

There's a love- in Downing

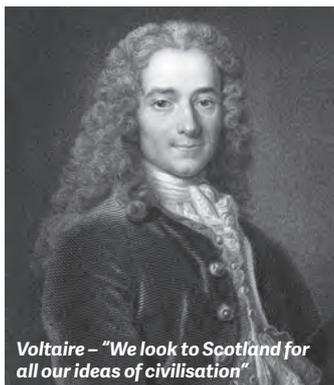


Queensferry Crossing – The bridge unionist politicians love to hate... except when they're claiming credit for it!

MANY FRENCH philosophers were heavily influenced by Scots – Voltaire, for example, is credited with saying, “We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation.” So it’s interesting, to me at least, how often another classic French quotation, by Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, so accurately sums up the kind of *Groundhog Day* experience that we independistas seem to permanently live in – **“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.”** Aye, the more things change, the more they stay the same...

That’s precisely the feeling that set me off on a wee rant in last month’s issue – *When is enough really enough?* – and

Aye, the more things change, the more they stay the same...



Voltaire – “We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation”



Karr – “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”

it reminded me of another couple of things which I wrote away back in 2011 – 9 years ago! – the gists of which are still relevant. To paraphrase Neil Diamond “*Well except for the names and a few other changes, if you’re talking about now, the story’s the same one*”...

The State broadcaster

BBC Scotland annoys me! There are many reasons for this, one being that it consistently misses our fine city of Dundee off the weather map. We’ll always see Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, usually Inverness, and regular appearances from apparently important outposts like Kelso – no disrespect Kelso! Why is that? Is there a conspiracy against Dundee? Actually, there may well be but that’s another rant for another day. No, what’s exercising my ire right now is a rapidly growing dislike of the inaccuracies, spin and unsolicited, thinly disguised opinionated slants contained within their news reporting.

Take Reporting Scotland last week as an example, and their feature on the (then) upcoming public sector ‘Day of Action’. Newsworthy, certainly, but presented in a very sinister way didn’t you think? For me, it certainly didn’t help that it was presented by David Henderson, you know, the one who’s far too posh for his own good and with a delivery style that’s way too contrived even by BBC Scotland standards. As an aside, just exactly why do they keep choosing presenters with appalling presentational styles – think Bob Wylie, or his extreme (and extremely irritating) disciple Seonag MacKinnon? And, why are we usually no better informed at the end of one of their tedious pieces than we were at the beginning?

Anyway, back to last week and what really irritated me was

bomb Street!



by Gordon
Craigie



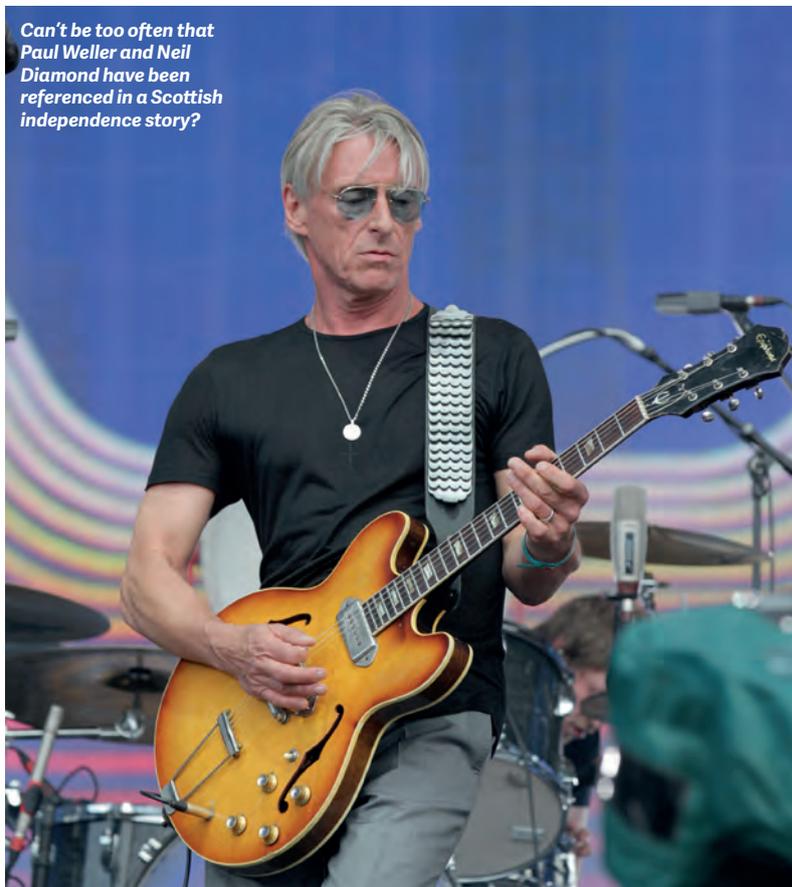
(as Paul Weller might've said!)

the whole tone of the article. Someone had clearly decided beforehand that the upcoming strike was a bad thing and should be presented in such a light. How else could you explain the introductory heart-tugging piece focusing on some random Edinburgh graphic design business owner whose "colleagues may be off work on strike day looking after their kids"? As the article was actually predicated on the announcement by the police that, although they can't go on strike, they were adding their voice to the protest against the UK Government plans for pension reform, why was this not the lead in to the story?

It didn't make sense. Posh David did finally get round to speaking about the police, and their spokesman made the very valid point that the fact that the UK Government was attempting to enforce the reforms on police pensions when that was a matter reserved to the Scottish Government was "an affront to the whole of the Scottish Parliament". Surely this is more of a story, worthy of further expansion and investigation? Apparently not, as oor David moved on to report that coastguards, driving instructors and even Glasgow Underground would be on strike, the latter prompting him to comment "so even those who want to work might find it a challenge". Ouch!

Reading that last bit back, I can imagine some of you thinking "what's wrong with that, he's just reporting facts" but my gripe is the selectivity of the facts, the order of apparent importance afforded to those facts and, most of all actually, the tone adopted in presenting these facts. We all know how sentiments and feelings are conveyed by the tone of a voice, and how the same words spoken in two different tones can have entirely different meanings, and you can just feel the disapproving tone in his report.

Can't be too often that Paul Weller and Neil Diamond have been referenced in a Scottish independence story?





Colonial Quay



The State Broadcaster

I happen to believe that these proposed reforms are shockingly misjudged, and I also believe the way public sector pay and pensions have been represented in the media generally over the last few years is appalling. A more cynical individual might even suggest it's all been part of a UK Government campaign to drip-feed the "public sector bad" message into the national consciousness so that come the time, now as it happens, they can justify draconian reforms

as 'reflecting public sentiment'. Shame on you BBC for appearing to collude in this campaign!

Just present the facts and let us make up our own minds, though that's not very fashionable these days as evidenced by media manipulation of the Scottish Referendum debate – surely a topic for another column? And, in this case, the facts contained in their report centred on over 250,000 Scots being willing to withdraw their labour and forsake a day's pay on a point of principle, supported by the police adding their voice despite being legally obliged not to withdraw their labour. Those are the important bits, not the fact that some graphic designer may be inconvenienced by a few of her pals taking the day off to look after their kids. Get it right!

Hmmm... I still don't watch BBC news output, as I consider it to be damaging to my health, but I know – by hearing from friends, from peoples' comments on social media and the like – that its level of propaganda has only increased over the intervening years. When Storm Ciara devastated most of North America and Europe in early February, for example, BBC Scotland and the entire Scottish unionist-leaning media went into anti-Scottish/anti-SNP overdrive because the Scottish Government were apparently culpable for not being able to prevent ice falling from the Queensferry Crossing – whiff? Of course, all the usual suspects from the Scottish branches of the UK political parties were falling over themselves to get in on the act. Perhaps the funniest though was the newly anointed First Minister-in-waiting, Jackson Carlaw, who had conveniently forgotten his previous pride at having been so instrumental in choosing the design of the aforementioned 'failing' bridge – bless!

Fortunately, for me at least, that sort of coordinated collaboration between desperate UK politicians and our compliantly cringeworthy media neatly segues into the second piece I've retrieved from the archives, also written in 2011 but still, once again, change the names and...

Jackson Carlaw, 2017...



Anti-BBC bias demonstrators

Its level of propaganda has only increased over the intervening years



V&A Dundee – All due to the UK Government... apparently!

Jackson Carlaw MSP @Jackson_Carlaw

The continued closure of the Queensferry Crossing is a damning indictment of this government. Whilst Nicola Sturgeon is swanning about in Brussels, Scots commuters are stuck without vital infrastructure.

Farce Road Bridge: Shut Queensferry Crossing weather sensors cannot properly detect ice
heraldscotland.com

09:30 · 12/02/2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Jackson Carlaw, 2020!

Lies, mistruths and... politics!

OK, enough's enough, am I the only one who sees through these politicians and their completely shameless attempts to browbeat an entire nation through fear? What, specifically, has set me off on this particular rant? One day last week, I open my Courier and out jumps Danny Alexander as the latest Westminster apparatchik to take his turn in spreading bogeymen stories about Scotland and the proposed Independence Referendum.

Apparently, this is "causing real uncertainty" and follows on from George Osborne claiming that "companies are being put off investing in Scotland due to fears the country will break away from the UK". For me though it's just the latest in what appears to be a concerted and sustained attempt to influence the Scottish electorate with scaremongering.

What uncertainty? Unlike the vague promises offered up by countless previous governments, UK and Scottish, the current Scottish Government were elected on a mandate including a firm commitment to hold a referendum in the second half of this parliament. Nothing vague about that.

And is it not simply common sense to allow plenty time for reasoned debate and considered reflection before asking the electorate to take possibly the biggest political decision in Scotland for over 300 years?



Danny Alexander – "Can I carry your bag sir?"



George Osborne – "Smug, moi?"

The latest Westminster apparatchik to take his turn in spreading bogeymen stories about Scotland and the proposed Independence Referendum

I'd have thought so, but as we listen to unionist politicians of various hues deride this plan do you not wonder, as I do, why they want us to rush this? To get rid of uncertainty? Give me a break!

Surely it's entirely self-seeking, as they believe the polls that seem to indicate they would win if the referendum was now, before all the arguments are out



Delivering for Scotland – are they having a laugh?

in the open, digested and reflected upon. I really can't be doing with it anymore, it's just all so transparent. If politics isn't about presenting your beliefs, arguing your corner then testing the outcome in an election then what is it about?

There's been a lot of talk in recent campaigns about negative electioneering and it is widely believed that a major factor in the last two Scottish elections has been the positivity of the SNP against the constant sniping and downplaying of the other parties. Have the UK parties learned no lessons? Do they ever?

As the referendum debate gathers pace, what I would naively expect to see is reasoned political argument from those who believe in the union to try to persuade those undecided or already inclined towards independence to change their minds.

Equally I do expect to see the SNP continue to promote what Scotland can be in the future without interference from Westminster. What we do know for certain is that successive Westminster governments have consistently lied for decades about matters affecting Scotland and, specifically, about the implications of independence.

It's all there in the public domain thanks to the 30-year rule and all that. They lied about oil, they lied about finances, and they continue to lie or at the very least peddle falsehoods and half-truths in order to mislead the Scottish electorate in order to get the result they want.

After all, if they were so convinced of their case why would they not indeed say "bring it on", present the positive benefits of Scotland continuing within the UK and then trust their own judgement and that of the Scottish people to come to the "right" conclusion?

Successive Westminster governments have consistently lied for decades about matters affecting Scotland and, specifically, about the implications of independence

Those last two paragraphs, in particular, could easily have been freshly written today. But what are we getting instead? A UK Government, Scotland (aka de Pfeffel's propaganda unit!) love-bomb campaign plastered all over social media and, apparently, about to assault innocent cinemagoers as they're about to tuck into their popcorn! But surely the main squirrel of this particular venture is the spurious promise of a bridge that seems highly unfeasible and that we all know will probably never be built anyway? As I'm writing this, I see that the UK Government are even claiming credit for the V&A Dundee – really? And, if a couple of bits of ice hadn't fallen off that bonny bridge thingy recently then they'd nae doot be claiming credit for that too – just like Jackson Carlaw was ower keen aboot daein afore! Surely even Clown Prince Johnson can see that claiming credit while simultaneously slagging it off is probably pushing *these people*TM just a wee bitty too far?

So, what was the point of this wee trip doon memory lane? I suppose it's a reminder that nothing is *actually* going to change until we *actually* change it. The BBC will always support the UK Government, and BBC Scotland more noticeably adheres to that, I guess, because the message from on-high is to keep us rebellious Scots in line. The UK Government says, "SNP bad", "Scottish NHS bad", "Scottish education bad" – actually "Scottish *anything* bad" – so BBC Scotland gleefully regurgitates that line and finds willing Tory/Labour/LibDem placeholders to back up that world view, just as they did back in 2011 when I first started ranting about it.

Why do we expect anything else from the BBC? For that matter, why do we expect anything else from the newspapers and other media outlets which are funded, in the main, by the same people who are funding the UK political parties and government? As *iScot Magazine's* managing editor and heid-honcho, Ken McDonald, is fond of saying, "Scotland must be its own salvation." We must support independent media, free from establishment control and government influence. If you're a regular *iScot Magazine* reader then you're unlikely to be surprised by any of this argument, but if you're interested in exploring the media manipulation of government messages further then please take any opportunity you get to hear Ken's excellent presentation on this very subject, *The Power and Importance of the Media*. His next booking is on Sunday 8 March from 2.30pm to 4.30pm at SNP EK, Westwood Hall, Riverton Drive, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8ZU. Scotland must be its own salvation and we must be the change. Oh, and ignore any UK-themed love-bombs heading your way through TV, print, social media or cinema... they're lying. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose, richt enough!