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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for March 28th, 2025

Electric Scotland News

Policy Exchange published a paper this week on the impact of Brexit on UK trade. It touches on many issues which Briefings has been raising for years – dodgy inferences from dodgy models and data being misconstrued – and comes to the same overall conclusion: Brexit itself has had, at most, a small effect on UK exports. Now that remainder myths are being exposed more widely, thinktanks should refocus on the future and identify Brexit opportunities that will have a lasting positive impact on UK trade.

The paper rightly criticises the use of 'doppelgänger' models, which compare the performance of the UK economy to a 'doppelgänger' constructed from a set of economies with some statistical historical similarities. Such models are cited by remainers who claim that Brexit has reduced GDP growth by 5%, but the models are deeply flawed. The statistical similarities between the UK and the countries which make up the doppelgänger are superficial, and cloak significant differences which make comparisons inappropriate. Even if the comparisons were sound, the models cannot isolate the impact of Brexit from other economic forces (like, for example, a global pandemic).

Another point which the paper picks up is the confusion that is caused by re-exports. Relying heavily on work by Briefings contributor Catherine McBride, the authors show that sudden drops in UK export data are explained not by a sudden drop in the number of UK-produced goods being sent to Europe, but by a sudden drop in the number of foreign-produced goods which travel through the UK on their way to Europe. Re-exports contribute very little to the UK economy, but can make a big difference to trade statistics. Remainers looking for a dramatic story seize on the figures without enquiring any further.

It is good that Policy Exchange and others are finally getting to grips with the reality of post-Brexit UK trade – the remainder myths should not have persisted for so long. But the focus should shift away from evaluating what has been to making plans for the future. Brexit was supposed to be an opportunity to pursue a new trade strategy independent of Europe. Successive governments have failed to capitalise fully on this. Instead of litigating old arguments, policy wonks would do better by identifying how Britain can best take advantage of its new found freedom.

You can read this report at:

<https://electricscotland.com/business/Less-than-Meets-the-Eye.pdf>

Trump adds 25% Tariffs to all automakers around the world. So any cars not made in the USA will increase in price. That's got to hurt world economies but also in the USA.

Mind you I can foresee countries blocking exports to the USA of oil, gas and rare minerals which means companies looking to move to the USA might actually think Canada might be a better option as Canada has abundant resources of everything.

I have to say that I'm for Trump when it comes to defence as NATO countries should have paid more for defence and so it's past time they upped their game. I don't agree with him on Ukraine as an independent country should not be allowed to be invaded by another country. However Trump seems to think this is ok for the USA to take over Canada and Greenland.

Just keeps getting worse in the USA. I'm still trying to document all this in my Canadian Journal at: https://electriccanadian.com/canada_add19.htm where I am looking at everything from a Canadian point of view and my personal view seeing as I am now a Canadian citizen.

I will say that the elections in Canada seem to be on a knife edge between the Conservatives and the Liberals due to the Trump presidency changing everything.

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...

America looks like a troubled emerging economy

Under Donald Trump's erratic rule, the United States is now exhibiting all the symptoms of a faltering economy, from high import tariffs and fiscal deficits, to oligarchy and flagrant corruption. Worse, the fallout cannot be confined to the US and no multilateral bailout or structural adjustment plan can mitigate the damage.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/kKRdZ>

Conrad Black: Attempted cultural suicide

It is no lie to say no graves have been found in Kamloops

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/LnTah>

Skye clan estate and historic castle put up for sale

One of the largest estates on the Isle of Skye, which includes a famous castle and the historic lands of the Clan MacDonald, is being put up for sale. The charity which owns the land said it had taken the "difficult" decision to sell Armadale Castle and the 20,000-acre estate because of financial challenges.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c871z5gvl8do>

Trump has blown up the world order - and left Europe's leaders scrabbling

This is the gravest crisis for Western security since the end of World War Two, and a lasting one. As one expert puts it, "Trumpism will outlast his presidency". But which nations are equipped to step to the fore as the US stands back?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2er9j83x0zo>

Scottish economy outperforms UK significantly, data reveal

The Scottish economy recorded significant growth in January, in contrast to contraction in the UK as a whole,

latest official figures reveal.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/h9l6L>

Canadian Political Affairs update with Brian Lilley

Watch Bridge City News at:

<https://youtu.be/eJdJzth0Sg8?si=vv63Tlx-OKlyzz5J>

He-man Xi unmasked

A persuasive analysis of the new Marxist Nationalism of President Xi's increasingly assertive and intolerant China

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2025/03/he-man-xi-unmasked/>

The Globalists are coming for our cities

WAKEN UP! If you live in Manchester or Glasgow, you've probably noticed that life isn't exactly getting cheaper, easier, or freer.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2025/03/the-globalists-are-coming-for-our-cities/>

Germany leads defiance to Trump car tariffs, saying it 'will not give in'

Germany has said it "will not give in" and that Europe must "respond firmly" as US President Donald Trump targets imported cars and car parts with a 25% tax in his latest tariffs. Other major world economies have vowed to retaliate, with France branding the move "very bad news", Canada calling it a "direct attack", and China accusing Washington of violating international trade rules.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy4vjwzv22eo>

Disdain for Europe in US Signal chat horrifies EU

Monday's Signal chat strikes at the heart of a slew of tensions, discomfort and plain old fear in Europe right now, that the Trump administration can no longer be relied on as the continent's greatest ally. At a time when Europe is facing off against a resurgent Russia.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c204vl27n2qo>

The Irn-Bru company shames the very spirit of Scottish enterprise

AG Barr reported a 5.1% increase in revenue for the year ending January 2025. That's up to £420.4 million from £400m last year. It also recorded a 15.8% increase in adjusted profits before tax, from £50.5m last year to £58.5m this year. However, AG Barr is shutting Strathmore Water. It's no longer sustainable, apparently. The factory in Forfar, and 23 jobs, are now, evidently, on the chopping block.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/iKZJH#selection-1883.3-1887.171>

Trump and Musk are not helping right-wingers abroad

They do not understand that the MAGA template cannot be copied

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/trump-and-musk-are-not-helping-right-wingers-abroad/>

Pierre's security clearance

Watch this at: <https://x.com/MarcNixon24/status/1904919041849843956>

Electric Canadian

The Widows of Famous Canadians

By Madge Macbeth (1914) (pdf)

You can read this short book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/Widows-of-Famous-Canadians.pdf>

The Life and Times of Wm. Lyon MacKenzie

With an account of the Canadian rebellion of 1837, and the subsequent frontier disturbances, chiefly from unpublished documents, by Charles Lindsey in two volumes (1862)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/mackenzie/index.htm>

The World's Work

Added volume 10 albeit with some difficulty as it's a poor scan but you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/worldswork.htm>

The Anglo-American Magazine

Added Volume 7 October 1855

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/angloamerican.htm>

Dr. Grenfell's Parish

The Deep Sea Fishermen by Norman Duncan (1909) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/newfoundland/drgrenfellsparish.pdf>

Dreams in Homespun

By Sam Walter Foss (1897) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/dreamsoffortgarr00wats.pdf>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 23rd day of March 2024 - the Commandments

By The Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26601-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-16th-day-of-march-2024-changes>

The Beaver Magazine

Added Volume 4 No. 10 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/HUDSONBAY/TheBeaver-July1924.pdf>

Electric Scotland

Sidelights on the History, Industries & Social Life of Scotland

By Louis A. Barbé, Officier d'Academie, Author of "In Byways of Scottish History" &c. (1919) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/business/sidelightsonhist00barbuoft.pdf>

Short Studies in Education in Scotland

By John Clarke, Lecturer on Education in the University of Aberdeen (1904) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/education/shortstudiesined00clarrich.pdf>

Marmion

A Tale of Flodden Field by Sir Walter Scott, edited with an Introduction and Notes for the use of students by George B. Aiton, M.A. (1908) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/other/scottsmarmional0000scot.pdf>

Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collections

Divines of the North-East of Scotland, edited by Reverend Robert Lippe (1890) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/selectionsfromwo00wodruoft.pdf>

Scottish Plans for the Annexation of Iceland 1785 -1813

By Anna Agnarsdottir (pdf)

You can read this article at:

https://electricScotland.com/history/iceland/Agnarsdottir_1992_Vol_29_pp_82_96.pdf

William Jardine

A Scottish opium trader and physician who co-founded the Hong Kong-based conglomerate Jardine, Matheson & Co. (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/nation/William-Jardine.pdf>

The Acts of the Earls of Dunbar relating to Scotland c. 1124 - c.1289

A Study of Lordship in Scotland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by Elsa Catherine Hamilton, M. A. (2003) (pdf)

You can read this at:

https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/The_acts_of_the_Earls_of_Dunbar_relating.pdf

Ronald William McEwen sent in a wee collection of 6 of his articles...

The Poet and the Prince

James Thomson and the origins of Kew Gardens (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/01.%20The%20Poet%20&%20the%20Prince.pdf>

The Princess & the Prime Minister
How the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew was born (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/02.%20The%20Princess%20&%20the%20Prime%20Minister.pdf>

The Northern Lads
Kew Gardens and the Scottish Invasion (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/11.%20The%20Northern%20Lads.pdf>

The Remarkable Botanist Physicians (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/12.%20The%20remarkable%20botanist%20physicians.pdf>

The Thistle and the Rose
The Anglo-Scottish Aristocracy of Richmond-upon-Thames Part 1:1603-1746 (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/13.%20The%20Thistle%20&%20the%20Rose.pdf>

and...

Princes, Prime Ministers and Pre-Raphaelites
Terrace Gardens and the Duke of Buccleuch (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/england/16.%20Princes,%20Prime%20Ministers%20&%20Pre-Raphaelites.pdf>

James Grant
Texas politician, physician and military participant in the Texas Revolution born on July 28, 1793, in Ross-shire, Scotland (pdf)

You can read about him at:

[https://electricscotland.com/history/america/James_Grant_\(Texas_politician\).pdf](https://electricscotland.com/history/america/James_Grant_(Texas_politician).pdf)

A History of the Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland
By The Rev. Robert W. Weir, M.A., Minister of Greyfriars' Parish, Dumfries (1900) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

https://electricscotland.com/bible/A_History_of_the_Foreign_Missions_of_the.pdf

Story

A treatise on the language, poetry, and music of the Highland clans

PREFACE

The religious and civil institutions, and the state of society among the patriarchal or Highland Clans, have been so misunderstood and misrepresented, as to have made on the English-speaking public the impression that these Clans were in a state of lawless barbarity at the dawn of authentic history, and continued in that condition until a period within the memory of men still living. Several untoward circumstances, chiefly resulting from the translation of Ossian's poems, have occurred to confirm this impression. One learned and talented Englishman, with a direct reference to these poems, contended that such ideas and feelings could not be expressed in the rude gibberish of a barbarous people; and several English-speaking Lowlanders and Highlanders, taking up this view of the subject, and having the same conviction as to the rude uncultivated character of the language, maintained that the Highland Clans had no poetry, and could not have had any poetry, excepting that which had been recently forged for them in English, by writers of so unscrupulous a character as to father their patched-up plagiarisms on mythic bards, known only to the vulgar lore of a people who had never emerged from a state of lawless barbarity. That these gentlemen were in total ignorance of the subject on which they wrote so dogmatically, did not lessen the influence of their opinions on readers who had no means of detecting that ignorance, and who naturally gave them credit for too much honesty and decency, to believe them capable of writing so confidently on a subject of which they knew nothing. It is very true, that, on a recent occasion, the achievements and conduct of the Highlanders were such as could not fail to cause doubt in the minds of an enlightened people, on the *ex parti* statements of those who represented the Highland Clans as plundering barbarians; since it is impossible to believe that a mere handful of barbarians could, not only encounter, but defeat a regularly trained army, or that lawless marauders, in overrunning a country, should have committed fewer outrages than were ever known to have been committed by any disciplined army in similar circumstances. These facts were known to the writers above referred to, when they were writing down the Highlanders! It may, I think, very fairly be assumed, that the age which witnessed these achievements and that conduct, and preferred believing ill-natured and dishonest assumptions to fairly interpreting these well known facts, was neither intelligent nor generous. Nevertheless, the succeeding age approved of, and followed their example, if we may judge by the unabated prejudices against the Highlanders. When modern wealth and refinement created such a demand for all kinds of literature, it was naturally interpreted as unfavourable to the pretensions of the Gael, that that literature was found apparently nil; nor, until within these few years did a single writer wield the pen to explain the reason, although it was quite easy to do so, by throwing light on the ancient institutions and tenures of the Celtic Clans, and showing that, when the patriarchal system was struck down by the disasters of Culloden, the rights and privileges of the people were violated, and the same effect given to feudal charters over the unconquered lands of the Highlanders, which they had long previously attained over the conquered lands of the people of England, and that the Gael had been thus placed in a state of transition and eviction, which was equally unfavourable to the pursuit or the remuneration of literature.

The melodies, reels, and strathspeys of the Gael met with no better fate than the "Ossian" of Macpherson, and the "Sean Dana" of the Rev. Dr Smith; nobody believed in their antiquity. For how, it was philosophically argued, could a rude and barbarous people carry down from remote ages in their oral lore and every day amusements, such poetry and such music? This was sound reasoning; for it is impossible to believe, (1.) that the music and poetry of a separate and distinct people could have two separate and distinct characters, from the indissoluble connexion between poetry and music, until within a very recent period. (2.) It was equally impossible to believe that the poetry and music of a people, and the people themselves, should be of two different and distinct characters; that the people should be rude and barbarous, and their poetry and music not only intelligent, but refined. Either of the two postulates must be conceded, therefore, to Dr Johnson, by whom the question of the authenticity of the poems was put on this sound and philosophic basis. The Doctor does not seem to have had the music of the Highlanders under consideration; but I submit that the music and the poetry were twins,—born of the same parentage, nursed at the same bosom, and reared among the same glens and mountains; and that whoever believes in the one, is bound to believe in the other. I therefore thoroughly agree

with Doctor Johnson, so far as he goes; but submit that the music forms an inseparable element in the question. The state of society that could have produced, and have in its every day amusements preserved such music, might well produce such poetry; and that state of society could not have been either rude or barbarous. But the copiers and publishers of the music had by their own vile snobbery contributed to the scepticism on the subject. They deprived the melodies and tunes of the signet of antiquity contained in the hereditary names, and rebaptised them, in compliment to their patrons and patronesses, and thus stamped them, *ex facie*, as modern instead of ancient music.

The transition state of the Gael is now past. The feudal historians and clearance-makers have done their worst; but the Clans have their Language, their Poetry, and their Music still left, and in these they have ample materials, if properly handled, to vindicate the memory of their noble ancestors against the charge of lawless barbarity. Hence this treatise. I was not, while writing it, insensible of the difficulty of finding purchasers and readers for any work on a subject so prejudiced and prejudged. And I could not venture to incur liability for a large amount of advertisements. But I published my proposal in a few of the newspapers most likely to meet the eyes of Highlanders, as I never doubted, should my object be made generally known, that there are thousands of Highlanders who are as anxious as I possibly can be, to remove the charge of lawless barbarity made against the memory of our ancestors, and the sentence of proscription under which their language and poetry in effect lie, and that such Highlanders would willingly use their influence to procure subscribers to guarantee the expenses. Subscription lists have been taken up with their usual spirit by a few worthy Highlanders in Greenock, Paisley, and Glasgow; I, accordingly, placed the treatise in the hands of the printer, without waiting for the result, but have no doubt that a sufficient number of subscribers have been obtained to cover the expenses; and, in that case, my conviction is, that the spirit of fair play which has hitherto characterized, and which I trust will ever continue to characterize the people of this country, will procure for a work having such an object, at least a fair hearing—and I ask no more.

With regard to the phonetic spelling, I am sorry to find that all the Highlanders whom I have consulted, excepting two literary gentlemen, are opposed to the “innovation.” Surely those who object to the phonetic spelling forget that the Gaelic has been subjected to a thorough innovation long before this, and that it now appears before the public, not in its native and graceful tartans, but in a Roman garment, grotesquely shaped for the purpose of swaddling, and not of developing its noble lineaments! This has hitherto evidently formed the stumbling-block to the study of the Gaelic language, for every person who has already learned the English names of the Roman letters, in perusing Gaelic books as now printed, must be subjected to the complicated process of unlearning the English, and learning the Gaelic sounds of the same letters, and the former is fully as difficult as the latter. Had the native alphabet been preserved, the Gaelic student would only have to go through the simple process of learning a new alphabet.

The Gaelic bards, as is shown elsewhere, were the great conservatives of ancient times. They stood firmly, and to the death, in the defence of the rights and liberties of the people; and, hence, wherever despotism was put up, Gaelic bards and Gaelic poetry were put down. The kindly feelings, liberal sentiments, and high tone of independence which breathes through Gaelic poetry—(the monks’ written *ursgeuls* excepted)—could not find sympathy among a feudal people, without proving destructive of despotism. The feudal despot and his assessors knew this well. Hence the Gaelic language, although one of the oldest in Europe, has been studiously excluded from every university or collegiate institution endowed by kings or queens, or presided over by priests, whether Catholic or Protestant, to the present day; and is the only European dialect which is now taught in no higher seminary than a charity-supported hedge-school. Do my Highland friends wish the language of their ancestors to be continued in this state of absolute proscription? We have, in Gaelic, grammars and dictionaries, which, to say the least, have been the works of men of as much learning, research, discrimination, and talent as those of our neighbours; but who profits by them? Not one in a thousand, even among Highlanders, can read or write Gaelic. In short, past experience shows that the Gaelic will not be an object of acquisition to the public, or even to learned men devoted to philological researches, while it continues under its present deformed mask. I have therefore considered it a worthy mission so to shake, if I do not shatter that mask, as to enable scholars and gentlemen to get, at least a glimpse of the beaming form which is being

crushed to death under it. And I know that there is to be found in the language, which has been thus thrown into obscurity by a forbidding-looking disguise, a poetry which clearly proves that the people whose sympathies were so accordant with the generous, heroic, kind, and benevolent feelings and sentiments therein contained, as to make them cherish and preserve it by oral recitation for nearly two thousand years, must have been as civilized, during that period, as the middle classes of the people of this country are at the present day;—unless civilization means something else than intelligence, and a lively sympathy with generous, heroic, kind, and benevolent feelings and sentiments ? I know that this assertion will be put down as paradoxical by those who form decided opinions on subjects of which they know nothing, and that such parties are peculiarly tenacious of foregone conclusions, not the less when they result from ignorance and prejudice; but I also believe that there is in this country enough of justice, candour, learning, and talent, to test this question on the merits. I submit ample materials for the investigation, and am convinced that whoever shall peruse them with the care necessary to enable him to decide intelligently on the subject, will agree with me. But, to enable those who are unacquainted with the language to form a sound opinion on the question, I considered a more simple orthography, a sine qua non. Hence the system adopted in this treatise. Although unaccustomed to write Gaelic, I believe I understand the language well, and have kept faith with such subscribers as are enamoured of the present orthography by spelling the specimens which I quote in accordance with that orthography, although, as already stated, want of practice may have occasioned many mistakes, which the verbal critic will be glad to pounce upon; but I have under-written every word so spelt phonetically, for the English reader, convinced that this will enable him to form a more sound opinion of the language and poetry than he could otherwise have formed of them without a vocal teacher, and much trouble and expense.

The writing of Gaelic, and especially phonetically, being new to me, I take it for granted that innumerable mistakes and omissions may have escaped me in correcting the proofs. Any critic but the merely verbal one will, however, I think, find enough to convince him that such mistakes and omissions are more to be ascribed to want of practice than to want of knowledge of the subjects. For the former I might expect to be excused; for the latter I could not. The phonetic spelling is on a carefully considered uniform plan, but being thoroughly new to myself, there is no doubt that many letters will be found undetected that are inconsistent with uniformity, and unnecessary to the pronunciation. This will, I trust, be excused in the first edition of a new system of orthography. I am aware that my phonetic spelling will give the English reader but a very imperfect idea of the beauty of the language when compared to a chaste and elegant pronunciation by the living voice ; but every well-educated person knows that letters without a vocal teacher never can teach any foreigner to speak any language like a native. I have endeavoured to make this Preface embrace my whole case, and submit it to the public with perfect confidence in its truth and honesty; and therefore I have some hopes that it may assist in creating among English readers some interest in the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans.

Port-Glasgow, 3rd July 1862.

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/poetry/treatiseonlangua02camp.pdf>

END.

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

Alastair