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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for July 24, 2026

Electric Scotland News

My Canadian Experience

Have been doing regular updates on my July entry which includes responses to Trump's 50% tariff threat and also covering the wild fires through Ontario and BC.

You can read the reports and watch the videos at:

<https://electriccanadian.com/canada-add35.htm>

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...

Andy Burnham sworn in as U.K. prime minister

Andy Burnham became the seventh U.K. prime minister in 10 years on Monday after meeting with the King. Burnham said he wants to help Britain regain stability.

Watch this at:

https://youtu.be/Ny_SD398mrw?si=dyygBMhVFcPHQT5x

Tree which survived WW2 plane crash up for award

Ten of the UK's "toughest" trees, from an oak that survived a plane crash to a yew hit by a cannonball, have been shortlisted for this year's Tree of the Year award.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8enw30r9j6o>

Conrad Black: Carney's failed diversification gambit

Gradually we will become less dependent on trade with the U.S., but we must focus on pro-growth strategies

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/IBbtX>

The sad ubiquity of political dishonesty

Is it too much to expect politicians to be straight with us sometimes?

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/1WzyB#selection-699.21-699.91>

Who will be the next Scottish Labour leader?

The runners and riders to replace Anas Sarwar

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/who-will-be-the-next-scottish-labour-leader-the-runners-and-riders-to-replace-anas-sarwar-8815225>

Commonwealth Games begins with bowls before opening ceremony

The Commonwealth Games has officially begun in Glasgow, with bowls instead of the opening ceremony.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0ny989n30o>

Firm hacked by rogue OpenAI models says it is 'a wake-up call'

The co-founder of Hugging Face, a technology start-up that was hacked after some of OpenAI's most advanced artificial intelligence (AI) models went rogue, said on Thursday that the incident is "a wake-up call" for the industry.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdrvy3pn3r0o>

Is 2026 the Commonwealth Games' last dance or a future-proofing revamp?

It is an event that has been going for 96 years. The Commonwealth Games have provided iconic sporting moments – from Roger Bannister's win in the 'Miracle Mile' of 1954 and Eilish McColgan breaking her mum's record in 2022 to England's netball victory four years earlier in Australia.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/articles/cj9dnk2p2dlo>

Electric Canadian

The New Garden of Canada

By Pack-Horse and Canoe through Undeveloped New British Columbia by F. A. Talbot (1911) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/bc/newgarden.pdf>

Memoirs of Charles Dennis Rusoe d'Eres

A Native of Canada Who was with the Scanyawtauragahroote Indians eleven years, with a particular account of his Sufferings, &c. during his tarry with them, and his safe return to his family connections in Canada (1800) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/memoirsofcharles.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 19th day of July 2026 - Washing Away

By The Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/SV2Ug7vDPs>

The Beaver Magazine

Added No. 1 Outfit 271 June 1940 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/TheBeaverJune1940.pdf>

How Polish Immigrants Built Modern Canada

Welcome to Thee Poland! In this 20-minute, in-depth feature, we uncover the little-known but essential story of Polish engineers and pioneers who laid the foundations of Canada's major urban centers. From political emigration in the mid-19th century to scientific emigration after World War II, Polish immigration brought specialized skills and resilience that helped build the Canadian nation. Uncover the incredible, often-untold chapter of Canadian history! This video reveals the profound and lasting influence of Polish immigrants—from brilliant engineers to resilient pioneers—who physically and culturally built the cities we recognize today. When you look at the majestic skylines of Montreal and the sprawling infrastructure of Toronto, you're seeing a mosaic shaped by Polish resilience and ingenuity.

You can watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/dcCbO6Ab5Sw?si=NhH63iKAKgiTpUBX>

Electric Scotland

Sketch of a Genealogical and Historical account of the family of Vaux, Vans, or De Vallibus

Now Represented by that of Vans Agnew of Barnbarrow, &c. in the County of Wigton, Scotland (1800) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/atoc/Vaux-Vans-or-De-Vallibus.pdf>

Memoirs of a British Agent

Being an account of the author's early life in many lands and of his official mission to Moscow in 1918 by R. H. Bruce Lockhart (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/scotreg/memoirs-Of.pdf>

Bushmen All

A Romance of the Never-Never by Giles Seagram (1908) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/australia/bushmen.pdf>

The Ness of Brodgar: Uncovering the Heart of Neolithic Orkney

Time Team Special. A video in July 2026 showing the completion of this dig.

You can watch this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/orkney>

A BBC Television for schools documentary series from 1966.

This episode looks at life on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Shows crofting, Harris Tweed weaving, and other examples of island life. Added this video around 1/3rd down the page.

You can watch this at:

https://electricscotland.com/western_isles.htm

Buildings of Stornoway - Past and Present

Talk hosted by Stornoway Historical Society on November 24th 2025 in the Council Chambers, Stornoway. The speaker was our Chairman, Malcolm Macdonald. Added this video to our Stormaway page.

You can watch this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/books/hebrides32.htm>

Robert Stevenson

Added two videos to his page about the building and provisioning of lighthouses.

You can watch these at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/stevenson>

Story

I like paying more for gas.

I'm certainly not looking for ways to spend more money, but I have a confession to make.

I like paying more for gas.

Now, before you decide I've completely lost it, let me explain.

We live roughly between two small towns, Wallaceburg and Dresden. There are several places I could stop for fuel, and I'm sure if I carefully studied all the signs, points programs and discounts, I could probably save a few cents somewhere.

But most of the time, I drive to Dresden and buy my gas at Brown's Garage.

The other day, though, I found myself in Wallaceburg needing to fill a small gas can. I stopped at one of the three gas stations in town, mainly because I thought it was still owned by the same longtime owners. They had always seemed to care a little. You know the kind of place. It may not be fancy, but someone greets you when you walk in and acts reasonably pleased that you chose their store.

Rather than paying at the pump, I went inside, as I usually like to do. I was greeted by a friendly young woman I didn't recognize. I hadn't been there in years, so I didn't think much of it.

While I was paying, I asked her if they carried a particular treat I wanted to bring home for Anne. She said she didn't think they had it.

That's when a man standing behind the counter, counting money, pointed and grunted in the general direction of one of the shelves.

Apparently, they did have it.

I stood there for a second, completely bewildered.

Here I was, clearly a new face in a store that appeared to have changed hands. Many of the shelves were half empty, the place didn't exactly seem to be overflowing with customers, and the person I assumed was the owner had just greeted a potential returning customer with a point and a grunt.

What in the world was going on?

I found Anne's treat, paid for my gas and headed home. But as I drove, I kept replaying the whole thing in my head. Not because it was some great injustice. It wasn't. Nobody yelled at me or threw me out of the store.

It was just so strange.

Of course, the more I thought about it, the more I imagined what I should have done.

I think the best response would have been a little one-man improv performance. I could have run around behind the counter and played both parts.

"Why yes, sir, we actually do carry that! It's right over here. And by the way, it's great to see a new customer come into our store. My name is Rod, and we really appreciate your business!"

Then I could have run back around to the customer side and replied, "Why thank you, Rod. What wonderful service. I'll be sure to come back!"

I'm not sure how he would have received that information. Probably not well. So perhaps it's best that the entire performance stayed inside my head.

A few days later, I stopped at Brown's Garage to fill the truck. As Francis pumped the gas, we stood there chatting, as we always do. I told him my story from the other station.

Then I said, "You know, there just aren't many good service businesses left anymore... other than Brown's Esso, of course."

Francis smiled and agreed.

The funny thing is, I know I pay a little more for my gas there. I've never done the exact math on how that adds up over a year, and I don't really want to. But at Brown's, Francis or his brother Den fills the truck. Someone always asks how things are going. We talk about the farm, the weather, town news or whatever else happens to come up.

Sometimes the conversation lasts two minutes. Sometimes it lasts ten.

Either way, I leave feeling like somebody was glad I stopped.

I don't really know what the answer is. Maybe businesses are struggling to find staff. Maybe owners are tired. Maybe customers have become more impatient too. Perhaps we've all become so focused on speed, price and convenience that we've slowly trained the conversation out of everyday life.

All I know is I'm willing to pay a little more for it.

Because someday, places like Brown's Garage may be gone. The pumps will probably still be there, and the gas will still come out. We'll tap a card, stare at a screen and carry on without speaking to anyone.

And I think I'll be sad when that day comes.

For now, though, I'll keep driving to Dresden.

Farmer Rod

END.

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

Alastair