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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 16th, 2026

## Electric Scotland News

### My Canadian Experience

Continued adding to the January 2026 entry with videos on Ontario government announces approval of new Toronto transmission line, Premier Doug Ford holds a news conference in Toronto, Sask. Premier Moe says the 'race is on' to expand oil markets amid turmoil in Venezuela, Why Canada wants to develop its own ability to launch rockets into space, Canada–Denmark Pact LOCKS the U.S. Out of GREENLAND, France HUMILIATES Trump for Attacking Canada, India's high commissioner to Canada says 'both countries need each other, and more.

Later we will learn more about the Canada China talks in next weeks newsletter.

You can read this at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada\\_add29.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada_add29.htm)

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Lots of snow this week but as I don't need to go out for anything I should be fine.

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Spent time this week doing some research on witchcraft and results show in our Electric Scotland section and in the story for this week.

## Scottish News from this weeks newspapers and other media

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...

The end is drawing near for Iran's mullahs

Overnight, there were protests throughout Iran. From the most religious cities like Qom and Mashhad, to the more secular like Rasht and Anzali, people took to the streets. This revolution isn't about the Left or Right, it is about Iranians wanting to be citizens, not soldiers of a reactionary Islamist cause.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/Ytkvo>

The last rites

As another church closes, writer reflects on poignant final mass in chapel that served family for generations

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/last-rites-for-scotlands-churches-holy-family-church-port-glasgow/>

Michael Forsyth elected Lord Speaker after ballot of peers

Michael Forsyth has been elected as the next Lord Speaker of the House of Lords. The former Scottish Secretary was appointed following a ballot of peers. He secured 383 votes, giving him a majority of 86 and 56.3% of the vote.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/btZ9L>

Fatherhood is to be relished

We should not let the lure of screens deny us the pleasures of the here and now

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/fatherhood-is-to-be-relished/>

Robert Burns 'supercharged' haggis to become 'international icon of Scottish culture', academics claim

A paper by Professor Gerard Carruthers and Dr Paul Malgrati of the University of Glasgow and the University of the Highlands and Islands reveals how Burns's 1786 poem, To a Haggis, transformed haggis from a humble peasant dish into a powerful symbol of Scottish identity.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/robert-burns-supercharged-haggis-to-become-international-icon-of-scottish-culture-academics-claim-5469334>

China announces record \$1tn trade surplus despite Trump tariffs

China announced record export numbers for 2025, a year when US President Donald Trump's tariffs and trade policy caused turmoil in the global economy.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9wx1v84rzyo>

Venezuela - more questions than answers?

NO-ONE with a pulse can really have been surprised at recent events in Venezuela. The USA telegraphed its intent for months before finally taking action. We all knew something was going to happen, if not exactly what.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2026/01/24340/>

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo plots tours of US indoor arenas

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is expected to tour across the United States for the first time under ambitious plans to dramatically extend the global reach of the event.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/5vjSK>

Contract secured for 'world's largest offshore wind farm' in North Sea

A contract has been secured for what could become the world's largest offshore wind farm in the North Sea. Perth-headquartered energy giant SSE has secured a 20-year contract for 1.4GW of low carbon offshore wind power from Phase B of its Berwick Bank Wind Farm project in the UK's seventh Contracts for Difference (CfD) Allocation Round, announced on Wednesday.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/iuTH2>

Iranians dying on the streets want democracy – not another Shah

An estimated 3,000 Iranian protesters have been killed by the regime in Tehran as it tries to cling on to power.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/Q770a#selection-557.0-557.111>

The lively Edinburgh family sandwich shop that's expanding to hectic tourist hotspot  
After you've visited Toscano in Edinburgh, it's difficult to go back to homemade egg mayo pieces.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/G2MJR>

Lord Offord named as Reform UK's Scottish leader

He will lead the party into May's Scottish Parliament election, with Reform aiming to make a major electoral breakthrough north of the border.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz7y1vq2qq0o>

Who is Reform UK's Scottish leader Malcolm Offord?

Malcolm Offord has packed a lot into a relatively short political career.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1m7pznk8n3o>

Thousands of jobs to be slashed by Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is set to cut 11,000 public sector jobs, it has been revealed.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/b4sQq>

## Electric Canadian

My Canadian Experience

Continued to add videos and this week covered topics such as: Ontario government announces approval of new Toronto transmission line, Premier Doug Ford holds a news conference in Toronto, Sask. Premier Moe says the 'race is on' to expand oil markets amid turmoil in Venezuela, Why Canada wants to develop its own ability to launch rockets into space, Canada–Denmark Pact LOCKS the U.S. Out of GREENLAND, France HUMILIATES Trump for Attacking Canada, India's high commissioner to Canada says 'both countries need each other, and more.

Read and view the videos at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada\\_add29.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada_add29.htm)

The Aborigines of Nova Scotia

From the North American Review by William Elder (1871) (pdf)

Read this article at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/novascotia/Elder-AboriginesNovaScotia-1871.pdf>

Then and Now in Frobisher Bay

By Thomas H. W. Martin (1969) (pdf)

Read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/nunavut/gageworldcommuni00mart.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 11th day of January 2026 - Time Wasters

By The Rev. Nola Crewe

Watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26689-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-11th-day-of-january-2026-time-wasters>

The Beaver Magazine

Added No. 2 Outfit 265 September 1934 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/TheBeaverSeptember1934.pdf>

50 Insane Facts That Will Change How You See Canada

A video that I've added to our Videos of Canada page.

You can view this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/videos/index.htm>

Most People Have No Idea Canada Owns The World

A video about The Geographic Secret That Changes History.

You can view this at:

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

## Electric Scotland

Life on the Isle of Rum

A video providing a Glimpse Into Scotland's Remote Community and below it you will also find another video about the Isle of Muck.

You can watch these videos at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/hebrides/chapter4.htm>

Tennessee Ernie Ford - Sixteen Tons (lyrics)

This is a favourite song of mine which is why I've put it on this page. It is one of the only songs that I remember the lyrics. It's the last video on our Music page.

You can watch this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/music/index.htm>

Glasgow's Oldest Treasures

Langside Cafe Est: 1920

You can watch this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/food/langside.htm>

Witch Stories

Collected by E. Lynn Linton (1861) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/witchstories00lint.pdf>

Witches of Pittenweem

From the Edinburgh Magazine, October (1817) (pdf)

You can read this article at:

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

The plan to re-open Edinburgh's lost rail loop  
Added a video about this to our Transport page.

You can watch this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/independence/transport.htm>

Western Wilds  
And an Authentic Narrative embracing an account of seven years travel and adventure in the Far West by J. H. Beadle (1879) (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/history/america/westernwildsmenw00beadrich.pdf>

Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts on Witchcraft  
With an Original Essay on Witchcraft by David Webster of Edinburgh (1820) (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/history/collectionofrare00websiala.pdf>

Bibliographical Notes on the Witchcraft Literature of Scotland  
By John Ferguson, LL.D., F.S.A. (1896) (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/history/bibliographical01ferggoog.pdf>

A Historical Account of the belief in Witchcraft in Scotland  
By Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., Of Boddam Castle (1884) (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/history/ahistoricalacco00shar.pdf>

Scottish Mouth Music - Dolores Keane / John Faulkne  
Added this video to our Music page, second video down the page.

You can watch this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/music/index.htm>

## Story

### An Original Essay of Witchcraft

If we wish to form a just estimate of the human character in its progress through the various stages of civilization, from ignorance and barbarism, to science and refinement, we must search into the natural causes that actuate the human mind. The life of man is prolonged to a remoter period, but subjected to more casualities, and greater vicissitudes of fortune, than most other animals. From these causes arises his anxious solicitude about futurity, and an eager desire to know his destiny; and thus man becomes the most superstitious of all other creatures. In every nation there have been multitudes of oracles, augurs, soothsayers, diviners, fortune-tellers, witches, sorcerers, &c. whose business has been to communicate intelligence respecting futurity, to the rest of mankind. If we attend to history, we shall find this theory sufficiently confirmed by experience. The most superstitious part of the species are soldiers and sailors, who are more exposed to accidents than any other class. History is full of the superstitious observances of the Roman armies; their regard to omens; the entrails of victims; the flight of birds, &c. and there are thousands of brave sailors of the present day, who would not sail in the finest ship of the British navy, without a horse-shoe were nailed on the main-mast. This

passion of diving into futurity, naturally produced a number of 'dealers in destiny's dark council,' who soon found it turn out a very lucrative profession. From knowing the secrets, it was naturally inferred, that they were the favourites of those powers who are supposed to have the future happiness of mankind at their disposal. This we apprehend is the real source of that power which the priesthood hath ever exercised over the human mind. Pleasure and pain are the two great principles of human action which has given rise to, the good and evil principle common to all nations. Those who held communication and commerce with the evil principle, are witches, wizzards, sorcerers, &c. Although we have various laws and injunctions against witchcraft in scripture, yet we are still as much in the dark as ever, as no definition is given of it, nor is the particular actions which constitute witchcraft enumerated, so as we can say wherein it consists. The story of the witch of Endor, is a case that throws more light on the subject than any other. But she appears to have acted more in the character of one of our second sighted seers, than one of our modern witches. According to our notions and ideas of witchcraft (as laid down by that sapient monarch James VI.), it is a poor ignorant old woman, who, through misery or malice, gives herself to the devil, soul and body, and renounces her baptism; for which considerations Satan engages to assist her with his power to work a number of petty mischiefs on such as she has a spite at; and sometimes he advances a little of the 'needful,' which, unfortunately for the poor old hag, turns out to be 'naething but slclate stanes' and this most unaccountable contract is generally sealed by 'carnal copulation' And yet, after believing this, we call ourselves rational creatures, and other animals we term brutes!! Many people have wondered, how so exalted a personage as the devil formerly was in days of yore, should latterly have taken up with such low company as our modern witches. He who tempted the very fathers of the church in so many various ways; who kept the whole priesthood of the Catholic church constantly on the alert with holy Water, exorcisms, &c. only to keep him in check; who often attacked Luther and our other reformers, in very ungentlemanly disguises; and had even the audacity to insult our covenanted saints, by bellowing like a bull, grunting like a pig, or groaning like a dying man. These were pranks something worthier of a devil than the tricks played off by the witches. Our King James gives the reason, because the consumation of the world, and our deliverance drawing neere, makes Satan so rage the more in his instruments, knowing his kingdom to be so near an end. James was a little out in his reckoning here, the consumation of the world not having taken place as yet, and the devil's kingdom turning out to be rather better established than his own. So far was it from being near an end, that it was on the increase, caused chiefly by the absurd and stupid laws that were exacted against it by himself and successors. The devil's kingdom is not to be destroyed by acts of parliament and burning of witches; these expedients have been tried in vain all over Europe and America, without effect; but now, when every person can bewitch with impunity, not a witch to be found; and the devil, though left at large, has retreated to the Highlands and islands, where he is seldom seen, even by those who have the second sight. The engines for battering the strong holds of Satan, and driving him and his jumps into utter darkness, are science and philosophy; these are the weapons that have compelled him to retrograde movements, after lavishing rivers of holy water in vain. Thus the terrific claws of the devil, when seen by the distempered eyes of ignorant bigotry, appear to us truly horrible, but when viewed through philosophical spectacles, looks harmless as the lamb-skin-gloves of a fine lady.

These stories, however, convey a strong likeness of the times in which they were acted. In our day, it is almost impossible to believe, that human beings could give credit to such gross absurdities as we have laid before the public in this little work, were the evidence not indubitable. Far less, that judges, lawyers, and divines, should unite in plundering such numbers of poor ignorant helpless creatures, for such mad chimeras, when it is hard to say, whether the poor victim, or the insane judges, were under the greater delusion. These wonderful tales of the doings of the devil with the witches, are taken from their own confessions, and from their delating of one another, as it is called. To us it does not appear improbable, but that too many of the poor deluded wretches actually imagined themselves to be witches. Nor will this appear so very surprizing, if we consider the circumstances of the case. At that period, any person who doubted of witchcraft, was looked upon as an atheist, and worse than mad; the whole country, from one end to the other, was continually ringing with tales of witches, devils, and fairies, with such other trash. Is it not then most likely, that people should dream about them? and is there any thing unnatural in supposing, that they should mistake these dreams for realities? as is evidently proved in several cases, and then confess, not the actions they really did, but the effects of their own disordered imagination. Moreover, when confined for this imaginary crime, they were tortured in all manner of ways, deprived of sleep, flung into water, and brodit, as they called it, being striped naked and searched for the devil's mark, in the most indecent manner. These confessions, after they were made, were nothing more than the wild ravings of a distempered imagination; and such a tissue of inconsistencies, as no person of the present day would listen to. An old woman in the Isle of Teree (as related by Mr Frazer, page 165), took in her head that she was in heaven no less, and had eat and drank there; and so firmly had the poor creature imbibed the notion, that it was with some difficulty she could be undeceived. A curious account of a pretended meeting with the devil, is given by a

gentleman of Normandy, in the Memoirs of Literature for November 1711.

"The pretended meeting, about which those who believe, they, have been at it, relate so many, extravagant things, is only in their imagination. I own, that some country people, especially shepherds, do now and then rub their skin with some narcotick grease or ointments, which cast them into a sound, sleep, and fill their imagination with a thousand visions. When they are thus asleep, they, fancy they see every thing that was told them concerning the devil's meeting, by their fathers, who were also shepherds, or wizards, if you will have me to call them so. Whereupon I will inform you of what I have been told by a country friend of mine, who pretended to have a mind to go to the devil's meeting with his own shepherd, who had the reputation of being a great sorcerer. Having frequently urged that shepherd to carry him thither, at last he obtained his desire. He went to him in the night at the appointed time. The shepherd immediately gave him something to grease himself withal. He took the grease as if he had a mind to rub his skin with it; but he desired that the shepherd's son, who was to go to the devil's meeting with his father, should anoint himself first, Which being done, that gentleman told the shepherd, that he shqld be glad to know what would become of the young man. Not long after, the young man fell fast asleep, and when he awaked, though he had not stirred from that place, he gave an account of every thing he though the had seen at the devil's meeting; and even named several persons whom he pretended to have seen there. My friend perceived then, that what is commonly said of the devil's meeting was a mere fancy. I have told you this story, that you may impart it to your brethren, who being prepossest with popular errors about witchcraft, do frequently hang and burn poor wretches, whose crime does only consist in the weakness of their imagination."

A thousand more instances might be produced to show, that the devil hath no meetings any where, but in the perturbed brain of ignorant credulity. The history of superstition is however of great use; we there see its dangerous influence upon the peace and happiness of society—its degrading effects upon the character and manners of nations, in morality, literature, jurisprudence, and science. Theology seems to have been particularly infected with this pestiferous contagion. The clergy were generally in the front rank of witch-hunters, and through their influence, the most of them were put to death. In places where the minister was inflamed with a 'holy zeal against the devil and his emissaries, such as Pittenweem and Torryburn, the parish became a perfect hot-bed for the rearing of witches; and so plentiful a crop did it produce, that it appeared nothing else could thrive. But in places where the minister had some portion of humanity, and a little common sense, the devil very rarely set foot on his territories, and witchcraft was not to be found. Since the repeal of the statutes against witchcraft, several prosecutions have been instituted against witches, who were convicted and punished; but it was bewitching silly ignorant people out of their money, goods, and common sense, by pretending a knowledge of futurity—a power of relieving maladies in man or beast—or procuring the affection of some favourite swain to a love-sick maiden. The dupes of these impostors do not altogether escape, as they are made the laughing stock of their neighbours; and by these means even this trade is now nearly annihilated. Happily for our times, the resplendent brightness of philosophy and science, hath dispelled these dark clouds of benighted superstition, and left us in possession only of our natural powers and faculties, which are quite enough.

Editor.

END.

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

Alastair