



ELECTRICCANADIAN.COM	CULTURE & LANGUAGE	GAZETTEER	NEWSLETTER	SHOPPING
AGRICULTURE & WILDLIFE	DONNA'S PAGE	GENEALOGY	PICTURES	SONGS
ARTICLES	ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET	HISTORIC PLACES	POETRY	SPORT
BETH'S FAMILY TREE	FAMOUS SCOTS	HISTORY	POSTCARDS	SCOTS DIASPORA
BOOKS	FAMILY TREE	HUMOR	RELIGION	TARTANS
BUSINESS	FORUMS	JOHN'S PAGE	ROBERT BURNS	TRAVEL
CHILDREN'S STORIES	FOOD & DRINK	KIDS	SCOTS IRISH	TRIVIA
CLANS & FAMILIES	GAMES	LIFESTYLE	SCOTS REGIMENTS	VIDEOS
HELP	TERMS OF USE	MUSIC	SERVICES	WHAT'S NEW

## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for March 24th, 2023

### Electric Scotland News

I had a very weird experience last week. It seems I somehow lost a week in that looking at my calendar for that week I noted my cleaning lady was due on the Tuesday but she didn't turn up. On Wednesday my foot nurse was due for her three monthly visit but she didn't turn up either. Then on Friday I had an appointment with my eye doctor and his place was closed when I got there.

Of course this week everyone arrived on time so how did I lose a week? Very weird if I say so myself.

-----

I am enjoying doing the towns of Ontario and in the process finding some really excellent books on Canadian topics as a result of my research. You can see the collection I've done so far at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/videos.htm>

-----

I particularly enjoyed the book Home Farm which is a discussion on how to run a small farm and how to deal with servants. As this was written around 1883 it provides an interesting account of various aspects of running a farm. One example is when a calf is born to rub salt over it to encourage the cow to do a thorough job of cleaning it and it's also beneficial to both calf and cow. You'll find a link below in the Electric Scotland section to it.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

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.

SNP membership plummets by a third as party finally reveals number of voters in leadership race

The SNP lost nearly a third of its membership over the last year, figures published today revealed

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/snp-membership-plummets-third-party-29476886>

Energy Bills - Scotland does not pay more than the rest of the UK

The SNP is working hard to push a false narrative that Scots are being ripped off or shafted on energy bills compared to the rest of the UK. This brief article explains that Scottish households actually pay energy tariffs almost identical to those in the rest of the UK.

Read more at:

[https://www.these-islands.co.uk/publications/i385/energy\\_bills\\_scotland\\_does\\_not\\_pay\\_more\\_than\\_rest\\_of\\_uk.aspx](https://www.these-islands.co.uk/publications/i385/energy_bills_scotland_does_not_pay_more_than_rest_of_uk.aspx)

How the Scottish morning roll became a national treasure

The sudden collapse earlier this month of Glasgow baking giant Morton's Rolls sent shockwaves across communities in the west of Scotland.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-64906163>

The epic quest to build a permanent Moon base

The handful of astronauts who have set foot on the Moon spent as little as a day on the surface. How do you build a settlement that will last for years?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20230317-the-epic-quest-to-build-a-permanent-moon-base>

Why asylum seekers are choosing Canada in record numbers

Last year, nearly 40,000 migrants crossed into Canada at an unofficial border at the end of a remote rural road in upstate New York - a record number - to seek asylum. Many are driven by the belief that the country is more welcoming than the US. But can Canada handle the influx?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64825197>

Trust, so carefully won, has been lost. It is time for a clean pair of hands

Trust, truth and confidence go together in politics. If people lose trust in their politicians, they also lose confidence in them to get the job of running the country done.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/trust-so-carefully-won-has-been-lost-it-is-time-for-a-clean-pair-of-hands/>

Landmark investigation exposes how health inequalities driven by poverty are killing men, women and children in our poorest postcodes

Drumchapel is an ideal place to go: a community where, in the 21st Century, death typically strikes men well short of the threescore years and 10 benchmark of the Old Testament.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/health-inequalities-driven-by-poverty-are-killing/>

Edinburgh's undervalued summit

Craiglockhart is probably the least known and least visited of Edinburgh's seven major hills. It's rarely recommended as a destination for newcomers and tourists, and is notably absent in many of the walking guides to the city and Lothian.

Read more at:

<https://www.scottishreview.net/CharlieEllis652a.html>

Fiscal Sustainability Report - March 2023

This is our first report on the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Scottish Government's budget.

Read more at:

<https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/publications/fiscal-sustainability-report-march-2023/>

The rules of the road in the Highlands

The first Porsches of spring are making their way around our single-track Highland roads and we are having to adjust our driving style.

Read more at:

<https://sceptical.scot/2023/03/the-rules-of-the-road-in-the-highlands/>

£100m boost for biggest UK hydro scheme in decades

A giant hydro scheme which would double the UK's ability to store energy for long periods is taking a leap forward with a £100m investment by SSE. The proposed 92m-high dam and two reservoirs at Coire Glas in the Highlands would be Britain's biggest hydroelectric project for 40 years.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-65015217>

The SNP leadership contest has exposed a surprising level of political naivety and a party at war

For a country so electorally literate, force-fed manifestoes, caught up in the whirl of constant election campaigns, engulfed by constitutional debates, and where calls for another referendum and shouts of democracy denial have become the soundtrack of our times, the contest to crown a new leader of the SNP, and our next first minister, has exposed a surprising level of political naivety and a party at war with itself

Read more at:

<https://www.holyrood.com/editors-column/view,the-snp-leadership-contest-has-exposed-a-surprising-level-of-political-naivety-and-a-party-at-war>

SNP leadership race: How and when Scotland's next first minister gets elected  
Voting to elect the next leader of the SNP, and first minister of Scotland, begins at noon on Monday.

Read more at:

<https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view,snp-leadership-race-how-and-when-scotlands-next-first-minister-gets-elected>

Nicola Sturgeon defends her record at final FMQs

Nicola Sturgeon has defended her record in government during her final First Minister's Questions. The first minister was accused of failures on education, drug deaths, NHS waiting lists and ferries in her 286th weekly session.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-65051038>

## Electric Canadian

Port Elgin, Ontario

Video and other information on the town.

You can see this at:

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

Fort William

Video and other information on Fort William, Ontario

You can see this at:

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

Trades and Labor Congress of Canada

Report on the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention held at the Cities of Fort William and Port Arthur, Ont., September 12 to 17, inclusive, 1910. (pdf)

You can read this report at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/reportofproceedi00trad.pdf>

Reports on the Algonquin National Park of Ontario for the year 1893  
Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly. (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/reportsongonqu00onta.pdf>

Types of Farming in Canada

A Co-operative Study by the Economics Division Marketing Service and the Census Division Dominion Bureau of Statistics

You can view this study at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/agriculture/typesoffarming.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 19th day of March 2023

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26322-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-19th-day-of-march-2023>

## Electric Scotland

Fiscal Sustainability Report - March 2023

This is our first report on the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Scottish Government's budget. (pdf)

You can study this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/independence/sip/Fiscal-Sustainability-Report-March-2023.pdf>

Jessie Cadell

Novelist and Orientalist and added her two volume book for you to read.

You can learn about her and read her book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/women/jessie-cadell.htm>

Francis Cadell

Australian explorer

You can learn about him at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/men/cadell-francis.htm>

Lady Charlotte Susan Maria Bury

Novelist

You can learn about her at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/women/lady-charlotte-susan-maria-bury.htm>

The Cairngorm Mountains

By John Hill Burton (1864) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/cairngorm/cairngormmounta01burtgoog.pdf>

My Home Farm  
By Mrs J. H. Burton (1883) (pdf)

I found this a most interesting book and really enjoyed reading it and I hope you will also. You can read this book at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/agriculture/myhomefarm00burtgoog.pdf>

Burton, John Hill  
Historiographer of Scotland and also created a link to his "The Book Hunter" which also includes a memorial about him.

You can read this at:  
[https://electricScotland.com/history/other/burton\\_john\\_hill.htm](https://electricScotland.com/history/other/burton_john_hill.htm)

Lives of the Engineers  
With an account of their principle works; comprising also a history of inland communication in Britain by Samuel Smiles in three volumes. (1861)

Many Scots can be found in these volumes which you can study at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/history/livesofengineers.htm>

Independence Uncovered  
The Economic and Social Impacts of Scottish Independence 26 February 2023 (pdf)

You can read this report at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/independence/Independence-Uncovered-The-Economic-Social-Impacts-of-Scottish-Independence-26.02.23.pdf>

Scottish Society of Louisville  
Got in their March 2023 newsletter which you can read at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Louisville/index.htm>

## Story

The Homes of the Rural Students, 1866-1870.

I WRITE only about my own period, and the parishes I have known from my childhood. These were mostly remote from railways—Auchindoir, Kildrummy, Towie, Leochel-Cushnie, Glenbucket, Strathdon, Clatt, Rhynie, and the Cabrach. In 1866, these were renowned for their schoolmasters. All were University graduates proud of their degrees. The University of Aberdeen was like a great lamp illuminating these far-off hills and valleys. In the schools the clever sons of the poorest parents had their chance. They were prepared by careful masters for the bursary competition, one of the principal events of the year. The fact that there was a straight road to college from their doors raised the whole character of the schools and schoolmasters. There were little universities scattered all over the county. I may specify Clatt, to which the Rev. John Minto's reputation brought pupils from far and near. The minister of Clatt for many years kept a boarding-house for boys attending Mr. Minto's school. Mr. Minto showed the utmost kindness to any clever boys, and was always ready to help them in every way. But he did not neglect the others. He interested himself in all the children, and was loved by every one. When Mr. Minto began his long and honourable career, his salary was but £2 5 and the fees. Afterwards came better days. He and my father were of the first batch of schoolmasters who were examined for the Dick Bequest. They were told nothing of the subjects of examination, and for a long time they met on Saturdays and discussed the possibilities. Both of them passed triumphantly, and received a most welcome addition to their salaries. Mr. Minto, after his retirement, was allowed to live on in the schoolhouse with his devoted sister, and acted as clerk to the school board. That sister, careful and troubled about many things, was especially concerned with the question which of them would die first. If her brother did, she would have to leave the schoolhouse, and if she were the first to go, there would be no one to look after him. Like so many fears hers were needless, for they both died of influenza in one day. There was the school at



Kildrummy, where the Christies taught so efficiently and so long. Other parishes were not behind. In the second parish school of Auchindoir, Henry Stephen, long a most successful Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta, and R. W. Reid, now the distinguished Professor of Anatomy in the University, began Latin with me under Mr. Wilson, now Dr. Wilson of Banff. He was my first teacher, and in many respects the best. He set us to think for ourselves, and he criticized what we were reading. Thus, when we had gone over Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," he asked us to sum up and review Goldsmith's political economy. I thought then as I think now that Goldsmith was not far wrong.

I.

In the homes from which came the rural students there was a great reverence for learning apart from its rewards. The temper of the communities was the same as that of Emerson's New England. The scholar was a hero and respected as such. This gave the teachers a very high rank in the parish. They were looked up to for their knowledge. Looking back it seems to me that there was more reading and more book buying than there is now. In my time there were lamps and candles, but before that the evening light was supplied partly by the huge peat fires and partly by home-made candles and fir candles made of splinters of "rosety" fir. These had to be held by some one, generally by the herd "loon," or the travelling beggar who often got a seat by the fireside. A stand sometimes used for holding these fir candles was called a "peer man". Oil lamps or cruises with rush wicks were also used, but their illuminating power was not great. The short working days of winter were followed by a long "forenicht". This was often spent in visiting neighbours—"giein' them a forenicht"—getting and/giving the news, and entertaining one another variously. Draughts was the favourite game, and there would be singing and story-telling. But in some houses at any rate, a great deal of reading was done. At first books were read, and of these there was greater choice than might be supposed. Erskine's "Sermons," "Josephus" (a special favourite), the publications of Messrs. Chambers, and latterly the Cottage Library, published by Milner & Sowerby in Halifax, were to be seen frequently. A carpenter in my native parish had got together about 500 volumes, and he knew them. The pedlars brought round little penny books of story and song which were often bound together. The older inhabitants had an intense prejudice against novels, or, as they pronounced them, "novelles"—the accent on the second syllable. But in my boyhood, Sir Walter Scott had partly overcome this dislike, and cheap editions of the "Waverley Novels" were to be found. But the book of all books that fascinated and thrilled our village in the early sixties was a translation of Eugene Sue's "Wandering Jew". [This is available on the Internet Archive and the three volume set can be read at: <https://archive.org/search?query=Wandering+Jew> where I found the set on the top row of the page.]

Newspapers were few and expensive, but they were read with singular earnestness. My granduncle subscribed to the "Aberdeen Journal," then a weekly of eight pages with advertisements on the first page and leaders on the last. When he received the paper he commenced at the beginning, reading all the advertisements carefully through, and pursued this way page by page and column by column to the end. In the houses at night some one would read the paper to the rest, and the leading articles in particular. "The able editor" was powerful in these days. When I first went to Aberdeen I was far more interested in seeing the editors than in seeing the professors, and the first grasp of the hand from William Forsyth made me very proud.

II.

Nearly all the homes were poor, but the poverty was honourable, and not often oppressive. As one put it to me, "there was always plenty of milk and meal". There was very little money, and rents were paid with difficulty. But almost everything used by the people grew on the farm. They had oatmeal and beremeal for porridge and bread. The yearly "mairt" provided beef for the Sunday dinner and tallow for candles. Now and then a sheep was killed. There were fowls and eggs, butter, and cheese. In years of bad harvest and frosted corn, things were not so well. Before the repeal of the Corn Laws, remoter districts like the Cabrach were often on the verge of a famine. I have heard of meal being sold at Clova at a boll, and often it could not be had anywhere. I remember a man saying that one had to be very hungry before he relished bread made from frosted here. Sugar, tea, and white bread were luxuries seldom enjoyed. Clothing as well as food was largely home-grown and made. At the sheep clipping wool was kept for family use, and lint was largely grown. From the lint was made all the family underclothing, and bed and table-linen. In this way the necessary everyday clothing was provided, and for the Sabbath day there were dresses of silk which often lasted their owners a lifetime. There were travelling tailors who went round from house to house and stayed till the family wardrobe was complete for the season. Some of our students came from cottars'

houses, and there I believe the poverty was often severe.

It was when we came to Aberdeen that we felt the pinch. Parents generously supplied meal, and oatcakes, and potatoes, and eggs, but they had little money to give us. When two students went together, lodgings could be had at 2s. 6d. a week, and it was difficult to bring food below 4s. even with the provision from home. Those of us who had bursaries found that a great part was taken away for fees. If there had been a Carnegie in these days we should have paid him royal honours. My bosom friend at College was the late Dr. R. A. Neil of Cambridge, and he and I bought regularly a penny tart in Old Aberdeen at an interval between classes. By the middle of January we found that we could not, and we had to go without till February when our bursaries were paid. Neil after that used to rattle the silver pieces in his trouser pocket and declare himself to be "in easy if not affluent circumstances". We made no complaint of our poor fare, and took things as they came, but there was a tragic element in them. When the potatoes gave out and only the meal was left brave hearts sank, and I know of at least one case where a student was practically starved to death with a huge empty oatmeal barrel beside him in his little garret. Neil used to say, looking back, "We were so young and so poor". In spite of our happiness, and it was very real, I think now that we were too young and too poor.

III.

The theory of life in these homes was mainly that of a Christian stoicism. I think there was more happiness than might at first appear. The people were interested in their work, and had pleasure in doing it well. They competed with each other in the harvest field, and at the turnip hoeing. The women used to assemble from various farms to a big spinning and knitting competition. A certain amount of wool was given to each, and the one who spun it first and best was winner. There were no prizes, the honour being sufficient reward. The sheepshearing, too, was a merry time, and was followed in the evening by a feast. Then there were the enjoyments of Yeel or Christmas, New Year, Fastern evening, Clyak supper, and the rest. There were no extravagant ambitions or desires, or at least these were carefully repressed. I suppose that most proverbs tend to throw cold water on elation and pride. This is so in the famous letter of proverbs written by Lord M. to John Belford in "The History of Clarissa Harlowe". The favourite proverbs of Aberdeenshire point to a sober, moderate, and controlled attitude to life. "Ca' canny and flee laigh" is one of the most characteristic, and there are others like it.

"Mony ane speirs the gait 'at they ken."

"The thing ye dinna ken disna anger ye."

"Better hand oot than pit oot."

"Learn young, learn fair, Learn auld, learn sair."

"Little wit in the heid makes mony traivels ti the"— said when one has to return for something forgotten.

"Ye nicht see that wi ae ee an' it stappit in wi fog."

The expression of emotion was severely restrained, and decorous love-making was as far as possible enforced. A certain Cabrach farmer in his youth asked a woman named Charlotte to marry him. Charlotte refused him with scorn, and he found another bride. 'After a time his wife died, and he proposed a second time to Charlotte. She again refused him still more scornfully. As he said, "she fufied an' blew at me". He married another and was again left a widower. A third time he went to Charlotte who was now advanced in years. She accepted him with alacrity. As he said, "Fa' was franker than Charlotte?" They were married and she long outlived him.

An elderly man the day before his marriage said to the bride, "Noo Meggie, gin ye binna as willin as me, aye yea an williner, I'm nae seekin' ye". She did not reply like Mr. Benson's heroine, "Utterly and entirely and absolutely proud and happy and content!" They speak more tersely in the Cabrach, but she was "williner" and the marriage proceeded.

It was counted most unlucky to praise a thing very highly. If that was done evil was sure to follow. "Forspeaking" it was called. The idea was, perhaps, that there was a little envy in the mind of the praiser, and although he spoke fair he was wishing ill to befall.

It must not for one moment be supposed that the undemonstrativeness I have spoken of implied a deficiency in

affection. The attachments of Northern hearts were deep and tender and faithful. Father, mother, brothers and sisters made heavy sacrifices to help forward the student of their families, and these sacrifices were made with the utmost cheerfulness. I know a farm servant who saved pounds from his wages to send to the brother in Aberdeen.

This temper was continued in the students. We were not hero worshippers, nor addicted to order ourselves lowly and reverently to our betters. The fact that a man was a professor gave him no glamour, but if he was able and did his work well he was warmly recognized. Some of us were too serious. We were like the soldiers of old who went into battle "with no fear and little hope". I lodged for a year with Andrew Craik, who afterwards was fourth wrangler at Cambridge, and died in the hour of his triumph. He confided to me as a great secret that he hoped to be one day Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. I said nothing but privately thought he was presumptuous. Once in a moment of enthusiasm a mother said to me of her son, "Henry will be a professor yet," and so it came to pass. But as a rule such outspokenness was exceedingly rare, and most of us were willing to be thankful for a livelihood. "A buddy's glad to get their heid in onywe," was a characteristic saying of the time. We had the blessing of those who expect little and are therefore not disappointed.

IV.

I do not wish to discuss theological questions, but I am strongly of opinion that our great Aberdeenshire genius, George MacDonald, exaggerated the Calvinism of his country. One woman I remember in Lumsden who lost three little children by diphtheria. "You can trust them to God's mercy," said a sympathizing neighbour. "I can trust them to His justice," was the reply.

But I am persuaded that the religion of the period and the place produced some of the noblest types of character I have ever known. All the witnesses are agreed in their testimony to this fact. George MacDonald is one, and that far more typical Aberdonian, William Alexander, is another. Even Mr. Watson who diverged from the Presbyterian creed is generous. Of one believer he says: "Briefly, his life was the Beatitudes in full and fragrant bloom". I can call up one venerable figure after another of whom I could say with assurance, "He never did naething that wasna' well intended". To know the higher natures of the world the students of my time did not need to go beyond their own parishes.

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

END

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair