

But what was going on in some (too few?) churches beyond the customary nativity plays?

It is to be hoped that because any society will be judged by its treatment of those at its margins, the essential link

blind.” I hope that the words from The Magnificat from Luke’s Gospel were announced in ringing tones throughout the land: “He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.”

Letters for publication, which we reserve the right to edit, must have a full address and phone number. Send to:

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Light work

I read with some dismay, the article regarding our electricity supplies, “Renewables now biggest generator of electricity” (The Scotsman, 23 December) in which you state that almost half of Scotland’s electrical demand during 2014 was supplied by renewables.

This statement may sound wonderful but it is somewhat misleading. Electrical system demand varies over time but it is always there and has to be satisfied, not when the wind blows, but instantly. This is achieved by means of large conventional power stations running night and day. There is no alternative.

Covering the countryside with wind turbines and allowing them to take precedence over all other forms of generation for grid access doesn’t really help matters. It just means that these large stations have to be running in the background, ready at a moment’s notice to provide 100 per cent backup for erratic and unpredictable wind farms.

This operating regime produces far more emissions than would be produced if the stations were running on full load, in fact it has been postulated that this state of affairs goes a long way towards negating any perceived savings made by these so-called green energy sources.

So yes, it can be said that renewables generated the equivalent of almost half of Scotland’s demand but only when the wind blew and this is not the basis for running a reliable and efficient power system.

With Cockenzie being a distant memory and Longanet following suit, we will soon

have nothing left to back up and protect our supply system, so instead of singing the praises of renewable energy, Fergus Ewing and others need to do some hard thinking and come up with realistic ideas for keeping the lights on.

ALAN CAWTHORNE
Captains Brae, Twynholm,
Kirkcudbright

Blight work

The Beauly to Denny high voltage electricity line is now fully operational. Recent media coverage has shown the disastrous impact this is having on the environment. Yet Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) continue to wreak havoc on our landscape. Despite all the evidence, SPEN is in the process of developing a similar line of 50m tall pylons across part of Ayrshire and the spine of Dumfries and Galloway, from near the west coast at Ballantrae to Harker, just north of Carlisle. They plan to create new sub-stations at Newton Stewart, Glenlee and near Dumfries.

This line will be primarily used to carry wind energy from South-west Scotland to Cumbria, not for use in Scotland. SPEN’s proposal document assumes that an overhead line is the only possible option and avoids mention of undersea or underground routes, despite the growing European Network of subsea cables and the undergrounding of lines through the Pyrenees and Alps.

Those of us who live under the threat of this blight would greatly appreciate any help to make SPEN reconsider their actions. They will be detrimental to wildlife, the visual and historical environment and significantly damaging to the tourist industry, which is one of the main economic drivers in the area. These monstrous behemoths striding through unspoiled hillsides and rural parishes are an insult to the landscape.

Unfortunately, it will take enormous pressure to convince SPEN that the allegedly cheapest option will have larger ongoing costs, both economically and for the envi-

deprivation; others, relying on the apparent good life of experiential satisfaction of individualism and consumerism, are losing contact with the virtues which sustain us”.

It is thus the role of the Church not only to be “a voice

The politicians are failing us. Now we must listen to Jesus, who was born in squalor, the son of refugees. The forces of wealth, power and privilege will seem, at times, insurmountable—but there is always Easter.

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ronment and to take responsibility for the long-term consequences of this project.

ALICE HOWDLE
Kirkton, Dumfries

Air, no thanks

Following John Swinney’s austerity Budget, I was shocked to read that the SNP is calling for a £200 million tax cut for the airline industry.

Where is this money going to

come from? The NHS, schools, higher borrowing or higher tax? George Osborne has cut Corporation Tax – supported by the SNP – from 28 per cent to 18 per cent, a massive tax cut for the airline industry, but they have not passed this on in lower fares. The price of oil has collapsed but the airline industry has not passed this on in lower air fares. Now the SNP want to give them another multi-million pound tax cut

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ON TWITTER

#LEMMY

The last surviving member of the classic Motorhead line-up paid tribute to the band’s frontman Lemmy, who died at 70.

@Abz_Thompson tweeted: “RIP Lemmy, seeing Motorhead was brilliant, thanks for the great music.”

@GoldenVision90 added: “The guy tasked with digging Lemmy’s grave is considered the best in the business. He’s the ace of spades.”

@IanWillNot commented: “I think Lemmy would be proud of how hungover I am at work today.”

@ChrisWDelgado suggested: “I’m sad to hear that Lemmy has died. Life is short, and we need to take advantage of it while we can.”

@danieltweets48 offered: “Still can’t believe that Lemmy is gone. Everyone thought he would live forever.”

@RealAliceCooper said: “#RIP Lemmy – he was 1 of a kind. He was innovative, true to his art & an icon. Condolences to his family, band & fans”

#STORMFRANK

Cumbria and Central Scotland were issued amber warnings for heavy rain as Storm Frank continued.

@CarolineGONeill said:

“Electricity starting to flicker on and off. Great.”

@rb2003 added: “Since when did naming bad weather in Scotland becoming a thing? Was there a vote that I missed?”

@antowrcifc commented: “Now we have another storm, Storm Frank. We’ll go through the whole alphabet by the time winter is over.”

#ANDYMSTEWART

Tributes were paid to leading folk musician Andy M Stewart, who died after a long illness.

@spiritedlads said: “RIP Andy M Stewart. Thanks for the music and the great songs”

@IsisZimmerman tweeted: “Tonight is a night for reminiscing. We lost one of the greats. Wildly underrated considering”

@GeordieMac added: “Sad to learn of the death of Andy M Stewart. Worked w/ him in early 90s: always laughing at some daft story. Surprised any work got done at all”

@GothardSisters commented: “So sad to hear of the passing of Andy M. Stewart!! A great loss to the Celtic music world.”

@janiec55 offered: “RIP Andy M Stewart. Great singer. Fond memories of 1970s Edinburgh.”