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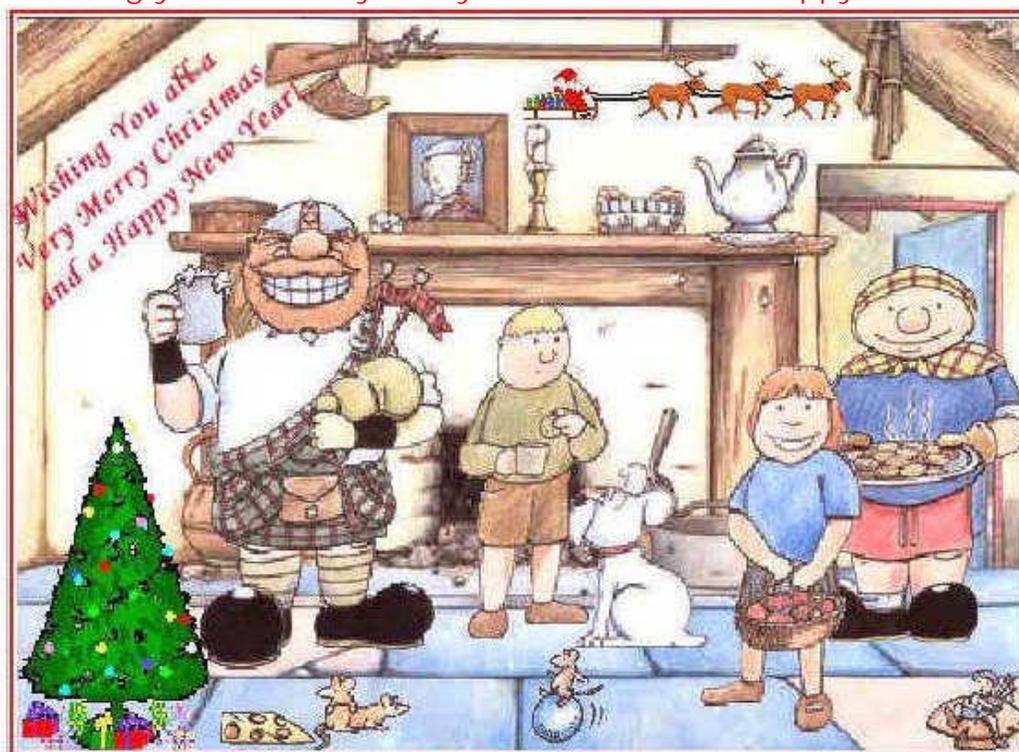
Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for December 24th, 2021

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

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

## Electric Scotland News

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



And do enjoy our Christmas page at:

<https://www.electricscotland.com/index98.htm>

We do also have a great collection of Scottish Songs at:

<https://electricscotland.com/poetry/henderson/singalong/>

Where you get both the words and the songs so great for a singalong.

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.

Text of the True Brexit elf  
Do you believe in Brexit? by John Redwood MP

Read more at:  
<https://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2021/12/17/text-of-the-true-brexit-elf/>

Kathleen Jamie: the poetry of natural resistance  
When Kathleen Jamie was appointed Scotland's Makar by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at a special ceremony at the Scottish Poetry Library in August.

Read more at:  
<https://sceptical.scot/2021/12/kathleen-jamie-the-poetry-of-natural-resistance/>

Serious failings at watchdog overseeing MSPs conduct  
Audit Scotland found a disturbing number of failings at the watchdog, with too many submissions dismissed.

Read more at:  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-59732189>

The robot chefs that can cook your Christmas dinner  
A number of tech firms are now developing robots that can cook and plate up entire meals, both for commercial and domestic kitchens. One of those at the forefront is London-based Moley Robotics, which is due to release its product, the Moley Robotic Kitchen, next year. Attached to rails fitted to the ceiling, two robotic arms hang down over your oven and hob, and can cook more than 5,000 different recipes. You just pick the dish in question on a touch screen, add the ingredients it tells you to the built-in containers, and it does everything else.

Read more at:  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59651334>

What devolution of DWP functions tells us about the likely costs of Independence  
A few days ago I tweeted about the lack of serious analysis from Scottish nationalists when it comes to the question of what it would cost to replicate the costs of our currently shared machinery of state:

Read more at:  
<https://chokkablog.blogspot.com/2021/12/what-devolution-of-dwp-functions-tells.html>

Canada & UK Announce Negotiations For Free Trade Deal  
The government of Canada has announced its notice of intent to enter into negotiations with the United Kingdom for a comprehensive free trade agreement, with potential for establishing tariff-free trade and the freer movement of citizens.

Read more at:  
<https://www.canzukinternational.com/2021/12/canada-uk-announce-negotiations-for-free-trade-deal.html>

Insurance firms warn Scots may not be covered if homes don't meet new laws  
Ministers have been accused of burying their heads in the sand as critics describe the introduction of the legislation demanding interlinked fire alarms in February as shambolic.

Read more at:  
<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/scots-may-not-be-covered-if-homes-dont-meet-new-law/>

Canada's village that bought a forest  
Cumberland on Vancouver Island has evolved from a grubby coal town to a mountain biking mecca, all thanks to passionate locals who claimed control of their landscape.

Read more at:  
<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20211214-canadas-village-that-bought-a-forest>

Simply having a wonderful Christmas Time?

AT THIS TIME of year, every year, our ears and good taste undergo a determined and persistent assault from what have come to be called Christmas favourite songs.

Read more and follow the link to listen to a favourite Christmas song

<https://thinksotland.org/2021/12/simply-having-a-wonderful-christmas-time/>

From second dinners to ordering to-go drinks, here's how to prepare for Christmas if you are self-isolating

You're relaxing at home and disaster strikes - you or a member of your family receives the dreaded news they have to self-isolate.

Read more at:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/food-drink/2852469/christmas-if-you-are-self-isolating/>

## Electric Canadian

Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada

A collection of their publications in English and French languages

You can read these at:

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

In Memoriam — Sir John William Dawson

By Frank Dawson Adams, M.Sc., Ph.D.

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/sirjohnwilliamdawson.pdf>

A Monograph of the Evolution of the Boundaries of the Province of New Brunswick.

(Contributions to the History of New Brunswick, No. 5.) By William F. Ganong, M.A., Ph.D. (Presented by Sir John Bourlnot, and read May 23rd, 1901.) (pdf)

You can read this at:

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

Ursuline Epic

By Lt.-Col. William Wood, Author of "The Fight for Canada." (Read May 23, 1908.) (pdf)

You can read this at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ursuline\\_epic.pdf](http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ursuline_epic.pdf)

Thomas Hutchinson, the last Royal Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

By the Reverend W. H. Withrow, D. D. (pdf)

You can read this at:

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

The Baronets of Nova Scotia

Their Country and Cognisance by Sir Edward MacKenzie MacKenzie, Baronet N.S. Communicated by Sir John Bourinot and read May 23, 1901 (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/novascotia/novascotiabaronetes.pdf>

Wau-Bun

The Early Days in the Northwest by Mrs John H. Kinzie of Chicago (1873) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/waubun.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - 19th December 2021

By Rev Nola Crewe

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26123-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-19th-december-2021>

The Canada Gazette 1892 (pdf)

You can read this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/canadagazettepar152.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

Aberdeen Journal Notes & Queries

Added volume 3 (1910) but it is challenging to read as it's very faint.

You can read this at:

[https://electricscotland.com/history/aberdeen/aberdeen\\_journal.htm](https://electricscotland.com/history/aberdeen/aberdeen_journal.htm)

Beth's Video Talks

December 22nd 2021 - Christmas and holidays to enjoy genealogically

You can watch this at:

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

You can watch other videos from her archive at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bnft/videos.htm>

The Best of 25 Years of the Scottish Review

Added issues 10 & 11 in pdf format

Issue 10 - International, Health, Food and Farming

Issue 11 - Education, Language, EU Referendum

You can get these at:

[https://electricscotland.com/history/scottish\\_review.htm](https://electricscotland.com/history/scottish_review.htm)

Scotland's Sacred Islands with Ben Fogle

Embedded this video which is Part 1 of a series of videos on YouTube. Added it to the foot of the page at:

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

Clan Munro of Australia

Got in their December 2021 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/munro/ClanMunroAustralia58.pdf>

The British Tourists or Travellers Pocket Companion

Through England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland (Volume 1) By William Mavor, LL.D. (1798) (pdf)

Old text where the letter "s" is written as an "f". You can read this at:  
<https://electricscotland.com/travel/britishtouristspocketcompanion.pdf>

The Border Magazine

November, 1831, Volume 1 and other volumes. OCR'd the Introduction to Volume 1 which you can read at:  
[https://electricscotland.com/history/newspapers/border\\_magazine.htm](https://electricscotland.com/history/newspapers/border_magazine.htm)

Clan Baird

Got in their Winter 2021 newsletter and 15 older copies going back to 2014.

You can read these at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Baird/index.htm>

Clan Buchanan

Got in their January 2022 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/buchanan/index.htm>

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland  
One hundred and twenty-eighth session 1907-1908 (pdf)

You can read this at:

[https://electricscotland.com/history/Proceedings\\_of\\_the\\_Society\\_of\\_Antiquarie.pdf](https://electricscotland.com/history/Proceedings_of_the_Society_of_Antiquarie.pdf)

Christmas story The true Brexit elf

By The Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (2021). A video on YouTube.

You can watch this at: <https://electricscotland.com/independence/sjp/brexit.htm>

## Story

I extracted three small stories from Volume 3 of the "Aberdeen Journal Notes and Queries". Mostly to show the variety of content it contains.

A Historic Aberdeen Bell - OLD "LOWRIE"

There has just been re-cast at the foundry of Messrs John Blaikie and Sons, Aberdeen. a fine full-toned bell with a somewhat remarkable history. The bell was originally cast in 1351 and named Laurence; it was renewed and re-erected in 1631; it was broken in 1874, when the church and spire of St Nicholas were burnt down. The fragments of broken metal were then collected and stored; and now the bell has been re-cast for the Episcopal Church of St Devenick, near Aberdeen. The new bell is a really fine specimen of the bell-founder's art, and weighs—exclusive of the 10lb. tongue of soft iron—275 lb; the total weight being over 2 cwt. Graceful in form, the bell, in addition to its other attractions, has a good well-proportioned and symmetrical "crown" head—so useful and advantageous in fixing the bell to the oaken beam from which it hangs. The "strike" note is a full, mellow A. and the bell is approximately in tune with itself. It is hung by the "lever" system. The bell — which has been gifted by an anonymous donor who is much interested in St Devenick's — is meant as a Christmas gift to the congregation.

Sale of Dunecht

It is understood that Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson, head of the well-known firm of S. Pearson and Son (Limited), contractors, Westminster, has purchased the estate of Dunecht. Sir Weetman Pearson has been sporting tenant of the property for some years. The new proprietor, who is an advanced Liberal in politics, has been M. P. for Colchester since 1885. He was created a baronet in 1894, and since his temporary connection with Aberdeenshire he and Lady Pearson have taken a keen interest in the welfare of the community.

The estate came into possession of the Forbes family through the marriage of Thomas Forbes, son of Alexander

Forbes of Brux, to Marjory Stewart, the heiress, and niece of the Earl of Mar, 1437-60. It remained in possession of the Forbeses for nearly three centuries. when, in 1726, it passed into the hands of the Duff's of the Earl of Fife's family. In 1803 it reverted to proprietors of the name of Forbes, who were very remotely, if at all, related to the old Forbeses of Echt. William Forbes of Springhill, who purchased the estate in the year referred to, was a partner in the firm of Forbes and Company, merchants and manufacturers, Aberdeen, and was a descendant of the Waterton branch of the Forbeses of Tolquhon. His city residence on the quay side is now occupied as the Board of Trade Offices. Mr Forbes died at Housedale in 1820. He was succeeded by his son James, who according to the "New Statistical Account." published in 1813. effected so many improvements, that "No parish in the county has undergone greater improvement in reclaiming waste land, enclosing, draining, making roads, and erecting farm buildings." He died in Aberdeen in 1850. In 1845 the estate was purchased from Mr Forbes by James. 24th Earl of Crawford and 7th Earl of Balcarris. the price being as stated in the "Aberdeen Journal" of 5th November of that year—£117,000. The Earl died in 1869. and was succeeded by Alexander William Crawford Lindsay, the 25th Lord Crawford, who died at Florence on 13th December, 1880. His body—after having been embalmed—was interred in the family vault beneath the private chapel of the mansion house of Dunecht on the 29th of the same month.

Richard Birnie

A worthy native of Banff was Sir Richard Birnie, originally a saddler, who removed to London, where, by his shrewdness, perseverance, promptitude, and pluck, he raised himself to fame and fortune. He was the chief actor in the arrest of Arthur Thistlewood and the Cato Street conspirators on 23rd February, 1820: he read the Riot Act during the Queen Charlotte disturbances when the head magistrate declined the task, and he was appointed the chief functionary at Bow Street. Knighted by the King George IV. in 1821. he died in 1832, leaving an only son. also named Richard, born in London on 16th January. 1808. It might be imagined that the son of so energetic a man would be a second edition of the sire; but, that would have been a very fallacious forecast, for a more careless, happy-go-lucky Bohemian never existed than Sir Richard's son.

He was a barrister-at-law. having been called to the bar in 1833, and obtained the degree of M.A. from Trinity College, Cambridge. Apparently a bright future awaited him. Let this extract from the autobiography of the late K V. Kenealy, an Irish scholar of the stamp of Maginn and Mahony, and famous as counsel for the Claimant in the Tichborne case, explain a bit of his erratic career:—"He (Birnie) had run through a fortune, and shone amongst the richest at Cambridge University, mixed in the fashionable life of London, had travelled and had seen every species of character from the highest to the lowest, had got into debt, into prison, out of it and back again and finally into a marriage and a garret, where it found him a laughing sage, treating the world and its troubles with scorn, and making a boast of his poverty and a jest of his starvation." It is a photograph of the man. the truth of which cannot be gainsaid.

Birnie got—in 1853—a legal appointment in West Australia, a very primitive place then; and. after a few years there, drifted to Melbourne in 1860. He got a little work at his profession, but ultimately took to lecturing and writing for the press. I came to know him - much against my will—in 1866. I was managing a suburban paper for an impecunious man. whose drafts and struggles were very diverting; but his creditors became clamorous, the red flag of auction was hoisted over the office, and the paper, goodwill, type, and presses were sold to a local brewer named Wild. We printers were accustomed to this climax, and did not care much. I thought that I would get my wages regularly, but instead I got "the bullet."

Amongst the crowd at the auction, I noticed a burly, devil-may-care sort of fellow. It was Birnie. That was the last number I edited. The brewer discarded the name of the old paper altogether, and substituted another in the interests of beer. using the same premises, presses, type, etc. Birnie was appointed the new editor, and the first issue of the "Beery Observer" as I may call it, had an amazing lot of verse in it. The next issue had about a column of song by Swinburne, incomplete but the finish was promised next week. Those Swinburne doses in the brewer's organ caused much grumbling at public-house bars and I was accosted by a resident— "I sav who's this here Swinborn genus?" I said he was a new poet. "Well" ruminated my querist. "I've tried to read some of his tommyrot, but gave it up. Let me tell you that this here Swineborn don't know when to knock off. Why his cursed stuff is longer than "Lord Bateman." [a tedious ballad] and not half so entertaining". I laughed heartily at this naive criticism, which had a real seed of truth in it. Birnie was a constant devotee at the brewery while his billet lasted. "I trow the gauntrers got a lift" at each visit, as the odd song has it.

Meanwhile I secured a situation up river in a goldmining township. and when I returned to Melbourne after two years absence the brewery paper had disappeared, the brewer was dead, the old local journal revived, and in the same premises: but Birnie was again treading the ...printed in the 'Australasian.' A ... from them was published in 1879, dedicated to Mr James Smith, a veteran journalist who had befriended him. and a second volume of essays was promised, but it never appeared, as I presume that the printer was not fully paid up for the first.

Birnie was a capital raconteur, and shone in convivial society as a conversationalist, for his experiences amongst all sorts and conditions of men were, singular and varied, and luminously told. But he must have been a severe tax on the generosity of the literary men of Melbourne, in much the same fashion as Leigh Hunt was alleged to be in the abysmal depths of chronic Hardupness. He lacked the necessary application and persistency to become a successful journalist, and this notwithstanding his polyglot learning and felicitous phraseology. He had strong vitality, despite his careless mode of living, for he was 80 years of age when he died in the Melbourne Hospital on 16th September, 1833. I saw his melancholy funeral pass, and it strongly recalled those lines of Thomas Noel: —

“Rattle his bones  
Over the stones:  
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns.”

Alba.

You can also read a much larger account of Sir Richard Birnie at:  
[https://electricScotland.com/history/other/birnie\\_richard.htm](https://electricScotland.com/history/other/birnie_richard.htm)

END.

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

Alastair

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