

# Gordon Craigie

## *This month, I'm even mair scunnered...*

19 OCTOBER 2023. No ifs. No buts.  
No maybes. And yet, here we are...

My level of scunnerisation, as described in the last issue, has now gone up several notches. Not for the first time has the cliché “a week is a long time in politics” been redefined by those we elect to govern on our behalf, and it is increasingly obvious that too many politicians have lost sight of their *raison d'être* – that **we** elect **them** to govern on **our** behalf, we don't elect them to follow their own agendas without reference to us, the electorate. Mandate, schmandate!

Where to start... When Nicola Sturgeon led the SNP to yet another resounding election victory in 2021 she assured us that she fully intended to serve the full term – many of us were disappointed by that commitment only in the sense that it sounded like she didn't anticipate independence happening within the five-year term of government! But she quickly appeared to retrieve the situation by promising to follow through on her umpteenth mandate to hold a second independence referendum with her “no ifs, no buts, no maybes” naming of the date, 19 October 2023. Not only is there clearly now nothing going to happen on that date but we're already witnessing reverse gear being engaged on the “Plan B” promise of a “de facto” referendum via the next UK general election or Holyrood election while simultaneously listening to some of our less-than-convincing fellow travellers in Westminster talking about a 50-year journey to independence! Do these guys think oor heids button up the back? We see you...

The British Establishment has been in Project Fear overdrive since Nicola Sturgeon announced her intention to step down, sensing their “once in a generation” opportunity – see what I did there readers? – to attack anything even remotely associated with Scottish independence like never

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before. Indeed, the more cynical of us may well suspect that the fabled British Security Service sleepers inhabiting both the corridors of Holyrood and the independence-supporting parties had been immediately activated before the resignation press conference had even finished. And that's not to mention their mainstream media allies – the questioning at that press conference was truly horrendous and in complete contrast to the treatment meted out to May, Johnson, Truss, Sunak, et al. And don't get me started on those allegedly on our own side who seem to feel the need to constantly add fuel to the fires – again, we see you...

Elsewhere in this issue Alf Baird returns to the theme of colonialism and, as I've written several times previously, there are so many examples of our self-appointed colonial masters talking down Scotland and talking down to Scots that it beggars belief when the notion of Scotland as a British/English colony is dismissed out of hand by people who really should know better. Scotland is constantly belittled or ignored and “can't possibly survive without British/English support” – exactly the same playbook as implemented with Ireland, India, and all the others – from the mighty USA to little Malta – for goodness' sake, we've even got the most recent custodian of the Westminster coffers declaring unashamedly that “independence is always better than dependence”! Not to mention Rishi Sunak's epic faux-pas when he asserted to a Westminster committee that “British” is just shorthand for “English” – they're not even hiding their absolute contempt for us now!

The evidence of colonisation is there for all to see, yet it's become so normalised that often we either don't see it or we've just become so accustomed to “the way things are” that we've just accepted it as the norm, therefore the normalisation has succeeded. Ask yourself what happened to the Scots language, not some weird form of English slang but one of the spoken and written languages of the country, including our parliament and monarchy, prior to the Union. Ask yourself why it was “discouraged”, while Gaelic was actually banned, when British/English placeholders assumed positions of power and influence after the Union. Ask yourself why the “British” army required all of their bases in Scotland after Culloden, as shown on the Stennis Historical Society map. Just take a moment to fully digest the sheer number of them – a picture paints a thousand words! Ask yourself why tartan was banned until it pleased an English king to wear it on a whim. Ask yourself why at school you were taught about the Magna Carta, the Battle of Hastings, the Pilgrim Fathers, etc., and ask yourself why you weren't taught Scottish history, language, or culture. As the great Scottish philosopher Mark Renton once memorably said in *Trainspotting*:

# An independent mind...



## British Army troop locations in Scotland, 1745-1756



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# SCOTLAND'S FUTURE

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Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon launch the Scotland's Future white paper in November 2013. Credit: ©flickr(CC BY 2.0)

Some people hate the English, I don't! They're just wankers! We, on the other hand, are colonised by wankers! Can't even find a decent culture to be colonised by! We're ruled by effete arseholes!

Three important points to make here dear reader. One, I know Renton's a fictional character! Two, even in an upmarket publication such as *iScot Magazine*, swearing is permissible when it's a direct quote! Three, everybody knows we don't "hate the English", so don't allow the pursuit of our national sovereignty to be dragged down by that Unionist red herring. Look, squirrel!

So it's against this backdrop of colonial entitlement that the re-establishment of full independence to our historic nation is even more urgently required than ever before. No doubt like many of you, I will never forget the feeling of utter devastation the day after the 2014 referendum. Without exaggeration, for many of us it felt exactly the same as a death in the family. And when Alex Salmond announced his resignation that afternoon... well, that just took us to our lowest point. Yet over the following weekend, independence supporters began to regroup and find renewed strength and enthusiasm, and it became clear from social media that something extraordinary was happening. The SNP membership numbers rose stratospherically and everyone realised, this is not over. And, despite the recent stooshie over those numbers declining, it really isn't over. Far from it.

But we do need to see decisive action and leadership. It's far too early to make any rash judgements on Humza Yousaf's leadership of the SNP but I think he really has to lay some firm

markers down very, very quickly in terms of our direction of travel. We can't go through another extended period of "making the case" and we certainly can't wait until opinion polls are consistently showing more than 60% support. There was no poll showing 60% support about the Berlin Wall coming down, and yet it did. 60% support for the Soviet Union to end? Nope. And was there 60% support in opinion polls for a majority SNP Government in 2011, leading to the first referendum? The only poll that matters is the vote on the day, whether that's a referendum or an election at either Holyrood or Westminster. Win that, tell the world, and let's get on with building the Scotland we deserve. But we need to get that day, and soon.

My one plea to Humza which, unfortunately, I'm certain he'd ignore, is to make peace with Alba, and with ISP, and with any other pro-independence parties. The basic tenet of the SNP for as long as I can remember is that the party is a "broad church" which is united only by the common goal of independence. For various reasons that broad church has split off into factions and these must be brought together again to work towards that common goal. You don't have to be friends, though that would be nice. You don't even have to like each other, though it might help! But you have to put your differences aside and get on with the job that we have elected you to do, which is to regain our political independence. And while I'm at it, I have a second plea, to the entire spectrum of independence support. Please leave your personal preferences, your personal red lines, your personal non-negotiables aside. Because whatever they are – monarchy, EU/EFTA, whatever – these are decisions for the Scottish people **after** independence has been re-established. You haven't got the proverbial cat in hell's chance of seeing a single one of your pet projects succeed in Broken Brexit Britain, but you know that you'll have your chance to argue your case in a free, welcoming and outward-looking independent Scotland. Nothing changes on the first day of independence, **except** the power to change everything!

And to those mealy-mouthed, scaredy-cats who cringingly say, "but what if we lose?" I have only two things to say. The only way to absolutely guarantee that we won't lose is if we don't try. And if we don't win... then we go again, and we keep going until we do win. The American author John Steinbeck once observed, "you talked of Scotland as a lost cause and that is not true. Scotland is an unwon cause". He's right, and I'll leave the final word to the man who some are inexplicably and unjustly trying to airbrush out of Scottish history, "the dream shall never die".

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