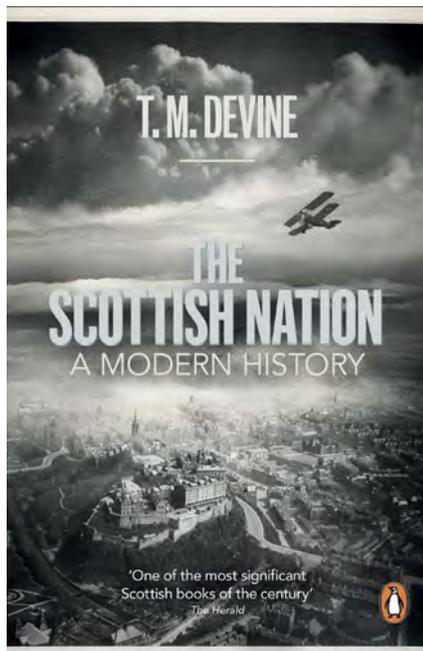


Scotland in

AS 2021 SEES our ancient nation of Scotland edge ever closer to regaining her independence, more so now than at any time since the Union in 1707, it is interesting to reflect on the timeline of events leading up to and around the establishment of the Kingdom of Great Britain through



The Scottish Nation, by Tom Devine
Penguin Books

This was a naked piece of economic blackmail designed to bring the Scottish parliament swiftly to the negotiating table

that Union, and its aftermath. Over the next few months, evidenced by historical analysis and political commentary, much of it published in the following century, we'll look at how and why the Union came about and whether it has ever been the benefit to Scotland claimed by its supporters. In this first part we look at...

Part 1: How Scotland was manipulated towards Union with England

In his classic book *The Scottish Nation*, Scotland's foremost historian Professor Tom Devine explains exactly how Scotland was coerced into the Union of 1707:

On 5 February 1705 the [English] House of Commons passed legislation which would help to shape the entire future of the United Kingdom. The Alien Act recommended to Queen Anne that commissioners be appointed to negotiate for Union between England and Scotland and, if the Scots did not comply and if discussions were not advanced by Christmas Day 1705, severe penalties would be imposed. All Scots, except those living in England, would be treated as aliens and the major Scottish exports to England of coal, linen and cattle would be suspended. This was a naked piece of economic blackmail designed to bring the Scottish parliament swiftly to the negotiating table; north of the border the first response was one of outrage.

But how exactly did it come to this? The exact details of much of the origins of our nation may be lost in the mists of time but there appears to be a general acceptance that the country we now know as Scotland began to be established when the Gaels and Picts came together under Kenneth MacAlpin in the ninth century. Despite the turbulent times, Scotland gradually stabilised, made

the Union



by Gordon Craigie



The Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton. © Crown copyright: National Records of Scotland

peace with her English neighbours (Treaty of York, 1237) and reclaimed the Western Isles from Norway (Treaty of Perth, 1266). But the English were still keen to expand their influence beyond the agreed border...

Historian Jenny Eeles, who transcribes and collates historical documents on her *Random Scottish History* website (www.rsh.scot), has an impressive collection of contemporaneous accounts from the 1700s and 1800s and has provided many of the extracts quoted in this feature. She takes up the story: "In 1290, King Edward I

of England, after adding Wales to his dominions, decided that he was also to be recognised as Overlord of Scotland. He was taking advantage of a break in the Scottish line of succession due to the untimely death of Margaret, the granddaughter of King Alexander III who died in 1286, and the subsequent confusion caused by there being thirteen rivals contesting the now vacant Scottish throne. Edward's attempt to annex Scotland was to lead to the First War of Scottish Independence, between 1296 and 1328.

"By this time the Catholic church had begun the Crusades, which stated that any Christian nation was able to, conscience-free, enact war against any other non-Christian country and take possession of that place. [Scotland was deemed non-Christian as Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, had been excommunicated by the Pope for not making peace with England!] Edward had obtained a Papal Bull allowing him to enter and take control of Scotland by whatever force necessary. To counter this, Robert the Bruce sent the Declaration of Arbroath to the Pope declaring Scotland's history as a Christian nation, over which no ruler of England had a claim.

Edward had obtained a Papal Bull allowing him to enter and take control of Scotland by whatever force necessary



King James VI and I

"Edward's has been the prevailing sentiment of those in authority in England [ever since] who struggle to see Scotland as anything more than a province that should be under their control. However, his grandson, Edward III, was less inclined this way, leading to the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in April 1328, which recognised Robert the Bruce as our king, the kingdom of Scotland as being an independent nation and established the border between Scotland and England."

... the King of England declared for himself and his heirs that the kingdom of Scotland shall remain for ever to the great prince, Lord Robert, by the grace of God illustrious King of Scotland, and that Scotland shall be separated from the Kingdom of England, and from all claims of subjection or vassalage.

(A. Whamond, 'A History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Union of the Crowns', 1881)

So the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton should have been the end of it, allowing Scotland and England to peacefully coexist as neighbours without constantly waiting for the next threat of invasion. And yet, as this newspaper quote from 1869 demonstrates, it was far from the end of the matter...

The English in the 13th century demanded that Scotland should acknowledge their Kings to be Lords Paramount over the whole island; and in the 19th century the same spirit led these assuming Southerners to speak and write as if that demand had never been resisted, and as if they had swallowed us up when the Union was consummated as the boa constrictor swallows a rabbit.

(Glasgow Herald, 8 February 1869)

Jenny continues: "In 1603, the Union of the Crowns saw the King of Scots, James VI, ascend also to the throne of England on the death of their Queen Elizabeth I. Although he was still our king, he moved to London with the promise to return to Scotland every three years – he was to return only once, in 1617. However, regardless of this joint monarchy, Scotland maintained a separate legislature to England.

In a bid to maintain their trading monopoly, various English parties took it upon themselves to persuade and convince those English and Dutch investors involved in the scheme to back out

When James VI fell heir to the English throne the first step was taken towards the union of the two hitherto hostile countries. All in the island fondly hoped that the long struggle, beginning with Edward I, had now reached a close, as the annexation of Scotland, which had been so covetously desired by the English for centuries, was now attained, and by a process alike honourable to Scotland and beneficial to England.

(C. Waddie, 'How Scotland Lost Her Parliament', 1891)

"In the immediate run-up to the signing of this Union there was a lot of back and forth and antagonism between Scotland and England. In 1688, when James VII was dethroned due to his post-Reformation Catholic tendencies, William of Orange and James' daughter Mary were chosen as his successors, being his nearest Protestant relations. Then, in the final decade of the 1600s, there were two further significant events – in 1692 there was the Massacre at Glencoe and, in 1698, the now infamous Darien scheme...

The failure of the Darien expedition greatly embittered the minds of the Scots against the English, and this unfortunate state of feeling was intensified by the cruel and unjustifiable massacre of Glencoe - a barbarous act that will leave an indelible stain upon the memory of William; for, in spite of his apologists, there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable man that he not only gave orders for the military execution, but approved of it.

(C. Waddie, 'How Scotland Lost Her Parliament', 1891)

"The Darien scheme was a Scottish attempt at trade expansion, but was seen by the English as being detrimental to, competition for, and a threat to English trade. With specific regard to Darien, in a bid to maintain their trading monopoly, various English parties took it upon themselves to persuade and convince those English and Dutch investors involved in the scheme to back out. Many commentators have been forthright about the English role in the failure of the Darien scheme."

English mercantile jealousy, and the king's indifference to Scottish interests.

(R. Chambers, 'Domestic Annals of Scotland', 1885)



The border was largely established in 1018 and was legally settled by the Treaty of York in 1237. It was further confirmed by the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, but England "stole" Berwick in 1482! © CC BY-SA 3.0

There was no decline in Scottish shipping activity until 1681... On the whole, Scottish merchants were making a living and were quite remote from any prospect of a great crash... They complained, of course, and especially about the navigation act, but their main grievance against it was that in English law Scotland was made a foreign country for the purposes of trade. Official exclusion from the plantation trade was legally rather than commercially resented, being seen as a gratuitous slight to the status of Scotsmen... Any Scotsman with the capacity to trade with the English colonies continued to do so, the navigation act notwithstanding, greatly to the distraction of the English customs service, whose resources were strained in an attempt to stop this illegal trade.

(P. W. J. Riley, 'The Union of England and Scotland', 1979)

Jenny concludes, "So, not only were we Scots deemed by the English to be foreign, in order to inhibit our trading capabilities, but we were tagged so regardless of it being detrimental to their own English workforce."

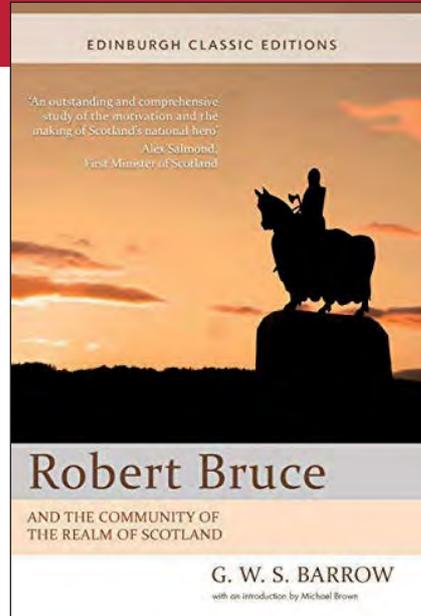
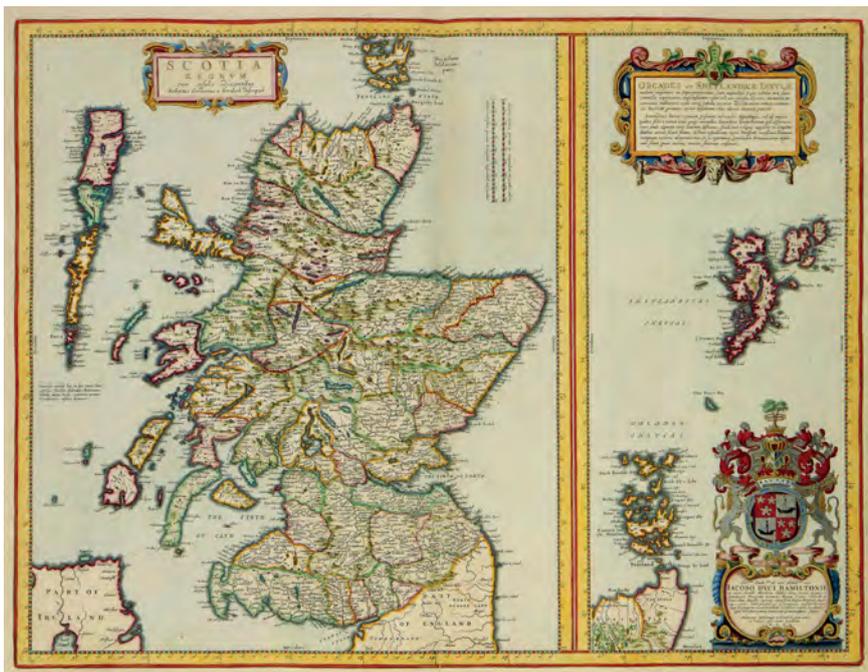
[Darien] failed miserably, solely through the jealous opposition of the English, who were determined that the Scotch should have no lot or part with them, either in founding new settlements or in engaging in foreign commerce. Ultimately our richer and more powerful neighbour, possessing the ear of the Government in London, succeeded in their opposition, and the ruin of the Darien scheme, and practically, also, the ruin of the whole country, was complete. It was in these circumstances that, at the beginning of the century, the question of union came to be discussed, the English scheming to get rid of their northern neighbour with its troublesome Parliament, and the Scotch prepared to sacrifice something of their independence in order to extend their trade, but never contemplating anything beyond a federal union.

(Aberdeen Juridical Society: Address by Sheriff Guthrie Smith, Aberdeen Free Press, 11 April 1885)

It is important to lay a few of these persistent myths to rest once and for all over Darien, and we have previously exposed these in iScot Magazine (Issue 54, August 2019: Myths and lies – what a surprise!). Historian and genealogist Gordon MacGregor gives his succinct analysis:

A point to consider in the "bankruptcy" version [of Darien] is that if, as a nation, we were bankrupted and in such dire straits that England had to bail us out with cash, where

Not only were we Scots deemed by the English to be foreign, in order to inhibit our trading capabilities, but we were tagged so regardless of it being detrimental to their own English workforce



**Robert Bruce, by Geoffrey Barrow
Edinburgh University Press**

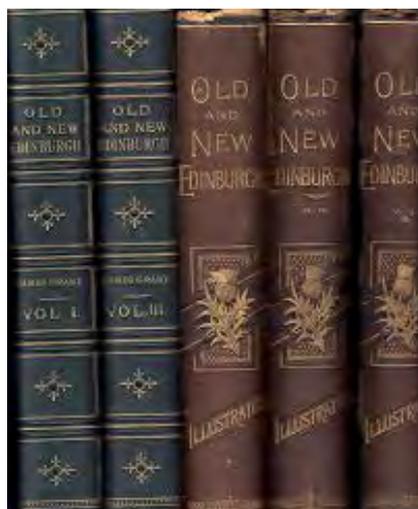
on earth is it supposed that all of our money went in the first place? If we were leasing, purchasing, provisioning and manning our own vessels, such as The Caledonia, then it stands to reason that our own money was being circulated around our own people in our own ports. And there are volumes in the Books of Council and Session dedicated to the recording of the hundreds of loans to the Company of Scotland not just by the folks at the top of the tree but by much smaller landholders and merchants.

The venture didn't bankrupt Scotland as a country. Instead, if anything, the increased spread of money during the preparations would have stuck a few extra coins in many a person's pocket. No doubt some of the larger single investors took a serious hit – and there is the initial trigger for the sell-out, then the Alien Act of 1705 which threatened further depletion of their precious reserves. It wasn't the country that was bankrupt but rather that those at the top didn't like taking a loss and would rather sell-out and recoup their personal losses than defend their own country's interests, come what may.

And recoup their personal losses they certainly did a few years later when, as we shall expand on next month, they were "persuaded" to agree to Scotland entering into Union with England. iScot Magazine has reproduced this following extract from James Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh*, published in 1880, before, but it is worth repeating to emphasise the point:

It is, of course, a matter of common history, that the legislative union between Scotland and England was carried by the grossest bribery and corruption; but the sums actually paid to members who sat in that last Parliament are not perhaps so well known, and may be curious to the reader.

During some financial investigations which were in progress in 1711 Lockhart [Sir George Lockhart of Carnwath, MP for Midlothian 1708–1715] discovered and made public that the sum of £20,540 17s. 7d. had been secretly distributed by Lord Godolphin, the Treasurer of England, among the baser members of the Scottish Parliament, for the purpose of inducing them to vote for the extinction of their country, and in his *Memoirs of Scotland from the Accession of Queen Anne*, he gives the following list of the receivers, with the actual sum which was paid to each, and this list was confirmed on oath by David Earl of Glasgow, the Treasurer Deputy of Scotland.



Old and New Edinburgh, by James Grant. www.rsh.scot

		£	s.	d.
To the	Earl of Marchmont	1104	15	7
"	Earl of Cromarty	300	0	0
"	Lord Prestonhall	200	0	0
"	Lord Ormiston, Lord Justice Clerk	200	0	0
"	Duke of Montrose	200	0	0
"	Duke of Athole [Atholl]	1000	0	0
"	Earl of Balcarris	500	0	0
"	Earl of Dunmore	200	0	0
"	Lord Anstruther	300	0	0
"	Stewart of Castle Stewart	300	0	0
"	Earl of Eglinton	200	0	0
"	Lord Fraser	100	0	0
"	Lord Cessnock (afterwards Polworth)	50	0	0
"	Mr. John Campbell	200	0	0
"	Earl of Forfar	100	0	0
"	Sir Kenneth Mackenzie	100	0	0
"	Earl of Glencairn	100	0	0
"	Earl of Kintore	200	0	0
"	Earl of Findlater	100	0	0
"	John Muir, Provost of Ayr	100	0	0
"	Lord Forbes	50	0	0
"	Earl of Seafield (afterwards Findlater)	490	0	0
"	Marquis of Tweeddale	1000	0	0
"	Duke of Roxburghe	500	0	0
"	Lord Elibank	50	0	0
"	Lord Banff	11	2	0
"	Major Cunninghame of Eckatt	100	0	0
"	Bearer of the Treaty of Union	60	0	0
"	Sir William Sharp	300	0	0
"	Coultrain, Provost of Wigton	25	0	0
"	Mr. Alexander Wedderburn	75	0	0
"	High Commissioner (Queensberry)	12,325	0	0
		£20,540	17s.	7d.

one half of the signatures were appended to the treaty in a cellar of a house, No 177, High Street, opposite the Tron Church, named "the Union Cellar", the rest were appended in an arbour which then adorned the Garden of Moray House in the Canongate; and the moment this was accomplished, Queensberry and the conspirators – for such they really seem to have been – fled to England before daybreak, with the duplicate of the treaty...

To put the level of bribery and corruption around the compensation of those Darien investors, and to "persuade" them into supporting the union, into context, that **£20,540 17s. 7d.** from 1707 would today be worth around **£3,500,000**. To 32 people...

Looking at the development of Scotland on this timeline, from its origins as a recognisable nation state in the ninth century through to the "incorporating union" with England in 1707, seems to throw up so many questions that still appear pertinent today. In his definitive book *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, the eminent medieval historian Professor Geoffrey Barrow noted that, even back in the 1300s:

It was an obvious necessity for Scotland to keep on good terms with England, not only its closest neighbour but also the only country in a position to inflict serious injury upon it... But it would be a mistake to think that Scotland's relations with England, political, cultural and economic, were the only ones that mattered to it, or that it counted in any way upon English protection and patronage. Enjoying no special favours, hampered by no special prejudices or hostility, the Scots of the thirteenth century were accustomed to earning their own living and making their own way in the community of North Sea peoples.

Yet it is astonishing to note that the establishment behaviours towards Scotland back in the lead up to 1707 – duplicity, bullying, subterfuge, exploitation and downright lying – are still being replicated by their successors in Westminster today.

The union was made by men of limited vision for very short-term and comparatively petty, if not squalid, aims.

(P. W. J. Riley, 'The Union of England and Scotland', 1979)

Ere the consummation, James Duke of Hamilton and James Earl of Bute quitted "the house in disgust and despair, to return to it no more".

Under terror of the Edinburgh mobs, who nearly tore the Chancellor and others limb from limb in the streets,

The purpose of inducing them to vote for the extinction of their country

Next month, we'll return to the timeline just after Darien and continue to follow the events leading up to and around the Union of 1707. We'll examine the role of Queen Anne, the last monarch of the Stuart dynasty, and see how the English Act of Settlement and the Scottish Act of Security led to the threats to Scotland contained in the English Alien Act...