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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for November 13th, 2020

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

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

Electric Scotland News

I was somewhat surprised at the amount of email I received after my bit of a rant on media, etc. that I did in my last newsletter. All of the emails I got agreed with some aspects of what I raised and some were even concerned that I might attract hate emails which so far has not happened. Much thanks for the feedback and other comments you sent in.

I am noting increasing coverage of what is called "Long Covid" which simply means the health issues of some that have survived the virus but now have longer term health issues which include feeling very tired, difficulty breathing, etc. While this is now being recognised it is poorly researched and no plans are in place to try and figure out how to treat this. This needs to change.

See a couple of our articles about Long Civid in our News section.

I am also concerned about the lockdowns going on around the world. It seems the hospitality sector is being severely hit which is pubs, restaurants, etc. There is actually very little real evidence that they are responsible for rise in numbers and those that are opening under very responsible regimes are being unfairly targetted. I do feel however that these places should be closed down if they break the rules but a blanket ban is not fair.

The debt being ramped up across the world is not sustainable and the health experts are the ones promoting lockdown BUT they as individuals are not being financially impacted and so don't seem to recognise that people need to earn money to be able to pay the mortgage or rent and need to feed themselves.

I am increasingly concerned about the level of lockdowns going on around the world and don't see Governments taking into account the problems they are causing. Also I do wonder if the stats that are being released are accurate. By this I mean that if there is anything about Covid on the death notice then that is counted as a death by Covid whereas I suspect that many are not and simply as a result in getting the flu or some other issue. I wonder if anything is being done to audit these figures?

At the end of the day we need to keep a social distance of 6 feet or 2 meters, wear a mask when out shopping and where it isn't possible to keep that social distance. We need to wash our hands regularly. By doing this we are doing the right things but if you don't do this then people need to call you out on this. For example I left a comment on a YouTube channel where they were promoting an event they have since held. I watched a video of the event and only one person was wearing a mask. No social distancing was being observed either. They did reply to my comment by threatening to block me and said they were all adults and could decide for themselves whether to come or not. Yet watching the event there were many children at that event. I don't suppose there will be any reports on anyone contracting this virus from that event but can't help wondering if this did or did not happen. I feel that this is an example of how the virus is continuing to spread due to the lack of responsibility of individuals that feel that rules are not applicable to them.

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.

A EU Deal: Two Critical Questions
From Lawyers for Britain

Read more at:

<https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2020/11/martin-howe-two-critical-questions-johnson-must-answer-on-any-eu-deal.html>

Joe Biden's Almost Impossible Task

Even if Joe Biden emerges victorious, the peaceful transfer of power still isn't yet a foregone conclusion. And as president, Biden would face the almost impossible task of reuniting a deeply divided nation.

Read more at:

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/donald-trump-nach-us-wahl-der-hausbesetzer-kopie-a-5608d26d-0105-4ac8-b1a3-da018e56825d>

George Galloway mocks SNP civil war as IndyRef2 campaign hit by bitter infighting

CONTROVERSIAL politician George Galloway has mocked Nicola Sturgeon's SNP on social media after infighting broke out within its IndyRef2 campaign.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1357103/snp-news-scottish-independence-indyref2-campaign-george-galloway-nicola-sturgeon>

How a Frenchman captured the exotic Glasgow in 1980

Forty years ago, French photographer Raymond Depardon was commissioned by The Sunday Times Magazine to travel to Glasgow for a feature on its rich and poor. The photos he took were never published.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-54800689>

Rupert Bear turns 100: The adventures continue

A little bear is celebrating a very big birthday: Rupert has turned 100. To commemorate the milestone, the anthropomorphic adventurer has been honoured by the Royal Mail in a set of eight stamps.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-54280708>

Scotland under the Conservatives, 1979-1997 - Part one

MRS THATCHER is a much hated figure in Scotland even today.

Read more at:

https://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=14325

Pfizer's Covid vaccine is a victory for the free market

The Pfizer vaccine has already proved something beyond any reasonable doubt. Free enterprise works.

Read more at:

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-pfizer-vaccine-is-a-victory-for-the-free-market>

The SNP has failed our doctors

It's worth reminding ourselves that the SNP have had complete control over Scotland's Health Service for the past 13-and-a-half years, and that prior to becoming First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon was Health Secretary.

Read more at:

<https://themajority.scot/2020/11/10/the-snp-has-failed-our-doctors/>

The SNP talks a good game, but it peddles fake liberalism

The SNP poses as a modern, open, liberal party - but its actions tell a different story

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-snps-talks-a-good-game-but-it-peddles-fake-liberalism/>

Governor General Releases Video Honouring Veterans of the Second World War

OTTAWA—Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada, today released a Remembrance Day video which speaks of the importance of this year's Remembrance Day, marking the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and which pays tribute to the service and courage of Canadian veterans.

Watch this at:

<https://www.gg.ca/en/media/news/2020/governor-general-releases-video-honouring-veterans-second-world-war>

The Unknown Warrior

The steam train slowly chugs through the idyllic Kent countryside on its way from Tenterden to the tiny village of Bodiam, 10 miles away. But the heritage station at Bodiam, kept in immaculate condition by the staff and volunteers of the Kent and East Sussex Railway line, offers more than a plethora of preserved rolling stock.

Read more at:

<https://www.scottishreview.net/BarbaraMillar546a.html>

A journalist's experience of Long Covid, the 'infodemically vulnerable', and more

A riveting but often distressing article by BBC Scotland's social affairs correspondent, Lucy Adams, explains in extensive and harrowing detail how 'Long COVID-19' has left her utterly exhausted for the past eight months.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-54793726>

Building a Better Scotland

Most of us on my home island of Easdale had a good lockdown.

Read more at:

<https://www.scottishreview.net/MikeMackenzie546a.html>

Covid in Scotland: No clinics for thousands of long Covid patients

A BBC investigation found no health boards in Scotland are offering dedicated long Covid clinics.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-54893317>

Scotland's Test and Protect Covid system accused of horrifying contact tracing failures

New figures show that contact tracers were unable to get in touch with 3,512 people who had tested positive

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scotlands-test-protect-covid-system-22997192>

The flying car is here - and it could change the world

Here's how they could transform the way we commute, work and live.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201111-the-flying-car-is-here-vtols-jetpacks-and-air-taxis>

Electric Canadian

Picture-Writing of the Blackfeet

By Rev. John MacLean, PH.D. (1891) (pdf)

Read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/picture-writing-blackfeet.pdf>

The Missionary Education Movement

Of the United States and Canada (pdf)

Read this at: http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/missionaryeducat00miss_1.pdf

Thoughts on a Sunday morning - 8th November 2020

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

View this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/5601-Thoughts-on-a-Sunday-morning-8th-November-2020>

Slavery in Canada

An article from the Transactions of the Canadian Institute

Read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/slaveryinCanada.pdf>

Social Organisation of the Blackfoot Indians
By Rev. John Maclean, M.A., Ph.D. (1892) (pdf)

Read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/blackfootindians.pdf>

Electric Scotland

Scotland and the American Revolution

Scottish historian Andrew Mackillop explored his homeland's role during the American Revolution. He argued that despite fighting for the losing side in the war, many Scots gained land and increased their social status after the war. Video on October 4, 2019 - Part of American Revolution International Conference.

You can watch this at:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?464977-2/scotland-american-revolution>

Outline of Scottish History

A.D. 81 to 1843 From Roman Times to the Disruption by W. M. MacKenzie, M.A., FSA Scot (1916) (pdf)

A good one volume book on the history of Scotland which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/OutlineOfScottishHistory.pdf>

Letter of Instructions from the Directors of the Scottish Missionary Society

To their Missionaries among the Heathen. These Instructions were drawn up with reference to missions in the East and West Indies, a circumstance which will account for the form which they in some instances assume (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bible/letterofinstruct00.pdf>

A Guide to Prehistoric Scotland

By Richard Feachem (1963) (pdf)

Enjoy this account at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/GuideToPrehistoricScotland1.pdf>

Alexander Gordon

The Antiquary (pdf). Researcher on the Romans in Scotland.

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/nation/Alexander-Gordon.pdf>

Brief Reports of Lectures delivered to the Working Classes of Edinburgh

On the Means in their own Power of Improving their Character & Condition by James Simpson, Esq., Advocate (1844) (pdf)

A thought provoking account which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/essaystoworkingmen1.pdf>

Glenfiddich Piping Championship (2020)

Mini bios of the competitors

You can read about them at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/glenfiddichpipingbios2020.pdf>

Story

I thought I'd bring you this chapter as a tribute to Remembrance Day. It is a story by Sir Harry Lauder when he visited France in WWI and Chapter 15 is about his first sighting of Vimy Ridge where the Canadians did so well to take it from the Germans. His son John died in that war and was one of his motives in undertaking this tour to see where his son fell. There is more of his Vimy Ridge visit in Chapter 16 and have provided a link to get to that at the end.

A Minstrel in France

Chapter 15

NOW Captain Godfrey leaned back and smiled at us.

"There's Vimy Ridge," he said. And he pointed.

"Yon?" I asked, in astonishment.

I was almost disappointed. We had heard so much, in Britain and in Scotland, of Vimy Ridge. The name of that famous hill had been written imperishably in history. But to look at it first, to see it as I saw it, it was no hill at all! My eyes were used to the mountains of my ain Scotland, and this great ridge was but a tiny thing beside them. But then I began to picture the scene as it had been the day the Canadians stormed it and won for themselves the glory of all the ages to follow, I pictured it blotted from sight by the hell of shells bursting over it, and raking its slopes as the Canadians charged upward. I pictured it crowned by defences and lined by such of the Huns as had survived the artillery battering, spitting death and destruction from their machine-guns. And then I saw it as I should, and I breathed deep at the thought of the men who had faced death and hell to win that height and plant the flag of Britain upon it. Aye, and the Stars and Stripes of America, too!

Ye ken that tale? There was an American who had enlisted, like so many of his fellow countrymen before America was in the war, in the Canadian forces. The British Army was full of men who had told a white lie to don the King's uniform. Men there are in the British Army who winked as they enlisted and were told: "You'll be a Canadian?"

"Aye, aye, I'm a Canadian," they'd say.

"From what province?"

"The province of Kentucky—or New York—or California!"

Well, there was a lad, one of them, was in the first wave at Vimy Ridge that April day in 1917. 'Twas but a few days before that a wave of the wildest cheering ever heard had run along the whole Western front, so that Fritz in his trenches wondered what was up the noo. Well, he has learned, since then! He has learned, despite his Kaiser and his officers, and his lying newspapers, that that cheer went up when the news came that America had declared war upon Germany. And so, it was a few days after that cheer was heard that the Canadians leaped over the top and went for Vimy Ridge, and this young fellow from America had a wee silken flag. He spoke to his officer.

"Now that my own country's in the war, sir," he said, "I'd like to carry her flag with me when we go over the top. Wrapped around me, sir-----"

"Go it!" said the officer.

And so he did. And he was one of those who won through and reached the top. There he was wounded, but he had carried the Stars and Stripes with him to the crest.

Vimy Ridge! I could see it. And above it, and beyond it, now, for the front had been carried on, far beyond, within what used to be the lines of the Hun, the aeroplanes circled. Very quiet and lazy they seemed, for all I knew of their endless activity and the precious work that they were doing. I could see how the Huns were shelling them. You would see an aeroplane hovering, and then, close by, suddenly, a ball of cottony white smoke. That was shrapnel bursting, as Fritz tried to get the range with an anti-aircraft gun—an Archie, as the Tommies call them. But the plane would pay no heed, except, maybe, to dip a bit or climb a little higher to make it harder for the Hun. It made me think of a man shrugging his shoulders, calmly and imperturbably, in the face of some great peril, and I wanted to cheer. I had some wild idea that maybe he would hear me, and know that some one saw him, and appreciated what he was doing—some one to whom it was not an old story. But then I smiled at my own thought.

Now it was time for us to leave the cars and get some exercise. Our steel helmets were on, and glad we were of them, for shrapnel was bursting near by sometimes, although most of the shells were big fellows, that buried themselves in the ground and then exploded. Fritz wasn't doing much casual shelling the noo, though. He was saving his fire until his observers gave him a real target to aim at. But that was no so often, for our aeroplanes were in command of the air then, and his flyers got precious little chance to guide his shooting. Most of his hits were due to luck.

"Spread out a bit as you go along here," said Captain Godfrey. "If a crump lands close by there's no need of all of us going! If we're spread out a bit, you see, a shell might get one and leave the rest of us."

It sounded cold blooded, but it was not. To men who have lived at the front everything comes to be taken as a matter of course. Men can get used to anything; this war has proved that again, if there was need of proving it. And I came to understand that, and to listen to things I heard, with different ears. But those are things no one can tell you of; you must have been at the front yourself to understand all that goes on there, both in action and in the minds of men.

We obeyed Captain Godfrey readily enough, as you can guess. And so I was alone as I walked toward Vimy Ridge. It looked just like a lumpy excrescence on the landscape; at home we would not even think of it as a foothill. But as I neared it, and as I remembered all it stood for, I thought that in the atlas of history it would loom higher than the highest peak of the great Himalaya range.

Beyond the ridge, beyond the actual line of the trenches, miles away, indeed, were the German batteries from which the shells we heard and saw as they burst, were coming. I was glad of my helmet, and of the cool assurance of Captain Godfrey. I felt that we were as safe, in his hands, as men could be in such a spot.

It was not more than a mile we had to cover, but it was rough going, bad going. Here war had had its grim way without interruption. The face of the earth had been cut to pieces. Its surface had been smashed to a pulpy mass. The ground had been ploughed, over and over, by a rain of shells, German and British. What a planting there had been that spring, and what a ploughing! A harvest of death it had been that had been sown, and the reaper had not waited for summer to come, and the harvest moon. He had passed that way with his scythe, and where we passed now he had taken his terrible, his horrid, toll.

At the foot of the ridge I saw men fighting for the first time, actually fighting, seeking to kill an enemy. It was a Canadian battery we saw, and it was firing, steadily and methodically, at the Huns. Up to now I had seen only the vast industrial side of war, its business and its labour. Now I was, for the first time, in touch with actual fighting. I saw the guns belching death and destruction, destined for men miles away. It was high angle fire, of course, directed by observers in the air.

But even that seemed part of the sheer, factory like industry of war. There was no passion, no coming to grips in hot blood, here. Orders were given by the battery commander and the other officers as the foreman in a machine shop might give them. And the busy artillerymen worked like labourers, too, clearing their guns after a salvo, loading them, bringing up fresh supplies of ammunition. It was all methodical, all a matter of routine.

"Good artillery work is like that," said Captain Godfrey, when I spoke to him about it. "It's a science. It's all a matter of the higher mathematics. Everything is worked out to half a dozen places of decimals. We've eliminated chance and guesswork just as far as possible from modern artillery actions."

But there was something about it all that was disappointing, at first sight. It let you down a bit. Only the guns themselves kept up the tradition. Only they were acting as they should, and showing a proper passion and excitement. I could hear them growling ominously, like dogs locked in their kennel when they would be loose and about, and hunting. And then they would spit, angrily. They inflamed my imagination, did those guns; they satisfied me and my old-fashioned conception of war and fighting, more than anything else that I had seen had done. And it seemed to me that after they had spit out their deadly charge they wiped their muzzles with red tongues of flame, satisfied beyond all words or measure with what they had done.

We were rising now, as we walked, and getting a better view of the country that lay beyond. And so I came to understand a little better the value of a height even so low and insignificant as Vimy Ridge in that flat country. While the Germans held it they could overlook all our positions, and all the advantage of natural placing had been to them. Now, thanks to the Canadians, it was our turn, and we were looking down.

Well, I was under fire. There was no doubt about it. There was a droning over us now, like the noise bees make, or many flies in a small room on a hot summer's day. That was the drone of the German shells. There was a little freshening of the artillery activity on both sides, Captain Godfrey said, as if in my honour. When one side increased its fire the other always answered; played copy cat. There was no telling, ye ken, when such an increase of fire might not be the first sign of an attack. And neither side took more chances than it must.

I had known, before I left Britain, that I would come under fire. And I had wondered what it would be like. I had expected to be afraid, nervous. Brave men had told me, one after another, that every man is afraid when he first comes under fire. And so I had wondered how I would, and I had expected to be badly scared and extremely nervous. Now I could hear that constant droning of shells, and, in the distance, I could see, very often, powdery squirts of smoke and dirt along the ground, where our shells were striking, so that I knew I had the Hun lines in sight.

And I can truthfully say that, that day, at least, I felt no great fear or nervousness. Later I did, as I shall tell you, but that day one overpowering emotion mastered every other. It was a desire for vengeance. You were the Huns, the men who had killed my boy. They were almost within my reach. And as I looked at them there in their lines a savage desire possessed me, almost overwhelmed me indeed, to rush to those guns and turn them to my own mad purpose of vengeance.

It was all I could do, I tell you, to restrain myself; to check that wild, almost ungovernable impulse to rush to the guns and grapple with them myself—myself fire them at the men who had killed my boy. I wanted to fight! I wanted to fight with my two hands; to tear and rend, and have the consciousness that I flashed back, like a telegraph message from my satiated hands to my eager brain that was spurring me on.

But that was not to be. I knew it, and I grew calmer, presently. The roughness of the going helped me to do that, for it took all a man's wits and faculties to grope his way along the path we were following now. Indeed, it was no path at all that led us to the Pimple, the topmost point of Vimy Ridge, which changed hands half a dozen times in the few minutes of bloody fighting that had gone on here during the great attack.

The ground was absolutely riddled with shell holes here. There must have been a mine of metal underneath us. What path there was, zigzagged around. It had been worn to such smoothness as it possessed since the battle, and it evaded the worst craters by going around them. My madness was passed now, and a great sadness had taken its place. For here, where I was walking, men had stumbled up with bullets and shells raining about them. At every step I trod ground that must have been the last resting-place of some Canadian soldier, who had died that I might climb this ridge in a safety so immeasurably greater than his had been.

If it was hard for us to make this climb, if we stumbled as we walked, what had it been for them? Our breath came hard and fast, how had it been with them? Yet they had done it! They had stormed the ridge the Huns had proudly called impregnable. They had taken, in a swift rush, that nothing could stay, a position the Kaiser's generals had assured him would never be lost, could never be reached by mortal troops.

The Pimple, for which we were heading now, was an observation post at that time. There, there was a detachment of soldiers, for it was an important post, covering much of the Hun territory beyond. A major of infantry was in command; his head-quarters were a large hole in the ground, dug for him by a German shell—fired by German gunners who had no thought further from their minds than to do a favour for a British officer. And he was sitting calmly in front of his headquarters, smoking a pipe, when we reached the crest and came to the Pimple.

He was a very calm man, that major, given, I should say, to the greatest repression of emotion. I think nothing would have moved him from that phlegmatic calm of his. He watched us coming, climbing and making hard going of it. If he was amused he gave no sign, as he puffed at his pipe. I, for one, was puffing, too; I was panting like a grampus. I had thought myself in good condition, but I found out at Vimy Ridge that I was soft and flabby.

Not a sign did that major give until we reached him. And then, as we stood looking at him, and beyond him at the panorama of the trenches, he took his pipe from his mouth.

"Welcome to Vimy Ridge!" he said, in the manner of a host greeting a party bidden for the week-end.

I was determined that that major should not outdo me. I had precious little wind left to breathe with, much less to talk, but I called for the last of it.

"Thank you, major," I said. "Can I join you in a smoke?"

"Of course you can!" he said, unsmiling. "That is, if you've brought your pipe with you."

"Aye, I've my pipe," I told him. "I may forget to pay my debt, but I'll never forget my pipe."

And no more I will.

So I sat down beside him, and drew out my pipe, and made a long business of filling it, and pushing the tobacco down just so, since that gave me a chance to get my wind. And when I was ready to light up I felt better, and I was breathing right, so that I could talk as I pleased without fighting for breath.

My friend the major proved an entertaining chap, and a talkative one, too, for all his seeming brusqueness. He pointed out the spots that had been made famous in the battle, and explained to me what it was the Canadians had done. And I saw and understood better than ever before what a great feat that had been, and how heavily it had counted. He lent me his binoculars, too, and with them I swept the whole valley toward Lens, where the great French coal mines are, and where the Germans have been under steady fire so long, and have been hanging on by their eyelashes.

It was not the place I should choose, ordinarily, to do a bit of sight-seeing. The German shells were still humming through the air above us, though not quite so often as they had. But there were enough of them, and they seemed to me close enough for me to feel the wind they raised as they passed. I thought for sure one of them would come along, presently, and clip my ears right off.

And sometimes I felt myself ducking my head; as if that would do me any good! But I did not think about it; I would feel myself doing it, without having intended to do anything of the sort. I was a bit nervous, I suppose, but no one could be really scared or alarmed in the unplumbable depths of calm in which that British major was plunged.

It was a grand view I had of the valley, but it was not the sort of thing I had expected to see. I knew there were thousands of men there, and I think I had expected to see men really fighting. But there was nothing of the sort. Not a man could I see in all the valley. They were under cover, of course. When I stopped to think about it, that was what I should have expected, of course. If I could have seen our laddies there below, why, the Huns could have seen them too. And that would never have done.

I could hear our guns, too, now, very well. They were giving voice all around me, but never a gun could I see, for all my peering and searching around. Even the battery we had passed below was out of sight now. And it was a weird thing, and an uncanny thing, to think of all that riot of sound around, and not a sight to be had of the batteries that were making it.

Hogge came up while I was talking to the major. "Hello!" he said. "What have you done to your knee, Lauder?"

I looked down and saw a trickle of blood running down, below my knee. It was bare, of course, because I wore my kilt.

"Oh, that's nothing," I said. I knew at once what it was. I remembered that as I stumbled up the hill, I had tripped over a bit of barbed wire and scratched my leg. And so I explained.

"And I fell into a shell-hole, too," I said. "A wee one, as they go around here." But I laughed. "Still, I'll be able to say I was wounded on Vimy Ridge."

I glanced at the major as I said that, and was half sorry I had made the poor jest. And I saw him smile, in one corner of his mouth, as I said I had been "wounded." It was the corner furthest from me, but I saw it. And it was a dry smile, a withered smile. I could guess his thought.

"Wounded!" he must have said to himself, scornfully. And he must have remembered the real wounds the Canadians had received on that hillside. Aye, I could guess his thought. And I, shared it, although I did not tell him so. But I think he understood.

He was still sitting there, puffing away at his old pipe, as quiet and calm and imperturbable as ever, when Captain Godfrey gathered us together to go on. He gazed out over the valley.

He was a man to be remembered for a long time, that major. I can see him now, in my mind's eye, sitting there, brooding, staring out toward Lens and the German lines. And I think that if I were choosing a figure for some great sculptor to immortalize, to typify and represent the superb, the majestic imperturbability of the British Empire in time of stress and storm, his would be the one. I could think of no finer figure than his for such a statue. You would see him, if the sculptor followed my thought, sitting in front of his shell-hole on Vimy Ridge, calm, dispassionate, devoted to his duty and the day's work; quietly giving the directions that guided the British guns in their work of blasting the Hun out of the refuge he had chosen when the Canadians had driven him from the spot where the major sat.

It was easier going down Vimy Ridge than it had been coming up, but it was still hard going. We had to skirt great, gaping holes torn by monstrous shells that had torn the very guts out of the little hill.

"We're going to visit another battery," said Captain Godfrey. "I'll tell you I think it's the best hidden battery on the whole British front. And that's saying a good deal, for we've learned a thing or two about hiding our whereabouts from Fritz. He's a curious one, Fritz is, but we try not to gratify his curiosity any more than we must."

"I'll be glad to see more of the guns," I said.

"Well, here you'll see more than guns. The major in command at this battery we're heading for, has a decoration that was given to him just for the way he hid his guns. There's much more than fighting that a man has to do in this war if he's to make good."

As we went along I kept my eyes open, trying to get a peep at the guns before Godfrey should point them out to me. I could hear firing going on all around me, but there was so much noise that my ears were not a guide. I was not a trained observer, of course; I would not know a gun position at sight, as some soldier trained to the work would be sure to do. And yet I thought I could tell when I was coming to a great battery. I thought so, I say.

Again, though, I had that feeling of something weird and uncanny. For now, as we walked along, I did hear the guns, and I was sure, from the nature of the sound, that we were coming close to them. But, as I looked straight toward the spot where my ears told me that they must be, I could see nothing at all. I thought that perhaps Godfrey had lost his way, and that we were wandering along the wrong path. It did not seem likely, but it was possible.

And then, suddenly, when I was least expecting it, we stopped.

"Well, here we are!" said the captain, and grinned at our amazement.

And there we were indeed! We were right among the guns of a Canadian battery, and the artillerymen were shouting their welcome, for they had heard that I was coming, and recognized me as soon as they saw me. But—how had we got here? I looked around me, in utter amazement. Even now that I had come to the battery I could not understand how it was that I had been deceived, how that battery had been so marvellously concealed that, if one did not know of its existence and of its exact location, one might literally stumble over it in broad daylight.

END.

You can read the next chapter at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/lauder/index.htm>

A full account of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and a video can be found at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/25th/index.htm>

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. Don't be stupid or selfish and instead be considerate of others and wear a mask if going shopping or into a crowded place and consider whether you should indeed go into a crowded space in the first place.

Alastair