. The treaty was just ready for signature when orders came to Lieut.-Colonel Seton not to sign it, as troops were in readiness to come with all haste for his relief. "Whereupon my Lord Spynie, a Scots Noble man, with . his Regiment, with sufficient provisions of money and Ammunition, were sent unto the Towne, and being entered, the treaty was rejected, and made voide."

Shortly after this an arrangement was entered into by the Kings of Denmark and Sweden, by which the defence of Stralsund was undertaken by the latter. Sir Alexander Leslie, "an expert and valorous Scots commander," was appointed governor, with some Swedish troops; and the forces employed by the King of Denmark were ordered to be withdrawn from the garrison, and Swedish troops employed in their place.

Leslie had no sooner taken the command than he resolved to attack the besiegers, and drive them from their works. Desirous of conferring "credit on his owne Nation alone," he "made choice of Spynie's Regiment, being their first service, to "make the outfall," and "the remainder of Mackay's Regiment to second them for making good of their retreate." They fell upon the enemy's works, forced them to retire, and drove them back to the main body of their army. But, overpowered by numbers, they, in their turn, were obliged "to retire with the losse of some brave Cavaliers." To make their retreat good, Captain Mackenzie advanced "with the old Scottish blades" of Mackay's Regiment. He succeeded in driving off the enemy, and then covering Spynie's men, till they had arrived within their own works, he, still facing the foe, gradually retired to his own position. But the loss of the Highlanders was again considerable, for they had thirty men killed.

END

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

Alastair