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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for August 16th, 2024

Electric Scotland News

Tragedies make for bad policy. Southport is no exception

By Matthew Feeney, Head of Tech and Innovation, Centre for Policy Studies

Tragedies make for bad policy. The recent killing of three girls in Southport and the subsequent riots are not exceptions.

Since the attack, riots and violent protests have taken place across England, with many participants chanting anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant slogans. Some of the rioters attacked hotels where asylum seekers were staying and we have seen street clashes between far-right protesters, British Asian communities, and counter protesters, as have multiple incidents of arson and looting. So far, hundreds of rioters have been arrested and court proceedings have begun.

The turmoil has prompted predictable and unwise calls for more regulations and restrictions of online speech. Such calls centre on two 'justifications', firstly that misinformation about the attacker was spreading rapidly online, including the incorrect naming of the attacker, and secondly that social media was used to organise rallies and protests which saw violence on the streets of several towns and cities.

Calls for more regulation focus on the Online Safety Act (OSA), which Parliament passed last year. The law, one of the most ambitious, lengthy, and complex pieces of internet regulation in the world, was heralded by the last government as a means to make the UK "the safest place in the world to be online". Yet for some, that doesn't seem to be enough. As awful as events of the last week have been, MPs should be wary of rushing to legislation in response. They risk only making a deeply flawed and anti-liberal approach to the internet much worse.

To be fair to some, the OSA has yet to be fully implemented, such is its size and complexity. Unsurprisingly, when the government mandates that a regulator come up with a code of practice for a global communications infrastructure technology used by billions of people and thousands of businesses and other institutions it's going to take a while for that regulator to come up with guidance that makes sense.

But many commenters do not want to wait. They see speech they do not like and they want it offline yesterday. Environmental activist and journalist George Monbiot took to X (formerly Twitter) to argue for OSA amendments "to tighten the law on incitement to racial hatred and racial violence". Journalist Paul Mason wants the government to "enact the full Online Safety Act now, no more consultations", an odd request given that the law requires the consultations Mason would like to steamroll.

Nevertheless, Mason's comments and his follow-up claim that he'd be happy to see X and Telegram taken down to avoid riots, reveals an eagerness for the government to censor millions of people in the name of safety. He's hardly alone. Earlier this week the lawyer Jessica Simor took to Twitter and suggested that the

prime minister introduce legislation to ban X.

Elon Musk didn't help matters when he posted claims that the UK is on the verge of a civil war and condemned "Two Tier Policing", as well as the UK's laws that allow people to be arrested for comments made on social media. But most of the concerns about online safety amid the riots concerned the spread of hateful content, misinformation, and disinformation.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said earlier this week that a "longer-term debate about the wider legal framework" concerning such content is required. This will come as something of a shock to those who have paid attention to policy debates on online speech over the past few years.

The OSA was the product of years of hearings, debates, whitepapers, consultations, etc. The result of all of this work was a piece of legislation that, when fully in force, will represent the most significant and burdensome piece of internet legislation in the English-speaking world. One wonders what a "wider legal framework" would look like.

One possibility is that the government will pursue legislation that amends the OSA's "false communications" offence. The offence currently criminalises knowingly sending a false message intended "to cause non-trivial psychological or physical harm to a likely audience". Much of the content associated with the riots of the past week was no doubt intended to cause harm, but it is less clear that many of the senders knew that the information was false.

MPs might also want to look at the OSA's definition of "Priority content that is harmful to children", which includes "content which is abusive and which targets" race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or gender reassignment. Following the events of last week, some MPs might be tempted to add migration or citizenship status to the list.

Such MPs should reconsider.

Content moderation is complex, and very little harmful content is harmful by definition. Footage of rioting, racist comments, and the spread of misinformation and disinformation can be valuable in specific contexts. Police, charities, researchers, and others might wish to share such content in order to educate or warn the public. But most of the popular social media sites host so much content that they rely on AI-based content moderation tools to take down content that violates their rules. At scale, this inevitably leads to many false positives. The longer the list of content social media sites are expected to tackle, the longer the list of false positives will be.

That would be an unwelcome outcome. First, such a move would remove valuable content from the eyes of law-abiding citizens and residents and stifle important debates and discussions about ongoing social issues. Second, it would be unlikely to work and encourage those most intent on conducting violence onto platforms police struggle to surveil and infiltrate. As news from India has shown, it is possible to stir up deadly mobs on encrypted platforms such as WhatsApp.

Fortunately for the police, many of the rioters seemed keen to film themselves committing their crimes and such footage inevitably finds its way online. Such rioters should not be surprised if they hear unexpected knocks on their doors in the coming days.

Unfortunately for the rest of us, we are in a position of taking a look at the events following the Southport stabbing and wondering how a tragedy prompted so many people to commit violence and public disorder. No doubt such reflections will require us to look at a range of issues, many of which are uncomfortable to discuss. But such discussions need to occur in the freest environment possible if we are to have a realistic chance of tackling complex social issues in a robust and honest way. A crackdown on social media would only hinder that goal.

Medal Table at the Paris Olympics...

Order	Country	Gold/Silver/Bronze/Total
1.	United States of America	40/44/42/126
2.	People's Republic of China	40/27/24/91
3.	Japan	20/12/13/45
4.	Australia	18/19/16/53
5.	France	16/26/22/64
6.	Netherlands	15/7/12/34
7.	Great Britain	14/22/29/65
8.	Republic of Korea	13/9/10/32
9.	Italy	12/13/15/40
10.	Germany	12/13/8/33
11.	New Zealand	10/7/3/20
12.	Canada	9/7/11/27

You can get more details at: <https://olympics.com/en/paris-2024>

Whiteboard Animations: Haggis
A video from Chicago Scots & Caledonia Senior Living

View this at:
https://youtu.be/D33aQ-S4awU?si=x-mxQ5AWh_UA6XTC

Inflation rate in the UK is now 2.2%, Canada is 2.7%, USA 2.9%, Australia is 3.8%, New Zealand is 4.7%, EU is 2.7%.

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...

Jordon B Peterson
Reaction to Supreme Court of Canada Ruling and Mandated Re-Education

Watch this at:
<https://youtu.be/IDOYglqeTck?si=IEL9CxL3VRDCRZwc>

Why Scotland may have avoided far-right unrest
For more than a week, far-right violence has been flaring up in cities in England and Northern Ireland - but not so far in Scotland. It begs the question, are we immune north of the border?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy9ej889w20o>

Conrad Black: Time for the climate insanity to stop
We have been racing to destroy our standard of living to avert a crisis that never materialized

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/pSMOC>

Revealed: The crumbling NHS boards shortchanged by hundreds of millions of pounds
EXCLUSIVE: New figures revealed as health boards across the country make devastating cuts to local services.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/cnhs-boards-shortchanged/>

Hundreds line streets to celebrate Scotland's biggest week of bagpipes
Thousands of people are expected to visit performances in Glasgow during The World Pipe Band Championships and Piping Live!.

Read more at:

<https://news.stv.tv/west-central/hundreds-line-streets-in-glasgow-to-celebrate-launch-of-the-world-pipe-band-championships-and-piping-live>

ELON MUSK Interviews DONALD TRUMP
This interview starts around 40 minutes into this transmission

Watch this at:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/bMPbYusoTh8?si=cOull9V25pnpXT1l>

Scotland's best beer crowned at World Beer Awards
The winners of the prestigious World Beer Awards 2024 have been announced, and one Scottish lager has been named as the best in the country - beating out Tennent's.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/scotland-now/scotlands-best-beer-crowned-world-33452027>

Scottish education has become a national embarrassment
Our schools have been the victims of Holyrood's political factionalism.

Read more at:

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/scotland/2024/08/under-the-snp-scottish-education-has-become-a-national-embarrassment>

GERS 2023-24: The results are in!
The latest Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland 2023-24 statistics - that normally provoke a bitter and unrewarding spat over their significance for Scottish independence and/or the Union - came out on August 14 with little or no trace of late summer madness.

Read more at:

<https://sceptical.scot/2024/08/gers-2023-24-the-results-are-in/>

Headteachers given new powers to ban mobile phones in Scottish schools
Scottish Government issues guidance that empowers teachers to impose a full ban on the usage of mobile

phones on the school estate.

Read more at:

<https://news.stv.tv/scotland/headteachers-given-new-powers-to-ban-mobile-phones-in-scottish-schools>

Fear and favour

Are the police guilty of a two tier approach? They are if their own Police Race Action Plan is to be believed

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/fear-and-favour/>

Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band wins 2024 European Championship in Perth
The 2024 European Pipe Band Championship competitions were held on the South Inch in Perth, Scotland on 11 August. Large crowds and perfect weather endorsed this spacious green space beside the River Tay an ideal venue. The pipe band competitions were combined with the Perth Highland Games. The event was organised by Perth Highland Games, Perth and Kinross Council and the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association.

Watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/cs7ULjrV6Ho?si=diiyyvBqvcSOHH8m>

Electric Canadian

Existing Difficulties in the Government of the Canadas

By J. A. Roebuck, M. P. (1836) (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/existingdifficul00roeb_1.pdf

Canada's Part in the Great War

2nd edition, July 1919 (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/canadaspartingre00cana_2.pdf

English America

Pictures of Canadian places and people by Samuel Phillips Day in two volumes. Impressions of Canadian social institutions, politics and industrial development in 1862. (1864)

On the 6th of May, 1862, I embarked from Liverpool for Quebec, in the Hibernian, one of the Montreal Ocean Steam-Ship Company's vessels. Her appointments were excellent, while her magnificent saloon and large, lofty state-rooms are, I may safely say, unrivalled. Such advantages, apart from a plentiful if not a luxurious table, can scarcely be overrated during a voyage even of twelve days' duration.

You can read these volumes at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/english-america.htm>

Farm and Ranch Review

Western Canada's Pioneer Agricultural Magazine, Founded in 1905 by Charles W. Peterson. Popular and respected Calgary-based monthly periodical focused on Western-Canadian agriculture founded by Malcolm Geddes, E. L. Richardson, and C. W. Peterson in 1904 and in print from 1905-1966. Tied to the Country Life Movement.

Added the July 1951 edition which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/alberta/FarmandRanchReview.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 11th day of August 2024 - the Ex

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26524-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-11th-day-of-august-2024-the-ex>

Harvesting 1000s of morel mushrooms in the Canadian wildfire wilderness

Morel mushrooms are by far my favourite mushroom to eat! In June 2024 I travelled to British Columbia in Canada to meet up with some commercial mushroom foragers and we found SO many! Added this video to the foot of our Agriculture page.

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/agriculture/index.htm>

The Beaver Magazine

Added Volume 1 No. 8 (1921) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/beavervol1issue8.pdf>

Electric Scotland

A no-nonsense look at Scotland's most famous island: The Isle of Skye

A video by Steve Marsh which I've added to our Skye page at:

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

Controversial Issues in Scottish History

A Contrast of the Early Chronicles with the Works of Modern Historians by William H. Gregg (1910) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/controversialiss00greg_0.pdf

Robert Harry McIntire

Author of several books on the MacIntyre's on the Internet Archive.

You can borrow them from the Internet Archive at:

<https://archive.org/search?query=creator:%22McIntire,%20Robert%20Harry,%201915-%22>

Descendants of Philip McIntire

A Scottish Highlander who was deported by Oliver Cromwell following the battle of Dunbar, September 3, 1650, and settled at Reading, Mass., about 1660 by Robert Harry McIntire (1941) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/webclans/m/descendentsofphi00mcin.pdf>

The Archeological Review

By George Laurence Gomme in 4 volumes from 1888.

THE objects for which this Review is established are above all things practical. We believe that, as it gets known and as its influence increases, it will become necessary to every student. It occupies no ground held by other periodicals; it seeks no ends for which there already exist adequate means of accomplishment.

You can read these at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/antiquary/Archeological-Review.htm>

Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
For the year 1842.

No General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has ever met in circumstances of profounder solemnity, or with prospects more overclouded. Enemies determined and ferocious ; treacherous and heartless defection in the ranks of the professed upholders of the truth ; civil power glorying in its sacrilegious usurpation of spiritual authority, and eagerly rushing on to fresh invasions of ecclesiastical order; the Executive of the State in league with her enemies, and proclaiming its resolution to enforce what it calls existing law against her to the uttermost! No outlook could well be gloomier—no circumstances more solemn.

You can read this at:

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

Kilts & Cabers: Scottish Highland Games
Video presentation on the Central Florida Scottish Highland Games 2024

You can watch this video at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/america/Lunch_and_Learn_Kilts_and_Capers.HD.mov

Clan Kidd

They got in touch to clarify the origin of the clan and have added this information to their page at:

<https://electricscotland.com/webclans/htol/kidd2.html>

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

By James Hogg with a detail of curious traditionary facts, and other evidence, by the editor (1824) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/other/privatememoirsco00hoggrich.pdf>

Archeological Sketches in Scotland

by Captain T. P. White, R.E., F.R.S. Edin., F.S.A. Scot. of the Ordnance Survey (1872) in two volumes. District of Kintyre (1872) and District of Knapdale and Gigha (1874)

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/Archeological-Sketches.htm>

Kidd Society

Added their 2024 newsletter which you can read at:

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

To-Days's Pictorial of Alexander Campbell
And the Christian Churches (1909) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bible/todayspictorials00john.pdf>

Thoughts on the Union between England & Scotland

By Albert V. Dicey, K.C., M.A., Hon. D.C.L. Oxford, LL.D. (Hon.) Cambridge, Glasgow and Edinburgh Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford and Robert S. Rait, C.B.E., Historiographer Royal for Scotland, Professor of Scottish History and Literature, in the University of Glasgow (1920)

In 1603 James VI. of Scotland succeeded on the death of Elizabeth to the English crown as James I. of England. Hence arose the so-called union of Crowns. Under this union the King of England was the same person as the King of Scotland. But, as King of England, he had, constitutionally, no authority in Scotland, and as King of Scotland, he had no authority in England. Hence it resulted that no law passed by the English Parliament had operation in Scotland, and no law passed by the Scottish Parliament had operation in England. In 1707 was passed first by the Parliament of Scotland, and then by the Parliament of England, the Act of Union. This statute abolished the separate Parliament of England and also the separate Parliament of Scotland, and brought into existence the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and, from a legal point of view, the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Hence the Parliament of Great Britain had, after the Union, authority to legislate for every part of Great Britain and for every country which had immediately before the Union been subject either to the King of England or to the King of Scotland, or, to use a modern expression, for every part of the British Empire.

This essay is concerned in one way or another wholly with the Act of Union, and treats of (1) the Scottish parliamentary government from 1603 to 1707; (2) the passing of the Act of Union, 1703-1707; (3) the results of the Act of Union, 1707-1832.

You can read this essay at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/england/union.htm>

A Tour in Scotland 1769

Third Edition, By Thomas Pennant (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/books/pdf/toursinScotland.pdf>

A True Friend

Reflections on Life, Character and Conduct by Archibald J. Campbell (1872) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/truefriendreflec00camp.pdf>

Story

THE FIRST LORD REAY

SIR DONALD MACKAY of Farr, raised to the Peerage as Lord Reay in 1628, was a notable man in his day and generation. Strange stories regarding him are still told by the peasantry of the Mackay country. By many of his contemporaries he was believed to be in close communion with Auld Nick, and it is said that all the fairies, witches, and wizards of the north were ever ready to obey his slightest behest. Aided thus powerfully he might have been a great benefactor of his county, but his schemes for the improvement of Sutherland were constantly thwarted by the "good men" of the district, whose long prayers on more than one occasion caused a stampede among Sir Donald's fairy labourers.

He did not follow in the beaten path of his ancestors, and this, in a measure, accounts for his extraordinary reputation. The hot blood of his forbears led them to pillage and murder their neighbours. They made

surreptitious raids into Sutherland, Assynt, or Caithness, and with a “strong hand” lifted the “marts” and the “muttons” of these countries. Upon occasion they would patch up their petty feuds by the sacrifice of a sister’s ora daughter’s happiness, and, descending from their rugged mountains, lead their “tail” to fight in the forefront of Scotland’s battle.

Times were changed. A politic marriage and a timely death had placed the Stuart upon the English throne. The Earls of Sutherland and Caithness had become too powerful to be attacked with impunity, and the Chief of the Mackays sought out “fresh fields and pastures new.” Sir Donald had heard of the fame of the King of Denmark, and, buckling on his broadsword, determined to fight under the man whom he describes as “ane resolutt soldett.” The “Bratach” of the Mackays was unfurled in a foreign land, and the slogan of the clan struck terror into a foreign foe. On many a hard-fought field Sir Donald and his men distinguished themselves; and when he returned to Britain his fame preceded him. An impecunious monarch scented the hard-won gold from afar, and an accommodating subject had his name inscribed in the Roll of Peers. As Lord Reay, the Chief of the Mackays returned to Germany surrounded by the chivalry of the north. But dark days were in store for him.

The gentlemen of Fife of about three centuries ago had an evil reputation as slanderers and tale-bearers. The great chief of Kintail, and the two Island Kings of the west, Macleod and Macdonald, each became victims of the unbridled tongues of these busybodies. Little wonder therefore that “they swair a grete aith to heid the fyrst Fifer” who crossed their path, or set foot on their domains. Another Highland Chief when in the zenith of his fame had his honour tarnished. The story of the dispute between Lord Reay and Ramsay is dark and involved. It would appear that Ramsay accused Reay of certain treasonable speeches in reference to the levies raised by the Marquis of Hamilton for the assistance of the King of Sweden. Ramsay affirmed that Reay had said Hamilton’s troops “war intendit for som uthir purposss quhilk wold break out in its awin tym” — darkly hinting at an attempt on Hamilton’s part to claim the throne. Accuser and accused being brought face to face, in the presence of the King, mutual recriminations ensued, and, in the result, the indignant Highland Chief challenged Ramsay to mortal combat. A High Court of Chivalry was specially constituted for the occasion, and the 20th November, 1631, was fixed as the date of the trial. From the records of the period, we learn that Reay appeared before the Court, ushered in by the herald, and accompanied with his sureties—Sir Pierce Crosby, Sir Walter Crosby, Sir William Forbes, Sir Robert Gordon, and Sir William Evers. He was “apparelled in black velvet trimmed with silver buttons, his sword in a silver embroidered belt, and his order of a Scottish baronet about his neck, and so, with reverence, entered into his pew, his counsel, Dr Reeves, standing by.”

It is satisfactory to learn that the gallant chief behaved, as became the head of a warlike clan, “like himself (tall, swarthy, black, but comely) very port-like, and of staid countenance.” Ramsay was ushered in by another herald, his sureties being Lord Roxburgh and Lord Abercorn, “and his deport like himself, stern and brave, a fair, ruddy, yellow-headed bush of hair; his apparel scarlet, overlaced with silver, the ground hardly discerned, and lined with sky-coloured plush, but unarmed without a sword. After his reverence to the Court, he faced the appellant, who alike sterned a countenance at him.”

The sentence of the Court was given as follows:—

“The Lord Constable [Earl of Lindsey] taking the appeal in his hands, and folding it up, put it into the glove which the Lord Reay has cast forth in the Court for a pawn in this behalf, and held the Bill and glove in his right hand, and in his left hand the answer and glove of David Ramsay, and then joining the Bill and answer and the gloves, and folding them together, he, with the Earl Marshal [Earl of Arundel] adjudged a duel between the parties.”

The duel was to be fought on the 12th April following, in the Tuttlefield, “between sun and sun.” The king and Court were to be present. The weapons were to be—“a long sword, four foot and a half in length, hilt and all, in breadth, two inches; a short sword, a yard and four inches in length, hilt and all, in breadth, two inches; a pike, fifteen foot in length, head and all; a dagger, nineteen inches in length, hilt and all, in breadth an inch.” These weapons were “each of them to be with a pointbut the combatants “might abate of the length and breadth if

they thought fit.”

The day of trial was fast approaching, and Lord Reay, like many another, experienced how fitful a thing was popular favour. Friends, relations, and those who were wont to fawn upon him in the heyday of his prosperity, now held aloof, and the gallant chief, desirous to appear in a manner befitting his birth and quality, addresses the following pathetic letter to the Earl of Carlisle:—

“Right Honorable,—May it please yor honor that a reall frend is best knowne in aduersitie. I have in all this tyme of my trialles and trubles reserved yor lordship to the after shott as the surest piller of my fortunes under god and our gracious soveraign our king. Good my lord soe is my present estate that I am brought soe loe an ow of meanes and monies that I know not what way to subsist until the day of my triall. Neither know I what way to furnisch myselfe wth any kind of equipage fitt for my birth or quality except his Matie be so graciouslie pleased as to cause to be given to me part of the monies wch is dew unto me. I caused a petition to be presented to his Matie, but had noe answer thereof so that I most humblie request yor lordship to present this my other petition to his Matie, and to return me an answer by this noble bearer my frend what I may expect seeing the time is so neare, and I left destitute of all other helpe, by reason that I did only trust into those monies due unto me heere. I think it the greatest of my misfortunes that I am brought into this straight wch I think I have to blutt paper with. I have received fifteene hundred pound since I came last into England, and his Matie oweth me as yet two thousand five hundred pounds. I desire now but the odd five hundred pound to do my present business wch is his Maties owne service more then mine and I am willing not to presse the other two thousand pound till God makes an end of this trialles. Although his Matie did owe me none yet without offence I may say his Matie is obleeged in honor, not to suffer me to come to ruin or disgrace at this time seeing that it is for his royall safty that I have brought myself into this necessitie. As yor lp. has ev< r beine my surest patron and truest frend I expect this fav. >r once more, amongst the rest of yor lordships manifould courtusies shown to me, as to thinke whether I live or die that I am

“Yor Lordshipps moste humble servant

“D. Reay.

“March this 29th.”

Addressed—“To the ryght honourable my very noble good lord the Earl of Carlile, Viscount Donkester, etc.”

Endorsed—“1632—Mackay to my lord; March 29.”

The duel was postponed by order of the King until the 17th of May, but five days before this he decided that it should not take place, and committed both Lord Reay and Ramsay to the Tower till they found sureties to keep the peace.

Of Lord Reay’s after life, and of his interesting matrimonial ventures, we say nothing further than that, in regard to the last, from his own curious confession, it would appear he could say with truth, in the words of Shakespere:—

“Full many a lady

I have eyed with best regard, and many a time

The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage

Brought my too diligent ear.”

At any rate he had to pay sweetly for going off with Lizzy Tamson.

MURRAY ROSE.

END

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

Alastair