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GAZETTEER  
GENEALOGY  
HISTORIC PLACES  
HISTORY  
HUMOR  
JOHN'S PAGE  
KIDS  
LIFESTYLE  
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER  
PICTURES  
POETRY  
POSTCARDS  
RELIGION  
ROBERT BURNS  
SCOTS IRISH  
SCOTS REGIMENTS  
SERVICES

SHOPPING  
SONGS  
SPORT  
SCOTS DIASPORA  
TARTANS  
TRAVEL  
TRIVIA  
VIDEOS  
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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 12th, 2020

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

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

### Electric Scotland News

Clan Rattray World Gathering held every four years in Perthshire, Scotland. The 2020 event is cancelled due to the covid-19 and is presently rescheduled for September 2021.

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Did a video about our Lifestyle section of the site using my new camera at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/index.htm>

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.

Scottish leader faces backlash over care home crisis

NICOLA STURGEON should have appointed a dedicated government minister with complete responsibility for care homes, her opposition has said.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1291322/nicola-sturgeon-care-homes-scotland-coronavirus-lockdown-minister-snp>

Scottish economy not set to recover from pre-coronavirus level until 2023

Scotland's economy is not expected to recover to pre-coronavirus levels until at least 2023, the country's chief economist has warned.

Read more at:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/1356671/scottish-economy-not-set-to-recover-from-pre-coronavirus-level-until-2023/>

Why Scotland is crying out for bold leadership, not PR spin

Devolution has failed to produce the kind of radical legislation on land, energy and economic development that made a real difference in the years before, writes Brian Wilson.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/why-scotland-crying-out-bold-leadership-not-pr-spin-brian-wilson-2876173>

A new trade vision for the UK

I find some of the media and email arguments I read and hear about our trade future bizarre.

Read more at:

<http://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2020/06/07/a-new-trade-vision-for-the-uk/>

UK to start post-Brexit trade talks with Japan

The negotiations come as London and Tokyo work towards replacing the agreement Britain currently has with Japan through the European Union.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52960677>

French teacher's Hebridean lockdown

A French language assistant who remained in the Western Isles during the coronavirus lockdown has been praised for the unique contribution she has made to young people's education.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-52935997>

The problem isn't too many divorces. It's too few marriages.

The Government's proposed Divorce Law reform bill, which was debated yesterday in the Commons, has three strangenesses about it.

Read more at:

<https://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2020/06/looking-through-the-wrong-end-of-the-telescope-the-problem-isnt-too-many-divorces-its-too-few-marriages.html>

Farm where Robert Burns invented the love song to become centre for songwriting

A farm once run by Robert Burns will become a centre for songwriting under ambitious plans to bolster the Bard's legacy.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/farm-where-robert-burns-invented-the-love-song-to-become-centre-for-songwriting/>

Feeding Britain: Can we grow it alone?

Does Britain need to be less dependent on imported food? Its food producers would like us to think so, though they would also like to improve exporting

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-52980630>

Scottish independence is one of the great confidence tricks of our time

An independent Scotland would be nothing like Sweden as the SNP claim - it would face years of ruin. Make no mistake, Scotland won massively from union with England in 1707 - and have done so ever since

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/scottish-independence-is-one-of-the-great-confidence-tricks-of-our-time/>

Barnier sees the need for compromise. The question is whether EU member states will let him.

Since the EU referendum in 2016, there have been many fork in the road moments that have subsequently altered the direction of the Brexit process.

Read more at:

<https://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2020/06/stephen-booth-barnier-sees-the-need-for-compromise-the-question-is-whether-eu-member-states-will-let-him.html>

## Electric Canadian

The Front Line

The Official Organ of General Motors Canadian War Service Honor Roll October 1943 along with some great wee stories which can be read at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/FrontLine.pdf>

The Flaming Forest

A Novel of the Canadian Northwest by James Oliver Curwood (pdf) which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/flamingforest.pdf>

Great Canadian Animal Stories

Some great stories for you to read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/GreatCanadiananimalstories.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

From a Half Scottish Australian a couple of humour stories

Which you can read at: <https://electricscotland.com/humour/h95.htm>

History of Egypt

From 330 B. C. to the Present Time By S. Rappoport in three volumes...

Volume 1

<https://electricscotland.com/history/Rappoport%20S%20-%20History%20of%20Egypt%20from%20330%20B%20C%20to%20the%20present%20time%20Vol%201%20-%201903.pdf>

Volume 2

<https://electricscotland.com/history/Rappoport%20S%20-%20History%20of%20Egypt%20from%20330%20B%20C%20to%20the%20present%20time%20Vol%202%20-%201903.pdf>

Volume 3

<https://electricscotland.com/history/Rappoport%20S%20-%20History%20of%20Egypt%20from%20330%20B%20C%20to%20the%20present%20time%20Vol%203%20-%201903.pdf>

MacCallum, Will and Dewar have been added to our Mini Bios section

You can read about them at:

[https://electricscotland.com/webclans/minibios/mc/maccallum\\_will.htm](https://electricscotland.com/webclans/minibios/mc/maccallum_will.htm)

Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount

You can read about him at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/nation/sirdavidlyndsay.pdf>

Donna's 2020 Journal - June 5

Donna sent in another entry for her journal which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/5539-Donna-s-2020-Journal-June-5>

THOUGHTS ON A SUNDAY MORNING - June 7th 2020 by the Rev. Nola Crewe

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/5538-THOUGHTS-ON-A-SUNDAY-MORNING-June-7th-2020>

## Story

John Bruce, Historiographer 1745-1826

By W. Foster.

DURING the time when Henry Dundas was the chief henchman of the younger Pitt, it was good to be a Scotsman, and especially a Scotsman who had the means of being useful to the Ministry. Most of the patronage of the Government was in the hands of Dundas, and he used it steadily as a means of securing political support for the party. From 1784 to 1801, moreover, he was first a member and then President of the Board of Control, enjoying in the latter capacity—as a courtesy, though not as a right—a considerable share in the patronage of appointments to the East India Company's service ; and this was used in the same way. Scotland was Dundas's chief concern, for England was already converted to the cause. Regularly, therefore, nominations for writerships and cadetships sped northwards to doubtful constituencies ; and as a consequence, season after season the batch of recruits for India was largely made up of youths hailing from across the Tweed; until, as one disgusted Englishman remarked, a cry of 'I say, Grant,' outside the Secretariat at Calcutta would bring a dozen of red heads out of the windows. These Scotsmen—to say nothing of an earlier generation of military officers who had gladly sold their swords to John Company— brought many others to the land of mohurs ; and even to-day the proportion of Scottish names, alike in the service and in the mercantile community of India, is considerable. Not that this infusion was in any sense a bad thing; on the contrary, Anglo-Indian history would be very different if the names of Malcolm, Munro, Elphinstone, Mackintosh, Duncan, Grant, Ochterlony, Burnes—to mention but a few—had never been included in its pages. The Scotsman carried to India the national energy and the national conscientiousness; and both countries were benefited thereby.

Among the Scotsmen thus recruited was John Bruce. He owed his appointment as the East India Company's Historiographer to the good offices of Dundas, who in this way remunerated services rendered to himself and to the Ministry of which he formed a part. Undoubtedly, the appointment was in some senses a job ; but it was one for which there was a good deal to be said, and we must

confess that Bruce did his best to earn the salary that was paid to him in that capacity, just as he was the first Keeper of the English State Papers to make his post an effective and useful one instead of a mere sinecure.

Of Bruce's early life we know but little. He was born in 1745, and was the heir male of the ancient family of Bruce of Earlsall ; though the ancestral estates had passed by marriage into another family, and all that he inherited from his father was the small property of Grangehill, near Kinghorn in Fifeshire. Young Bruce was sent to Edinburgh University, where he distinguished himself so greatly that in 1774 he was made Professor of Logic. His lectures in that capacity attracted much attention; and he repeated this success when he took at short notice the place of Adam Fergusson as Professor of Moral Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> On the double series of lectures thus delivered were based his earliest published works, namely, one on the principles of philosophy, which went through three editions in five years, and *The Elements of the Science of Ethics*, issued in 1786.

Bruce appears to have been first brought into contact with Dundas (to whom, by the way, he was distantly related) by becoming tutor to that statesman's only son Robert (a future President of the India Board). His services in this respect were rewarded by the grant, to him and another jointly, of the reversion of the post of King's Printer and Stationer in Scotland—an office which, however, did not fall in for about fifteen years. Soon there occurred an opportunity of making himself useful to Dundas in a fresh capacity. The time was approaching when the Government must decide whether or not to propose the renewal of the exclusive privileges of the East India Company, and both the supporters and the opponents of that body had already taken the field. Dundas, though he was not yet President, was by far the most influential member of the India Board, and it was to him that Pitt looked for guidance in the matter. The duty now (1790) entrusted to Bruce was to prepare for Dundas's use a detailed digest of the various proposals which had been made for the future regulation of Indian affairs, and to provide him with any further information he might require on the subject; in short, he was to 'devil' for Dundas in the Indian controversy. The task was one well suited to Bruce's capacity, and he entered upon it with his usual energy. He seems to have planned an extensive report upon the subject, which was to be divided into three sections. The first was to sketch the general history of India down to the time of writing ; the second to give a special account of the operations of the East India Company from its inception to the year 1790 ; and the third was to analyse the various plans suggested for the future administration of the dependency. It was a heavy piece of work to undertake in addition to other labours, and it is not surprising to find that the first section was only partially completed, while the second had to be left for later treatment. The third, as being most urgent, received the greatest amount of attention, and it was completed and printed in 1793 (by order of the India Board) under the title of *Historical View of Plans for the Government of British India*. The author's name was not given ; and as late as 1810 James Mill, writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, either was, or pretended to be, in doubt whether the work was not written by Dundas himself.

It was probably in connexion with these researches that Bruce's attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory state of the State Paper Office at Whitehall. The post of Keeper had been held from 1773 by an ex-diplomatist, Sir Stanier Porten (uncle of Edward Gibbon), but he seems to have treated it as a sinecure, and, although three commissioners had been appointed in 1764 to arrange and digest certain classes of records, little real progress had been made. Porten had died in June, 1789, and his post was now vacant. A letter among the Dropmore MSS. shows that Dundas was on the look-out for some suitable appointment for his profit; and it was possibly on his prompting that Bruce, in October, 1792, submitted a series of suggestions for rendering the office more efficient and for calendaring certain series of documents, including those relating to the East Indies and to other dependencies of the Crown. The result was seen in Bruce's appointment to be Keeper of the State Papers, with effect from July 5, 1792. The post was one of honour rather than of emolument, for the salary remained at £160 per annum (the figure fixed in 1661), and was subject to deductions for taxes, fees, etc., amounting to over £27 yearly ; while no provision was made for any clerical assistance. Bruce, however, did not rest until matters were put upon a more satisfactory footing. He drew up a series of regulations and a scheme for a more suitable establishment, and pressed these upon the ministry. After considerable delay—Pitt himself mislaid the royal warrant at Walmer and a fresh one had to be prepared— these were sanctioned by a warrant of March 4, 1800 ; and they remained in force until 1854, when the State Papers were transferred to the Public Record Office. By the new arrangement Bruce's salary was raised to £500 per annum, and he was provided with a deputy and the necessary clerks. His post had already been confirmed to him for life, by letters patent of September 23, 1799, possibly as some compensation for his having refused the post of Consul at Hamburg, which had been offered to him by Grenville in the previous year and was worth £600 a year?

It was the aim of the new Keeper to utilize the archives under his charge in bringing the experience of the past to bear upon the problems of the present; and he succeeded rather too well for his own comfort. Pitt and Dundas had discovered his merits as a digesting machine, with the result that, whenever a subject at once complicated and important came before them, Bruce was applied to as a matter of course. Thus the capture of the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and other Dutch settlements in the East (1795) raised the question whether these possessions should be governed directly by the Crown or through the East India Company ; whereupon Bruce prepared under instructions two reports on the history of the Cape and the Dutch Islands—a task which, as he said, necessitated his ' wading through heavy Dutch authors and still heavier Dutch papers,' and occupied him for a considerable part of the years 1796-97. At the same period he produced a *Review of the Events and Treaties which established the Balance of Power in Europe and the Balance of Trade in favour of Great Britain*, which was printed in 1796. About two years later, when the country took alarm at French threats of invasion, he reported on the arrangements made for the defence of the kingdom at the time of the Spanish Armada; while in 1801 he submitted a further report on the precautions adopted at the time of previous French schemes of invasion. The projected union of Ireland with Great Britain led to a fresh call upon his energies, inasmuch as ministers desired a full account of the measures taken at the time of the union of Scotland and England. And all this was in addition to the labours he had

undertaken for the East India Company, his connexion with which we must now examine.

This takes us back to the middle of 1793, when Bruce's Historical View had just been printed, and the Company's exclusive privileges, thanks to Dundas, were on the point of being extended for another twenty years. The minister may well have thought that some small return was due to him, especially if it took the form of a provision for Bruce, who had already worked hard in the Company's interests. As we have seen, Bruce's post at the State Paper Office brought him at this time only  $\text{£}160$  a year, and was terminable at His Majesty's pleasure ; and this was but a poor substitute for the life professorship at Edinburgh which he had surrendered at Dundas's suggestion. Moreover, it is evident from the letter already mentioned (p. 368) that as early as August, 1792, the latter had in mind the possibility of employing Bruce to investigate the records lying at the East India House. Accordingly he now proposed to the Directors that they should create for Bruce the post of Historiographer to the Company—an employment familiar enough to a Scotsman, for there was then (and still is) an official Historiographer at Edinburgh. The motion, however, proved unpalatable to the Directors, and they countered it in a very ingenious manner. They represented that practically the post already existed and was filled by a distinguished writer, since for over twenty years they had been paying  $\text{£}400$  per annum to Robert Orme, the author of *The Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, to enable him to continue his historical studies. However, Dundas was not easily moved when once he had made up his mind; and so a compromise was reached, by which Bruce was given the reversion of the post, with  $\text{£}100$  a year meanwhile. The actual date of this arrangement was July 10, 1793. In the establishment lists of the time Orme and Bruce are bracketed together as joint Historiographers.

Though his salary from the Company was little more than nominal and he had plenty of other demands upon his time, Bruce set to work at once to justify his appointment. He had still at heart the completion of the general history of Indian affairs he had already sketched out ; and his letterbook (now at the India Office) shows how indefatigable he was in applying to everyone (especially the officials in India) who could afford him assistance in procuring materials. It was while waiting to see the result of his first appeal that he compiled and presented to the Company a detailed history of the recent negotiations on the renewal of the charter—a work which was printed in 1811, when the period for which the Company's privileges had been extended was approaching its termination. He also prepared for Dundas an elaborate report upon the various plans proposed for the organization of the military forces in India.

The response to Bruce's appeal for assistance from India was on the whole disappointing. Certain individual officers forwarded him valuable reports on matters within their cognizance ; while in the Bombay Presidency, thanks to the interest shown by Governor Duncan, a committee was appointed which provided him with a quantity of useful materials. But, although Bruce persuaded the Company to send out (May, 1797) official instructions on the point, in other parts of India his demands were practically ignored. Further discouragement was afforded by the death in November, 1796, of his brother, Colonel Robert Bruce, of the Bengal Artillery, who had lent most zealous assistance to his projects. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that he turned his attention for some time to other matters.

The death of Orme in January, 1801, left Bruce sole Historiographer, and raised his salary to  $\text{£}400$  per annum. He was now about 55 years of age; and probably he had begun to recognize that, considering his duties at the State Paper Office, it would be wise to concentrate his attention upon that section of his proposed work which was to deal with the history of the Company, full materials for which were now at his disposal. After some delay the Directors were induced (May, 1803) to allow him the use of certain rooms at the East India House and to sanction the engagement of a clerk to make extracts for him from their records. Four years later, Robert Lemon, Bruce's indefatigable assistant at the State Paper Office, was employed by the Company for the same purpose (in addition to his official duties); and in August, 1810, another clerk was added to the staff.

On the heavy task he had thus set himself, Bruce laboured resolutely until 1810. His work was done in his own house at Knightsbridge; and there he and Lemon worked diligently evening after evening, sometimes until eleven o'clock, occasionally devoting Sunday to the same task. At a later date Bruce declared that the work entailed the perusal and abstracting of more than thirty thousand documents, besides printed works; but probably he included in the total the letters which were examined by his India House staff but not epitomized for his use. An examination of the references given in the work shows that, as regards the Company's records, he confined himself almost entirely to the letters received from the East and the Company's replies, and that he made little use of the valuable series of Court Minutes. On the other hand, the documents at the State Paper Office bearing upon India seem to have been fully utilized.

As already mentioned, the original intention had been to carry the history down to the year 1790; but the desire to have at least part published in time for the renewed negotiations on the charter led Bruce to pause when he had reached the union of the two rival Companies in 1708. In June, 1810, he announced its completion to this point, and in the same year the work was published in three volumes at the Company's expense under the title of *Annals of the Honourable East India Company*. The copyrights of this and of his account of the charter negotiations of 1793 were made over to the Directors, who seem also to have received the sale proceeds. They were not ungrateful, for in August, 1812, they voted Bruce, in return for his literary labours, an honorarium of  $\text{£}1000$ .

The *Annals* became at once the standard work upon its subject, and it is still far from obsolete. That it has defects cannot be denied. For these the form adopted was partly responsible. When Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland* appeared, Dr. Johnson wrote to Boswell: 'It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history, which tells all that is wanted and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured

splendour of language or affected subtlety of conjecture.' Bruce would probably have been glad to hear the same remark applied to his work; and indeed it describes very fairly what we may suppose to have been his idea in adopting the same form. However, most readers prefer a lively narrative to a dry enumeration, year by year, of what the historian judges to be the leading facts he finds in the materials before him. No doubt Bruce provides us with a painstaking analysis of the abstracts made for him by his clerks; but the result is too obviously a mere summary of events in which (one suspects) he really felt little interest and which he deemed of no very special importance to his own generation. Nor does he make any pretence at impartiality. It goes without saying that in a work produced under such auspices he is a thoroughgoing advocate of the Company, and condemns all who came into conflict with that body; while in his preface he hints an expectation that this survey of the past will induce Parliament to continue unchanged the exclusive privileges of the Company, instead of giving way to 'exploded, or to specious, but hazardous, theories of commerce.' In this result, at all events, he was disappointed.

The compilation of the Annals was not the only work undertaken for the Company at this period. About 1805 Bruce began an elaborate Review of the Political and Military Annals of the Honourable East India Company which was to extend from the year 1744 to the renewal of the charter in 1793. Apparently this did not get beyond 1761, and it was never printed; but Bruce's own copy, extending to 1320 pages, is now among the India Office records.

On the title-page of the Annals Bruce was able to append to his name not only F.R.S., but also M.P. He had been elected for the small Cornish borough of Mitchell in February, 1809, and he retained his seat until the summer of 1814, when he retired on the ground of ill-health. The chief events of his Parliamentary career were his brief tenure of office as Secretary to the Board of Control (March-August, 1812) and his speech in Committee on the India Bill. This was printed in 1813. According to an obituary notice in the Gentleman's Magazine\* he held also the appointment of Latin Secretary to the Privy Council. He certainly prepared Latin versions of letters sent to the Emperor of China in 1804, 1810, and 1811, and also of a royal letter addressed to the King of Abyssinia in 1808. These will be found in the letter book already mentioned.

As we have seen, the Annals had been brought to a close earlier than had been intended. After the publication of the three volumes, Bruce set to work on a further instalment, which was to extend to 1748, or possibly to 1763. He did not, however, get very far. Age was beginning to tell upon him, and first a dislocated leg and then rheumatism laid him up for some time. Meanwhile the Company, smarting under the partial loss of its privileges, had inaugurated a campaign of retrenchment at the East India House; and in the spring of 1816 the Committee of Accounts and Warehouses turned its attention to the Historiographer's Department. Bruce had then been absent for fifteen months, and Lemon had to undertake the defence, in the course of which he admitted that the other two clerks, whose hours were only from ten till three, were practically uncontrolled, as he himself was unable, owing to his duties at the State Paper Office, to do more than look in two or three times a week. He seems, however, to have satisfied the Committee, for the only change then made was that his two colleagues were required to attend from nine till four, in consideration of which their salaries (and his) were raised to £2 per week. In the following year the matter came up again, this time before the Committee of Correspondence; and at the end of March, 1817, it was rather summarily decided to abolish the department of the Historiographer and transfer the work to the Librarian's department. Bruce, who was at Bath and had not then received a letter announcing what was proposed, wrote at once in great indignation to protest against the 'unmerited degradation' of being placed in subordination to the Librarian. The Directors, however, were inexorable; and he therefore addressed a memorial to them, applying to be pensioned, and asking at the same time for a declaration that his literary work had met with their approval. Both requests were granted: he was given a retiring allowance of two-thirds of his salary, while 'his zealous and faithful services' were acknowledged in handsome terms. Even this did not pacify him, and he made an attempt to induce the Board of Control to interfere, but in vain. A further source of annoyance was that the Directors had induced his assistant, Lemon, to resign his post at the State Paper Office in order to give his whole time to the India House records; in this case, however, Bruce had the victory, for he succeeded in persuading Lord Sidmouth to offer Lemon an increased salary, whereupon the latter withdrew his resignation.

Having so efficient a deputy at the State Paper Office, and being now well over seventy, Bruce seems to have withdrawn from all literary work. He retired to his estates in Scotland, where he spent his time in making improvements, including the repairing of the remains of the old palace of Falkland. In such congenial pursuits the years sped rapidly away; and he died tranquilly at his seat of Nuthill on April 16, 1826, being then in his eighty-second year. The Gentleman's Magazine, in an anonymous obituary from which we have already drawn, gives a pleasant, if somewhat high-flown, eulogy of his attainments and character; and with a citation of this we take our leave of him: 'Mr. Bruce's intellectual powers were of the very highest order. He was equally distinguished as an accurate historian and an elegant scholar. The extent, the variety, and the correctness of his general information was astonishing.... In the more vigorous period of his life he was eminently distinguished by that qualification which is so rarely to be met with, in which great knowledge is combined with a shrewdness and pleasing urbanity of manners which rendered his communications agreeable to everyone. His conversational powers were captivating in the extreme, and his sallies of innocent humour and flashes of wit were irresistibly entertaining.'

END.

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a great weekend and mind and keep your distance, wash your hands and stay safe.

Alastair