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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for September 6th, 2024

Electric Scotland News

I note that both in Scotland and Canada drugs and homelessness are major issues.

I can't help but wonder if it's our education system that is to blame for this. I mean by this both the education of kids and adults.

I note that when drug users are homeless the state does try to help them by providing some place for them to live but often the person trashes the place and ends up back on the street. It seems that drugs are the root cause of this.

Tent cities are being built which usually means the area they appear in goes down hill.

While I have never used drugs I am a smoker so you could say that's a little like being a drug addict.

I did once give up smoking for around a year but took it up again. I do note however that smoking is expensive and taxes go up on tobacco on a regular basis. Just like I note the increase in the price of alcohol. It doesn't seem to make much difference other than for the people that use those products just cut back on other things so they can still afford them. So does that lead to more crime as I note that crime is also on the increase.

I don't know what our education system does about educating our children on drugs. I do know it was never mentioned at any of the schools I attended but that was many years ago now. I do also wonder that when our children get caught taking drugs what happens to the parents? Are they educated about how to deal with their children?

I'd like to explore more about this and should you have any information to share I'd appreciate any information you feel you can pass onto me.

38 years

The age gap between France's new Prime Minister, Michel Barnier (73), and his predecessor, Gabriel Attal (35).

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...

In pictures: Festival to celebrate women of Tiree

Screenings of historical images of women from the Hebridean island of Tiree are to form part of this year's Sea Change Festival.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly80pyxppl0>

Ancient Scottish clan heads to Hollywood as documentary premieres worldwide

Members of Clan Buchanan, one of the oldest and largest in Scotland, have journeyed to Los Angeles for the premiere of a brand-new feature-length documentary about the clan.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/scotland-now/ancient-scottish-clan-heads-hollywood-33583198>

Conrad Black: The chaos on U.K. streets was preventable

Riots are concentrated in areas where high percentage of the population is on welfare

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/Caxvl>

Stolen moments

Smoking is a precious social currency in a fast atomising world

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/stolen-moments/>

The unknown story of Scotland's Stonehenge

Forgotten for centuries, Kilmartin Glen in Argyll is one of Britain's most important archaeological landscapes but most people have never heard of it.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240823-kilmartin-glen-scotlands-enormous-prehistoric-treasure-trove>

Ancient fossils discovered in Scottish city predate dinosaurs by 140 million years

The fossilised remains of fish believed to date back 140 million years before the dinosaurs have been discovered hiding in plain sight on the streets of Inverness

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/scotland-now/ancient-fossils-discovered-scottish-city-33590343>

Scottish airline Loganair in major move on electric flights

Loganair has partnered with a manufacturer of a planned hybrid-electric aircraft to determine whether it can be flown by the airline.

Read more at:

<https://www.ttgmedia.com/fairer-travel/loganair-to-explore-hybrid-electric-flight-with-new-partner-48117>

As the Maori Queen rises, the King has been laid to rest

Kingi Tuheitia has been laid to rest on the sacred Taupiri Maunga, bringing to an end a seven day tangihanga attended by tens of thousands of people from across Aotearoa and the world. On the final morning, it was revealed the line of succession would remain in the family, the Kings' youngest child, and only daughter, Nga Wai hono i te po Paki. Meaning the new monarch's first job was to accompany their father on his final journey

down the Waikato River, Laura Tupou introduces this segment.

View this at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVXP-JHFDc4>

Canada's NDP pulls support for Trudeau's Liberals

Canada's left-wing New Democratic Party (NDP) has pulled the plug on a two-and-a-half-year-old agreement with Justin Trudeau's Liberals that had helped keep his minority government in power.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2n00e3z87o>

It is good to challenge kids

That which makes us anxious can also make us strong

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/it-is-good-to-challenge-kids>

Budgets, ideas and lethargy in the Scottish Government

It has been a grim few days for the Scottish Government. First of all, the Finance Secretary, Shona Robison, outlined how an extra £1 billion of funds had to be used to fill a fiscal hole for this financial year. Leaving us wondering what on earth she was going to do for next year.

Read more at:

<https://sceptical.scot/2024/09/budgets-ideas-and-lethargy-in-the-scottish-government/>

Electric Canadian

Glengarry's Games - Tradition: A Story From Glengarry

Added a video to the foot of our Glengarry page at:

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

The Military and Naval Operations in the Canadas

During the late war with the United States including also the Political History of Lower Canada during the administration of Sir James Henry Craig and Sir George Prevost from the year 1807 until the year 1815 by Robert Christie, Esq. (1819) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/quebec/military-and-naval-operations-in-the-Canadas.pdf>

The Celtic Kitchen

2024 edition (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/COOKBOOK_2024.pdf

Reminiscences of a (Make-Believe) Mid-19th Century Hudson's Bay Company Labourer

This post is part of a limited series called HBC at 350, which focuses on the environmental history of the Hudson's Bay Company in light of the 350th anniversary of its founding in 1670. (pdf)

You can read this at:

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

Hudson's Bay Company

Posts & Depots, Images from a Vanished Era by Thomas Schultze (2020) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/HBCPosts-PictureBook.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - 2024 September 1 - Labour

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26533-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-2024-september-1-labour>

Province of Manitoba Budget Speech

Delivered by the Hon. John Norquay, Premier and Provincial Treasurer on April 16th, 1884 (pdf)

You can read this speech at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/manitoba/budgetspeechdeli00mani.pdf>

The Beaver Magazine

Added Volume 2 No 2 and Volume 2 No. 3

You can read these issues...

Volume 2 No 2 at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/beaver2_2.pdf

Volume 2 No 3 at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/beaver2_3.pdf

Electric Scotland

The Life of Thomas Muir, Esq., Advocate

Younger of Huntershill, near Glasgow, Member of the Convention of Delegates for Reform in Scotland, etc., etc., who was tried for Sedition before the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland and sentenced to Transportation for fourteen years with a full report of his trial by Peter Mackenzie (1831) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/law/lifeofthomasmuir00mackiala.pdf>

The Life of Thomas Dickson

A Memorial of a Scots-American by Samuel C. Logan, D.D. (1888) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/america/lifeofthomasdick00loga.pdf>

The Life of St. Cuthbert

Prior of Mailros and Bishop of Lindisfarne by a Monk of Lindisfarne Abbey (pdf)

You can read this book at:

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

The Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell
By Daniel Defoe (1720) (pdf)

You can read this old book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/lifeadventuresof00def.pdf>

Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty
Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the Highlands of Scotland in 2 volumes
(second edition) by William Gilpin, A. M. (1792)

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/observations.htm>

The Dissertation on the Origin and Antiquity of the Scottish Nation
By James Tytler (1795) (pdf)

An old account which you can read at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/dissertation-on-the-or_tytler-james-ma-of-_1795.pdf

Horse Drill

And Manoeuvres for the Native Cavalry on the Coast of Coromandel by Major Gen. Sir Archibald Campbell
K.B., Governor and Commander in Chief (1837) (pdf)

You can read this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/horse-drill-and-manoeuvr_campbell-sir-archibald-_1787.pdf

The History of the Ancient Surname of Buchanan
And of Ancient Scottish Surnames; more particularly the Clans by William Buchanan of Auchmar (1793) (pdf)

You can read this history at:

https://electricscotland.com/webclans/atoc/history-of-the-ancie_buchanan-william_1793.pdf

The History of the Reformation in Scotland

By John Knox to which are appended, several other pieces of his writings including the First Book of Discipline,
complete and his dispute with the Abbot of Crossraguel, and not given with any former edition with a memoir,
historical introduction, and notes by William M'Gavin, Esq. (1831) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/knox/historyofreforma00knox_0.pdf

History of Arbroath to the Present Time

Second edition by George Hay (1899) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/arbroath/historyarbroath00hay.pdf>

Duncan and Peggy

A Scottish Tale by Elizabeth Helme in two volumes (1794)

You can read this story at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/duncanandpeggy.htm>

Evergreen

A Northern Seasonal 1895 Published in 4 volumes in the Lawnmarket of Edinburgh by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues.

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/evergreen.htm>

Ethnology in Folklore

By George Laurence Gomme, F.S.A., President of the Folklore Society (1892) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/folklore/ethnologyonfolk100gomm.pdf>

CASSOC

Updated our page on their history with more recent information.

You can read this at:

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

The Highland Monthly Magazine

Added volumes 3 & 4.

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/highlandmonthly.htm>

Story

A DAY AT "JOHN O' GROATS."

"Ho! we were a band of Rovers
Sailing here and sailing there,
Sailing where the wild wind bore us,
None to stay our course might dare!

Gaily blew and roar'd the breezes,
Wav'd our Ravens in the air,
Forward bounded Norway's Galleys
Wing'd with many a tar-stained sail! "

SUCH a pleasant, interesting, never-to-be-forgotten expedition, seems to deserve a chronicle. To many people "John O' Groat's House," the most northerly point on the British Isles, seems as far off and unattainable as America. To others, again, a mere step North, hardly worth writing about. But to us, this dream of youth left such wild beautiful pictures on memory's page, that some recital of that day's enjoyment seemed to come spontaneously. It was June, that month of loveliest green and longest evenings, of yellow broom and golden gorse; of cuckoos and corn-craiks, of roses and hay-fields and it was a fine June, sunny and bright, with a little crispness in the air, which enabled us to roam over the hills in Ross-shire and Inverness-shire before taking the final trip, the " grand final " which was to land us at Wick.

The day came at last, and, full of expectation and excitement, we set out for this unknown country. The scenery

all through Sutherland was beautiful, but when we left Helmsdale behind, and got further and further into the heart of Caithness (derived from "Cat," the wild cat—and Ness, a promontory) it seemed like going through a great moorland desert—not a tree, not a hill to be seen. Perhaps in autumn, when the heather is out, the colouring may be rich, but what we saw was black, and dark, and ugly ! Yes ! ugly. We had always heard Caithness was flat and ugly. We believed it now ! Here and there a rushing stream, and banks of rich yellow broom, relieved the monotony, but in general there was absolutely nothing to look at! Yes I one thing attracted our attention. Instead of green hedges or stone walls, to divide the fields or go round the farms (where there was any cultivation) there were large, flat paving stones, raised about two feet from the ground, and placed against each other. These are used all over Caithness, and have a most curious effect, and, I must say, very little beauty, except where the yellow lichen had enriched the gray slabs here and there. Our great grandfather, old Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, tried to get the good folk of Edinburgh to use the slabs for their pavement, and had the part opposite his own house in George Street paved with these stones from the North; but he failed in his project at that time (I believe some have been used since), and was only rewarded for his trouble by having that portion of the street termed (his family were all upwards of six foot high)

At last we saw the gray town of Wick appearing. No beauty here, we said, for in truth it is not prettily situated, though some fine cliffs and a good harbour are worth seeing. We were too early for the herring fishing, one of the most interesting of sights, we were told.

Next morning our long anticipated drive was to take place. Oh! will it be fine! Two o'clock in the morning was as bright as day, and we saw numbers of large white sea-gulls marching all over our friend's field and garden; then a mist came slowly down, but that should not deter us, so ten o'clock saw us fairly off in a large landau and pair of strong horses for "John O' Groats" and Duncansby Head (a twenty mile drive). There is, at present, no other way of approaching these places, as the train stops at Wick, &c. Our kind hosts, the Sheriff and his wife, planned this expedition, and nothing could exceed their generous hospitality.

As we got out of the town, we met carts and vehicles of every description, slowly coming in, filled to overflowing with old, middle-aged, and young people; and we found: that it was the monthly market-day, when the inhabitants flock in from every part to make their various purchases. It was a most picturesque and gay scene on that desolate road.

On we went, the mist still creeping over everything, though a glint of sunshine now and then showed us a weird castle by the sea, or a gray cliff, and gave us hope that we might eventually be able to get through altogether. One caught a sound of the rollers when the road neared the cliffs; and we heard the scream of the curlew and plover among the fluttering, white, cotton-rushes on the moor as we passed along. As yet we had not seen the sea. John O' Groats was getting nearer. A slight shower fell. What will the afternoon turn out? It was nearly one o'clock. "There is the Inn," said our kind hostess, and a prettily built, curious old house (not really old, we found, but built exactly after the old pattern) came in view. A flag-staff (with a red flag flying) is put up just opposite, on the identical site.

Such a kind, bright, nice looking landlady, Mrs Macdonald, came out to meet us, and conducted us to the octagonal room, the room of the Inn. There is a curious story connected with this room, she told us; eight brothers came over from Norway in the olden days, and, as each wanted to sit at the head of the table, they agreed that the room should be built octagonally, so that each brother had his seat at the board, and his window, equal with his brothers. This room is built exactly in the shape the other was, and the view from the windows was most charming. The shower cleared off—kind creature—and took away a great deal of the mist, so that we proposed a stroll on the shore till luncheon was ready, after having a most acceptable cup of tea. The time was all too short, as we picked up the red sea-weeds, John O' Groats buckies and other shells, and curious long arms of sponge that I never saw elsewhere.

Our luncheon did credit to Mrs Macdonald, but we were anxious to be off to Duncansby Head, and the time seemed almost wasted that we spent indoors. How far was it ? Three-quarters of a mile. Oh! joy, the mist is

slowly lifting, and the great blue sea is close at our feet. After a pleasant walk over short grass, we come, first of all, upon several little bays of purest white sand, with rocky islands in front, literally hidden by the sea-birds, and the clear, bright blue-green of the water which surround them, like no other but the Cornish sea.

Then we seemed to strike away from the sea into the middle of the plain, and I inwardly felt reluctant to leave all this beauty, when our guide stopped short, saying, "This is one of the famous gorges of Duncansby." We came so suddenly upon them that they took us quite unawares, and, looking down two or three hundred feet below, we beheld these wonderful chasms of red rock, where the sea rushes in, gurgling and boiling, between the great red walls, and where the hundreds and thousands of big white sea-gulls were screaming and yelling as if to tell us some of their adventurous secrets among the far off ocean billows. I never saw such sea-gulls (the great black-backed gull, I believe), and so tame, from the very few people who disturb them, that some hardly moved even when we were quite close to them. The echo of their cries sounded again and again, loud and clear, as we stood silently there, trying to understand their wild language and quite transfixed by the majesty of their glorious surroundings. "The Lord shall rejoice in His works," we thought, and we seemed to understand that text as we never had before.

Duncansby Head itself is a grand cliff of the same red colour, and the "Stacks of Duncansby," three big, bold, pointed rocks, about a quarter of a mile further on, standing out a little way from the shore, looked weird and ghostlike, as some of the mist still hung about them and revealed only half of their dark forms.

It seemed strange to stand here and feel we could go no further North, and to look across those wild seas over whose waves our brave Scandinavian ancestors had ventured to settle on these rugged shores. Perhaps it was some of their blood in our veins which made these scenes so doubly interesting. Oh! to have been able to take the form of one of those free, happy gulls, for a few days, and go in and out, up and down among the mighty chasms, now floating on the waves, now dashing through the cliffs whistling out their own wild poems!

We could have stood there for hours, but a gentle reminder that we had yet to spend half-an-hour among the shells, made us reluctantly turn away. It was easier said than done, as the plain was covered with short heather and grass, and, being full of holes, it was impossible not to get a foot into one of these traps sooner or later. We had been warned, and thought we were careful, but alas ! down came one of us full length on the ground, and the other two, although avoiding this calamity, had several very narrow escapes. As we passed two of the great chasms, we noticed some wire fencing being put round them, and were told that the farmer who had taken to graze his flock there this spring, had lost twenty-four sheep and lambs from falling over the side ; the poor unsuspecting creatures, thinking they were walking quietly in the middle of a field, found themselves suddenly dashed over the cliffs into the treacherous ravine below.

We soon reached the spot where the greatest number and variety of shells are to be found; what a Paradise for the children! Half-an-hour went like wild fire. It had to be extended a little; we really could not leave that enchanted shore. No, not until the baskets were laden with John O' Groats buckies, nightcaps, Noah's arks, saddles, bright coloured pointed periwinkles, red and yellow fans, and long arms of sponge cast up by some recent storm. These "treasures of the deep," with some of the gulls' feathers and various sea-weeds, were carefully preserved to be mementoes of this delightful expedition.

When we got back to the Inn, our good landlady had prepared a cup of tea for us before starting home, and produced some interesting autographs for our inspection from visitors to John O' Groats. The Prince and Princess of Wales, Robert Browning, Hugh Miller, Carlyle, &c., &c., were among the number. As we were leaving she popped a magnificent lobster into the carriage, a gift for the deservedly popular Sheriff, who unfortunately had had a chill the night before and could not accompany the little party. He and his family had spent a fortnight there in the spring, and had made great friends with Mrs Macdonald. This was the result, and a splendid sequel it proved!

We had to hasten off, gazing lovingly back on Dunnet Head, the "Old Man of Hoy," the Orkney Islands, and the

blue, blue sea all round. Many pretty peeps showed themselves driving back, which the mist had somewhat hidden in the morning, and a golden light lit up ocean, rock, and moorland ; and several "old castles by the sea," standing out clearly in the evening brightness, carried us back to old feudal days when those gray walls were peopled with the "hardy Norsemen." We reached Wick at half-past eight o'clock, with those wonderful scenes fresh in our memory—they seem as fresh now—and often when passing through the crowded town, or walking in the quiet country lane, "they flash upon that inward eye," and I hear once more those screaming gulls and see those great gorges and cliffs, and pick up the shells on the white sandy shore, and in spirit am truly at John O' Groats again!

August, 1891.

JANET SINCLAIR BERGER.

END

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

Alastair