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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 20th, 2019

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

<https://electricscotland.com/scotnews.htm>

### Electric Scotland News

Well I have to admit that I'm delighted with the 80 seat majority that Boris Johnson and the Conservatives managed to get in the election. This means Brexit will happen BUT of course we still need to know what that Brexit actually means... like will we get back control of our Borders, Legal system, be able to do trade deals with other countries... that's the real question I'm still wanting to hear about.

As to the Scottish elections the SNP did very well be regaining most of the seats they lost in the last election which gave them some 48% of the vote in Scotland. Of course Nicola Sturgeon claims this is a vote for Independence but of course this wasn't the theme of her campaign but rather to stop Boris.

The Brexit party didn't win even one seat which I think proves what I was saying in previous posts that Farage lost the plot towards the end.

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 where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as world news stories that can affect Scotland and all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time.

Election results 2019: Conservatives win overall majority

The BBC forecasts that Boris Johnson will return to Downing Street with a majority of 74.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50765773>

SNP wins election in Scotland

The SNP win back seats they lost in 2017 but they fail to keep North East Fife which they held in 2017 with just two votes

<https://www.bbc.com/news/live/election-2019-50689115>

Leader of Canada's main opposition party quits after loss to Trudeau

The head of Canada's main opposition Conservatives quit on Thursday after losing an October election to Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, leaving the party in search of a more effective leader.

Read more at:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-canada-politics-scheer/leader-of-canadas-main-opposition-party-quits-after-loss-to-trudeau-idUKKBN1YG2JM>

TIAA: a global American invades Scotland

It may yet be Edinburgh's most intriguing Fringe show.

Read more at:

<http://sceptical.scot/2019/12/tiaa-a-global-american-invades-scotland/>

Part Two: the council boards a runaway train

In Part One. TIIA, US pension fund turned global property giant, ran rings round Scottish Government and Edinburgh City Council. Now Princes Street is suffering and the capital's heritage status is tarnished

Read more at:

<http://sceptical.scot/2019/12/part-two-the-council-boards-a-runaway-train/>

Election 2019: the result in Scotland in numbers

With the 2019 general election in the books, what are the key numbers behind the result in Scotland?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50789131>

Watchdog orders Gaelic language body Bòrd na Gàidhlig to improve

Public body watchdog, the Auditor General, has raised concerns about its ineffective leadership and a lack of transparency in decision-making.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-50777869>

BBC's anti-Brexit bias drips through their entire output - their licence fee days are numbered

Week after week it leads news bulletins with claims by Remain-supporting think tanks that the economy would crash as a result of Brexit while simultaneously downplaying real economic data showing healthy economic growth and very strong jobs figures.

Read more at:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10575207/bbc-anti-brexit-bias-licence-fee/>

Here come the skirls

Women pipers from all around the world head to Glasgow for landmark Celtic Connections concert

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/here-come-the-skirls-women-pipers-from-all-around-the-world-head-to-glasgow-for-landmark-celtic-connections-concert>

How to cook sausages the right way

Food expert Jeff Baker, who has fed the likes of the Queen, has shared his tips and tricks to cooking sausages - and the three ways we fall foul when cooking our bangers

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/how-cook-sausages-right-way-21099827>

The ugly duckling

A story by John Redwood MP

Read this at:

<http://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2019/12/19/the-ugly-duckling>

The case for a Singapore-on-Thames Brexit

Critics of Brexit often claim the Tories want to turn Britain into 'Singapore-on-Thames'. But would that be such a bad thing? With high incomes, excellent healthcare and an efficient state, we could certainly do a lot worse than learn from one of the world's great economic success stories.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-case-for-a-singapore-on-thames-brexit>

Queen's Speech: Boris Johnson hails radical programme

Boris Johnson has claimed his programme for government is the most radical Queen's Speech in a generation.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-50842124>

## Electric Canadian

Lights and Shadows

Or Pioneer Days in the Seventies and Eighties by Peggy Martin (pdf)

A charming little book of settlers in Moskoka and the mother that did so much for her 9 children and her neighbours.

You can read this at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/children/lightshadows.pdf>

Books for young readers:

Found A wee collection of stories for young readers 5+...

Animals Work Too <https://www.electriccanadian.com/children/animalsworktoo.pdf>

Animals are Fun <https://www.electriccanadian.com/children/animalsarefun.pdf>

The Animal Parade <https://www.electriccanadian.com/children/animalparade.pdf>

Fifty Winters Ago

By Gates Neill Peardon (1940) (pdf) A story for children

You can read this at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/fiftywintersago.pdf>

Canadian Content for Children

I am finding a fair bit of content for the children in Canada so thought it time to create a specific page on the site for them. I have added a link to this section to our index page and menu and you can go directly to it at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/children/index.htm>

## Electric Scotland

Home Preacher

Added Service 20 by Dr. F. Stevenson. which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bible/homepreacher/week20.htm>

When Scotland Was Jewish

DNA Evidence, Archeology, Analysis of Migrations, and Public and Family Records Show Twelfth Century Semitic Roots by Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman and Donald N. Yates (2006) (pdf)

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

How the Army Runs

A Senior Leader Reference Handbook for the US Army (2013) (pdf)

Thought this might be of interest to those interested in Armed Forces research as I have already posted up the UK manual. You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/america/USArmy.pdf>

Songs of the Hebrides

For Voice and Celtic Harp or Piano by Pataffa Kennedy Fraser (1922) (pdf)

The Harp was very popular in Scotland in the olden times and noticed it's having a wee bit of a come back of late. You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/music/songsofthebrides.pdf>

The Santa Claus Song

By Stan Bruce with an old Scottish Postcard from Buckie.

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/poetry/banff/santaclause.htm>

Pavement and Highways

Specimen Days in Strathclyde by William Power (1911) (pdf)

An interesting set of stories which can be read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/pavementhighways.pdf>

Sports and Adventures in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland  
By W. H. Maxwell (1857) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/sport/sportsadventures01.pdf>

Celtic Religion in Pre-Christian Times  
By Edward Anwyl, M. A. (1906) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/celts/CelticReligionPre-Christian.pdf>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree  
Got both sections 1 and 2 up for January 2020. For section 1 Beth says...

Hey. I have managed to do a 46 page publication for the Section A in January. (What happened, I found a marvelous article on electricScotland.com...about Scottish folks in the creation of our Washington, DC. It is a WONDERFUL and interesting article...and I didn't want to not use it all. Hence, 46 pages.) I thought I'd write on the front page that the issue was stretched out a bit so everyone could read this fascinating article...and to please consider it a wee Christmas gift.

You can read both section at: <https://electricScotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

## The Story

Thought I should give you a Christmas story at this special time of year and so here is one I found in our archives...

A Christmas Story  
Sent to us by email from Jeanie Francis, author not known

A dear friend shared this precious Christmas Story with me, and it touched me so much, I, in turn, wanted to share it with you...

Better bundle up - the goose bumps will freeze you!! I think I need to read this every year at Christmas! It IS a 'tear jerker'...so get the kleenex out...

Pa never had much compassion for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible.

After supper was over I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read Scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up again and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity.

Soon, Pa came back in. It was a cold, clear, night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what...

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was, we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. We never hitched up this sled unless we were going to haul a big load. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high sideboards on. After we had exchanged the sideboards, Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood - the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing?

Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jakey was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. Shoes, they're out of shoes. Little Jakey just had gunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

We came in from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt, could we come in for a bit?" Widow Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp.

"We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children - sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last. I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. He turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring in enough to last awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks with so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak.

My heart swelled within me and a joy that I'd never known before, filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people. I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God Bless You," she said. "I know the Lord has sent you. The children and I have been praying that He would send one of His Angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it.

Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their Pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two brothers and two sisters had all married and had moved away. Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, May The Lord Bless You, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your Ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your Ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that, but on the way I saw little Jakey out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand."

I understood, and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children. For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.

Don't be too busy today. Share this inspiring message.

May God Bless You!

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a very Merry Christmas. Mind you can find our Christmas index page at <https://electricScotland.com/index98.htm> but also note if you want to play the games you need to use Internet Explorer as Google's Chrome won't play them.

Alastair