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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for October 4th, 2024

Electric Scotland News

Labour have plans for us. Lots and lots of them. Yet what our politicians really need is a system that can make things happen. Andrew Haldenby wrote for CapX this week on what it will take to build a government that works – offering food for thought for Conservative leadership contenders as well...

The Government needs a management lesson

Keir Starmer and the Conservative Party agree about one thing: the UK needs a government that works.

In his conference speech, the Prime Minister pledged to be a 'decisive government' and a 'great reforming government' – able as a result to improve the NHS, energy supply, crime, education and the economy.

During the Conservative leadership campaign, Kemi Badenoch has said that government should do fewer things but better, and those it does, it should do with 'brilliance'. Robert Jenrick and Tom Tugendhat have both criticised the last Government for increasing spending on public service without ensuring commensurate increases in outcomes.

Keir Starmer's answer is to publish plans. Lots of them. The most important of these is a plan for improved productivity across the economy, to appear with the Budget next month. The health department is working on a ten-year plan for the NHS, expected next year. The Deputy Prime Minister announced three plans in her conference speech alone (a 'plan to make work pay', a long-term plan for the rented sector and a remediation action plan to remove unsafe cladding from buildings).

At this point, the warning lights should start flashing, because governments have been here before.

Jeremy Hunt published a productivity plan at the beginning of last year. Philip Hammond did so in 2016 and George Osborne in 2015, as indeed did Gordon Brown in 1998. There have been common themes across all of these, including the need for greater business investment and more even regional development. But productivity growth in the UK has been half the rate in Germany and the US since 2010, according to the current Chancellor.

There have been 25 NHS plans since 1990, nearly all focusing on the need to improve productivity through a shift from hospital activity to prevention and care closer to home. But the NHS is more hospital-dominated than ever. As the Darzi review said two weeks ago, 'successive governments have promised to shift care away from hospitals and into the community. In practice, the reverse has happened. Between 2006 and 2022, the share of the NHS budget spent on hospitals increased from 47 per cent to 58 per cent.' Lord Darzi concluded that the NHS is in 'serious trouble'.

There have been 17 major plans for reform of the machinery of government since the Fulton Report in 1968.

Governments have repeatedly pledged that civil servants will develop specific rather than general expertise and stay in their jobs for longer. But public sector labour productivity fell by 8% between 1997 and 2022 compared to a rise of 27% for the whole economy.

All this suggests that the last thing political leaders need is another set of plans. Instead they need something to make them happen.

The Prime Minister spoke again in his conference speech of 'mission-led government', i.e., a government able to deliver the big improvements that society needs (such as clean energy or a healthier population), even if those outcomes stretch across more than one government department. The idea is similar to the public service agreements brought in by the last Labour Government which set targets that required cooperation cross-government. Such an approach will only work, however, if individual departments are themselves effective, and so can work effectively on joint projects.

Keir Starmer must ask, who is going to put the plans into operation? Not the current system, as history shows. What is needed is for government to adopt basic principles of effective management. This means a clear vision, measurable objectives and plans, and experienced professional management who have the authority to execute the plans as they think fit. To begin with, these must come from outside the civil service, so they are not imbued with the present culture.

After seven years in office, Tony Blair said that he realised how important it is to make government work (he called for 'a civil service equipped to lead, with proven leadership in management and project delivery'). Keir Starmer needn't and shouldn't take that long. Over to you, Prime Minister.

Andrew Haldenby

I have great news! Starting today, and for a limited time only, you can upload your DNA data to MyHeritage and get full access to all DNA features for free, forever! They support uploads from Ancestry, FamilyTreeDNA (Family Finder) and 23andMe.

For each NEW DNA file that you upload this week, you'll receive free access to all advanced DNA features including the Ethnicity Estimate and Genetic Groups, DNA Matches, and all tools to analyze your relationship to your matches, saving you the usual \$29 unlock fee per file. This rare offer is valid for the next few days only, until October 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

To upload your file go to

https://www.myheritage.com/dna/upload?utm_campaign=DNA%20U

Rev. Nola Crewe

Each Sunday Nola produces a 10 minute homily on YouTube from her home in Toronto.

Her videos are linked to in our own ElectricScotland Community at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe>

I know that fewer and fewer folk are going to church so thought I'd just mention this as 10 minutes isn't much time and you might profit from the experience.

Here is what Nola says on her YouTube page...

When COVID shut the doors of our church, St Monica's looked for a new way to serve the Parish and its missional mandate.

Many churches with great resources and talents offered up inspiring services of music and worship and we encourage our members to join in.

What we felt was missing and an appropriate niche for St Monica's was to offer up thoughts and generate discussion on what living as a Christian means today. The struggles and challenges -- the joys and satisfactions. And so we offer up our THOUGHTS on a SUNDAY MORNING each week.

Her YouTube channel can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@NolaCrewe-THOUGHTS>

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...

Who is new Scottish Conservative leader Russell Findlay?

Russell Findlay has been chosen as the new leader of the Scottish Conservatives.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20jxvrq57ro>

Massive dinosaur skull unearthed in Northern Alberta

After 72 million years underground palaeontologists near Grande Prairie in Alberta have unearthed a 600lb (272kg) skull of a Pachyrhinosaurus, a plant-eating dinosaur that roamed Alberta's badlands.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cvgx4njwgjdo>

An end to Eurosclerosis?

The German Chancellor and French President are living on borrowed time while the European Commission chief is failing to turn the page: is the EU's slow agony fatal?

Read more at:

<https://davidgow.substack.com/p/an-end-to-eurosceloris>

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation delegitimizes truth

So do attempts to criminalize residential school denialism.

Read more at:

<https://hymie.substack.com/p/xxx-national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation>

Scots hit by triple whammy of price hikes as rail fares, booze and energy go up

Scots will be hit by the return of peak rail fares, the increase of minimum unit pricing and the hiking of the energy price cap.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scots-hit-triple-whammy-price-33779296>

Why the Tories lost

Having lost half their vote and two-thirds of their MPs, Conservatives need to understand and accept why voters rejected them. A new book from Lord Ashcroft, based on extensive polling, sets out those reasons in uncompromising terms. Issues of trust, character and competence are centre stage.

Read more at:

<https://conservativehome.com/2024/09/30/lord-ashcroft-polling-for-my-new-book-shows-why-the-conservatives-lost-not-just-the-election-but-the-reputation-for-competent-government/>

Let's reverse the decline in Scottish journalism

Scotland's newspapers are some of the oldest, and were once among the most prestigious, in the world. But there are few foreign correspondents left. None of our newspapers has a staff correspondent covering Ukraine - a major war in Europe! - or a foreign correspondent on the staff at all.

Read more at:

<https://sceptical.scot/2024/10/lets-reverse-the-decline-in-scottish-journalism/>

The road to Chimney Rock is gone - Hurricane Helene aftermath

There are communities stuck on top of mountains due to their only line of access being completely destroyed with no hope of it being fixed anytime soon.

Watch this video at:

https://youtu.be/SPBtrJHADGE?si=g_MOF8e8l8fjyOeu

Eight Scientists, a Billion Dollars, and the Moonshot Agency Trying to Make Britain Great Again

The Advanced Research and Invention Agency - ARIA - is the UK's answer to Darpa. But can it put the country back on the scientific map?

Read more at:

<https://www.wired.com/story/aria-moonshot-darpa-uk-britain-great-again/>

The Tories need to listen to business

The Tories should be worried about how few businesses bothered to turn up to their conference. Any discussion about the future of the country must include voices from the City and wealth creators across the country. Unless Conservatives listen to entrepreneurs, they'll never work out why they failed to deliver growth.

Read more at:

<https://www.cityam.com/tories-must-get-out-of-their-bubble-and-listen-to-business/>

The Enchanted Forrest

The Enchanted Forest welcomed visitors back to the familiar, majestic surroundings of Faskally Wood in Pitlochry last night. This year's show, which runs until November 3, is a celebration of the natural world and the harmonies created by the many animals who call Faskally Wood home.

Watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/KeGINEWQWyE?si=0TY-Y45yLL35h4IZ>

John Swinney under pressure over botched plan for National Care Service

The SNP Government has struggled to spell out exactly how a National Care Service will operate after local authorities and NHS bosses voiced serious concerns.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/john-swinney-under-pressure-over-33812475>

Electric Canadian

The \$25B Oil Pipeline That Could Make or Break Canada's Economy
A YouTube video which I've added to the foot of our Oil & Gas page

You can watch this at:

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

The Eagle

Rupert's Land College Magazine. Added volume 2 (1930)

You can read this volume at:

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

Picard Peanuts

Ontario's original peanut shop

Just bought some of their chocolate peanuts and you can learn more about them at:

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

Royal Military College of Canada

Added the 1964 edition

You can read this edition at:

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

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 29th day of September 2024 - Forgiveness

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26541-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-29th-day-of-september-2024-forgiveness>

Israel demonized while Hezbollah war crimes ignored

By Steve Amble, September 23, 2024 (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/israel-hezbollah.pdf>

Alexander Morris

Lawyer, judge, businessman, politician, and public servant

You can learn more about him at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/morris-alexander.htm>

John A. Macdonald saved more Indigenous lives than ANY other prime minister

Added a video about this to the foot of our page about him at:

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

The Beaver Magazine
Added Volume 2 No. 7 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/beaver2_7.pdf

Electric Scotland

Robert Bruce in Life and Death

A talk on YouTube by Dr Martin MacGregor which I added a link to on our Bruce page and you can watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/ST2K-jeGVGU?si=qYpajyAtodaYb1MJ>

Scottish Jews

Added two links to videos about Israel and Palestine...

Dan Senor explains the Genius of Israel at:

https://youtu.be/q6yzMVF5SIs?si=fWC32d4Z_N_20Yiq

and

This is WHY no ONE wants the PALESTINIANS! at:

https://youtu.be/G5Uqy2eIngA?si=NGKGW_5qnIERpxUk

The Dances of the Highlanders

By Norman Hay Forbes from the Celtic Monthly of 1908 and a book, Sketches relative to the history and theory, but more especially to the practice of dancing by Francis Peacock, Aberdeen (1805) (pdf)

I got an email in asking about when dancing might have started in Scotland and so did a bit of research and found some interesting material which I've added to a pdf file.

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/dance/dancing.pdf>

Scotland and Europe: a Union of Ideas. Scotland House, Brussels

Europe and the beginning of Scottish sovereignty by Dauvit Broun, 15 July 2014 (pdf)

You can read this paper at:

https://electricScotland.com/independence/ref/Europe_and_the_beginning_of_Scottish_sov.pdf

Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era

E. J. Cowan and R. Andrew McDonald, eds. (2000). A review of this book by Cynthia J. Neville, Dalhousie University (pdf)

You can read this book review at:

https://electricScotland.com/independence/ref/E_J_Cowan_and_R_Andrew_McDonald_eds_Alba.pdf

Universities in Scotland

Taken from the book, "The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages" by the late Hastings Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, edited by F. M. Powicke, Regius Professor of Modern History, in the University of Oxford (1895) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/universitiesinscotland.pdf>

Scotland and the French Revolution

By Henry W. Meikle, M.A., D.Litt., Lecturer in Scottish History in the University of Edinburgh (1912) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/france/scotlandfrenchre00meikrich.pdf>

Loyal Lewis

Roll of Honour 1914 and After, printed at the offices of the "Stornoway Gazette" and published by William Grant (1920) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/loyallewisrollof1920lewi.pdf>

Donald MacLeod

Did a small edit to this page to correct a few spelling errors and also to add the text from the image of the scanned document we have on the page.

You can get to this at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/donald_macleod.htm

The Yearbook of the Heather Society

From the first volume in 1963

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/gardening/yearbook-heather.htm>

Education in the Highlands in Olden Times

By William Mackay (1921) (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricscotland.com/education/educationinhighl00mack.pdf>

Highland Minute

An article from the Celtic Magazine of 1888 (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/higlandminute.pdf>

Alexander MacDonald, The Poet

By Rev. John Kennedy taken from the Celtic Magazine of 1888 (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricscotland.com/poetry/alexandermacdonaldthepoet.pdf>

Robert MacKay - Rob Donn

By Rev. John Kennedy from the Celtic Magazine (1888) (pdf). Added this book to the top of our page on Songs and Poems by Rob Donn MacKay at:

<https://electricscotland.com/poetry/robdonn/index.htm>

Documents from Lord MacDonald's Charter Chest
From the Celtic Magazine (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/m/macdonalddocuments.pdf>

Fishermen and Superstition
By Cathel Kerr (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricScotland.com/thomson/fishermenandsuperstitions.pdf>

The Old Church and Churchyard of Kingussie
By Alexander MacPherson from the Celtic Magazine of December, 1887 (pdf)

You can read this article at:

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

MacIntyre

Got an email in that provided some new information on McIntyre of Camus-na-h-Erie and information on Peter which I've added to our page at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/m/macintyre/part3.htm>

The Scottish Terrier
By Williams Haynes (1915) ((pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/pets/scottishterrier0000will.pdf>

The Scottish Tongue

A Series of Lectures on the Vernacular Language of Lowland Scotland Delivered to the Members of the Vernacular Circle of the Burns Club of London By W. A. Craigie, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Anglo-Saxon, Oxford University, John Buchan, M.A., LL.D., Peter Giles, M.A., LL.D., Master of Emmanuel, Cambridge University, J. M. Bulloch, M.A., LL.D., Editor of "The Graphic," Chairman, Vernacular Circle, Burns Club of London (1924)

You can read these lectures at:

<https://electricScotland.com/culture/features/scots/scottishtongue.htm>

Story

CILLE AMHLAIDH, SOUTH UIST

It is not, I believe, generally known that a quantity of the rich and holy soil of Italy lies strewn among the cold, damp lands of South Uist: and it was only very recently that I myself ascertained that such was a fact. In the district of Lochdar, which lies on the south side of the South Ford of Benbecula, is a township called Cille Amhlaidh (Kilaulay), the burying-ground or Church of Aulay, near which the Roman Catholic Church now stands. But the district where this church is, is called Ardkenneth, being so named after St. Kenneth, a famous priest who had the whole spiritual government of South Uist in his time. In support of this assertion, I may mention that the hill at the north side of the entrance to Lochboisdale is named Ben Kenneth, a name which it derives from the aforementioned St. Kenneth, who officiated occasionally in a church which then stood at a place

called Aurotote, near Lochboisdale Hotel. The site of this church may still be seen; and from it Father Campbell of Lochboisdale recently carried a most beautiful three-cornered stone font, found among the green grass, to the Catholic Church at Dalibrog.

But the township in question—Cille Amhlaidh—bears the name of another priest—St Anflith or Amhlaidh, who lived and laboured faithfully and diligently for many years at lochdar; and, having died there at a good old age, his remains were, in terms of his oft-expressed request, interred in the place, which has ever since been called Cille Amhlaidh. It is but right to mention that St. Amhlaidh had no connection with the Macaulays of Lewis, who were of a different race altogether.

The next priest, says tradition, who ministered to the spiritual wants of the people of lochdar, was the famous St. Bliannan, a man whose name, on account of his holy zeal, ought to be better known and cherished by the people of South Uist than it is. This great Saint, in order that the flock under his charge at Cille Amhlaidh might derive some of the good enjoyed by the happy people who tread continuously on holy ground, went on one occasion, at no small personal expense, to Rome, and carried hence a quantity of soil, dug from the graves of the saints. After a long and weary journey, which occupied many months, he reached Cille Amhlaidh, in South Uist; and, taking the holy soil carried from Rome, he scattered it there in the form of a cross. From that day forward, the place has been looked upon as consecrated, and, therefore, a sacred and favoured spot. I have frequently stood on this ground.

I cannot but think that, if the Crofters' Commission had known, when recently in South Uist, the interesting antiquities associated with Lochdar, they would not have passed over the crofters there without giving them an equal justice with their neighbours in the south end of the Island.

Mac Iain.

END

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

Alastair