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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 19th, 2015

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

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

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

Electric Scotland News

Got an email in from Malcolm MacGregor...

This email is to let you know that next week is the 200th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, Belgium. Without going into detail, the outcome of the battle, like Trafalgar, shaped Europe until WW1. Hundreds of clansmen from the Outer Hebrides to the borders fought at Waterloo. There are many epic tales involving the Guards, the Royal Scots Greys, the Highland and lowland Brigades. War artists, such as Lady Butler, came to prominence as well. Lady Butler's painting of the charge of the Greys entitled 'Scotland forever' is perhaps the most well known. Sgt Ewart of the Greys, who captured the French Eagle, was feted around Edinburgh and the borders by Sir Walter Scott.

Frank Wherrett, SCSC secretary, has carried out extensive research into the clan component of the Duke's Army, painstakingly going through the nominal role of all those who were awarded the Waterloo Medal - some 24,000 names. The list is topped by Clan Donald and Campbell at 175 and 150 respectively. Clan Gregor is on 35. Nearly every clan & family name is represented, - highland, lowland and Borderers. 19% of the Duke's Army were Scots, from a population of 10% of UK. The Duke of Wellington himself was of course Irish.

For MacG/MacD addressees - Wellington's chief medical officer was Sir Charles McGrigor who created the system of casualty evacuation as a formal logistical operation of war, perfected in the Peninsular Campaign. He founded the Royal Army Medical Corps. Sergeant Macgregor was one of a band of 5 Scots/irish soldiers and 5 english officers who successfully closed the gates at Hougoumont Farm against a full French onslaught, and thus turned the whole battle. Sous-Lieutenant LeGros (that really was his name) and known as 'L'enforceur', to friend and foe, was a 6ft 6in beast of a man from the Imperial Guard, tasked by Napoleon to break into the farm, by smashing down the gates with an axe. Incredibly, he succeeded but he and his imperial guards were overpowered. Colonel Macdonnell (brother of the Glengarry chief) commanded the Coldstream Guards and 3rd Foot Guards (later Scots Guards) at Hougoumont. He was also part of the gate group and was effectively named 'man of the match' by the Great Duke. He shared the accolade of being 'the bravest man in Britain' with Corporal James Graham who was Scots/Irish.

Meanwhile Piper Kenneth Mackay, from Reay in Caithness, and of the Cameron Highlanders played the tune "Peace or War", marching round the outside of the square formed by the Camerons in defence against the French massed cavalry charge led by the heroic Marshal Ney, when 'the earth vibrated under the thundering tramp of the mounted host'. Mackay was later given a set of silver mounted bagpipes by the King in Paris.

My role in the commemoration is to represent the SCSC and the clans/families at the ceremony at Hougoumont Farm, of the unveiling of the Monument dedicated to the British Army that fought at Waterloo. The ceremony will be enriched by a Guard of Honour from the Scots Guards and the pipes and drums in full rig. So there will be a good number of kilts present. The planning of the event has mainly been carried out by the Guards Division and the British Embassy in Brussels. They have done an extraordinary job in tracking the descendants of key figures in the German, Belgian and Dutch contingents of the Duke's army. Family names that became well known in later years such as Kielmansegg and Stauffenberg. Something of a relief to know that the Army and our Foreign Office have stepped up to the plate on this.

In order to keep the French under control, as they think they won the battle, or that it was at least a draw, there is to be a brief ceremony at the monument involving the Duke of Wellington, Prince Nikolas Blucher and Prince Charles Bonaparte.

There are other events taking place in Scotland in Edinburgh, the borders and Drumlanrig Castle, which are being covered by the bold Lady M and Border TV. Additionally there is a commemorative service at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The SCSC will be represented by the Hon. Katherine Nicolson whose ancestor, Lord Saltoun, chief of the Frasers, commanded the 1st Foot Guards at Waterloo. The final crushing blow at the battle was the rout of Napoleon's Imperial Grenadier Guard by the 1st Guards from which they later took the name Grenadier Guards. The bearskin cap, worn by the Imperial Guard, was subsequently adopted by the Guards Brigade as a result, and is still worn today on ceremonial duties.

A final point of interest from a diaspora perspective. Most of the accommodation around Brussels is fully booked up not by the British, but by Americans and Canadians who are descendants of those who fought in the Duke's Army. Indeed there is an American arm of the Hougoumont restoration project team.

I look forward to meeting Lord Uxbridge with or without his ancestor's leg.

best wishes,

Malcolm

I have an account on the site about The Scottish Troops at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo which can be downloaded at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/wars/146QuatreBasAndWaterloo.pdf>

New anti-malaria drug developed at Dundee University

Researchers at Dundee University have discovered a new compound which could treat malaria while protecting people from the disease and preventing its spread, all in a single dose.

You can read more about this at <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-33164528>

Dramatic mural of Battle of Bannockburn unveiled

A DRAMATIC new work of art depicting the Battle of Bannockburn, which dozens of real people have paid to be featured in, has been unveiled at the historic site.

More than 600 figures are featured in Chris Rutterford's 30-metre long mural, on which he started work last summer in the run-up to the 700th anniversary of the battle.

Learn more at

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/heritage/dramatic-mural-of-battle-of-bannockburn-unveiled-1-3803402>

Full fiscal autonomy

Might sound decidedly dull to the voter who has more interest in the Scotland Football Association, but it is the only game in town, now that the consequences of the independence referendum and the general election are playing out. The debate is working its way into the wider public consciousness, reaching parts of society that had never before been moved to pay attention.

The fun and games started earlier in the week, when the SNP was taunted by Prime Minister David Cameron and his Scottish Secretary, David Mundell, for failing to follow up its manifesto commitment to full fiscal autonomy. The SNP accepted the challenge, and put the policy back on the table with an amendment to the Scotland Bill. It was a bold move, but it was never going to be the end of the matter. More like the start, in fact.

On Thursday, the Office for Budget Responsibility offered the SNP's opponents an open goal when it forecast a dramatic fall in North Sea oil revenues over the next 25 years. Mr Mundell & Co didn't miss, highlighting the damage this would inflict on the SNP's fiscal plans.

Yesterday, there was a further attack from the Scotland Office, when Mr Mundell claimed the basic rate of income tax would have to be doubled from 20 to 40 per cent to cover a £10 billion spending gap under FFA.

Yesterday also brought an intervention from Tory grandee Sir Edward Leigh, who has tabled an amendment for immediate delivery of full fiscal autonomy, forcing the SNP to take a position on an ultimate aim that the party doesn't really want right now. Can it afford not to back it? There is more than an element of fun and games here. No-one seriously believes income tax will be doubled, even if the figures can be made to say so, and Sir Edward's strategy was rejected by Mr Mundell earlier this week as not in the Conservatives' interests.

But at the same time, legitimate and difficult questions are being asked of the Nationalists' fiscal responsibility; questions that are made all the more valid by dissent we have heard from within the SNP ranks.

The Nationalists have been out-manoeuvred, and if they are not to be overwhelmed by waves of attacks, they need to deliver a convincing response. They could start with providing clarity on their position. If, as it seems, they do not believe Scotland is ready for FFA, they should have the courage to say so. Until they do, they continue to be fair game, and an easy target.

This article taken from the Scotsman newspaper online.

Electric Canadian

Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the last Fifty Years
Continuing to add more chapters to this book.

We are now up to Chapter XIII and in Chapter XI we get a lesson in chopping down trees. Here is a wee bit from that chapter...

Well, say you, let us set to work and chop down some of these trees. Softly, good sir. In the first place, you must underbrush. With an axe or a strong, long handled bill-hook, made to be used with both hands, you cut away for some distance round--a quarter or half an acre perhaps--all the small saplings and underwood which would otherwise impede your operations upon the larger trees. In "a good hard-wood bush," that is, where the principal timber is maple, white oak, elm, white ash, hickory, and other of the harder species of timber--the "underbrush" is very trifling indeed; and in an hour or two may be cleared off sufficiently to give the forest an agreeable park-like appearance--so much so that, as has been said of English Acts of Parliament, any skilful hand might drive a coach and six through.

When you have finished "under-brushing," you stand with whetted axe, ready and willing to attack the fathers of the forest--but stay--you don't know how to chop? It is rather doubtful, as you have travelled hither in a great hurry, whether you have ever seen an axeman at work. Your man, Carroll, who has been in the country five or six years, and is quite au fait, will readily instruct you. Observe--you strike your axe, by a dexterous swing backwards and round over your shoulder,--take care there are no twigs near you, or you may perhaps hurt yourself seriously--you strike your axe into the tree with a downward slant, at about thirty inches from the ground; then, by an upward stroke you meet the former incision and release a chip, which flies out briskly. Thus you proceed, by alternate downward and upward or horizontal strokes on that side of the tree which leans over, or towards which you wish to compel it to fall, until you have made a clear gap rather more than half way through, when you attack it in rear.

Now for the reward of your perspiring exertions--a few well-aimed blows on the reverse side of the tree, rather higher than in front, and the vast mass "totters to its fall,"--another for the coup-de-grace--crack! crack! cra-a-ack!--aha!--away with you behind yon beech--the noble tree bows gently its leafy honours with graceful sweep towards the earth--for a moment slowly and leisurely, presently with giddy velocity, until it strikes the ground, amidst a whirlwind of leaves, with a loud thud, and a concussion both of air and earth, that may be felt at a considerable distance. You feel yourself a second David, who has overthrown a mightier Goliath.

You can read this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/thompson/index.htm>

Enigma Machine

The whole collection can be found at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma>. We're currently working on puzzle 106.

Alfred Fitzpatrick

Known nationally and internationally as a pioneer in education and we've added a page for him in our Makers of Canada section. Also added a couple of his books for you to download.

You can read about him at http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/fitzpatrick_alfred.htm

Constable Daniel Woodall

The funeral service for this constable was amazing and I wanted to profile this on the site and so you can read about him and see some videos of the service at:

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

A Brief Review of the Settlement of Upper Canada

By the U. E. Loyalists and Scotch Highlanders in 1783 By D. M'Leod, Major General, Patriot Army, Upper Canada (1841) (pdf). This article is written from the point of view of people wanting to join with the USA against Great Britain.

You can download this book from <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/articles/uppercanada.pdf>

Electric Scotland

Stories in the Scottish Dialect

This is a collection of stories we'll be adding over time from the pen of Alexander (Black) Harley. We've added a section for these at the foot of his page.

Added "Through Death's Dark Vale" which I've decided to make the Story of this week so you can read it below.

You can get to these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/harley.htm>

James Hutchison Stirling

Added this Philosopher to our Famous Scots section. Now added the fifth section of his book.

You can get to this at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/stirling_james.htm

Wild Sports of the West

With Legendary Tales and Local Sketches in two volumes by William Hamilton Maxwell (1833).

This takes place in Ireland and thought you might enjoy this one and here is the Preface to set the scene...

PREFACE

Some explanation may be necessary for obtruding upon the public the private details of a sportsman's life, and particularly when the scene of his exploits is laid within "the four seas of Britain." In the customary course of field adventure, few besides the individual concerned are much interested in the successes and disappointments he experiences: and rural sports are, in all their general incidents, so essentially alike, as to render their minute description, almost invariably, a dull and unprofitable record.

Circumstances, however, may occasionally create an interest which in ordinary cases would be wanting. From local connexions, a field almost untrodden by any but himself was opened to the writer of these Sketches. He was thrown into an unfrequented district, with a primitive people to consort with. With some advantages to profit from the accident, a remote and semi-civilized region was offered to his observation; and although within a limited distance of his majesty's mail-coach, a country was thus disclosed as little known to the multitude as the interior of Australasia; and where, excepting some adventurous grouse-shooter, none have viewed its highlands or mingled with its inhabitants.

That the scenic and personal sketches are faithful the reader is assured; some were written on the spot, and others traced from vivid recollection. Those with whom the author shot these wild moors, or fished the waters, will best estimate the fidelity of the descriptions; and one valued friend, though now beneath another sun, will probably recall the days he spent by "fell and flood," and bring to memory those light and joyous nights.

Of the actors in the following scenes, some are still living, while others are no more. The colonel, that best and honestest of boon companions, sleeps with his fathers; and old John and the Otter-killer have gone the way of all flesh. The priest, "mine honoured friend," I rejoice to say, is still healthy and vigorous; in his wild but happy retirement he holds "the noiseless tenor of his way," exercises hospitality most liberally to the stranger, and throws forty feet of silk and hair better than any artist in the empire. Last of the 'dramatis personae,' Hennessey is in full force, and *mulalo nomine,' may still be found in Ballycroy.

With regard to the tales and legends narrated in the succeeding pages, the former were told just as they are introduced. "The Blind Seal" is known to be substantially true: I have heard it from many and never knew its veracity impugned. My lamented friend was himself the principal actor in "the Night Attack;" and he, poor fellow, was exactly the man who in an affray, or a carouse, might be depended on. The heroes of the "Gold Snuffbox" are alive and merry, and long may they continue so! for "truer friends and better company" never listened to the "chimes at midnight." "Mr. Dawkins" is, I believe, engaged in seeking through Doctors Commons to be relieved "e vinculo matrimonii"—and "Mr. Burke" duly announced among the last arrivals in the Sidney Gazette.

Respecting the legendary stories, I have no pledge to offer for their authenticity,—old Antony believed them to the letter—I have given them nearly in his own words, and I may say with Sir Walter Scott,

"I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me."

"The Legend of Knockathample" remains as the Otter-killer related it; but with "Rose Roche" I confess to have taken liberties, in suppressing a portion of her flirtation with the "black-eyed page," which, although, upon the lady's part, I feel convinced was perfectly platonic, yet by uncharitable constructions might be tortured into something like indiscretion.

If I have undervalued those rural recreations in which many a worthy citizen sometimes dissipates, I hope my contempt for his avocations will be ascribed to the true cause, namely, that local advantages have spoiled my taste and rendered me fastidious. He who can shoot grouse upon the moor will spend little time in killing pigeons from the trap; the angler who in a morning hooks some halfscore salmon, would reckon it but sorry amusement to dabble in a pond. To a Galway rider, the Epping hunt would be a bore, and he would probably treat it with the same contumely that one of this redoubted body did hare-hunting, by riding to the hounds in morocco slippers, and carrying an open umbrella to protect him from the sun.

As I have casually named "an honoured name," I lament that it was not his fortune to have visited those interesting scenes, where I have been so long a useless wanderer. The wild features and wilder associations of that romantic and untouched country, would have offered him a fresh field whereon to exercise his magic pencil— and many a tale and legend still orally handed down, but which in a few years must of necessity be forgotten, would have gained immortality from the touch of "the mighty master." But alas! the creations of his splendid imagination will no more delight an enchanted world. The wand is broken, the spell is over, the lamp of life is nearly exhausted—and even now, Scotland may be mourning for the mightiest of her gifted sons.

As a votive offering, these volumes are inscribed to that matchless genius, by an humble, but enthusiastic admirer of Sir Walter Scott.

Sydenham, 12th September, 1833

You can download these volumes at <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/wildsports.htm>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in section 2 of the July 2015 issue which you can download at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

Colin and Grace Murray

Have added these Scottish Theater Entertainers to our Famous Scots section and you can read about them at: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/men/murray_colin_grace.htm

Hannah

The winning entry in the inaugural Scottish Schools' Young Writer of the Year competition. You can read this one at <http://www.scottishreview.net/ScottishSchoolsYoungWriter15.html>

Lucy Bethia Colquhoun

Added Chapter IV. An Early Victorian Household to this book which you can read at:

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

Jacobite rising 1745

I found this film on YouTube so added it to our page on Bonnie Prince Charlie at:

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

The Scots Language

I added a video which explains the Scots language which you can view at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/culture/features/scots/>

British Regimental Videos

Found an interesting collection of stories of British Regiments in video format so created a page to provide links to them which you can get to at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/videos.htm>

THE STORY

The story this week comes from our collection of stories in the Scottish Dialect which we're currently adding to the site.

Through Death's Dark Vale

There is a place, Shieldhill by name, that sits blithely on the braeface at the entering in of Annandale, where the country is not very wild, and there are many cottar houses dotted among the knowes. But at the time of our story the heavy hand of persecution was upon the country, and the poor folk were being driven from hearth and homestead to wander on the bleak and barren hillsides. For some time the troops of dragoons who were scouring the country had had but scant success, for they were ill-accustomed to this mossy and boggy land. At length, however, the commander of the main body, James Johnstone of Westerha', hit upon a plan for enclosing the whole with a ring of his men and coming upon the party of Covenanters, as he thought, unawares, for he said the place was like a conventicle and rife with psalm-singers. But he was a wild man when he found the men and women all fled, and only the

bairns, feared mostly out of their lives, sitting cowering by the ingle, or hiding about the byres.

"I'll fear them waur, or my name is no' James Johnstone!"

So what did this ill-set Johnstone do but gather them all up into a knot by a great thorn tree that grows on the slope. The children stood together, huddled in a crowd, too frightened to speak or even to cry aloud; and one thing I noticed, that the lassie bairns sat stiller and grat not so much as the boys, all save one who was a laddie of about ten years. He stood with his hands behind his back, and his face was very white; but he threw back his head and looked the dragoons fair in the face as one that has conquered fear. Then Westerha' rode forward almost to the midst of the bairns, glowering and roaring at the bit things to frighten them, as was his custom with such.

They were mostly from six to ten years of age, and when I saw them thus with their feared white faces, I wished that I had been six foot high, and with twenty good men of the Glen at my back. But I minded that I was but a boy, "Stay-at-home John," as Sandy called me, and could do nothing with my hands; so I could only fret and be silent

So Westerha' rode nearer to them, shouting to them like a shepherd crying down the wind tempestuously when his dogs are working sourly.

"Hark ye," he cried, "ill bairns that ye are! Ye are a' tae dee, an' that quickly, unless ye shall answer me what I shall ask of ye."

A party of soldiers was now drawn out before them, and the young things were bid look into the black muzzles of the muskets. They were, indeed, only loaded with powder, but the children did not know that.

"Tell me who comes to your houses at nights, and who goes away early in the mornings." The children crept closer to one another, but none answered, whereupon Westerha' indicated one with his finger the lad who stood up so straightly and held his head back. "You, young cock-o'-the-heather! what might your black Whig's name be?"

"Juist the same as yer Honour's, James Johnstone," replied the boy in no way abashed. Methought there ran a titter of laughter among the soldiers, for Westerha' was nowadays so well liked as Graham of Claverhouse or even roaring Grier of Lag.

"And what is your father's name?" continued Westerha', bending a black look on the lad.

"James Johnstone," replied the boy. Back in the ranks some one laughed. Westerha' flung an oath over his shoulder.

"Who was the man who laughed? Who was the man who laughed? I shall teach you to laugh at the Johnstone in his own country."

"It was Jeems Johnstone o' Wamphray that laughed, your Honour," replied the calm voice of a troop-sergeant. Then Westerha' set himself to the work of examination, which suited him well.

"Ye will not answer, young rebels!" he cried. "Ken ye what they get that will not speak when the King bids them?"

"Are you the King?" said the lad of ten, who was called James Johnstone. At this Westerha' waxed perfectly furious, with a pale and shaky fury that I liked not to see; but indeed the whole affair was so distasteful to me that I could but turn my head away.

"Now, ill bairns," said Westerha', "and you, my young rebel namesake, hearken ye! The King's command is not to be made light of, and I tell you plainly, that as ye will not answer, I am resolved that ye shall all be shot dead on the spot."

With that he sent men to set them out in rows and make them kneel down with kerchiefs over their eyes. Now when the soldiers came near to the cluster of huddled bairns, that same heart-broken, little bleating which I have heard lambs make, broke again from them. It made my heart bleed and the nerves tingle in my palms; and this was King Charles Stuart making war; it had not been his father's way. But the soldiers—although some few were smiling a little as at an excellent play—were mostly black ashamed. Nevertheless, they made the bairns kneel, for that was the order, and without mutiny they could not better it

"Soger man, wull ye let me tak' ma wee brither by the han', I think he wud thole it better," said a little maid of eight, and the soldier let go a great oath and looked at Westerha' as though he could have slain him.

"Bonny wark," he cried. "Deil burn me gin I listit for this."

But the little maid had already taken her brother by the hand. "Bend doon, Alec, ma man, doon on yer knees."

The boy glanced up at her. "Wull it be sair, think ye, Maggie? I hope it'll no' be awfu' sair."

"Na, na, Alec," his sister made answer. "It'll no' be either lang or sair!"

But James Johnstone neither bent nor knelt. "I hae dune nae wrang," he said. "I'll juist dee this way." And he stood up like one that straightens himself at drill.

Then Westerha' bid fire over the bairns' heads, which was cruel, cruel work, and only some of the soldiers did it; but even a few pieces that did go off made a great noise in that lonely place. At the sound of the muskets some of the bairns fell forward on their faces as if they had really been shot; some leapt in the air, but the most part knelt quietly and composedly. Little Alec, whose sister had his hand in hers, made as if to rise.

"Bide ye doon, Alec, ma wee mannie," she said, very quietly, "It's no' oor turn yet."

Then the heart within me gave way, and I roared out in my helpless pain a perfect gowl of anger and grief.

"Bonny Whigs ye are," cried Westerha', "tae dee without even a prayer! Put up a prayer this minute, for ye shall a' dee, every one o' ye."

Then the boy, James Johnstone, made answer to him. "Sir, we canna pray, for we be too young to pray."

"Ye are not too young to rebel nor yet to die for it," was the brute-beast's answer. With that the little girl held up a hand as if she was answering a dominie in class.

"An' it please ye, sir," she said, "me an' Alec canna' pray, but we can sing 'The Lord's my Shepherd,' gin that wull do; my mither learnt us it afore she gaed awa'." And before any one could stop her, she stood up like one that leads the singin' in a kirk. "Stan' up, Alec, ma mannie," she said.

Then all the bairns stood up, and from the lips of the babes arose the quavering strains, "The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want." ... As they sang, I began to grasp hold of my pistols and to sort and prime them, hardly knowing what I did, for I was resolved to make a break for it, and at least to blow a hole in James Johnstone of Westerha' that would mar him for life, before I suffered any more of it; but even as they sang I saw trooper after trooper turn away his head, for being Scots bairns themselves they had all learnt that psalm. The ranks shook, man after man fell out, and I saw the tears happin' down their cheeks. But it was Douglas of Morton, that stark persecutor, who first broke down.

"Curse it, Westerha'," he cried, "I canna' thole this langer; I'll war wi' bairns na mair fur a' the earldoms i' the north." And at last even Westerha' turned his bridle and rode away from Shieldhill, for the victory was to the bairns. I wonder what his thoughts were, for he, too, had learnt that psalm at his mother's knee, and as the troopers rode loosely up hill and down brae, broken and ashamed, the sound of these bairns' singing followed them, and across the fells came the words:—

"Yea though I walk through death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me, and
Thy rod And staff me comfort still."

S. R. Crockett.

The other stories we have up in this series can be found at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/harley.htm>

And that's it for this week and hope you all enjoy your weekend.

Alastair