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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 20th, 2016

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

To my surprise I got in a few emails asking what I thought about the Brexit referendum. To be perfectly frank I am in favour of exiting the EU. I am instead in favour of being a member of EFTA, EEA and the Nordic Council and believe that fits very well for Scotland's ambitions for independence.

That said here is a paper you can read which in it's Executive Summary states...

More jobs are needed and switching to membership of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is the easiest option for creating 1 million new jobs. Membership of EFTA will also allow for the UK to become more democratic.

EFTA is the European Free Trade Association, established in 1960, with Britain as a founding member, as a simple free trade area, where decisions are made by consensus, involving simple rules, and allowing each country to run it's own affairs. Britain left EFTA in 1972 to join the EEC (European Economic Community), which went on to become the EU (European Union). EFTA is still going, and going strong.

EFTA countries include, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Lichtenstein, and they all have good trading relations with countries in the EU, and in fact are involved in 'decision shaping' in the EU. The unemployment rates of the EFTA states have been around 2% to 4%, even during the recession. EFTA states Norway and Switzerland have given their people a say, through referenda on whether to join the EU or keep their current arrangements. On all occasions the EU was rejected.

There are two options for being a member of EFTA and trading freely with the countries in the EU. The first is EFTA/EEA. EEA is the European Economic Area, which gives members, free movement of: goods, services, capital and people. The EEA is economic not political. Britain is already in the EEA. The other option is an EFTA/bi-lateral agreement, which Switzerland has, which is a series of agreements covering goods, services, capital and people movement, and took from 1992 to 2002 to negotiate and then implement.

This paper favours the EFTA/EEA option as the option that would give the most benefits in the shortest possible time, and likely get the most votes in a referendum, and be the easiest to implement, since Britain is already in the EEA it would only take weeks to implement.

What would be the benefits of joining EFTA?

The changes would include:

- New regulations per year: EFTA = 300, EU = 1000+
- Financial Contributions: EFTA = £3.9 bn, EU = £6 billion and rising
- Running own farming again, i.e. No Common Agricultural Policy
- Running own fisheries, i.e. No Common Fisheries Policy and return of the UK's fishing waters
- Full responsibility for Justice and Home Affairs

So how would the new jobs be created? A reduction from 1000 to 300 regulations per year, is a 70% reduction. Since EU regulations are estimated at 5% of GDP, this would be comparable to a massive tax cut on business, equivalent to about 3.5% of GDP for businesses and other organisations; thus making exporters competitive in more sectors.

This paper suggests a referendum on Britain's future; should the UK remain in the uncompetitive and costly EU, or should it join the more dynamic and democratic European Free Trade Association.

Read this report at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/110321EFTAorEU.pdf>

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our ScotNews feed on our index page...

An Open Letter to Nicola Sturgeon

First of all let me congratulate you on being returned as Scotland's First Minister.

See also the comments which make interesting reading.

Read more at:

<http://chokkablog.blogspot.ca/2016/05/an-open-letter-to-nicola-sturgeon.html>

Nicola Sturgeon's cabinet choices reveal her priorities

Ms Sturgeon's changes are driven, de facto, by choice. But those choices are informed and led by the priorities previously announced by the first minister.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-36325590>

World's largest floating wind farm to be built off Scottish coast

Statoil granted seabed lease to develop floating windfarm 15 miles off the coast of Peterhead that is expected to be operational by the end of 2017

Read more at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/16/worlds-largest-floating-windfarm-to-be-built-off-scottish-coast>

The truth about activist Willie McRae's tragic death

THE mystery surrounding the death of SNP activist Willie McRae 30 years ago has been solved after an investigation by Scotland on Sunday.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/the-truth-about-activist-willie-mcrae-s-tragic-death-1-3738745>

Note also that we have a full account of this on the site at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/willie_macrae.htm

Scots warned to prepare for plague of midges

Scotland is bracing itself for a plague of midges.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/scots-warned-to-prepare-for-plague-of-midges-1-4129539>

Commission to examine democracy in Highlands

There has been a long running debate among councillors about breaking up the authority into smaller areas.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-36302502>

Fall-out over Named Person scheme won't go away

THE Scottish government will have to work hard to persuade the public the scheme is valid

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/lesley-riddoch-fall-out-over-named-person-scheme-won-t-go-away-1-4128776>

Most people in SNP want to get rid of monarchy

A LEADING SNP politician has admitted most people in his party want to get rid of the Queen as head of state, despite its official policy to keep the Monarchy.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/humza-yousaf-most-people-in-snp-want-to-get-rid-of-monarchy-1-4127741>

Could an ancient Scottish diet be the key to an obesity cure?

Scots may not be known for a healthy diet but scientists are now turning to foods grown in this country for thousands of years in their search for an obesity cure.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/health/could-an-ancient-scottish-diet-be-the-key-to-an-obesity-cure-1-4127373>

Dinosaurs in danger of damaging the game of golf

Royal Troon will host The Open in July for the first time since 2004 but a mixed membership being in place at the club by then would seem unlikely.

Read more at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/sport/golf/comment-dinosaurs-in-danger-of-damaging-the-game-of-golf-1-4131096>

Ministers aware of EU payments conflict

A delayed and over-budget Scottish government IT project had a serious conflict of interest at the heart of the programme, auditors have confirmed.

Read more at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/19/it-failures-farm-subsidies-cost-sturgeon-scotland-125m>

Operators expect one in six North Sea jobs to go this year

North Sea oil and gas operators expect to lay off one-in-six UK-based workers this year, according to a major survey.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-36321064>

Where have all the jobs gone?

The unemployment rate is higher - 6.2% to the UK rate of 5.1%. Wales is at 4.8%, so it's not all about the rich south-east.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-36331419>

Electric Canadian

John Forbes

With it three other Forbes of note which you can read about at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/forbes_john.htm

Fort McMurray fire grows to 423,000 hectares, continues to threaten oilsands sites

Wildfire stalls near Saskatchewan border but continues spread north to oilsands facilities

The Fort McMurray wildfire in northern Alberta is carving a new path of destruction, destroying an oilsands camp while racing eastward toward more industry sites.

The fire, which has become known as "the beast," has grown by a staggering 57,000 hectares in the last 24 hours, consuming 423,000 hectares of boreal forest as of Wednesday morning.

Wildfire information officer Travis Fairweather attributes the "pretty significant" growth to "extreme fire conditions."

"It's really being burning intensely and the winds have been carrying it," he said Wednesday.

The fire forced 8,000 non-essential workers to flee the area Monday night, and a mandatory evacuation order remains in place for all work camps north of the city.

The majority were sent by ground to work camps near Fort MacKay, about 53 kilometres to the north. But some were also bused, or later flown, south to Edmonton and Calgary.

By Tuesday morning, the flames had made their way to the Blacksand Executive Lodge, which provides accommodations to hundreds of workers in the area.

The building's sprinkler system was no match for the raging inferno, and all 665 units of the building were consumed by the fire.

Within hours, the flames had spread east, threatening the Noralta Lodge Fort McMurray Village, a facility that can house more than 3,000 people, and Horizon North's Birch Mountain, a 540-unit facility.

Noralta officials took to social media Tuesday night to say the fire had been held back, but the site was still at risk and crews would be working through the night to protect the facility.

This fire is now considered to be the most expensive event in Canadian Insurance history.
Learn more about the fire at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jsob73m1Oug>

Electric Scotland

The Howes o' Buchan

Being Notes, Local, Historical, and Antiquarian, regarding the various places of interest along the route of the Buchan Railway by the Late William Anderson (1873)

You can download this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/travel/guide/buchan.pdf>

Dictionary of National Biography

Added some more entries on names from this publication. The links can be found at the foot of the appropriate pages. I must confess that I am finding some great people which is making me try and find out more about them.

Baillie <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/baillie.htm>

Baird <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/baird.htm>

Balcanquhall <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/balcanquhall.htm>

Balfour <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/balfour.htm>

Baliol <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/baliol.htm>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in section 2 of the June edition at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

I also noted I didn't receive section 1 of the May edition and now have that and you can read it at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/archives/BNFTMay2016A.PDF>

Eric Winchester

Winchester was born in 1827 and Baptised at Drainie in Morayshire and emigrated to Australia.

Read about him at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/Eric.pdf>

The Gentle Persuasion

Sketches of Scottish Life by Alan Gray (1918)

Chapter 1. The Colonel's Funeral

MANY years have come and gone since I, Alan Gray, bade farewell to bonny Glenconan, in which I spent the happy days of my childhood. During these years I have feasted my eyes on some of the loveliest scenery in the Empire; my lot has been a most varied one, bringing me in contact with all sorts and conditions of men; yet in spite of these things I have never forgotten, and never can forget, the quiet sylvan beauty of my native glen, or the quaint old-world characters, who then lived in it, all now, alas, gone over to the great majority.

The other day I had occasion to make a long and tedious journey across the snow-covered, frost-bound prairie. There was no wind to

speak of; the air, though keen, was not too cold for comfort; my sleigh was well equipped, my horses strong and willing; my Jehu, a French Canadian, could speak very little English, and my French was very rusty; and so as conversation was denied me, I lay back among the fur robes, and fell into a reverie. On the previous evening I had been in the company of a very dear friend, the Rev. Harold Courtney, one of the most devoted and enthusiastic clergymen in the great Northwest. In the course of conversation he happened to remark; "I have often wondered, Gray, what led you, the son of Presbyterian parents, to become an Anglican. You are not the sort of man that would act in a matter like this without the strongest convictions. How did it all come about?"

"Well, Courtney, it is too long a story to tell tonight. You are right, however, in supposing that I could not have made the change without being fully convinced of the superior claims of the Anglican branch of the Church. It took me a long time to unlearn what had been so carefully taught me in my younger days, and to see the defects of the system in which I had been reared. It meant the severing of many associations that were very dear to me. Some day, perhaps, I'll tell you the whole story."

Doubtless it was the memory of this chat that set my wits awandering, and called up before my mental vision scenes and incidents of long ago that had made lasting impressions upon my impressionable nature. How vividly I could realize those scenes: I can see them clearly still. Let me tell you all I saw as I dozed in my sleigh that fine January day.

I saw myself again a boy in my native town of St. Conan's on the northeast of Scotland. The country was clad in the russet mellow robes of harvest. I could see the Conan Water pursuing its quiet journey to the sea between finely wooded banks. On the north bank there was the Craig, a little hamlet consisting of St. Conan's Episcopal Church, the Parsonage, the Craig inn, where the "Defiance" coach used to stop and change horses on its way to and from the city, and a few cottages; on the opposite bank the long straggling village of St. Conan's. St. Conan's had for many centuries been a place of considerable importance; its Moot Hill, where in olden days the Earl of Buchan held his Court and where justice was executed, was still pointed out to the curious. A fine old one-arched bridge spanned the river and formed the bond of union between Craig and St. Conan's. The main street of the village ran parallel with the river and ended eastward in the market square, where stood the old Presbyterian parish church, the old parish school and the principal places of business.

On this day which stood out so clearly in my vision, the school was deserted and the whole village was more than usually quiet. The flag on the tall staff in the square was floating at half-mast; the shutters were on every shop window, and the blinds were down in every house. At intervals the tolling of a bell resounded through the air. Groups of men in their best Sunday "blacks" were wending their way towards the great entrance gate of the castle.

The school children were all on the qui vive for what was about to happen. I could see myself among the rest, a lad of twelve, comfortably clad in homespun, eagerly watching for the funeral cortege that would soon appear. At last it came. No hideous hearse was there; but relays of the local volunteer company, in their picturesque tartan trews and scarlet tunics, took turns in bearing the body to its last resting-place. Colonel Forbes, the brother of our "auld laird" had been a famous soldier, and the men who loved his family and name were carrying him to his burial after the manner that belonged to the Forbeses of Glenconan. In front of all strode a stalwart piper, in kilt and plaid of the same dark green tartan, that of the Clan Forbes, playing a weird and mournful coronach. In my vision I could see the long procession take its way by the main street bridge towards St. Conan's church on the Craig. At the gate it was met by a little white-robed company of men and boys, who turned and led the way through the churchyard, the clergyman reciting the introductory sentences of the Anglican burial service. When they reached the church door, six of the oldest tenants on the Glenconan estate took the casket from the bearers and carried it up the nave to the chancel steps, where the first part of the office was said.

Shall I ever forget the beauty and solemnity of that service? It was so different from any service I had ever seen. All was so orderly and so void of anything like gloom.

There was undoubtedly a great deal that to my boyish mind was unintelligible, but the general impression produced on me was so profound that I was thrilled to the heart in a way I had never been before.

Following the cortege out from the chancel to the east end of the churchyard, I heard the words of Christian hope in a glorious resurrection spoken by an old and venerable man of commanding appearance, when the casket had been lowered into the grave, which was lined with moss and flowers; I listened entranced while the choir sang the beautiful hymn:

"Father, in Thy gracious keeping Leave we now Thy servant sleeping." and then, when all was over, I crept away out of the crowd, to ponder over what I had seen and heard.

Brought up on the Shorter Catechism, explained, or I should say distorted, by stern and unbending teachers, I actually believed there was nothing good in any other faith. But here I had been brought face to face with a new phase of Christian belief, and one which to my boyish mind was far more beautiful than that to which I had been accustomed. Young as I was, I had thought a good deal about such matters. Were I to go to my father, he would give me no sympathy, but tell me to mind my lessons, and leave such things for older heads to consider. There was, however, one man in the village with whom my fondness for books made me a great favorite. This was old Mr. Lindsay, who had himself been a probationer of the "Auld Kirk", but who, because of inability to sign the Confession

of Faith, had never been received into the ministry. For many years he had been a teacher of a semi-private school in another parish; but ever since I could remember he had been living near our home, retired from professional life, and spending most of his time among his books. To him I would go for advice and instruction.

As soon as our frugal supper was over, I said to my mother, "Mother, I am going to see the auld dominie, and get him to help me wi' a gey hard Latin version that I have to do for the morn."

"Weel, weel, Alan, do ye sae, but see ye dinna bide ower late, else your father 'll no be pleased."

In a few minutes I had knocked at the old man's door and had been admitted into the sanctum, where I had spent many a happy evening among the books.

"Come awa, laddie, and sit you doon. What's the difficulty the nicht? I haena seen ye for twa or three days. Are they all weel at hame?"

"Yes, thank ye, Mr. Lindsay, a'body's fine, I hae a question or twa I wad like to speir at ye, if you please, about the use of the ablative absolute; but," and I hesitated, "It was something else I wantit maistly to speak to you aboot. I gaed to the colonel's burial the day."

"Aye, weel, we'll take the Latin first, syne we'll hear about the ither maitter. My leg was gey troublesome the day, else I wad hae gone to the funeral. He was a good man was the auld colonel, ane o' the 'gentle persuasion,' in the richt sense o' the word, an' deserved a' the respect that could be shown him."

In a few minutes I had told my difficulty in the Latin version and had the construction fully explained; and you may be sure, my books were very speedily replaced in my schoolbag.

"Noo," said Mr. Lindsay, taking a pinch of snuff from his silver box and leaning back in his arm chair. "Ye was at the funeral, ye wis saying'. What thocht ye o' that? There would be a lot of folk there, Til warrant-I heard the pipes playing the coronach and I couldna help thinking of the many times that the sound of the pipes had sounded in the old colonel's ear as he led his Highlanders to victory."

In my simple Scotch way I tried to tell my old friend all I had seen and heard.

"It wasna like ony ither burial I ever saw. They didna hae a black mortcloth ower the coffin, but a purple ane. Wasna that queer?"

In ordinary conversation the dominie used the broad Doric Scotch of our part of the country; when he had any instructions to give or any important thing to communicate he spoke in good colloquial English, although sometimes a Scotch word might creep in.

"Weel, you see, Alan, the Episcopalians have a meaning in their use of colors. They teach through the eye as well as through the ear, just as our Master did. For several hundreds of years purple has been used as the emblem of penitence and sorrow; and as penitence and sorrow for sin, if genuine, will bring peace, so this color teaches that mourning for one who is dead in Christ is not without hope, but will end in the joy of the resurrection morning."

"What a beautiful idea, Mr. Lindsay, I never thought they had any meaning in it at all, but just used that color because it was pretty. And they had, oh! such lovely flowers made up in wreaths and crosses, laid on the coffin. Oor folk never hae onything o' that kind."

"No, the auld kirk likes to make death as gloomy as possible. In fact they look on death as if he were always an enemy. Now the Episcopalians teach that if a man is seeking first the Kingdom of Christ he has nae need to fear at death. To hear some Presbyterians speak you would think that death meant an end o' a' thing; whereas the English Prayer Book teaches that it is only the beginning of another stage of life. In a book I have here, by a great man called Tertullian, who lived in the fourth century, it is said that the Christian Church of the first days turned the gloom of the funeral into a triumph, and that between the death and the burial their religious exercises were expressive of peace and hope. They felt that death could not and did not separate them from the love of their heavenly Father or from the fellowship of the saints; and so they made use of palms and flowers to give expression to their hope and trust."

'Now I hope I understand better the meanin' o' what I saw to-day. But, there wis ae day nae long ago I heard auld Willie Scott the mason—and ye ken he's great on religious matters—say to a man in Jamie Keith's smiddy that there wis only a tissue paper wall between the English Kirk and Roman Catholics. He said that their white gowns, an' organs, an' chantin' an' hymns, were a' relics of popery. It wis jist a kirk for the 'gentle persuasion,' he said; they dinna want ony poor folk there." "Dinna ye heed ony o' auld Willie's havers; he's only a poor narrow-minded body, an' disna think anybody will be saved except the 'Auld light' folk. The white gowns were used in the oldest and purest ages of the Church, more than a thousand years before the black Geneva gown was heard of, an' as to organs, weel, King David himsel' played on a harp, an' I'm thinking if the Almighty was pleased wi' that, he wouldna hae ony objection to a grand instrument like the organ. As for the chantin' there was plenty o' that in the temple when the Maister Himsel' was worshipping there, and gin He had thocht there wis onything wrang He wad sune hae let them hear about it. If Willie thinks the

English version o' the Psalms is inspired, he's awfu' sair mista'en. Some of the metre Psalms are perfect doggerel."

"But I'll tell you Alan, he spak' a true word when he said that the Episcopalian kirk was the kirk o' the gentle persuasion; for there is something in it, as a system, that helps to make a man gentle, and kind, and unselfish. No doubt there may be many imperfect characters among them, but the teaching of their Church, the use of their Prayer Book, their ordinances and Sacraments, all help to make them o' 'the gentle persuasion.' Why, laddie, the very service ye heard the day is a proof o' the perfect democracy of her system. It is the same burial service that she uses for the poorest of her people as for the most exalted in rank. So you see in the way Willie meant she's not the kirk o' 'the gentle persuasion'."

"Thank ye very much for takin' the trouble to explain all this to me. I wis wonderin' if ye could lend me an auld Prayer Book for a day or two; I would like to read a bit o't."

"Surely I'll dae that, Alan;" and with that he went to his book-shelves, took down a copy of the Book of Common Prayer and handed it to me.

Putting the precious volume in my pocket, I set out for home, arriving there in time for family worship, which, according to the custom of his people, my father conducted every evening.

Such was my day dream. So was the first seed sown many years ago; but to me it sometimes seems as yesterday, so vividly can I recall it all. My reverie was a pleasant one. By and by I may go back in spirit to those old days and tell you something more of the way by which God led me, and some of the difficulties which I had to overcome, before I could throw in my lob with the great Anglican Communion.

You can get read the other chapters of this book at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/gentlepersuasion.pdf>

Alexander Bald
Added to our Significant Scots page at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/bain_alexander.htm

James Baine
One of the most distinguished ministers of the second great secession from the church of Scotland which you can read about at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/baine_james.htm

John and Catherine MacDonald Family History
Sent in by Betty Woolley about this family from the Isle of Skye who went to India and then settled in Australia.

You can read this at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/australia/MacDonaldHistory.pdf>

MacDuffee Clan Society of America
Got in their May 2016 newsletter

You can read this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/macduffee/index.htm>

I contacted the Clan President to ask for some information on the name and got in this reply...

Alistair, Thank you for your inquiry. We do have a web site at macduffeeclansociety.org that has introductory background information. Two of the best resources for information regarding the MacDuffies back to the 1400/1500s can be found in the book Colonsay and Oronsay by Norman Newton written in 1990 (ISBN 0-7153-9239-5) and the Inventory of the Monuments on Colonsay and Oronsay extracted from ARGYLL volume 5 prepared by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1994, (ISBN 0-7480-1075-0). How do you plan to use our information? The Clan is a very old Clan that has been noted evolved from Clan Alpin.

The private MacDuffee Clan (1968-1981) and the eventually named MacDuffee Clan Society (1982-) has met annually at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games since the late 1950's. In 1968 the MacDuffee Clan was organized on the Mountain by Allen McDuffie. About 1981 a group of Macfies led by Earl Douglas McPhee petitioned the Lord Lyon to resurrect the Clan. We had been a Broken Clan since 1623 when our last MacDuffie Chief was killed without an identified male heir. Nearly all ancient records use a version of MacDuffie including grave slab carvings from the MacDuffie Aisle attached to the Oronsay Priory where the MacDuffie Chiefs/Priors (Augustinian) are buried. The Lord Lyon elected to activate the Clan, without a Chief but with a commander, as the Mcfie Clan. He selected the existing family motto and crest, Pro Rege, of the Mcfies of Dreghorn and declared it the Clan's motto and crest. The Mcfies of Dreghorn were known as the Sugar Mcfies as the crown had given them a favorable position for importation of sugar. Historically the MacDuffies/Mcfies of Colonsay fought the Crown especially at events such as the Battle at Culloden when they fought

along side the Camerons.

Please let me know if you require further information. I do have photos of the MacDuffie Aisle, the Malcolm MacDuffie Cross and the MacDuffie grave slab as identified by the Royal commission.

If you plan to publish an article regarding our organization I would appreciate an opportunity to review your proposal prior to publication. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Tom

Thomas Patrick McDuffee, President
MacDuffee Clan Society

Baikie, William Balfour
Naturalist, traveller, and philologist added to our Significant Scots page at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/baikie_william.htm

Tartan Herald
Got in the copy of the May 2016 issue which you can read at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/tartans/newsletter/>

William Ballenden
Prefect-apostolic of the catholic mission in Scotland which you can read about at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/ballenden_william.htm

David Bartholomew
A Captain in the Royal Navy that you can read about at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scots/Bartholomew_david

John Murray Forbes
An American Railroad Builder whom you can read about at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/americanrailroad.pdf>

A Scottish Knight-Errant
A Sketch of the Life and Times of John Ogilvie, Jesuit by F. A. Forbes and M. Cahill which you can read about at:
http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/saint_john.htm

THE STORY

Scotland's Story
Chapter XLIII. Robert The Bruce - How the Scots carried the War into England

FOR some years after Bannockburn, King Robert ruled Scotland wisely and well. The war with England still went on, but it was the Scots who won the battles.

At last King Robert became very ill. He could no longer sit upon a horse or lead his soldiers to battle, but he still thought, and planned, and ruled his kingdom, living quietly in his castle near the river Clyde.

About this time Edward II. of England was dethroned, and his son, Edward III., was crowned instead. Robert the Bruce, having sent a message to the new King, telling him that he would invade England, gathered an army and sent it across the Border. Randolph and Douglas commanded this army, which was about twenty thousand strong. The men wore little armour, and were mounted upon rough ponies, so that they moved about from place to place far more quickly than the heavy English horse. The ponies were so swift and sure footed, that they could go through valleys and among hills where the English found it impossible to follow with their heavy cavalry.

Besides his weapons, each man carried a bag of oatmeal and an iron girdle. A girdle is a flat, round piece of iron, something like a frying pan without sides, upon which scones and oatcakes are baked. Except their bags of oatmeal, the Scots carried no other provisions, for they were always sure of finding cattle in the country through which they passed. They used to kill these and cook the flesh. But they carried neither pots nor pans. They boiled the flesh in the skins, which they made into pots by slinging them on crossed sticks, very much as gipsies sling their big, black, round pots at the present day.

After a day's march, the ponies were turned loose to graze. Bullocks were killed and skinned. Water and beef were put into the bag-pots, fires were lit under them; every man brought out his girdle and oatmeal, and after a supper of boiled beef and oat-cakes, the men lay down to sleep round the warm camp fires.

In this way, the Scots moved from place to place, burning and destroying at will, and pursued by the English, who tried in vain to come up with them. The English could often see the smoke of the Scots' fires as they followed them over hill and dale, till, weary and hungry, they encamped for the night, hoping next morning to catch the Scots. Day by day this went on, till the English army was well-nigh exhausted.

Sometimes during the march there would be a cry. Those behind, thinking that at last the enemy was in sight, would hurry forward with drawn swords in their hands, ready to fight. But, after having run for a mile or so over hill and valley, they would find that what had aroused their hope was only a herd of deer or wild cattle, which fled swiftly away before the army.

Wandering about in this manner, the English leaders lost their way, and one day, just as the sun was setting, they arrived at the river Tyne. This they crossed with great difficulty, and lay down for the night on the bank.

The men had only a loaf of bread each to eat, and there was nothing but water from the river to drink. They had no hatchets to cut down wood, so they could make neither fire nor light. Wet and hungry, they lay down to sleep, wearing their armour, and holding their horses by the bridle, lest they should stray during the night.

In the morning, some peasants passing, told them that they were eleven leagues from the nearest town. Hearing this, the King immediately sent messengers to the town with a proclamation, saying that any one who wished to earn some money, had only to bring provisions to the army.

The next day the messengers returned with what they could get, which was not much. They were followed, however, by many of the townspeople, who brought badly baked bread, and poor, thin wine, for which they made the soldiers pay very dearly. Even then, there was not enough for every one, and the men would often quarrel fiercely over a piece of meat or loaf of bread, snatching it out of each others' hands. To add to the discomfort, it began to rain, and kept on raining for a whole week. Hungry, cold, and wet, the soldiers began to grumble bitterly. Still there was no sign of the Scots.

At last the King made a proclamation, that any one who could find the Scots should have a hundred pounds a year, and be made a knight. Upon that, about fifteen or sixteen gentlemen leaped upon their horses, and rode off in different directions, eager to win the reward.

Four days later, a gentleman came galloping back to the King. 'Sire,' he cried, 'I bring you news of the Scots. They are three leagues from this place, lodged in a mountain, where they have been this week, waiting for you. You may trust me, this is true. For I went so near to them, that I was made prisoner, and taken before their leaders. I told them where you were, and that you were seeking them to give battle. The lords gave me my liberty, on condition that I rested not until I found you, and told you that they were waiting, and as eager to meet you in battle as you can be to meet them.'

As soon as the King heard this news, he ordered his army to march forward. About noon next day they came in sight of the Scots. But when they saw in what a strong position the long-looked-for enemy lay, they were very much disheartened.

The Scots were encamped upon a mountain, at the foot of which flowed a strong, rapid river. The river would be difficult and dangerous to cross. If the English did cross, there was no room between the mountain and the river for them to form into line. Seeing this, King Edward sent his heralds to ask the Scots to come down into the plain, and fight in the open.

Douglas and Randolph replied that they would do no such thing. 'King Edward and his barons see,' they said, 'that we are in his kingdom. We burn and pillage wherever we pass. If that is displeasing to the King, he may come and amend it, for we will tarry here as long as it pleases us.'

Seeing that the Scots would not come out of their stronghold, King Edward resolved to starve them out. For three days and nights, his army lay in front of the Scots. But the Scots had plenty to eat, they had comfortable huts and great fires, whereas the English lay opposite in cold and hunger, without shelter or proper food.

But on the fourth morning, when the English King looked towards the Scottish camp, behold it was empty. Not a man was left. They had decamped secretly at midnight.

Immediately, Edward sent scouts on horseback to search for them. About four o'clock in the afternoon, they came back with news. The Scots were encamped upon another mountain, in a far stronger position than the last.

So again the English marched forward, and took up a position opposite the Scots.

That night the English camp was suddenly aroused by the fierce war-cry, 'Douglas! Douglas! Ye shall die, ye thieves of England.'

It was Lord James Douglas with two hundred men, who had silently left the Scottish camp, and, finding the English keeping but a careless watch, dashed suddenly upon them.

Three hundred Englishmen were killed, and the King narrowly escaped. Douglas reached his tent, and cutting the ropes, tried to carry off the King in the confusion. But his servants stood bravely round their master, and the camp being now thoroughly aroused, Douglas was obliged to call his men together, and escape. After this, the English kept a strong and careful watch, but the Scots did not again attempt to surprise them.

For three weeks the English lay watching the Scots, hoping to starve them out. During this time the Scots were not idle. Behind them was a marsh, and while the English watched in front, they were busy making a road through the marsh behind. One morning, behold, again the Scottish camp was empty.

Two Scottish trumpeters alone remained. 'My lords,' they said, coming to the English camp. 'why do you watch here? You do but lose your time, for we swear by our heads that the Scots are on homeward march, and are now four or five leagues off. They left us here to tell you this.'

The English were very angry with this message, and on going to the Scottish camp they found that what the trumpeters told them was only too true. Not a Scot was to be seen. They had vanished in the night, but they had left behind them many signs that they had been by no means starving. In the deserted camp there lay the dead bodies of many cattle, which the Scots had killed because they could not take them away, as they moved too slowly. There were hundreds of fires laid, ready to light, under skin pots filled with meat and water. There were thousands of pairs of worn-out shoes. These shoes the Scots used to make out of the raw, rough hide of the bullocks which they killed for food. They wore them with the hairy side out, and from that were often called 'the rough footed Scots,' or 'red shanks.'

Besides these things, the English found a few prisoners whom the Scots had taken, and whom they had now left behind tied to trees. They also left a message saying that if the King of England were displeased with what they had done, he might follow them to Scotland and fight them there.

But Edward had no wish to follow so wily a foe, and he turned southward and disbanded his army.

Shortly afterwards a peace was made between the two countries, and a treaty was signed at Northampton. By this treaty the English King gave up all claim to Scotland, and acknowledged Robert the Bruce to be the rightful King. It was also arranged that Edward's young sister should marry Bruce's son. And so at last the land had rest.

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

Alastair