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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for October 11th, 2013

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Electric Scotland News

I found an interesting article in the Scottish Review which was welcoming a returning Scot back to Scotland but at the same time telling him how Scotland had changed since he was last here. I thought I'd copy it here for you to read.

A memo to James Naughtie on his return to Scotland

Dear Jim

It has come to my attention that you planning to move north to cover the independence referendum, admittedly for only two days a week.

Since you last worked in Scotland in 1977 a lot has altered that you might find at first a bit bewildering. Scotland has changed, not entirely in ways immediately apparent or straightforward. Some institutions which have the same names as 36 years ago have

changed, nearly totally out of recognition. New bodies and different ways of doing things have emerged.

To save you time and reading, considering that you are only here two days a week, here is a short guide to what's changed and what's not changed, and how to make some sense of the public life of Scotland.

1. Edinburgh isn't Scotland, nor is the Edinburgh Festival(s) even Edinburgh. Nor are Edinburgh and Glasgow combined, most of Scotland; they represent the BBC/STV version of Scotland.
2. Arguments lamenting the loss of Scottish industry that poignantly reflect that we used to be 'the shipbuilding capital of the world', or that 'all the jobs have gone', are now caricatures and clichés. They also don't reflect the dramatically different and in many places, dynamic nature of the Scottish economy today.
3. Some pro-union people ask: when will the constitutional debate ever end? But part of Scotland's debate is about how we share an island with the powerhouse of London and the south-east, which will go on whether we are independent or not.
4. There is a problem with how the British government comprehends and doesn't comprehend modern Scotland. They occasionally get Scotland, but more often they don't, or just plain forget us. They don't think Scottish independence is a serious threat to the union, and when they refer to 'the referendum' and 'sovereignty debate' they aren't talking about Scotland, but about the UK and Europe.
5. Westminster is increasingly becoming a distant, untrusted body in Scotland. When asked which institution they most trust to look after Scottish interests, two thirds of Scots consistently choose the Scottish Parliament, and only about 20% or less Westminster.
6. Scotland is no longer natural Labour territory. Many people think Labour is no longer very, well, Labour.
7. The SNP are a very different force from the 1970s. Mostly social democratic, and on the centre-left, they are a bit 'Big Tent' in a way which is reminiscent of, dare I say it, New Labour at its peak, without the scandals. And they are more than Salmond and Sturgeon.
8. The Scottish Tories are not taken seriously by anyone including, crucially, themselves. Their last 'big' idea was the poll tax, and after that, they decided to give up having ideas.
9. There are a few Lib Dems left. Rumour has it one of them claims to be Secretary of State for Scotland. That is no longer a proper full-time job.
10. The old deferential society of the lords and ladies who ran Scotland has mostly gone (although not in relation to land), but in the last few decades we have seen the rise of something called 'civic Scotland'. This claims to be inclusive, warm and friendly, but is narrow, incestuous and profoundly self-referential.
11. Scotland has become an increasingly secular society. Church membership has fallen markedly for both the Kirk and Catholic Church, mirroring trends elsewhere. Our problem with sectarianism isn't about Glasgow being 'Belfast without the bombs' and different biblical interpretations, but about tribalism.
12. Rangers FC now play in the lower leagues of Scottish football. Some people (including quite a lot of Celtic and Rangers fans) claim that the Old Firm no longer exists (for very different reasons).
13. International football isn't any more about Scotland v England. Memories of Wembley 1977 or 1967 are part of a distant past. Rather like Scottish teams doing well in Europe or English players dominating the Premiership.
14. Scottish history matters and is having a golden era of books and historians. But nowhere is this a 'Braveheart'/Bannockburn mentality. The state which is seemingly obsessed with living in the past is the British one – which can hardly seem to stop marking and celebrating various British military adventures.
15. Scottish culture across the arts, literature, theatre, music has changed. Kailyard and the Celtic cultural cringe have long left the arts.
16. Scotland has undergone a quiet revolution where it is now possible to talk about subjects like homosexuality in public. But we still have some issues around gender and men behaving badly – both middle and working class.
17. There is a strange McLad culture in parts of the Beeb in Scotland and society. It is one of immaturity, irresponsibility and open prejudice (particularly in relation to sexism). This is all dismissed by its apologists as 'just a joke' or a parody of offensive views, as seen in the many public men who rushed to the defence of Tam Cowan and his recent allegedly sexist comments.

18. The station you will be on is called BBC Radio Scotland, set up in 1978. But BBC Scotland is still, in terms of power and authority, 'a fiction' with centralisation meaning that most decisions are in the hands of what are seen as a very few safe and trusted individuals (I will pass here on any judgement of Patten and the incompetent BBC Trust). All of this encourages a culture which lacks confidence and imagination, and consistently fails to represent back to Scotland the rich, varied nation that we are.

19. Scottish nationalism for all its claims isn't very radical (and is also much wider and deeper than the SNP's version). Instead, it reflects the character of the society it comes from: respectable, a bit conservative with a small 'c', mildly and moderately progressive in a way which wouldn't be possible in England, and shocked to the core by the dogma and nihilism of the free market vandals who are running amok in the English NHS and elsewhere.

20. Unionists, in Labour particularly, pontificate endlessly about the dangers of 'narrow nationalism' (meaning Scottish, not British). They still cannot come to terms with the truism that unionism is a form of nationalism – British state nationalism. A large part of Scotland, probably a sizeable majority, wants a debate beyond the claims of two competing nationalisms.

21. Scottish politics is more diverse than a simple Yes/No choice. To complicate matters not everyone is either unionist or nationalist. Not everyone who supports independence is a nationalist, while some pro-union opinion balks at the term unionist.

22. Whatever happens in 2014 something profound and far-reaching is occurring. Irrespective of the SNP's qualified version of independence, until May 2011, large parts of Scotland and the UK establishment just didn't take any of this seriously. Many of the latter are still in a state of deep denial, but irrespective of the result in September 2014, the idea of independence is being normalised in Scottish society. And that means that Scotland and the UK will never be the same again.

23. Despite appearances everything in Scotland cannot be reduced to politics or football. You wouldn't know it from some of the conversations in a very small, select part of the country or the mainstream media. But there is a whole nation and culture of activities, passions and people beyond these interests.

There are many books on Scotland, its politics, history and identities. If I were to recommend any which give an insight into the cultures and imaginations of modern Scotland in the last decade, I wouldn't choose any books from those areas, but two leftfield classics. They are Bill Duncan's 'The Wee Book of Calvin', a hilarious satire on the self-help industry and Calvinism, and Momus's 'The Book of Scotlands', which portrays 156 parallel Scotlands of past, present and future.

I hope that I have conveyed that Scotland has changed and that some of this might appear confusing on first appearances. What is even more difficult to gauge is that in some respects in the last 30-plus years Scotland has become more like the rest of the UK, and at the same time, more different and divergent from the rest of the UK in other ways. Scotland is filled with such paradoxes and what appear as contradictions (but actually aren't), which the London media have little comprehension of, along with large parts of BBC Scotland (and STV).

It is part of your mission to try to reflect all of this without caricature or prejudice. Good luck. You will certainly need it.

Gerry

Dr Gerry Hassan is research fellow in cultural policy at the University of the West of Scotland and is the author and editor of numerous books on Scotland, politics and ideas, including 'The Strange Death of Labour Scotland'.

So do you ever find yourself at a loose end wondering what to do with yourself? Well if you do you might consider spending time on YouTube to see if you can find any interesting videos about Scots and things Scottish. You could then match them to pages on our site and then let us know about them so we can include them on our pages.

This week I took the book "Industries of Scotland" which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/industrial/>

I then started to work through each chapter to see if I could find any decent videos to go with each chapter. I'm still working through this but have made a start of which more below. However this is an ongoing project for me as you'll have seen in previous newsletters. This is thus your chance to give back to our community. Perhaps take a topic that interests you that can also point to some Scottish background and then if you find anything that you think is good let us know. We'll acknowledge your contribution on the page so you'll get your name up in lights!

David Herschell Edwards was an outstanding find this week. Why I've never heard of him is amazing. To give you a glimpse of how

prolific his work was here is a bit from his biography...

He set himself to collect specimen verses by a hundred recent or living Scottish poets deemed worthy of remembrance. This he did, launching the volume into the sea of literature with the title, "One Hundred Modern Scottish Poets." Trembling, with fear for its success, he watched its progress, and was rewarded when he saw it receive favourable criticism and public appreciation. The edition was immediately exhausted; letters of congratulation showered in upon the editor, together with encouraging suggestions still further to prosecute the work. The public know what followed. Every few months since that time we have been awakened with the announcement of another series of "Modern Scottish Poets" being ready, until, as the result of his eleven years gleaning in the field of poesy, he has given to the public no fewer than fifteen volumes.

"When it is considered," says the editor of the People's Friend, "that each of these volumes contains about 450 pages of closely-printed matter, and deals with close on 100 poets each, giving an average of three poems to each poet. with a biographical sketch and a critical estimate, it will be seen that the labour involved in the preparation of the volumes must have been immense."

Neither for quality nor extent, does any National anthology approach that of Scotland. Mr Edwards' work notices and gives specimens of between fourteen and fifteen hundred poets, many of world-wide fame, and all of them exhibiting, more or less, genuine love of nature, kindly feeling, domestic affection, faithful love, a laudable spirit of independence, patriotism, keen observation of character, or quaint humour.

I provide a link below to get to this massive collection.

Electric Canadian

Memoir of the Right Reverend John Strachan
First Bishop of Toronto by A. N. Bethune, his successor in the See (1870)

Now up to Chapter 24 so another 7 chapters added this week which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/strachan/index.htm>

First Nation's Treaty History in B.C., Canada

An interesting video which you can view at: http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/treaty_history.htm

Ian Angus Michael Munro, President of CASSOC dies.

Added a wee obituary which you can read at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/ian_munro.htm

History - Vanished in the Mists - Lost Newfoundland

A three part video which you can view at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/newfoundland/videos.htm>

Logging History North Western Ontario

A half hour video which you can view at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/lumber/logging.htm>

Paul Desmarais

A key member of Canada's financial elite, and friend to premiers and prime ministers dies. I posted up a wee bit about him which you can find at: http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/desmarais_paul.htm

Grand Priory of Canada Newsletter

We posted up a copy of the October 2013 newsletter of the Knights Templar Grand Priory of Canada. In it there is a mix of articles along with reports on the happenings from individual priories. There is also a set of articles about The Middle East in Transition which are educational and try to teach you something of the various countries in the news.

You can read this October 2013 issue at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/kt.htm>

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue was compiled by Fraser Hudghton. There is also a Synopsis this week.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org>

Electric Scotland

The Scottish Historical Review

We are on Volume 12 and have now added the January 1915 issue. You can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/volume12.htm>

In Part 1 there is an interesting article on Medieval House Burnings by the Vikings of Orkney. INHABITED house-burning or slaughter by arson was resorted to in Viking feuds of old, and was sometimes accompanied by the appropriation of all the valuables which could be laid hands on.

A further article on Sir David Lindsay: 1490-1555 is also of interest because until Burns appeared he was in fact the poet of the Scottish people, and was appealed to as an infallible authority on the Scottish language.

You can read the previous issues at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/>

Songs Of Scotland, Prior To Burns

This book is by Robert Chambers who is famous for collecting old Scottish Songs.

Added another three songs...

Saw Ye Johnie Coming?

Dumbarton's Drums

An Thou Wert My Ain Thing

You can get to this book at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers_robert.htm

Thomas Dykes

(1850, Dundonald, Ayrshire - 1916, London, England) Journalist and Author

Added three more articles to his "All Round Sport" book.

Round the Mouse and Home

A Day's Pheasant Shooting

A Round of the Links at Golf

You can read these at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/dykes_thomas.htm

Enigma Machine

This is where we are publishing this set of puzzles created by Doug Ross which can now be found in Doctor's Surgeries, Old Folks Homes, etc.

Added Enigma Machine 35 puzzle which you can get to at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/enigma035.htm>

The other puzzles we've already published can be found at:

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

Leaves from the Journal

From our life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861 (1868)

We've added the four chapters not to do with Scotland to complete the book...

First Visit to Ireland 2 Aug. 1849

Yachting Excursion 20 Aug. 1846

Second Yachting Excursion 2 Sept. 1846

Visit to the Lakes of Killarney 27 Aug. 1861

and have made a start at the second book with...

Building of the Prince's Cairn 21 Aug 1862

Visit to the Old Cairn on the Prince's Birthday 26 Aug 1862

First Visit to the Prince's Cairn after its Completion 19 May 1863

The visit to the Old Cairn is short...

Balmoral, August 25, 1862

I went out at twelve with the two girls on ponies (I in the little carriage), Bertie on foot. We went to see the obelisk building to His dear memory: Bertie left us there, and we went on round by the village, up Craig-Gowan, in the little carriage, over the heather till we reached near to the old cairn of 1852. Grant said: "I thought you would like to be here to-day, on His birthday!"—so entirely was he of opinion that this beloved day, and even the 14th of December, must not be looked upon as a day of mourning. "That's not the light to look at it." There is so much true and strong faith in these good, simple people.

Walked down by the Fog* House, all pink with heather, the day beautifully fine and bright.

* Scotch for "Moss."

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/leaves/>

Merchant's Guide to Stirling & District

A new book we're starting which we're adding to the foot of our History of Stirlingshire page.

This week I added the chapters on...

Guild Hall or Cowane's Hospital
Ruins of the Earl of Mar's Lodging

You can get to this book which we'll be adding to over the next few weeks at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/stirlingshire> at the foot of the page.

Lord Charles Neaves
Added three more of his poems...

Hilli-Onnee
The Tourist's Matrimonial Guide Through Scotland
Decimis Inclusis

You can view these at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/neaves_charles.htm

Autumnal Rambles Among The Scottish Mountains
or Pedestrian Tourist's Friend by The Rev. Thomas Grierson, Minister of Kirkbean (1900)

Have now added the final chapters to this book...

Ballater, Crathie, &c.
Castleton, Deer Forest, &c.
Glens Dee, Denny, Lui-Beg, &c.
Corry-Etichan, Ben Macdhuil, &c.
The Queen, Crathie Church, &c.
Hints to Innkeepers, Highland Pride, &c.
Hints to Pedestrians — Conclusion

You can read these chapters at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/rambles/index.htm>

The Awakening of Scotland

A History from 1747 to 1797 by William Law Mathieson. A new book we're starting.

Here is what the Preface has to say...

In this book I have continued for another fifty years the narrative of Scottish history since the Reformation which is contained in my two previous works. The second half of the eighteenth century in Scotland owes much of its interest to the awakening of industry and to the brilliant, though expensive, victory won by liberalism in the Church; but the change from stagnation to the full current of life was no less remarkable in the political than in, the industrial sphere; and here perhaps the significance of the period is not so generally

understood. In developing this branch of my subject. I have not hesitated to pursue its ramifications into British, or even into English, history; for all the chief conflicts of opinion during these years—the Militia and Anti Catholic agitations and the Reform movements of 1780 and 1792—originated in England; and, as the spirit of the Scottish Parliament, embodied in its election laws, survived till 1832, one has to consider, not only the original nature of this force, but its evolution as a factor in Westminster politics. In the following pages I have devoted considerable attention to such politicians as Oswald, Dempster and Bute, and have reviewed with more precision than has yet been attempted the character and early career of Henry Dundas. Moderatism, in accordance with its conjunction of repressive methods and liberal ideas, is studied, first as a system of ecclesiastical policy, and then as an intellectual force; and the material development of the country is sketched continuously under its several heads. I had intended in a concluding chapter to indicate the effect of expanding thought and industry on the daily life of the people; but this has been done fully, if not methodically, by the late [Henry Grey Graham](#); and little of importance could have been added to his vivid, humorous and picturesque account.

Edinburgh : November, 1910.

This was the start of a radical change to social and industrial life in Scotland and so well worth a read.

You can view this book at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/awakening/index.htm>

The Industries of Scotland

As I mentioned above I have started to work my way back through this book to see if I can find any decent videos to go with the text. So far I have found good ones under the chapters on...

Manufacture of Plate and Jewellery
Ship Building
Coal Mining
Railways
Distilling

You can get to these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/industrial/index.htm>

James Reid

James "Jimmy" Reid was a Scottish trade union activist, orator, politician, and journalist born in Govan, Glasgow. We've added a profile about him to our Significant Scots section.

You can view this and a few videos we found at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/reid_james.htm

David Grant

Added this Teacher, Journalist and Poet to our Significant Scots pages.

There is perhaps no need to justify a biographical sketch prefixed to a volume of poems. To many who read poetry merely for its own sake, such an arrangement adds an interest; they look for it. There is a more certain value in such a sketch when the verses to which it is prefixed derive their interest, not exclusively from their poetical merit, but also, and hardly less from a certain flavour, a racial or local colouring, from any quality indeed which directs their first and immediate appeal to a circumscribed range of readers. The title of the present volume shows that this greater justification is present here, and it may be hoped that the short biography which is here set out, will have an interest for other than those who cherish their personal recollections of our poet.

You can read about him at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/grant_david.htm

At The South Gate Of Arabia

I needed to add some videos on histories of countries in the Middle East so I decided to use this page to do so. Essentially this was to provide further educational information to the Knights Templar. You may also enjoy watching them.

You can get to these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/church/chapter11.htm>

Songs by John Henderson

John sent in another of his songs, Youthheid Freenship.

You can read this song at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerel517.htm>

His other songs can be read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

History of Ireland

I added three video series on the History of Ireland including Northern Ireland. You can view these at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/ireland/history.htm>

David Herschell Edwards

His 16 volumes of modern Scottish Poets is probably the most massive collection of poetry by anyone in the world and it's all about Scots poets which makes it all the more amazing. We're going to add the 16 volumes as we tidy them up and added another two volumes today. You'll also find a link on the page to a Special Collection where we've extracted some samples for you to read.

I can't even imagine how he found the time to produce this massive collection and so he's now in our Significant Scots collection. I'm actually amazed I'd never heard of him given this massive collection he produced. He also did a couple of other books which we'll make available for you to download.

John Henderson, who is tidying these up for us, suggested that you might like to read through them and if you find a particular poem with special meaning for yourself that you copy it to us. We've created a special page where we are taking a wee selection of poems that we think are outstanding so we'd love to add your own selections to it. You'll find a link to this page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/edwards_david.htm

The Vikings

Thought it was about time I added information about the Vikings as they played an important part in the history of Scotland.

I have added 3 video series to start things of but will be adding a few books when I get the time. You can view these at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/vikings/index.htm>

Christine McKelvie's Column

Got in her column for 4th October 2013. You can read this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/131004.htm>

William Panton

Found a small biography of William Panton of Panton, Leslie & Co. I created a pdf file which can be found at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/world/panton_leslie.htm

Eric Linklater

Added this writer to our Significant Scots page.

Eric Robert Russell Linklater (8 March 1899 – 7 November 1974) was a Welsh-born Scottish writer of novels and short stories, military history, and travel books. For *The Wind on the Moon*, a children's fantasy novel, he won the 1944 Carnegie Medal from the Library Association for the year's best children's book by a British subject.

You can read about him at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/linklater_eric.htm

Robert Burns Lives!

Edited by Frank Shaw

Obituary of Professor Kenneth Simpson by Christopher A Whatley

I have known Ken Simpson for over 12 years, and I met him where most Burnsians meet other Burnsians – attending conferences on Burns. This meeting was at Atlanta's Emory University and our Burns Club of Atlanta was host to a group of Scots from across the pond who were members of the Robert Burns World Federation. The program advertised that “a panel of Burns scholars will include Kenneth Simpson...” - the first of the speakers listed. I heard Dr. Simpson speak on Friday afternoon July 20, 2001, and he remained in Atlanta to speak at our Burns Club meeting the next week. This was only the second Robert Burns World Federation conference held in the United States. Sometime later, Ken and I met again in Columbia, South Carolina at one of Ross Roy's Burns conferences, made famous by Patrick Scott, Elizabeth Sudduth and their colleagues. It didn't take long to have a meal with Ken and an even shorter time to become friends.

In his professional life Professor Simpson was one of the most significant Burns scholars in the world. His books can still be found on eBay and in the better rare book stores across America and in the United Kingdom. Not many Burns scholars can say they were the opening act to famous Scottish singer Eddi Reader! I'm so glad Susan and I were able to have lunch with him while attending the University of Glasgow's Centre for Robert Burns Studies conferences the past two years. Each time we took the train to meet him so as not to subject Ken to a trip to Glasgow as his health was already failing.

I want to thank Dr. Jennifer Orr, now of Newcastle University, for sending the obituary below by Professor Christopher Whatley which

appeared in the Glasgow Herald this past Tuesday. My heartfelt thanks to Chris (University of Dundee) for allowing me to reprint this tribute for our readers. He replied promptly enough for the obituary to be included in this week's Robert Burns Lives!.

"Yesterday's funeral was a low key affair, but well attended by many of Ken's friends and colleagues, plus some family." Chris went on to say, "I'd be perfectly happy - flattered I think - for you to make whatever use of the obit you choose. I know it'll be in good hands."

Best wishes to Jennie and Chris for making this chapter possible on Robert Burns Lives!.

Read the obituary at: http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns_lives182.htm

Other articles in this series can be read at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm>

And finally...

SENIOR DRIVING

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on Interstate 77. Please be careful!"

"Heck," said Herman, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

DRIVING

Two elderly women were out driving in a large car - both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along, they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red, but they just went on through. The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself "I must be losing it. I could have sworn we just went through a red light." After a few more minutes, they came to another intersection and the light was red again. Again, they went right through. The woman in the passenger seat was almost sure that the light had been red but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous. At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was red and they went on through. So, she turned to the other woman and said, "Mildred, did you know that we just ran through three red lights in a row? You could have killed us both!"

Mildred turned to her and said, "Oh, my, am I driving?"

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

Alastair