

Gordon Craigie



An independent mind...

This month, I'm increasingly lost for words...



James Robertson.
Sourced from Twitter/X.

The news where you are, comes after the news where we are.

The news where we are is the news, it comes first.

The news where you are is the news where you are, it comes after.

We do not have the news where you are.

The news where you are may be news to you, but it is not news to us.

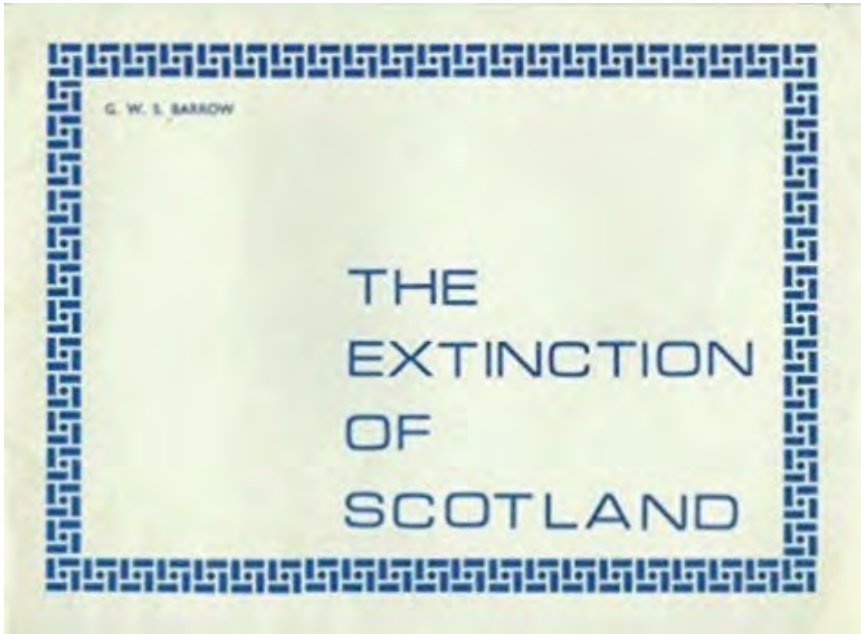
IF YOU'VE NEVER heard "The News Where You Are" by James Robertson then please take a wee skeck at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhL57cjN8xY and settle back for around three minutes of highly entertaining, yet deeply serious and incredibly topical, commentary on the state of British media, particularly as it applies to Scotland. James Robertson's poem predates the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum yet, in many respects, the situation now is even more disappointing and disturbing than it was ten years ago. Ten years...

Because I'm increasingly lost for words, as I cunningly suggested in this month's title, it's worth recalling, yet again, someone else's words – the erudite conclusions of one

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of the foremost experts on Scottish history, the late Professor Geoffrey Barrow. In his inaugural lecture at the University of Edinburgh back in 1980 – the year after the gerrymandered 1979 Scottish Devolution Referendum – he said that the greatest cultural disaster which Scotland had suffered in the 20th century was "the failure of Scotland to establish its own organisation for public service broadcasting". And he wasn't wrong as we can see from the increasing hostility exhibited to everything connected with the Scottish independence movement by the British media – particularly, though not exclusively, the British State broadcaster, the BBC. The title of Barrow's lecture was "The Extinction of Scotland" and, interestingly, the University broke with its own tradition and didn't publish it... Isn't it fascinating how traditions can be broken so easily when they involve Scotland's national cause or interests – and yes Lindsay Hoyle, we're looking at you! Truly shameful.

Now, there's an ongoing debate as to whether our independence-supporting politicians should adopt an abstentionist policy with Westminster, in the same way



Shamefully not published by the University of Edinburgh, but a colleague arranged for its publication by the Scots Independent. Sourced from Twitter/X.

as Sinn Fein did and still do. I understand the arguments against this, principally that the MPs didn't stand for election on that platform, but equally they were elected to represent their constituents and if they are constantly ignored (at best), disrespected (constantly), or derided (regularly!) then they're not fulfilling their purpose anyway, so what is there to lose? On the occasions they have walked out the British media has found it almost impossible not to notice, and party memberships and support for independence have always seemed to increase. It's certainly worth thinking about and could prove to be the catalyst for finally setting up the long-awaited, long-promised, long-needed, Scottish Constitutional Convention.

Barrow was also one of the first to recognise the talents of one Alex Salmond, his "star student" of the time, correctly predicting that the young man was "going places". It would seem to me that Alex Salmond still is going places – recently I watched in admiration as he calmly, patiently, and expertly, worked his way through his evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee at Westminster, as part of their enquiry into intergovernmental relations since devolution. His grasp of detail, his recall of events, his love of Scotland, and his understanding of politics is truly impressive – and his ability to strike down that petulant wee gnaff Douglas Ross was joyous to behold! I truly believe that if Alex Salmond hadn't felt compelled to step down after the 2014 referendum, then Scotland would have regained her independence by now...

But we are where we are, as the modern cliché goes, and the question that urgently needs to be answered – and has done for some considerable time now – is, what do we do next? The SNP is, sadly, showing no urgency or appetite to place their *raison d'être* – the restoration of Scotland's independence – front and centre of everything it does. Consider just two recent examples... Even in these financially difficult times, I cannot understand why they appear to have let the proposed Rosyth to Dunkirk ferry stall for want of what is, in governmental terms, a very small subsidy. And the notion that they would meekly accept the "commercial" decision to

close Scotland's only oil refinery at Grangemouth is baffling on so many levels. Publishing discussion papers on various aspects of what an independent Scotland might look like is completely pointless if they are happy to allow Scotland to be continually asset-stripped and deindustrialised, and to have the country's natural resources hijacked by our colonial masters.

So, what **do** we do next? All media talk for the foreseeable is now going to be centred on the upcoming UK General Election and my fear is that the SNP are sleepwalking into this with unjustifiable confidence bordering on arrogance. Their refusal to make common cause with Alba, ISP, and any other pro-independence party makes absolutely no sense – the cause of independence is bigger than the seat count of any individual party. It's still not too late, and surely the outrageous Westminster shenanigans over the SNP's Gaza ceasefire motion should be enough to belatedly get the penny to drop?

And finally, as James Robertson concluded his poem and his attention turned from the news where you are to the weather where you are, his final line sums up exactly where we are with Westminster and Broken Brexit Britain right now:

On average, the weather where you are is more extreme than the weather where we are – tough shit!

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