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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 27th, 2022

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

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

Electric Scotland News

Given the tremendous publicity given to mass shootings I can't help wondering if extensive press coverage makes it more likely more of these will happen?

While it is right that they should be covered I am in doubt as to the value of continued press coverage by news anchors going into exhaustive details over many days and weeks. It just seems to me that this would actually encourage more of these events.

Likewise extensive coverage of celebrities or political goings on by leading political leaders are to be frank rather boring. It seems to me that journalists are doing a very poor job of covering events. Like I have found that following a particular journalist finds headlines constantly repeated and it's clear they have their own agenda.

As you probably know I am pro Brexit and anti-SNP. Note however I am not anti Independence. However coverage of events related to these are usually politically biased. That means it is hard to get to the facts as the journalists have their own agenda and so will write to their own biased way of thinking. That's good for you if you support their views but if they don't support them then you are not likely to read anything they publish.

Like I do read Gary Hassan's column in the Scottish Review and he's clearly anti Westminster and has his own biased views of politics. To be frank he should be ignoring Westminster and should be talking instead about how Scotland could be doing better but this is not something he really understands. He's also not covering business and yet it's business that can make a huge difference to an Independent Scotland.

Like my own way of thinking about Brexit is that it is right that the UK should be an independent country able to do its own deals. It's a fact that China and India are the two growing powers in the world. Europe and the USA are in decline which means to me that we need to work with these two growing nations and Africa to ensure we prosper in the future. I simply can't understand why people should be so attached to the EU as firstly, they are not a democratic institution and secondly it was costing the UK billions of pounds by being part of the EU. However it's clear to me that Scotland's largest export market is to England with the USA coming second and then the EU. To make Brexit a success businesses need to work hard at developing exports outside the EU and yet very little is being discussed on this front by any media outlet.

For example a lot of discussion is had on a USA, UK Trade deal BUT that is actually not required to do good business in the USA. It seems to me that the English language is the key to exporting and is why England and the USA are Scotland's largest export markets which means we need to encourage and help businesses do better with non English speaking countries.

I remember telling you how hard it was to find Ox Tongue in Canada and so I ended up importing it from the UK. However when I went direct to the producer of that product in the UK their customer services told me (1) they didn't export and (2) they had no information on any of their customers who could export their product. To me that meant

here was a company that should be talked to by Government about how they might expand through exporting. And how many other companies like this are also not exporting?

I eventually found one of their customers that did export their product and purchased it from them. BUT why didn't they know about them and why didn't they make use of them to expand their sales? I mean if you don't want to get into exports surely you could at least work with an existing customer to encourage them to do even better.

So how many other companies are like this in Scotland and what is being done to encourage them to open new export markets. I have so far seen zero discussion on this front in any media outlet. It is being estimated that by 2040 China will be the largest market with India being second and then the USA third. If Africa worked together they would be a very significant market and I also have to say that the Commonwealth would also be a very large market if we all worked together. So why are we even bothering about the EU? We are also in discussions on a CANZUK free trade deal with free movement between all four nations of UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. We are very similar countries and already trade well together. As a counter to the EU it would seem to make a lot of sense to go forward on this possible grouping.

I am told that since Brexit Scottish firms are having to do a lot more paperwork to do their normal business with the EU so why aren't they looking for new markets?

I also find it a touch illogical that Scotland wanting to be an Independent country don't like the UK being also an Independent country. Mind you I can partly understand why Scotland wants to be tied to the EU as they will then handle our exports for us but does that make Scotland a real Independent country if they rely on the EU for their exports and foreign policy?

I remember a lot of years ago when I was in the USA I was asked if I could profile Scottish companies on my web site and in my newsletter. When I got home I found 200 Scottish companies that were either currently exporting or clearly had products and services they could export. I wrote to them all which meant posting them all a letter to ask if they'd provide me with information on their company and a suitable way to contact someone to take any business enquiries. Not one got back to me. I remain totally disgusted with the Scottish business sector.

I got a few emails in asking if I was ok after the storms in Ontario and Quebec. Being in Chatham I am in the bottom South West corner of Ontario, about an hour from the US border and we're very fortunate to have no extremes of weather. Just to the east of us is London, one hour away and they do get very heavy falls of snow in the Winter but we manage to avoid what they call "lake effect snow".

So many thanks for asking and yes I'm fine.

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.

Dunfermline is Scotland's eighth city

Dunfermline is to become Scotland's eighth city after being granted the status as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The town in Fife was chosen along with seven others across the UK and overseas territories. It joins Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Stirling and Inverness on the list of Scottish cities.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-61512746>

Learn more about Dunfermline by reading the book "Annals of Dunfermline A.D. 1069 - 1878"

by Ebenezer Henderson, LL.D. at:

<https://www.electricscotland.com/history/dunfermline/index.htm>

Anthony Albanese leads Labor to Australian election victory

Anthony Albanese is set to become Australia's next prime minister after leading the Labor Party to its first election victory in almost a decade.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-61267489>

Can gravity batteries solve our energy storage problems?

Gravitricity, an Edinburgh-based green engineering start-up, is working to make this a reality.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220511-can-gravity-batteries-solve-our-energy-storage-problems>

Conrad Black: Poilievre has a real chance to break the Liberal status quo — and that has his enemies trembling

To the extent that Poilievre threatens some change to the comfortable Liberal status quo built on durable advantages in Quebec and urban Ontario, Poilievre renders the political establishment uneasy.

Read more at:

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/conrad-black-poilievre-has-a-real-chance-to-break-the-liberal-status-quo-and-that-has-his-enemies-trembling>

Museum preserves story of contemporary whisky industry

A new collection of contemporary items reflecting the nation's thriving whisky industry has been unveiled by National Museums Scotland. The museum has acquired bottled whiskies, packaging and other material spanning more than a decade of production.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-61522482>

Scottish women breaking new ground in motorsport

Meet the three Scottish racing drivers blazing a trail for women in motorsport. Logan Hannah and Chloe Grant are the only all-female racing team in the UK, while Jodie Sloss has seen off competition from around the world to land a seat with McLaren.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/av/motorsport/60927207>

Canada storms: Nearly a million homes lose power in high winds

More than 900,000 homes in southern Canada were left without power on Saturday after a severe storm hit the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-61541653>

Church of Scotland to allow same-sex marriage ceremonies following historic vote

Ministers and deacons will now be able to conduct same-sex marriages in the Church of Scotland if they so wish.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/church-scotland-allow-same-sex-27042233>

Why choose Britain?

The private sector is essential to getting us through the inflation crisis, so when business speaks, the Government should listen. The Centre for Policy Studies has conducted the biggest ever survey of CEOs and industry leaders asking why people should invest in Britain - and there's a lot to learn from their answers.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/if-the-government-wants-companies-to-choose-britain-we-need-a-culture-change/>

Gene editing is the key to getting cheaper, greener food

Gene editing has the potential to revolutionise agriculture, increasing crop yields, improving disease resistance and reducing the need for environmentally harmful pesticides. But needless EU red tape and unscientific safety fears have stood in the way of progress - until now.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/gene-editing-is-the-key-to-getting-cheaper-greener-food>

The servile relationship

The US view of Northern Ireland is steeped in dewy-eyed romanticism and outright falsehoods - not least the idea that America is a 'guarantor' of the Good Friday Agreement. The UK should give such pronouncements the short shrift they deserve, even it means shattering our illusions about the 'special relationship'.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-servile-relationship-why-do-we-put-up-with-american-nonsense-about-ireland>

Media

By Hamish MacKay in the Scottish Review

Read more at:

<https://www.scottishreview.net/HamishMackay617a.html>

Archaeologists search for lost traces of Glasgow Garden Festival

Archaeologists excavating a Glasgow park have begun to uncover traces of a landscape hidden beneath the turf.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-61562866>

Leith waterfront development plans unveiled

Forth Ports wants to create a vibrant new neighbourhood on a 10-acre site, with up to 800 residential apartments, a hotel, shops, offices and leisure facilities.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-61565382>

Kendal baby formula producer to supply US amid shortage

Baby formula produced in Cumbria is being sent to the US to help amid severe shortages.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cumbria-61590576>

Experts run the rule over Nicola Sturgeon's legacy

Here experts look at her record in office, how it will be viewed by history and what the future might hold.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/nicola-sturgeon-longest-serving-first-minister>

Electric Canadian

Orillia, Ontario

Information on the town and a good video as well.

You can get to this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/orillia.htm>

Stephen Leacock

Canadian teacher, political scientist, writer, and humorist.

Added him to our Makers of Canada and included two of his book for you to read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/StephenLeacock.htm>

Leaves from the Backwoods

Poetry by Louisa Walker (pdf)

You can read her poems at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/Leaves-from-the-backwoods.pdf>

Brief Sketch of Life and Work of Rev. James Evans

Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Indians in Northwestern Canada 1801—1846 By Rev. John Maclean (pdf)

You can read this at:

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

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 22nd day of May 2022 - Victoria Day

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26212-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-22nd-day-of-may-2022-victoria-day>

Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada

A journey of 3,200 miles by canoe and snowshoe through the Barren Lands by J. W. Tyrell, C.E., D.L.S. (1898) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

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

Electric Scotland

Beth's Video Talks

May 25th 2022 - Potpourri Irreplaceable Family Papers Murphys laws, George Washington

You can watch this at: <https://electricscotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

A Contract of Mutual Friendship in the '45

An article found in an old magazine which was very faint but managed to make some sense of it and included here for you to read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/mutualfriendship.htm>

Joseph Robertson

Added this Scottish historian and record scholar to our Significant Scots section with links to a couple of his publications.

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/other/robertson_joseph.htm

Remember Now Thy Creator

Scottish Girls' Samplers, 1700–1872 by Naomi E A Tarrant (2014). I fixed the link to this book which you can now get to at:

<https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/Book%20Manuscript-501-1-10-20220112.pdf>

Torry Heritage Group

A Future Shapit by the Past - Winner Doric Film Festival

Hoping to get other articles from this group and you can watch their short video at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/aberdeen/torryheritage.htm>

Pictures by Stan Bruce c2004- 2007

Taken in Lossiemouth

Thanks to Stan for sending us in some of his collection of pictures which you can view at:

<https://electricScotland.com/lossiemouth/bruce.htm>

Added three books from Stanley Bruce in his Aberdeen Shipbuilders series.

You can get to his whole series at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/aberdeen/aberdeenshipbuilding.htm>

The three books he sent us can be found at:..

Thomas Wright, Shipbuilders, Inches

(Upper Dock), Aberdeen, c1855 to 1858 by Stanley Bruce (pdf)

<https://electricScotland.com/history/aberdeen/THOMAS%20WRIGHT%20BOOK%20APRIL2021.pdf>

Aberdeen Harbour's Shear Poles

By Stanley Bruce (pdf)

<https://electricScotland.com/history/aberdeen/ShearPolesAberdeen.pdf>

John Duffus & Co.

Shipbuilders Footdee, Aberdeen, 1826 to 1845 by Stanley Bruce (pdf)

<https://electricScotland.com/history/aberdeen/John%20Duffus%20&%20Co.%20book.pdf>

Burns and Folk-song

By Alexander Keith, M.A. (1922) (pdf)

An interesting book which you can read at:

<https://electricScotland.com/burns/burnsandfolksong.pdf>

The Right Hon. James Bryce, O.M.

An article by Andrew Carnegie which I've added to his page.

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/america/americancommonwealth.htm>

Earl of Elgin and Kincardine

Chancellor of Aberdeen University (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/nation/lord-elgin.pdf>

Story

Peasant Life in Argyllshire in the End of the Eighteenth Century

The following paper by Mrs. K. W. Grant of Oban gives an account of life in her native village as related to Mrs. Grant many years ago by her grandmother.

I WAS born in the year 1774 at Barichreil, a small village of Nether Lorn.

My father was a descendant of that McCallum of Colagin, the sight of whom, as he entered Kilbride Church one Sunday, followed by his twelve sons in order of their age, provoked the Lady of Dunollie to exclaim: 'A third of Albyn were none too much for McCallum of Colagin!'

My mother's family, the Macnabs, belonged to Glenorchy. Her forefathers had been armourers and silversmiths for seven hundred years, the son stepping into the father's place throughout the whole of that long period.

My mother had a training such as fell to the lot of few Highland girls of the period in which she lived. In early girlhood she went to live in the family of a relative, whose wife had been educated in one of the best schools in Edinburgh. This lady delighted to teach my mother not only all that a good housewife ought to know but also the spinning of wool and flax, and the working up of both from the raw material to the finished web.

My childhood was cast in that transition period when the domestic life of the Highland people was gradually adapting itself to modern civilisation. To-day one can hardly realise a time when there were no railways, no steamboats, no penny post, no telegraph, no looms driven by machinery, no wheaten bread nor tea in country districts, no newspapers giving us the news of the wide world.

Clive had just laid the foundation of our Indian Empire. Canada had become one of our possessions. The first ominous mutterings were heard of the storm about to break over our

American colonies. Australia and New Zealand began to loom on the horizon. That was abroad. At home the forces which were to overturn social life were already set in motion. Watt was busy improving his steam-engine. Arkwright's spinningjenny had penetrated into the Scottish Lowlands.

In the Highlands the spinning-wheel was beginning to supersede the spindle and distaff; schools were being established in every parish; the New Testament was translated into Gaelic, and the books of the Old Testament were in capable hands for translation.

At the same time the daily life of the people continued to be what it had been for ages. They had not outlived the simple life which had been theirs from time immemorial; the shielings were still theirs; nor were they restricted from fishing the rivers, or from taking a hare from the hill.

Our village was an important place in its own estimation. It consisted of a group of sixteen thriving families, whose boast it was that every known trade required in the district was represented among the men. That was something to be proud of in those days, when to be a first-rate tradesman meant that a man possessed as thorough a knowledge of every branch of his craft as a master-workman is expected to have in these days.

The town of Oban did not exist except in the brain of the then Duke of Argyll and his Chamberlain. The first time I walked into Oban there were but three houses on the bay: the Custom House, the Inn, and a farmhouse.

The edict that made the wearing of our national costume punishable made a tailor of my father. The finest linen underwear as well as upper garments were made at that time by the tailor. When some thrifty dame brought a web of linen and another of woollen material to be made up, my father turned the web of linen over to my mother, who could manipulate it as well as any tailor. When, on the other hand, my father was out boarding with a family till all the household sewing was finished, he received yjd. per day, which sum was considered to be very good pay.

When I was old enough to attend school my brothers pled with mother to allow me to accompany them. It was an unheard of thing for girls except the daughters of ' gentlemen ' to be sent to school. But my mother came of a family that loved learning, and she knew how to value education, so it did not take much coaxing to get her to consent to my taking a winter at school.

So I trudged there and back in company with my kind brothers, who, if the weather proved severe, took turns in carrying me, so that I might sit dry and cosy at school.

It was always during the six winter months that we attended school. Each boy carried a peat under his arm to keep the fire blazing. One of the older lads provided a good broom of long, wiry-stemmed moss from the marsh, wherewith to sweep the earthen floor. All had helped to gather the thatch and cover the roof before the winter session began.

That season in school would, I was confident, enable me to go on by myself afterwards, so I made the most of my time. For I doubted whether there would come another opportunity. When could a woman find time for schooling with the clothing of the whole family dependent upon her knowledge and skill in working wool and flax; even the sewing thread had to be manufactured by her deft fingers. The women had also the care of the cattle to a great extent, and oftentimes they were obliged to grind the meal before baking it. How could time be spared to read and write?

When my eldest brother was old enough he was allowed to go to the harvest work in the Lowlands. On his return he brought with him an English Bible; he read it aloud to us in the evening, not in English but as if written in Gaelic.

My brothers learned trades. John became a farmer ; another brother built many of the houses in Oban and the Congregational Chapel, which was the first place of worship in Oban. He erected also the high wall around Iain Ciar's grave.

One morning our quiet village was greatly startled by a rumour that we might have a visit from the press-gang. A friendly warning was sent us to the effect that the press-gang were in the vicinity and would be certain to pay us a call in the passing as we were quite near the highway.

The good wives of Barichreil were not in the habit of overstepping the bounds of modest conventional womanhood, but on this occasion they took the law into their own hands. The husbands, with all the sons and brothers old enough to be impressed, were ordered off to make peats, and forbidden to return until sent for. Boy scouts were stationed here and there to keep us women informed of the appearance of the enemy, and report his movements. Meanwhile, a supply of ammunition was prepared in the shape of clods and turf.

At length the press-gang arrived, and looked greatly astonished on finding a village composed of women and children only. Before they had time to ask, * Where are the men ? ' the wives attacked them with such a volley of clods and turf that they wheeled right about and marched off, the officer saying he 'wasn't going to fight with women,' and there was no time to go about the hills searching for the men.

Our village lay in a green glade, flanked by two low, brown hills. The houses were clustered on both sides of a burn that divided the glade in two and fell into the river Euachir just below the highway. The Euachir is a fine salmon stream running through a deep channel between steep banks covered with birch and hazel.

My brothers were keen fishers. There was a beautiful salmon that haunted a deep pool in the Euachir; all the fishermen about had tried in vain to catch it. My brothers were determined not to be baffled; they would blaze the river. They got up during the night and sallied forth with torches and fish-spears. I was suddenly awakened at daybreak by the call, 'Get up and see our fishing!' In a twinkling I was up, dressed, and in their midst. There among smaller fish was the great big beauty!

Salmon was so plentiful that when a farmer engaged a ploughman he was bound to promise not to give him salmon oftener than four days in the week.

Each family in Barichreil owned a few sheep and cows. The sheep provided us with wool for clothing, the cows with

milk, butter and cheese.

The sheep were the native sheep of the Highlands ; small, intelligent creatures covered with fine wool, each answering to its name, and milked as well as the cows. We were obliged to fold them at night, because of the numerous foxes and wild cats that prowled about freely. Our fowls, too, had to be carefully closed in for protection.

Our household utensils were made of wood and a few of pewter. Bowls of all sizes were made of hard wood, preferably birch, because of its sweetness, also because it was easily kept clean. Tubs, too, were of all sizes ; shallow tubs for holding milk and for working butter in, as well as wash-tubs such as are still in use. There were cogues for milking, luggies for feeding calves, pails and stoups for bringing water from the well. Our spoons were of horn, some thin and finely ornamented, and used only on special occasions.

Each croft had a plot set apart for the cultivation of flax. On it we depended for linen for household use as well as for underwear.

The cloth of which the men's suits were made was very much the same as that called tweed or homespun nowadays. The women wore druggat. Their best dresses, as well as the cloaks of the men, consisted of a firm shiny material called temin, which lasted a lifetime, being manufactured of the longest and finest wool, and treated in the working exactly as flax was. The temin for dresses was often watered to look like silk. A softer cloth was called caimleid, which was as fine as temin. It was, however, dyed in the web, and dressed so as to have a nap on the cloth.

The dye-stuffs for all kinds of cloth were gathered, each in its season, all the year round. Berries, flowers, leaves, bark, roots, heather, and lichens formed our principal stores of dyes. There was hardly a plant on hill or meadow that was not laid under contribution for dye, or medicine, or food. Even the autumn crowfoot had its use as a substitute for rennet, when no rennet could be had ; nettles were prized when the ' curly kale ' was exhausted in spring.

The fulling of a web of woollen material was the least agreeable as also the most toilsome labour connected with the manufacture of cloth. When the web came home from the weaver, word was sent out to the most experienced women and girls to the number of from sixteen to eighteen. A fulling-frame of fine wicker—the common property of the village—was set on trestles of the proper height. It was from two-and-a-half to three feet wide, and eight or nine feet long. The most experienced and careful woman was installed mistress of ceremonies at the head of the frame, to deal out the web and watch over the working.

Seven women stood on each side of the frame, care being taken that each couple were of the same length of arm. There was one at the foot of the frame to fold the cloth as it was passed along, and to attend to it being kept soaked with liquid as it was being thickened.

About a yard of the cloth was unrolled to begin with, by her who stood at the head. It was soaked at once with ammoniated liquid, then drawn slantwise across the frame ; that is No. one on the hither side worked with No. two on the opposite side—not with the woman directly in front of her, for that would bring no nap on the cloth, and it would be streaky, because the treatment would not be equal. Then the cloth was rubbed and pounded to thicken it, and drawn backwards and forwards till it was ready to be passed on for the next two couples to thump, and rub and see-saw it and pass it down farther to undergo the same process.

The whole of this toil was set to music. Every movement of the hand was regulated by a waulking-song, sung in perfect tune by all. If a part (or the whole) of the cloth needed more working, the women never said, 'It will take another half-hour, or hour's work,' but 'It will take another song,' or 'It will take so many more songs.'

The tweed being thickened and smoothed to the satisfaction of the experts, a thin straight board three inches wide was brought, on which to wind the web. This process was called 'winding the cloth into a candle.' The board was necessarily a little longer than the width of the cloth. The winding of the web was done with the minutest care, lest there should be a crease or a wrinkle or an unequal overlapping of the selvages anywhere. In this winding the cloth; the women kept slapping every inch of each fold with all their might, with the open palms of their hands. The song sung during this performance required a different measure from the other. It was called Port-nam-bas, the

palm-chant, or rather palming-chant. Those who sang it were well acquainted with the gossip of the country-side. They knew who was the favoured laddie of each lassie, present or absent. In the song the names of the maidens and their real or supposed sweethearts were coupled, thus adding to the merriment and the interest. Such songs are termed 'pairing' songs. The candle of the cloth was left lying as it was till next day, when it was soused in water and left to dry.

Here is a specimen of one of the 'pairing songs' sung on such an occasion. The title is, 'An Long Eirionnach,' The Irish Ship. It begins with the lines :—

Ho! ci 'bheir mi leam, air an luing Eirionnaich,
Leis an fhidhil, leis an truibh, air an luing Eirionnaich?

The rhythm of the words requires that it be translated:

Ho! who sails with me, on the ship *Irishman,'
With a fiddle, with a harp, on the ship 'Irishman'?

Ho! who goes with me, on the ship 'Irishman'?
Mirag I'll take with me, on the ship 'Irishman'!

Ho! who sails with me, on the ship 'Irishman'?
Donald I'll take with me, on the ship 'Irishman'!
O'er the billows riding free, on the ship 'Irishman'.

And so on to any number of couplets, as long as there were names in the district to be linked together. When those gave out the next district yielded a fresh supply, till the web was rolled into a 'candle.'

Very gradually during these years, potatoes were becoming more and more an article of diet, but so little were they used that we set aside only one creelful as seed potatoes against the following spring. Turnips, too, were slowly coming into general use. Tea was still a rare treat; baker's bread—soft, spongy stuff!—was not to be thought of. Until then it was honey that was used for sweetening. Salt was very expensive, being taxed to more than forty times its value.

There was one kind of food used occasionally which is probably unknown nowadays. Some of the stronger cattle were bled in spring by an expert; the blood was carefully prepared, salted in a tub and set aside for use. We called it black pudding.

We had no winnowed rye-grass or turnips in those days to feed the cattle ; we were entirely dependent on the natural grass. When the lower pastures became bare it was necessary to take the cattle to be fed once, or in some districts twice, a year to those higher pastures where sweet hill grass was plentiful. This relieved the lower pastures, allowing the grass on them to grow afresh.

A green, grassy hill was called an Airigh (pronounced ah-ry). When spring work was over, the men of the village went to the airigh to get the sheilings, that is the huts, into order. Being built of turf they required to be put into thorough repair, so as to make them habitable after the storms of winter and the rains of spring, which were sure to dismantle the roofs.

One end of every hut was banked up some eighteen inches from the rest of the floor, and part of it covered with heather-tops for a bed. The heather made a fragrant springy couch, and, as it was to be used in June weather, a thin blanket to cover it, and another to cover the sleeper, were all that were needed for comfort. The remainder of the banked up space served for a seat. We did with as little furniture as possible for our six weeks' picnic.

The little village of turf huts was a woman's township. Only one man, the aireach (herdsman) was there to help about the cattle in all matters that needed such experienced aid as his special knowledge could afford.

The sheilings were generally ready for occupation by the first week of June; then a day was fixed upon for the setting out. Of course the whole village set out together. The children were welcome, boys as well as girls, at that first outset. There were so many articles to be carried that all alike could be of help. There were the utensils and implements needed for making butter and cheese—cogues, churns, luggies, milk-tubs, cheese-vats, a large iron pot for heating the milk in, and a block of iron which, when heated red-hot, was used to sterilise the milk. The women took their distaffs and wool, for they were in the habit of going among their flocks twirling their distaffs as they minded them. Household provisions were taken, clothing too, and a few dishes and cooking utensils, and each company carried a milking-stool.

The cows and the little sheep knew the way and gave little or no trouble. To prevent any bother about the calves, a churn called an imideal (butterer) was carried on the back. This special make of churn was flat on one side, so as to fit on to the back, and was covered with a skin. The lid also was secured with a skin round it; but on such an occasion as this setting out it was not so tightly fastened but that a few drops of milk were jolted out of it while climbing the hill, and trickled down over the skin covering. The calves, lured by the dropping milk, followed the imideals of their respective owners, licking the skin as often as they were able to overtake the climber, and thus they arrived at the airigh.

There were frequent journeys to and from home during those six weeks. As often as a certain quantity of butter and cheese was ready it was carried home to be stored for future use. When the home was not too distant some of the stronger young women were accustomed to put the proper amount of cream into the imideal, then, strapping it on to their backs, they thus carried it to its destination, the churning being done by the jolting in going down the braes. The butter in this case was washed and salted after arrival. The churn did not slip off when it was bumped up and down so much, because it was held securely by two stout straps, and rested on the bunched gathers of the drugget skirt as on a cushion. When several of those heavy drugget and plaiding skirts were worn, as was the habit then, there was quite a shelf for the churn to rest on.

Every meal taken in the open air was a feast. We rarely took our food indoors. We had whey porridge very often, which I liked better than the rich milk porridge, which was our Sunday treat. What a wealth there was of wild strawberries and blaeberries, as many as we could eat!

We had children's rhymes to repeat too for almost everything we met.

When we children came upon a bed of cuckoo-stockings and primroses, we sang out:

Primrose, cow-sorrel, wood-sorrel, white clover ;
Food for all the little children all the bright summer over!

Did we come upon a bird's nest, we covered our mouths, believing that if our breath came near the eggs it would taint them and so scare the bird away. In leaving the nest we sang:

Tweet-tweet-tweet- O,
Who spoiled my nest so sweet, O?
Should he be a tall man,
Fling him headlong from the keep!
Should he be a small man
Toss him from the rocky steep!
But a clown—who doesn't care!
Turn him over to his mother
And leave him there!

If a corra-chosag—a wood-louse—crossed our path, we instantly stopped and asked it gravely:

O, corra-chorra-chosag, pray,
Will to-morrow be a lovely day?
If you tell me quick and true,

A pair of brogues I'll make for you!

When the cuckoo was due to return in April we were careful to eat a bit of bread before turning out in the early morning, as it was deemed unlucky to hear it for the first time in each season with our fast unbroken. But in June, it was bound to forsake its summer haunts, so we addressed it thus:

'Cuckoo! ' cried the gowk on a spray,
'I've missed thee yestre'en and to-day';
'Cuckoo!' cried the cuckoo, 'farewell!
By the hunter I'm chased from the dell! '

The little blue scabious was treated rudely, I don't know why. Holding it by the neck firmly between the root of the thumb and the palm of the hand, we twisted the stem with the other hand, then, loosening the pressure of the thumb, the flower began to turn slowly round. As the flower began to turn round we repeated :

Gillie, gillie blue-boy, if thou turn not round, down comes my fist upon thee.

Suiting the action to the word, at the emphatically pronounced word 'down' we crushed the head of the flower by the violence of the blow.

END

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you. I also note that this is the long weekend in the USA for "Memorial Day" so hope our American readers enjoy it.

Alastair