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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 7th, 2024

Electric Scotland News

Grass is at last growing in my back garden. It's only been some 20 years since I tried to grow it and after many years sowing seed and tilling the soil it's at long last starting to look like the beginnings of a lawn.

The planting of flowers in the front beds last year did wonders this year with even my neighbours commenting on how nice they look. I note a near neighbour who appears to be from Wales is working on her front garden. When she first moved in she flew the British flag and this year that has been replaced by the Welsh flag. Perhaps my own Saltire flag inspired her?

There is an increasing amount of homeless people in Chatham and an increase in drug users so not good for the area. There was an article in the recent issue of the Chatham Voice newspaper entitled "Parking lot camp a public display of homelessness" and you can read it if you wish at:

<https://chathamvoice.com/2024/05/29/parking-lot-camp-a-public-display-of-homelessness/>

I visited Pardo Villa Acres this week as I am hooked on their chocolate coated peanuts. I did a photo shoot of their premises some 20 years ago now which you can see at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/ck3.htm>

Mrs Pardo and her husband retired some years ago and her daughter now runs it. I still enjoy their potato and onion bread but be advised that if you want it you should phone them to ensure they will have it for you as it can sell out pretty fast.

80th anniversary of D-Day at Juno Beach | CBC News Special

Veterans of the Second World War return to Juno Beach on the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, which is considered to be the beginning of the end of the war. CBC News chief correspondent Adrienne Arseneault hosts special coverage of events commemorating the anniversary, as some of the few remaining veterans return to Juno Beach.

You can watch this at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMR318b7qfc>

The astonishing achievement of D-Day

Today marks the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when British and Allied troops stormed the beaches of Normandy in a bloody and grinding struggle to liberate Europe. The scale and complexity of the invasion are astonishing even now, and it ought to deter any country such as China contemplating a major seaborne attack.

You can read this article at:

<https://archive.is/7l2bu#selection-1269.0-1269.91>

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 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.

Here is what caught my eye this week...

The benefits of national service

From Keir Starmer to ardent libertarians, the Tories' plan to reintroduce national service has been met with much derision. However, it is currently too easy for young people to lead a life dependent on the state. The sense of adventure and independence national service would offer our nation's youth could reverse this.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/national-service-is-the-change-young-people-need/>

Logan demands action as computer teaching falls

The Scottish Government's chief entrepreneurial adviser Mark Logan has called for urgent action after new research revealed that computer science teaching in schools is in decline.

Read more at:

<https://dailybusinessgroup.co.uk/2024/05/logan-demands-action-as-computer-teaching-falls/>

The new Nigel Farage

Rather than stay on as honorary president of Reform UK, Nigel Farage has taken over as leader and announced that he will stand as an MP in Clacton-on-Sea. For a man who was once described as 'thin-skinned and aggressive', he now seems to have adopted what used to be Boris Johnson's secret political weapon: optimism.

Read more at:

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/this-is-a-new-nigel-farage/>

Donald Trump welcome in Scotland if he becomes US president, says SNP Westminster leader

Stephen Flynn gave the green light to the felon coming to Scotland after November's election

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/donald-trump-welcome-scotland-becomes-32962815>

Stars descend on Dior's first Scottish fashion show since 1955

French fashion house Dior has returned to Scotland for its first catwalk show in the country in almost seven decades.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv223y3x68go>

Why Canadians are angry with their biggest supermarket

Canada is searching for an international grocer to enter its domestic market, after years of anger from shoppers over high food prices, much of it directed at one of the big players. But would an Aldi or a Lidl solve the problem?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd11ywyg6p0o>

D-Day: Scots piper plays on Normandy beach at exact moment landings started 80 years ago

Major Trevor Macey-Lillie honoured those who fell during the largest seaborne invasion in history, performing Highland Laddie as he stepped onto the shore.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/d-day-scots-piper-plays-32971402>

Conrad Black: University of Toronto takes a stand against the mob

This, at last, is leadership from a quarter where there has been little enough of it

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/1voQ3>

Kate Forbes quizzed over £450m unspent EU funds

Ms Baillie hit back saying while it is likely Scotland is due to return 28% of the funding, Wales is on course to return 9% of its money, England 6% and Northern Ireland 2%.

Read more at:

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/westminster/24370699.fmq-s-kate-forbes-quizzed-450m-unspent-eu-funds/>

Electric Canadian

Royal Military College of Canada

Added the June, 1938 edition

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/royalmilitarycollege.htm>

The Golden North

A Vast Country of Inexhaustible Gold Fields, and a Land of Illimitable Cereal and Stock Raising Capabilities by C. R. Tuttle (1897) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/goldennorthvastc00tuttuoft.pdf>

The Railway and Marine World

Devoted to Steam and Electric Railway, Marine, Grain Elevator, Express, Telegraph and Contractors' Interests. General Index for 1908 (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/canadiantranspor1908donm.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 2nd day of June 2024 - Civilization

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26497-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-2nd-day-of-june-2024-civilization>

Captain John MacGregor

Awarded the Victoria Cross in the Great War.

You can learn more about him at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/JohnMacGregor.htm>

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs

Added the 1924-25 edition

You can read this edition at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/annual/index.htm>

Electric Scotland

Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd

Added a small biography of this Scottish Divine and also a link to a book by his son which highlights his work.

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/parson/index.htm>

Choice Notes from "Notes and Queries"

Folk Lore (1859) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/parson/index.htm>

The Caledonian Magazine

Added the 1911 edition

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/america/caledonianmag.htm>

Hylton Newsletter

Got in his newsletter for June 2024 in which he is on the hunt for Fairies in Scotland.

You can read this at:

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

The Archbishops of St. Andrews

By John Herkless, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews and Robert Kerr Hanny, Lecturer in Ancient History in the University of St. Andrews in 4 volumes (1907)

You can read these volumes at:

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

Scotland's Free Church

A historical retrospect and memorial of the disruption by George Buchanan Ryley with a summary of Free Church progress and Finance 1843-1893 by John M. McCandlish F.R.S.E. late president of the Faculty of Actuaries (1893) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/scotlandsfreechu00ryleuoft.pdf>

An Ordinary of Arms

Contained in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland by James Balfour Paul, Lyon King of Arms (1895) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/heraldry/ordinaryofarmsco00paul.pdf>

Outlines of Human Life

Sketched by Hercules Cramond, M. D., In the Thirtieth Year of his Age (1775) (pdf)

You can read this at:

https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/outlines-of-human-life-s_cramond-hercules_1785.pdf

The Annals of Banff

Volume 2 By William Cramond (pdf)

Found volume 2 at last and you can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/70/aberdeen/annalsofbanffcom02cram.pdf>

Clan Watson Society

Got in their April 2024 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricScotland.com/familytree/newsletters/watson/index.htm>

Story

AMONG THE FARTHEST HEBRIDES

We had left Tobermory sleeping quietly in a bath of sunshine, its well-wooded bay looked cool and green, reminding one of Isola Bella, so transparent is the atmosphere and so brilliant the summer light in the western islands. High overhead a Marconigram receiver—if that be the proper scientific term—casts its reflection on the smooth waters, beneath which divers are zealously seeking the treasures of the Armada, thus strangely do the centuries jostle each other. Over against us are the dark hills of Morven with their sweet reminiscences of a Highland Parish, where a family of famous Scottish preachers spent their happy boyhood. Bugged Ardnamurchan stands boldly forth, the type of the happy warrior steadfastly battling against storm and oppression—a cloud of spume by day, a warning beacon by night to warn and direct the erring mariner. Our antiquated little cargosteamer doggedly thrusts her blunt nose through the great green waves, and puffs and pants on her nine-knot course with the plodding determination of struggling talent. After passing the low-lying islands of Coll and Tiree, there arise to the north the weirdly-shaped outlines of Eigg, Muck, Bum and Canna, with the blue hills of Skye in the distance. We are out of the track of commercial shipping, so there are no giant liners, no picturesque “windjammers,” nothing but a row of blue-pointed hills showing up against the western skyline, like the smokestacks of giant warships sailing hull down. These are the distant Hebrides,—rightly considered, a range of mountains raising their rocky heads above the green twilight of the sea to offer a precarious foothold to a few hardy humans, and a peaceful abode to countless myriads of sea-fowl. The solid

land we are slowly approaching is Barra, the chief of a little group of islands, one of which, Muldoanich, guards the entrance to Castlebay and is uninhabited save by flocks of those hardy sheep whose fleece provides the famous Harris tweed.

Another little island,

VATERSAY,

lying to the south of Barra, has recently been invaded by a few starving crofters, who have dared to seek here the smiling tillage which the larger island denied. Standing in the middle of the bay of Castlebay, is a little rocky islet surmounted by an ancient keep, in whose shadow the seal and the sea-mew listlessly enjoy the pleasures of digestion, and in the waters around are moored fishing-boats of every type to be met with near our shores. Rising almost from the water's edge is Mount Heaval, whose cone of a thousand odd feet looks more imposing and majestic than many a peak of greater altitude situated in a hilly country. The strong odour of fish offal proclaims this to be no gilt-edged abode of touristy, yet it is an interesting land well worth our closest scrutiny and observation.

The traveller who finds his way to the rocky island of Barra has many surprises awaiting him. At first he fancies himself in Galway, with its primitive cabins and emerald fields of immature oats. The inhabitants, too, are Irish in appearance and Roman Catholic in religion, only a few families being Protestant. Again, the wiry hill-ponies with pack-saddles and fish-creels filled with stores remind one of the Pyrenees and the Spanish muleteer. These ponies, sure-footed as goats, are well adapted for climbing the rocky pathways of an island where there is but one well-made road. The cows watched by some aged dame or tethered to a little patch of pasture no bigger than a parlour floor, recall similar scenes among the fiords of Norway, and the Norwegian character is further emphasised by the wooden fish-curing sheds planted along the shores of Castlebay.

THE STUDENT OF FOLKLORE,

if he be acquainted with Gaelic, will learn from the people many a quaint legend of brownie and kelpie, and the antiquary may here observe the ancient implements of husbandry in vogue more than a century ago on the mainland, when the sickle and the flail, the spindle and distaff, were important and necessary adjuncts of household life.

Words are powerless to describe the exceeding poverty of the soil. Green grow the rashes everywhere, a sure token of insufficient drainage or of sour bogland. The sole crops are oats and potatoes, these latter being grown in trenches called "lazy beds," a mode of culture that obtains where the depth of soil is such that the spade instead of the plough must be employed. Fields of rye and barley are to be met with in the west, where the wind-blown sand, mixing with the soil, offers a suitable habitat for these cereals. Old and young climb the hills to dig the turf which forms their fuel, or to cut the wild mountain grasses for their only cow, whose existence must be as exiguous as that of her human owners. The bed-rock crops out everywhere, forming islands of desolation in the midst of very tiny lakes of scanty tillage. On this stony ground the grain springs up as rapidly as that spoken of in the Evangile, and is as soon withered up by the fervent heat of the sun. Fields of golden marigold are beautiful to the aesthetic observer, but are less satisfying to the hungry crofter. No pleasant

WAYSIDE BLOSSOMS

charm the sight or woo the imagination, none but the ill-weeds that grow apace to vex the weary husbandman, the burdock, dead-nettle, dodder, and all manner of tares fit only to be bound into bundles and cast into the fire. There are no trees except in tiny glens, where attempts at afforestation have proved abortive. Every available foot of ground is tilled, but there are still many waste places gay with sparse heather, bog asphodel, and snowy canna.

To compensate for the poverty of the soil, Providence sends annually to these shores, shoals of the finest herring. What gold is to Klondyke, the herring is to Barra, and especially to Castlebay, the chief centre of population in the south of the island. These large and beautiful fish are too dear for home consumption, but, when cured, are shipped to Russia and Germany, where they are almost as expensive as caviare. It is somewhat surprising to hear the inhabitants of this wind-swept island speak as fluently of marks and roubles as we might of shillings and sixpences. The fishing begins about the first week of May and lasts through the summer, for July marks the close of the harvest. The prices of the herring vary according to the quality of the fish and the abundance or scarcity of the catch, but, when we observe that the high-water mark is something over £4 per cran, it will be understood at once that the consumers are not moujiks. Fishermen from all parts of the kingdom congregate like gulls to collect these shoals of silvery beauties, and disappear as mysteriously when the waters cease to yield their harvest, so that naturally much of the wealth returns with the strangers, and the island is not greatly benefited thereby.

Although the geographical names undoubtedly point to an epoch when this was the home of

FIERCE NORWEGIAN JARLS,

there is very little trace of Teutonic admixture in the Celtic inhabitants of to-day. The people, though poor, are bright and hospitable, and are endowed with a large share of that charm of manner which seems to be the birthright of all Celtic races. They appear very tenacious of their mother tongue, for one seldom hears English except among the strangers whom trade has brought to the island. During the winter the women and children are left to guard the tiny garth, while husbands and stalwart sons migrate to the shipbuilding towns on the Clyde, or earn a living as sailors on the large liners, but they never forget the stone cabin, for they always endeavour to send some of their small economies home to keep away the ever-baying wolf. It is no unusual thing to enter into conversation with the simple-minded peasant and find that, having seen all the world's famous beauty spots he prefers to end his days in the surroundings in which he first saw the light, and for which he experiences a heart-hunger we city-bred people wot not of.

The western shores of the island are very beautiful, with the jade waters of the Atlantic dashing in constant fury or murmurous fret on sandy creek or everlasting rock, but the winter storms have raised up dunes of sand, which threaten to overwhelm what little remains for man to cultivate. The artist will find this a dreamland of fairy-mist and divine colour, and the social reformer will find here many a moral wherewith to adorn his platform oratory. Glasgow. J. P. Park.

END

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

Alastair