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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 7th, 2021

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

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

Electric Scotland News

As you read this newsletter the polls have likely closed in the Scottish Elections so it will likely be tomorrow afternoon that we'll get any decent results due to the pandemic. It will be most interesting to see how Scots voted and I'll cover that in next weeks newsletter.

Will there be a Scottish Election 2021 exit poll? Here's when we'll know the results

Read this article at: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scottish-election-2021-exit-poll-24053768> but here are the salient facts...

Coronavirus restrictions mean the usual exit poll predictions have been axed. Voters will have to wait until the count has finished and the results are certified to know the outcome of the Holyrood election.

Votes are normally counted from 10pm onwards and late into the night, but that won't happen this time. Due to coronavirus, votes will not be counted overnight and instead counts will take place after the election. Counting will start on Friday morning, with the final result expected on Saturday. That means the fallout to this crucial election is due to come on Sunday and then into next week on Monday.

This time next week I'll have attended an online meeting with the Fellows of the Antiquaries of Scotland in Canada. It's a Zoom meeting scheduled for 5pm EST. As the newsletter usually goes out around that time I probably won't be able to report on it that day.

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 and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines it becomes a good resource. 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.

Where are the missing Covid millions Nicola? Asks LIAM FOX

Incompetent at home, failing the Scottish people, undermining the Union, intolerant of criticism and unable to answer even the most basic questions about independence within the UK and beyond, the SNP have shown themselves to be the problem for Scotland, not the answer.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1429916/Nicola-Sturgeon-snp-liam-fox-comment-scottish-election>

Kim Jong-un launches suicide drones as North Korea develops terrifying threat

NORTH KOREA has built unmanned drones which could launch "suicide" attacks on its enemies in the latest threat to the west.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1429961/North-Korea-news-world-war-3-kim-jong-un-suicide-drones-Pyongyang>

Joe Biden's EU nightmare: Brussels threatens US with 50% tariffs on goods - showdown looms

JOE BIDEN faces a major dilemma in his trade dispute with the European Union as Brussels threatens to double tariffs on US goods.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1429902/Joe-Biden-news-eu-trade-war-steel-aluminium-tariffs-whiskey-harley-davidson-Trump>

Stonehenge breakthrough

Original purpose of ancient monument uncovered after Welsh find

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1430235/stonehenge-archaeology-news-salisbury-wiltshire-monument-wales-preseli-hills-spt>

Ferguson shipyard made £100m loss after being nationalised

A nationalised shipyard tasked with delivering two ferries made a £100m loss in the first few months that it was under the ownership of the Scottish government, figures show.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-56943864>

The SNP's big lie and the heavy price higher education is paying for it

14,000 applicants from Scotland were denied a university place. This represents around 60% more than before the SNP chose to scrap the graduation fee in 2008.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2021/04/the-snps-big-lie-and-the-heavy-price-higher-education-is-paying-for-it/>

Scottish parties making unrealistic spending promises, warns IFS

Institute says health and social care manifesto pledges affordable only by increasing taxes or service cuts

Read more at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/26/scottish-parties-making-unrealistic-spending-promises-warns-ifs>

Ghillies; Scotland's little known Highlanders.

Bound to the land by tradition, ghillies are unique to Scotland and have helped shape the nation's rural identity.

Read more at:

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20210222-ghillies-scotlands-little-known-highlanders>

George Galloway outlines plan to unseat dozens of SNP MSPs

George Galloway told Good Morning Scotland that if Scottish voters all tactically voted for Scottish Labour Party leader Anas Sarwar in Nicola Sturgeon's Glasgow Southside constituency, Scotland's First Minister would lose her seat.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1420760/Nicola-Sturgeon-SNP-news-George-Galloway-latest-election-Scottish-independence-update-vn>

Dancing Scots pensioner 'gies it yaldi' in Glasgow city centre street as shops re-open

The footage was taken outside the Topshop branch on Argyle Street on Monday morning as non-essential retail started up again for the first time since December.

View this at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/dancing-scots-pensioner-gies-yaldi-23984487>

New record deaths as virus engulfs India

India has recorded its highest daily coronavirus death toll since the pandemic began - a day after it became the first country to register more than 400,000 new cases in a 24-hour period.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56961940>

Education minister John Swinney's unminuted meetings spark fears of secret government - Sunday Post

Education minister John Swinney is at the centre of a new transparency row over three unminuted meetings about an important review of what Scots pupils are taught.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotlandmatters.co.uk/2021/04/26/education-minister-john-swinneys-unminuted-meetings-spark-fears-of-secret-government-sunday-post>

These Islands: Scottish politics in the grip of a fact-denial epidemic

A survey commissioned by These Islands has revealed widespread fact denial within the Scottish electorate and deep confusion over the SNP's independence plans, particularly with respect to currency.

Read more at:

https://www.these-islands.co.uk/publications/i374/scottish_politics_in_the_grip_of_a_fact_denial_epidemic.aspx

Only the media's limitless helium keeps the Sturgeon balloon flying

Naturally, as so much of the media has such an active stake in the Scottish status quo, it flatly ignores plans to counter abuses of power and instead makes sporadic puerile digs at the party's founder, George Galloway.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2021/05/only-the-medias-limitless-helium-keeps-the-sturgeon-balloon-flying/>

Merkel's legacy in tatters: Mega poll shows Chancellor's conservatives set to be ousted

ANGELA Merkel's legacy is at risk of being left in tatters with six out of 10 polls published recently putting the Green party ahead of her Christian Democratic Union.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1431479/Angela-Merkel-news-Germany-election-2021-CDU-Green-party-poll-Annalena-Baerbock>

Canadian sign war captivates the internet

For the past week, the Canadian town of Listowel has been embroiled in a war of words via business signs that has captivated local residents and people around the world.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56972907>

Janey Godley's brilliant voiceover as Nicola Sturgeon visits off licence

Janey, who has kept Scots entertained through lockdown with her voiceovers, couldn't resist adding her own commentary to the latest footage of The First Minister.

View this at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/entertainment/celebrity/were-having-party-janey-godleys-24035512>

Chic Murray remembered as BBC to screen special show about Scottish comic genius

Chic Murray was known as the guvnor by Billy Connolly and the iconic funnyman inspired a host of great comedians.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scots-comic-legend-chic-murray-19004330>

Archaeologists amazed by most impressive Roman fort anywhere in Empire found in UK

ARCHAEOLOGISTS have been baffled by the extent of Scotland's Ardoch Roman fort, a site layered in multiple periods of the Empire's occupation of Britain. By Joel Day

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1431622/archaeology-news-archaeologists-baffled-extent-roman-ardoch-fort-uk-history-scotland-spt>

Kate and William tease exciting project as Duke and Duchess launch NEW YouTube channel

KATE, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince William have announced they have set up a new YouTube channel.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1432186/Kate-Middleton-Prince-William-youtube-channel-Duke-Duchess-Cambridge-Instagram-Royal-news>

Covid in Scotland: Spread of infections in Moray is uncontrolled

The region currently has an infection rate of more than 81 cases per 100,000 - four times the Scotland-wide level.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-57010292>

Electric Canadian

Belgium's in Canada

Created a section for this ethnic group which you can see at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/belgium.htm>

Canada West

Issued by direction of Hon. W. J. Ritchie, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Canada, 1914 (pdf)

A little challenging to read but full of interesting information and you can get to this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/thelastbestwest.pdf>

Sea, Forest and Prairie

Being stories of Life and Adventure in Canada Past and Present by Boys and Girls in Canada's Schools. (1893) (pdf)

Lots of interesting stories which you can read at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/children/sea_forest_prairie.htm

Thoughts on a Sunday morning - the 2nd day of May 2021

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26024-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-2nd-may-2021>

Notes of a Twenty-Five years Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory

By John McLean in two volumes (1849)

The writer's main object in first committing to writing the following Notes was to while away the many lonely and wearisome hours which are the lot of the Indian trader;— a wish to gratify his friends by the narrative of his adventures had also some share in introducing him to take up the pen.

While he might justly plead the hackneyd excuse of being urged by not a few of those friends to publish these Notes, in extenuation of the folly or presumption, or whatever else it may be termed, of obtruding them on the world, in these days of "making many books" he feels that he can rest his own vindication on higher grounds. Although several works of much merit have appeared in connexion with the subject, the Hudson's Bay territory is yet, comparatively speaking, but little known; no faithful representation has yet been given of the situation of the Company's servants — the Indian traders; with the degradation and misery of the many Indian tribes, or rather remnants of tribes, scattered throughout this vast territory, the public are little acquainted; erroneous statements have gone abroad in regard to the Company's treatment of these Indians; as also in regard to the government, policy, and management of the Company's affairs. On these points, he conceives that his plain, unvarnished talc may throw some new light.

Some of the details may seem trivial, and some of the incidents to be without much interest to the general reader still as it was one chief design of the writer to draw a faithful picture of the Indian trader's life, — its toils, annoyances, privations, and perils, when on actual service, or on a trading or exploring expedition; its loneliness, cheerlessness, and ennui, when not on actual service; together with the shifts to which he is reduced in order to combat that ennui;—such incidents, trifling though they may appear to be, he conceives may yet convey to the reader a livelier idea of life in the Hudson's Bay Company's territories than a more ambitious or laboured description could have done. No one, indeed, who has passed his life amid the busy haunts of men, can form any just idea of the interest attached by the lonely trader to the most trifling events, such as the arrival of a stranger Indian,—the coming of a new clerk,—a scuffle among the Indians,—or a sudden change of weather. No one, unaccustomed to their "short commons," can conceive the intense, it may be said fearful, interest and excitement with which the issue of a fishing or hunting expedition is anticipated.

Should his work contribute, in any degree, to awaken the sympathy of the Christian world in behalf of the wretched and degraded Aborigines of this vast territory; should it tend in any way to expose, or to reform the abuses in the management of the Hudson's Bay Company, or to render its monopoly less injurious to the natives than hitherto it has been; the writer's labour will have been amply compensated. Interested as he still is in that Company, with a considerable stake depending on its returns, it can scarcely be supposed that he has any intention, wantonly or unnecessarily, to injure its interests.

Guelph, Canada West,

1st March, 1849.

You can read these volumes at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/25.htm>

Electric Scotland

Dain Iain Ghobha

The Poems of John Morison collected and edited with a Memoir by George Henderson in two volumes (1896)

The present series of Celtic Texts, illustrating, through various moods and phases, the life of the Gael in early and later times, opens with the works of a man beloved at home and abroad. Though no real edition of the poet has hitherto appeared the poems of his which have formerly been published gave some an opportunity of drinking from the clear wells of genius. Once and again several of these were printed at Glasgow; but it has been in Canada that the poet has received most attention. The Toronto Edition of 1861 as well as the Cape Breton Edition of 1885, both partial but containing entirely different sets of poems, are tokens of disinterested devotion to the memory of a hallowed name. The Canadian Gael has left his country only to love it more.

“From the lone sheiling of the misty island
Mountains divide us and a waste of seas,
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we, in dreams, behold the Hebrides.”

The present effort, it is hoped, will be found as complete; as loving care could make it. Inquiries on the mainland and journeys to the Isles have largely helped to elicit facts and reminiscences which shed their own perspective light especially on the poet's life, while the free offerings of poems preserved in oral memory have helped to correct and supplement the fragmentary condition to which time had reduced the older MSS. in the poet's hand, thus, in matter wholly new, doubling the bulk of what has hitherto been open to the public. The justice and the tenderness so native to John Morison have shed a halo around his venerated memory and friends have been exceeding kind. Foremost among these is Alexander Carmichael, whose patriotic devotion, to the rescue of ancient Celtic literature is only equalled by his noble enthusiasm in all that concerns John Morison. All the MSS in his possession, which his friend the late Dr. Donald Munro Morison left behind him, have chiefly aided in making this edition as full as is now possible. His name is thus associated with these volumes though words do not fitly express the recognition of his patience or the record of his praise.

It is much regretted that the late Dr. Morison himself was unable to edit his father's poems in his own lifetime; he had so much power and sense of poetic purity. Those which he published in *The Gael*, with the music annexed to them, appear in this edition.

Special thanks are due to the poet's eldest son, Mr. Eoghan Morison, for letters and trustworthy information as well as for some of his father's poems from memory; to Mr. Angus Macleod for MS journals by his father, the late Alexander Macleod, tacksman, Ung-na-cille, Isle of Skye; to the Gaelic poet and scholar, the late Dr. Blair, Barney's River, Nova Scotia; and to the late Alexander Nicolson, M.A., LL.D. both of whom died while the work was passing through the press.

Memories and partial transcripts of MSS. by the poet's nephew, Mr. Malcolm Macaskill, Bernera; Mr. Donald Morison, Tarbert; Mr. Archibald Macleod, South Uist; Mr. Roderick Macleod, Edinburgh; and by the late Mr. Nicolson of Lewis, through his grandson, Mr. Nicolson Munro, New College, have been found helpful. But most of all the MS. of Morison's earlier poems by the late Hector Macdonald, who died near Mira, Sydney, Cape Breton. Hector Macdonald, a good Gaelic scholar, and the poet's friend, wrote this MS. at Stafford Street, Edinburgh, in 1836, when tutor in the family of General Mackay of Rockfield, who wrote the life of Lieutenant General Hugh Mackay, Commander of the Forces in Scotland, 1689-1690. Through this MS., of which there were one or two transcripts, the Gaelic poems were well known among Highland students at Edinburgh University during 1836, '37, '38. As the late Dr. Blair put it, "Hector Macdonald was the most beautiful writer he had ever seen;" and his MS. has rescued many of the earlier poems from oblivion. The MS. itself, comparable to the work of the finest scribes of Ireland, is a monument to a warm friendship.

Tender thanks are also due to Mr. Duncan Mackenzie, M.A., for suggestions, references and criticisms; to the publisher, Mr. Archibald Sinclair, for some of the poet's correspondence: to Mr. John Murdoch, to Professor Mackinnon, to Professor Rhys and to Professor Windisch for kind encouragement and sympathy.

Berlin, August. 1893.

Electric Scotland Note: The memoir in Volume 1 and the Introduction in Volume 2 are in English but all else is in the Gaelic language.

You can read these volumes at: <https://electricscotland.com/gaelic/dainiainghobha.htm>

The Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters
1633 - 88 by James Dodds (Third Edition) (1861) (pdf)

You can read this account at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/covenanters/fiftyyearsstruggle.pdf>

The Scotch Ancestry of the MacFarrens

You can read this wee article at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/macfarren.htm>

The Hobyahs: A Scotch Nursery Tale

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/hobyahs.htm>

Colonial Experiences

Or, Incidents and Reminiscences of thirty-four years in New Zealand by An Old Colonist (W. T. Pratt) (1877) (pdf)

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

George H. C. Macgregor M. A.:

A biography by the Rev. Duncan Campbell Macgregor (1900) (pdf)

You can read about him at: <https://electricscotland.com/bible/GeorgeMacgregor.pdf>

Story

US Bid to save Gaelic culture from Scots

Highland games, the Mod, Sir Walter Scot and English blamed for distorting the true picture of the intellectual Gael By Noel Young

As if the Clearances were not bad enough, the Highland calamity continues to be compounded by a view of the glens as home to woad-painted savages, lawless thugs and bloodthirsty MacMafiosi.

It is time to get real about genuine Highland heritage in the post-Braveheart era, and to recognise that Gaelic culture was at the forefront of literature, medicine and European law long before English began to crawl from the linguistic slime and evolve out of Anglo-Saxon.

A millennium before Mel Gibson was cheekily mooning at the English army, it was apparently Gaels who brought literacy to the north of England – in an earlier, altogether more civilised cultural exchange.

So says a US-based scholar of such ethnography, with a mission to challenge some Highland myths. Dr Michael Newton is not short of people to blame for this “ethnocide”: the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden, Walter Scott, the Victorians, Hollywood and even Highland games. This revisionist take on Highland heritage is to be the focus of a conference, which Newton is organising, at the University of Richmond in Virginia. He plans to show the Highlander “as having a legitimate culture and intellectual capacities”.

“I am tired of the Hollywood image now being peddled of the Highlander as a woad-painted noble savage,” he said. “And I am irked by people talking about Gaelic having only an oral tradition. The Gaels were literate before the English – and actually brought literacy to the northern English.”

Some 1302 years before the European Convention of Human Rights was incorporated into Scots law, Newton claims the monks living on Iona in 697 were penning the first international human rights treaty. Gaelic was one of only four languages in which European medical knowledge was written and studied prior to the 15th century – along with Arabic, Latin and Greek.

So why did it go so wrong? Newton – a Californian who studied for a Celtic studies doctorate from Edinburgh University and researched at Glasgow University – has explanations galore. He reckons the problem was mainly one of self-esteem, with the damage already done a century before the Jacobite defeat at Culloden in 1746.

“All the structures in Scotland around the Gaelic speaker were Anglophone. It’s a bit like the Navajo in the US: in their schools they were beaten for speaking their own language. That weakened their resistance to the instruments of ethnocide – and that is not too strong a word for what happened to the Gaels.

“When they arrived in America, the Highlanders already believed their language was inferior to English. This contrasts them with other immigrant groups such as the French and Germans, whose languages are still heard in the US. Being forced out of Scotland only reinforced their low self-esteem and powerlessness.”

The Highlanders’ answer was to become a martial race in the service of the British crown, their bagpipes terrifying opponents of the empire. In America, that meant acting as a buffer against the Spanish in the south and the French in the north .

But Newton is also unhappy about such stereotyping of the Highlanders’ military virtues, and reckons they were happier at home, being intellectual. “There is a common myth that the Highlanders were lawless thugs and bloodthirsty mafiosos,” he said . “Gaelic culture was far from that. The Gaelic legal system was already assuming written form by 800, making it the earliest-documented in western Europe.”

In more recent times, Scots have aggravated the damage done to Gaeldom by highlighting Lowland literature: “Outside agents have

reinvented Highland history with false icons. Instead of Burns and Scott, the descendants of those Highland immigrants should have on their walls poets such as Duncan Ban McIntyre, Iain Lom MacDonald and Alexander MacDonald.”

The Highlanders themselves continue to indulge in institutions designed to “preserve” their culture, which have instead distorted the true Gaelic tradition, through Highland games, with their competitions, pipe bands and dancing, and also the Gaelic Mod. It was immigrant communities in North America, like that in Cape Breton, which held on to the purer form of the culture.

In the US, the most recent census showed a 40% increase in the numbers identifying themselves as having Scottish roots – not because there is a rise in people with such roots, but because people are becoming increasingly aware and proud of them. That means, said Newton, that Highland games in the US indulge a thirst for what he calls neo-tribalism, which could be even more confusing.

At one such event, he found a Glaswegian group, Clann An Drumma, who were, according to the programme, doing Pictish drumming passed down from their ancestors. “Sheer nonsense,” said Newton. “The Picts were extinct for 1000 years before percussion made its way into Celtic music, and that was just about 50 years ago. Market forces are striving to misrepresent history.”

The conference, promising “vigorous debate”, will be held in November, and run by the Virginia Historical Society and Richmond University. Keynote speaker will be Harvard Emeritus Professor Charles Dunn, whose book on Gaels in Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, published 50 years ago, rekindled US interest in the culture.

10th August 2003

END.

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a great weekend.

Alastair
