



ELECTRICCANADIAN.COM
AGRICULTURE & WILDLIFE
ARTICLES
BETH'S FAMILY TREE
BOOKS
BUSINESS
CHILDREN'S STORIES
CLANS & FAMILIES

CULTURE & LANGUAGE
DONNA'S PAGE
ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET
FAMOUS SCOTS
FAMILY TREE
FORUMS
FOOD & DRINK
GAMES

GAZETTEER
GENEALOGY
HISTORIC PLACES
HISTORY
HUMOR
JOHN'S PAGE
KIDS
LIFESTYLE
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER
PICTURES
POETRY
POSTCARDS
RELIGION
ROBERT BURNS
SCOTS IRISH
SCOTS REGIMENTS
SERVICES

SHOPPING
SONGS
SPORT
SCOTS DIASPORA
TARTANS
TRAVEL
TRIVIA
VIDEOS
WHAT'S NEW

HELP TERMS OF USE CONTACT US

Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for September 5th, 2025

Electric Scotland News

Not posted as much this week due partly from getting in a new book from my favourite author, L.E. Modesitt Jr. He produces around 2 books a year and I very much enjoy them. You can visit his site at:

<https://www.lemodesittjr.com/>

It is his eighty-fifth novel and I've got all of them.

I did continue to work on My Canadian Experience for September 2025 which will always be updated throughout the month. You can read what I've posted up so far at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada_add25.htm

The story this week is about Henry MacKenzie, one of the most illustrious names connected with polite literature in Scotland. I have added a couple of books by him and will be adding others next week. You can view his page and links to the books at:

https://electricscotland.com/history/other/mackenzie_henry.htm

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...

BBC The Royal Edinburgh 75th Military Tattoo

The 2025 Royal Edinburgh 75th Military Tattoo as presented by the BBC.

You can watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/wZ7iFuNGipY?si=ACbViUgEUv6r-q-U>

Trump has forgotten what made America great

Adam Smith's belief that the wealth of a nation should be derived not from protectionism, but the power of free exchange, is clearly lost on Donald Trump, who is moving the United States towards a form of state capitalism. The US will discover that economic nationalism is not a recipe for prosperity.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/the-power-of-free-markets-and-voluntary-exchange>

Conrad Black: A fragile federation awaits Carney's green assault

The prime minister's self-improvement program for us won't be pleasant

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/4O6pg>

Historic Dalserf Parish Church celebrates 370th anniversary

A historic church with deep links to some of the most tumultuous events in Scotland's history has marked its 370th anniversary. A special service of praise and thanksgiving was held to celebrate milestone at Dalserf Parish Church in South Lanarkshire.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/8KX65>

Why the growing crisis in Scotland's £10bn tourism industry may engulf us all

The cost-of-living crisis, increases in National Insurance contributions and looming tourist taxes pose a real problem for a sector that is vital to Scotland's economy

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/5KU2#selection-597.0-597.167>

Electric Canadian

The Organization, Administration and Equipment

Of His Majesty's Land Forces in Peace and War, first edition by Lieut-Colonel William R. Lang, M.S.C. (1916) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/organizationadmi00lang.pdf>

The Good Canadian

Or, Household Physician by V. B. Hall (1871) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/goodcanadianorho00unse.pdf>

My Canadian Experience

The August 2025 entry is now complete with a mix of videos showing Canada's continued work to move away from reliance on the US and strengthen ties with Europe and how it is also working against Chinese tariffs. Also Canada's work on defense both in the Arctic and also with Europe.

You can read the complete August posting at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/canada_add24.htm

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 31st day of August 2025 - Toronto

By The Rev. Nola Crewe and also added to our Toronto page.

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26651-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-31st-day-of-august-2025-toronto>

The Beaver Magazine

Added No. 3 Outfit 260 December 1929 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/TheBeaverDecember1929.pdf>

Electric Scotland

The Saturday News

Edmonton, Alberta, Saturday, January 26, 1907. In this issue they celebrate Burns' Birthday (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

https://electricScotland.com/burns/saturdaynews_burns.pdf

An Account of the Life and Writings of John Home, Esq.

By Henry MacKenzie, Esq. F.R.S.E., &c. &c. &c. (1822) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/books/pdf/anaccountlifean00mack.pdf>

The Anecdotes and Egotism of Henry MacKenzie 1745 - 1831

Now first published with an Introduction by Harold William Thompson, A.M., Ph.D., F.S.A.Scot. (1927). Added a link to this book at the foot of our page about him.

You can get to this at:

https://electricScotland.com/history/other/mackenzie_henry.htm

Wealthy Nation, Healthy Nation

A philosophy and policies for a prosperous Scotland Edited by Malcolm Offord, 2nd September, 2025

You can read this report at:

https://electricScotland.com/independence/sip/CPS_WEALTHY_NATION_HEALTHY_NATION-1.pdf

Man of Feeling

By Henry MacKenzie (1893) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/manoffeeling.pdf>

The Scottish Journal of Agriculture

Volume X (1927) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

<https://electricScotland.com/agriculture/The%20Scottish%20Journal%20Of%20Agriculture%20Vol1927.pdf>

Story

HENRY MACKENZIE

One of the most illustrious names connected with polite literature in Scotland.

He was born at Edinburgh in August 1745, while the citizens were preparing, by ineffectual fortifications, for the dreaded attack of prince Charles Stuart, then collecting his army in the Highlands. [Sir Walter Scott, in the memoir of Mr Mackenzie, prefixed to his novels in Ballantyne's Novelist's Library, states that his birth took place "on the same day on which prince Charles landed." This, however, is incompatible with the fact of Mr M. having been born in August, as the prince landed on the 25th of July. We may here also mention, that the original source of the memoir itself was not, as implied by Sir Walter, a Paris edition of the Man of Feeling, but a publication, entitled "The British Gallery of Contemporary Portraits."] The nativity of Mr Mackenzie was fixed by himself, at a public meeting which he attended late in life, upon the venerable alley denominated Liberton's Wynd, now removed in order to admit of a bridge for the connexion of the High Street with the southern districts of the city. His father was Dr Joshua, or (as his name is spelt in the Scots Magazine for 1800, where his death is recorded) Josiah Mackenzie, an eminent physician. Dr Mackenzie was, we believe, a native of Fortrose, upon the Moray frith, but had removed in early life to Edinburgh, where he acquired an extensive practice as a physician, and distinguished himself in the world of letters as author of a volume of Medical and Literary Essays. [We have heard that some of Harley's feelings were taken from those of the author himself, when, at his first entrance on the dry and barbarous study of municipal law, he was looking back, like Blackstone, on the land of the Muses, which he was condemned to leave behind him. It has also been said, that the fine sketch of Miss Walton was taken from the heiress of a family of distinction, who ranked at that time high in the Scottish fashionable world. But such surmises are little worth the tracing; for we believe no original character was ever composed by any author, without the idea having been previously suggested by something which he had observed in nature." –Sir Walter Scott, in Ballantyne's Novelists' Library.] The mother of the author of the Man of Feeling was Margaret, eldest daughter of Mr Rose of Kilravock, a gentleman of ancient family in Nairnshire.

After being educated at the high school and university of Edinburgh, Mr Mackenzie, by the advice of some friends of his father, was articled to Mr Inglis of Redhall, in order to acquire a knowledge of the business of the Exchequer, a law department, in which he was likely to have fewer competitors than in any other in Scotland. To this, though not perfectly compatible with the literary taste which he very early displayed, he applied with due diligence; and, in 1765, went to London to study the modes of English Exchequer practice, which, as well as the constitution of the court, were similar in both countries. While there, his talents induced a friend to solicit his remaining in London, and qualifying himself for the English bar. But the anxious wishes of his family that he should reside with them, and the moderation of an unambitious mind, decided his return to Edinburgh; where he became, first, partner, and afterwards successor, to Mr Inglis, in the office of attorney for the crown.

His professional labour, however, did not prevent his attachment to literary pursuits. When in London, he sketched some part of his first and very popular work, The Man of Feeling, which was published in 1771, without his name, and was so much a favourite with the public, as to become, a few years after, the occasion of a remarkable fraud. A Mr Eccles of Bath, observing the continued mystery as to the author, laid claim to the work as his own, and, in order to support his pretensions, transcribed the whole with his own hand, with an appropriate allowance of blottings, interlineations, and corrections. So plausibly was this claim put forward, and so pertinaciously was it adhered to, that Messrs Cadell and Strachan, the publishers, found it necessary to undeceive the public by a formal contradiction.

Though Mr Mackenzie preserved the anonymity of the Man of Feeling for some years, (probably from prudential motives with reference to his business,) he did not scruple to indulge, both before and after this period, in the literary society with which the Scottish capital abounded. He informs us in his Life of Home, that he was admitted in boyhood as a kind of page to the tea-drinkings which then constituted the principal festive entertainment of the more polished people in Edinburgh; and his early acquaintance with Hume, Smith, Robertson, Blair, and the rest of the literary galaxy, then in the ascendant, is evidenced from the same source. He was an early intimate of the ingenious blind poet, Dr Blacklock; and at the house of that gentleman, as we have been informed by a survivor of the party, then a youthful boarder in the house, met Dr Johnson and Boswell, when the former was passing through Edinburgh on his journey to the Hebrides. To quote the words of our informant—"Several strangers had been invited on the occasion, (it was to breakfast;) and, amongst others, Dr Mackenzie, and his son, the late Mr Henry Mackenzie. These gentlemen went away before Dr Johnson; and Mrs Blacklock took the opportunity of pronouncing a panegyric upon the father and son, which she concluded by saying, that though Dr Mackenzie had a large family, and was married to a lady who was his son's step-mother, nevertheless the son

lived with his own wife and family in the same house, [Their residence was in one of the floors of a tall house at the junction of the Cowgate and Grassmarket, either above or below a floor occupied by Mrs Syme, the maternal grandmother of Lord Brougham.] and the greatest harmony obtained among all the parties. On this Dr Johnson said, 'That's wrong, madam;' and stated a reason, which it were as well to leave unchronicled. This settled Mrs Blacklock's opinion of the doctor. Several years ago, on calling to remembrance the particulars of this breakfast with Mr Henry Mackenzie, he said there was another reason for Mrs Blacklock's dislike: she had filled no less than twenty-two cups of tea to Dr Johnson at this breakfast; which, I told Mr M., was too many, for Mrs Blacklock had appointed me to number them, and I made them only nineteen!" [Our correspondent's introduction to this anecdote may be deemed worthy of the reader's notice. "I was twice in company with Dr Johnson, when he came to Edinburgh, on his journey to the Hebrides. Being then a boarder in Dr Blacklock's, my request to be present at the breakfast given to Dr Johnson was readily granted. The impression which I then received of him can never be effaced; but it was not of an unpleasant nature. He did not appear to me to be that savage which some of my college companions had described him: on the contrary, there was much suavity and kindness in his manner and address to Dr Blacklock. The blind poet generally stood in company, rocking from one side to another; he had remarkably small white hands, which Dr Johnson held in his great paws during the most part of the time they conversed together, caressing and stroking them, as he might have done those of a pretty child." It is necessary to mention, that the great moralist was, by Boswell's showing, in one of his gentlest moods on this occasion.]

Some years after the publication of the *Man of Feeling*, Mr Mackenzie published his *Man of the World*, which was intended as a counterpart to the other. In his former fiction, he imagined a hero constantly obedient to every emotion of his moral sense. In the *Man of the World*, he exhibited, on the contrary, a person rushing headlong into misery and ruin, and spreading misery all around him, by pursuing a happiness which he expected to obtain in defiance of the moral sense. His next production was *Julia de Roubigné*, a novel in a series of letters, designed, in its turn, as a counterpart to the *Man of the World*. "A friend of the author," says Sir Walter Scott, "the celebrated Lord Kames, we believe, had represented to Mr Mackenzie, in how sunny poems, plays, and novels, the distress of the piece is made to turn upon the designing villany of some one of the dramatic persons. On considering his observations, the author undertook, as a task fit for his genius, the composition of a story, in which the characters should be all naturally virtuous, and where the calamities of the catastrophe should arise, as frequently happens in actual life, not out of schemes of premeditated villany, but from the excess and over-indulgence of passions and feelings in themselves blameless, nay, praiseworthy, but which, encouraged to a morbid excess, and coming into fatal and fortuitous concourse with each other, lead to the most disastrous consequences. Mr Mackenzie executed his purpose; and as the plan fell in most happily with the views of a writer, whose object was less to describe external objects, than to read a lesson to the human heart, he has produced one of the most heart-wringing histories which has ever been written. The very circumstances which palliate the errors of the sufferers, in whose distress we interest ourselves, point out to the reader that there is neither hope, remedy, nor revenge."

In 1777 or 1778, a number of young men of literary taste, chiefly connected with the Scottish bar, formed themselves into an association for the prosecution of their favourite studies, which came to bear the name of the Mirror Club. An account of this fraternity, of its members, and of the way in which they conducted their meetings, has already been given under the article "WILLIAM CRAIG," being derived from the oral information of Sir William Macleod Bannatyne, the latest survivor of the society.

[Sir William MacLeod Bannatyne was born, January 26, 1743, O.S., and died November 30, 1833, in his ninety-first year. He was the son of Mr Roderick Macleod, W.S., whose sister, lady Clanranald, for protecting Prince Charles in his wanderings, was made prisoner, and kept for some time in confinement in London. The "young Clanranald," who led out his clan in 1745, and took the town of Dundee, was therefore cousin-german to Sir William. The venerable subject of this note, passed advocate, January 22, 1765, and was the intimate friend of the first lord Melville, when at the bar, and of several other eminent persons in that profession, with whom he used to meet regularly for mutual improvement in forensic and legal business. His contributions to the *Mirror* were five papers, which are pointed out in the latest edition. On the resignation of lord Swinton, in 1799, he was raised to the bench, where he performed the duties of a judge till 1823. On his retirement, he received the honour of knighthood. The remainder of his life was spent by Sir William in a cheerful and hospitable leisure at

his residence in Whiteford House, near the bottom of the Canongate, where he was for many years the only surviving specimen of the old town gentleman. Sir William was full of anecdote and information respecting the political history of Scotland during the last century, and showed, in conversation with the present writer, as intimate an acquaintance, and as lively a recollection of the secrets of the Walpole and Bute administrations, as could be displayed by any living man, respecting that of Mr Canning or the Duke of Wellington.]

Of the Mirror Club, Mr Mackenzie was readily acknowledged chief; and, accordingly, when it was resolved to issue their literary essays in a small weekly paper, resembling the Spectator, he was appointed to undertake the duties connected with the publication. The Mirror was commenced on the 23d of January, 1779, in the shape of a small folio sheet, price three halfpence, and terminated on the 27th of May, 1780; having latterly been issued twice a-week. Of the one hundred and ten papers to which the Mirror extended, forty-two were contributed by Mr Mackenzie, including La Roche, and several others of the most admired of his minor pieces. The sale, during the progress of the publication, never exceeded four hundred copies; but this was more than sufficient to bring it under the notice of a wide and influential circle, and to found the reputation it has since enjoyed. When re-published in duodecimo volumes, a considerable sum was realized from the copyright, out of which the proprietors presented £100 to the Orphan Hospital, and treated themselves to a hogshead of claret, to be drunk at their ensuing meetings.

The Lounger, a work of exactly the same character, was commenced by the same writers, and under the same editorship, February 6, 1785, and continued once a-week till the 6th of January, 1787; out of the hundred and one papers to which it extended, fifty-seven are the production of Mackenzie. One of the latter papers the editor devoted to a generous and adventurous critique on the poems of Burns, which were just then published, and had not yet been approved by the public voice. As might have been expected, Mackenzie dwells most fondly on the Addresses to the Mouse and the Mountain Daisy, which struck a tone nearest to that prevailing in his own mind.

On the institution of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Mr Mackenzie became one of the members; and amongst the papers with which he enriched its transactions, are an elegant tribute to the memory of his friend lord Abercromby, and a memoir on German tragedy; the latter of which bestows high praise on the Emelia Galotti of Leasing, and on the Robbers by Schiller. For this memoir he had procured the materials through the medium of a French work; but desiring afterwards to enjoy the native beauties of German poetry, he took lessons in German from a Dr Okely, who was at that time studying medicine in Edinburgh. The fruits of his attention to German literature appeared further in the year 1791, in a small volume, containing translations of the Set of Horses by Lessing, and of two or three other dramatic pieces. But the most remarkable result of his studies in this department, was certainly the effect which his memoir produced on the mind of Sir Walter Scott, then a very young man. It gave a direction to the genius of this illustrious person, at a time when it was groping about for something on which to employ itself; and, harmonizing with the native legendary lore with which he was already replete, decided, perhaps, that Scott was to strike out a new path for himself, instead of following tamely on in the already beaten walks of literature.

Mr Mackenzie was also an original member of the Highland Society; and by him were published the volumes of their Transactions, to which he prefixed an account of the institution, and the principal proceedings of the society. In these Transactions is also to be found his view of the controversy respecting Ossian's Poems, and an interesting account of Gaelic poetry.

Among Mackenzie's compositions are several political pamphlets, all upon the Tory side; the first being "An Account of the Proceedings of the Parliament of 1784," in which he strongly defended the views of his friend, Mr Henry Dundas, afterwards viscount Melville. At the time of the French Revolution, he wrote various tracts, with the design of counteracting the progress of liberal principles in his own country. These services, with the friendship of Lord Melville and Mr George Rose, obtained for him, in 1804, the lucrative office of comptroller of taxes for Scotland, which he held till his death.

In 1793, Mr Mackenzie wrote the life of Dr Blacklock, prefixed to a quarto edition of the blind poet's works, which was published for the benefit of his widow. Mr Mackenzie's intimacy with Blacklock, gave him an opportunity of knowing the habits of his life, the bent of his mind, and the feelings peculiar to the privation of sight under which

Blacklock laboured. In 1812, he read to the Royal Society his *Life of John Home*, which was some years after prefixed to an edition of that poet's works, and also published separately. At the time he read this paper to the Society, he also laid before them, in connexion with it, some Critical Essays, chiefly relative to dramatic poetry, which have not been published.

Mackenzie was himself a dramatic writer, though not a successful one. A tragedy, written by him in early life, under the name of *The Spanish Father*, was never represented; in consequence of Mr Garrick's opinion, that the catastrophe was of too shocking a kind for the modern stage; although he owned the merit of the poetry, the force of some of the scenes, and the scope for fine acting in the character of Alphonso, the leading person in the drama. In 1773, Mr Mackenzie produced a tragedy under the title of *The Prince of Tunis*, which, with Mrs. Yates as its heroine, was performed with applause for six nights, at the Edinburgh theatre. Of three other dramatic pieces by Mr Mackenzie, the next was *The Shipwreck, or Fatal Curiosity*, which might be described as an alteration of Lilly's play under the latter of the two names. The comedies entitled *The Force of Fashion*, and *The White Hypocrite*, both of which were unsuccessful, complete the list. Mr Mackenzie's grand deficiency as a dramatic author was his inability to draw forcible characters. His novels and tales charm by other means altogether; but in the drama, striking characters, and a skilful management of them, are indispensable.

In 1808, Mackenzie published a complete edition of his works in eight volumes. From that period, and indeed from one considerably antecedent to it, he might be said to have abandoned literature, though, to use his own affecting image, as employed at one of the meetings of the Royal Society, the old stump would still occasionally send forth a few green shoots. The patronage of the government was unfortunately extended in a somewhat improper shape, in as far as the office bestowed upon him, though lucrative, required unremitting personal labour. He was thus unable, even if he had been willing, to cultivate literature to any considerable purpose. Such leisure as he possessed, he spent chiefly in healthy recreations—in shooting, particularly, and angling, to which he was devotedly attached, and the former of which he had practised in early life, on the ground now occupied by the New Town of Edinburgh. He thus protracted his days to a healthy old age, until he finally stood amidst his fellow men, like Noah amongst his descendants, a sole-surviving specimen of a race of literary men, all of whom had long been consigned to the dust. His recollections of the great men who lived in his youth, were most distinct and interesting; but it is to be regretted, that with the exception of what he has given in his *Life of Home*, he never could be prevailed upon to commit them to paper. The sole physical failing of his latter years was a slight deafness, which, however, seemed only to give him the greater power of speech, as, by a natural deception of the mind, he probably conceived, that what was inaudible to himself, was so, or ran the risk of being so, to his hearers also. At length, after a comparatively brief period of decline, he died, January 14, 1831, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

By his wife, Miss Penuel Grant, daughter of Sir Ludovick Grant, of Grant, Bart., and lady Mary Ogilvie, Mr Mackenzie had eleven children, the eldest of whom was a judge of the courts of session and justiciary—and a younger, Mr Holt Mackenzie, one of the members of the privy council.

As a novelist and essayist, Mackenzie still ranks in the first class, though, perhaps, rather by a reflection of his former fame, than through any active or sincere appreciation of his writings by the present generation. It is, perhaps, unfair to judge of the intellectual efforts of an author, by any other age than his own, seeing that, as Johnson well remarks, the most of men content themselves if they only can, in some degree, outstrip their predecessors. Yet it is impossible to overlook that Mr Mackenzie's works are not of a kind to retain the highest degree of popularity beyond the age in which they were written, and that they have been surpassed by many later writers, who, from the greater competition which they had to contend with, have not attained nearly so high an eminence. Mr Mackenzie lived in an age, when to attain certain proprieties in language, was looked upon as almost the summum bonum of authorship of any kind: men had not yet become sufficiently at ease about the vehicle of their thoughts, to direct their attention solely, or even chiefly, as they do now, to the sense which is conveyed. Hence, we find, in his works, a faultless sweetness and delicacy of diction, which, however, is only a mannerism, though not exactly that of an individual—while the whole scenery, incidents, and characters, instead of being taken directly from nature, are little more than a vivification of what have been the stock of fictitious writers from the commencement of the art. The real life with which Mr Mackenzie was acquainted, must have been, in a great measure, the same from which Sir Walter Scott afterwards fashioned his immortal narratives;

but this, to Mackenzie, fashion had forbidden, and he had not the force to break through the rules of that tawdry deity. He was content to take all his materials at second-hand, to grapple only with that literary human nature, which, like certain dresses on the stage, runs through all books from perhaps some successful model of antiquity, without ever gathering a spark of the genuine article of the living world in its course. Dexterously, we allow, is the mosaic composed, and beautiful is the crust of sentiment in which it was presented. As works of art, the novels and minor stories of Mackenzie are exquisite; but, nevertheless, they could never have attained so great a celebrity, if they had not appeared at a time when mere art was chiefly regarded by the public, and when, as yet, men esteemed nature as something not exactly fitted for drawing-room intercourse.

While we thus, with great deference, express an unfavourable opinion of his merits as a writer of fiction, we allow to Mr Mackenzie the highest credit as a moralist, and also as a composer of language, which is to be esteemed as no mean accomplishment, and depends more upon native gifts than is generally supposed. The moral sense of Mackenzie was in the highest degree pure, tender, and graceful; and has imbued his writings with a character for which they can hardly ever fail to be esteemed. "The principal object of all his novels," says Sir Walter Scott, "has been to reach and sustain a tone of moral pathos, by representing the effect of incidents, whether important or trifling, upon the human mind, and especially on those which were not only just, honourable, and intelligent, but so framed as to be responsive to those finer feelings to which ordinary hearts are callous." The sweet collocation of the words in which all these efforts are made, combines to render the effect, to an extraordinary degree, soothing, refining, and agreeable.

END.

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

Alastair