

Gordon Craigie



An independent mind...

Par un beau jour d'été pendant les grandes vacances...

AS THE MEMORIES of an extremely hot summer holiday get chased away by the hoolie blawin outside, that may or may not be the remnants of Hurricane Ian, oor Ed tells me it's time to get back into the swing of the iScot production schedule. In this month's heading I'm not celebrating the auld alliance *per se* – see what I did there? – merely recalling the stereotypical opening words of most O Grade French exam essays during the 1970s! To be fair, since my summer was spent in la bella Italia, I should really have kicked off with *in una bella giornata estiva durante le lunghe vacanze...* but that would just be showing aff! And O Grade Italian wisnae generally offered across Scotland back then, so the relevance would be lost...

Anyway, did anything of any great note happen this summer while we were sweltering in temperatures

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rarely much short of 40°C? Apart from us losing around six pairs of shoes/flipflops to heat exhaustion – who knew that those temperatures would melt the glue holding the footwear together? – was there anything happening on this side of the North Sea that I should know about... hmm? I'm joking, of course. Even while steadfastly avoiding Sky News International it was impossible to avoid the seemingly interminable Conservative leadership election and then, immediately afterwards, the even more over-the-top coverage of the Queen's passing and aftermath. Trying to explain either or both of these events to our Italian friends only served to highlight how ridiculous Broken Brexit Britain looks to the rest of Europe.

The Tory pantomime season kicked off with eight candidates, each of whom looking more suited to appearing in *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here* or *The Apprentice* than to seriously convincing anybody that they were capable of running the UK Government. Fortunately for them, however, the only people they had to initially convince were their equally batshit-crazy Conservative MP colleagues! Naïvely, we probably all breathed a huge sigh of relief as some of the more extreme candidates fell by the wayside to leave the final choice between the former Chancellor – who must be good with money as he personally has a shedload of it! – and the former Foreign Secretary – who clearly knows the difference between the Baltic and Black Seas, can hold a phone the right way up (allegedly!), and is capable of negotiating great cheese deals with Japan! We were soon to be disavowed of that naïveté...

There are no words to adequately describe how bad a choice the Tory faithful have made in Truss. That is not in any way meant to imply that Sunak would've been much better, but she is particularly clueless – dangerously so. Have you watched the BBC drama series *The Capture* yet? Without spoiling the plot for any readers who haven't seen it yet – particularly season 2 – in dramatic form it raises many questions about the involvement of the security services in government activities and the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and deepfake. Who could watch Truss's painful silences as she tries to compute the

questions being put to her by interviewers or opponents and not wonder if the Maybot was simply an earlier prototype of an AI politico? But there were no good options – the previous incumbent saw to that when he drove all the unbelievers out of the parliamentary group prior to the 2019 election. It turns out that while we all thought that Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson was undoubtedly the worst Prime Minister of all time, Mary Elizabeth Truss was sitting in the background saying, "hold my pint"!

Our Italian friends all thought, rightly, that Johnson was a clown – indeed, he was brilliantly parodied on their TV comedy show *Stati Generali* by the impressionist Neri Marcorè (search for it on YouTube). But they were equally unimpressed with what they saw of Trussolini, seeing her very much in the mould of their own incoming Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, as a right-wing populist with fascist sympathies. But it was what they witnessed after the Queen's death that really had them perplexed – they simply thought "the British" had lost their minds. They really couldn't believe the extent of the public outpouring of grief over an overly-long, state-dictated mourning period and they also had genuinely held distaste for what they perceived as the unnecessary extravagance and opulence of the out-of-date, and out-of-touch, ceremonial aspects while ordinary working people couldn't afford to heat their homes or feed themselves.

I tried to avoid as much of both events as possible – in the interests of controlling my blood pressure! – but I saw and read enough to know how little either meant to Scotland and Scots. I get that some people are monarchists – I will never understand why, but I respect their right to choose that belief – and I accept that the death of a head of state has to be respectfully mourned. What we witnessed was way beyond that. I also get that some people are small-c conservative in their political beliefs – again, I will never understand why, but I respect their right to hold those views – but I will never get why ordinary working people choose to support the Conservative Party as it has evolved over the years. The controlling elite must laugh at them every single day for falling for their schtick – tax cuts for the rich, reducing benefits, cynically moving their businesses to Ireland (or other EU countries) despite convincing their electorate that "taking back control from Europe" via Brexit is in everybody's best interests... the list goes on.

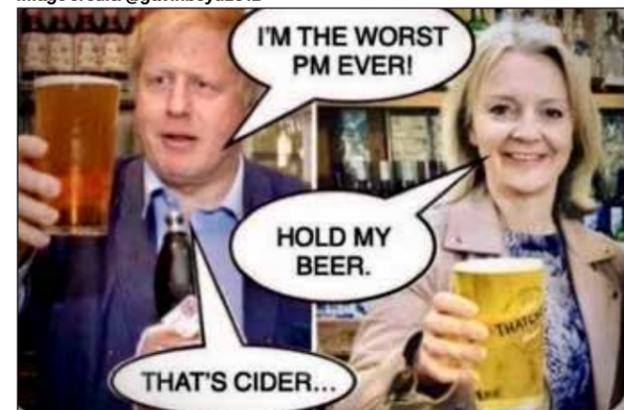
Whether an independent Scotland chooses to rejoin the EU or join EFTA is a debate for after independence is

regained but being an integral part of the European family of nations and restoring freedom of movement are priorities in either event. Whether an independent Scotland chooses to retain a constitutional monarchy – and not necessarily the current one – or become a presidential republic is equally a debate for after independence is regained, but having a modern, written constitution that clearly defines and limits the role of the head of state is a fundamental priority. What the events of this long, hot summer have brought even more sharply into focus is that all of us who believe in the restoration of Scotland's independence must pressure our politicians in any way we can to just get on with it. Independence is normal.

If the 195 countries recognised by the United Nations, with populations ranging from being measured in thousands to populations measured in billions, can be in control of their own destiny, why not Scotland? If each one of those countries can successfully use one of the 180 currencies recognised by the United Nations, why not Scotland? If 65 countries have declared their independence from the UK, and not a single one has ever asked to return to the protection of the "broad shoulders" of the UK, why not Scotland? If a North Sea country with a population of 5.5 million, Norway, which was fortunate enough to discover vast reserves of oil and gas in its territorial waters at the same time as us, can generate the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, currently worth approximately £250,000 per citizen, why not Scotland? If a country possesses 25% of Europe's renewable wind and tidal energy potential, why is it facing a winter of power cuts and impossible fuel bills – why is that Scotland?

If 65 countries have declared their independence from the UK, and not a single one has ever asked to return to the protection of the "broad shoulders" of the UK, why not Scotland?

Image credit: @gavinboyd2012



Independence is Normal

Alghanistan	د افغانستان اسلامي امارت	AFN	Artigua & Barbuda	Independence is Normal	ECS	Australia	Independence is Normal	AUS
The Bahamas	Independence is Normal	BS	Bahrain	د بحرین امارت	BD	Barbados	Independence is Normal	Bsd
Belize	Independence is Normal	BZ	Botswana	Independence is Normal	BWP	Brunei	Kemendekaan adalah perkara biasa	B
Cameroon	L'Independence est normale	FCFA	Canada	Independence is Normal	CANS	Cyprus	Η ανεξαρτησία είναι φυσιολογική	CYE
Dominica	Independence is Normal	DD\$	Egypt	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	EE	Eswatini	Independence is Normal	E
Fiji	Independence is Normal	FJ\$	The Gambia	Independence is Normal	GMD	Ghana	Independence is Normal	GHC
Grenada	Independence is Normal	EC\$	Guyana	Independence is Normal	GY\$	India	स्वातंत्रता सामान्य है	It.
Iraq	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	IOD	Israel	ישראל היא מדינה עצמאית	IS	Jamaica	Independence is Normal	JS
Jordan	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	JOD	Kenya	Uhuru ni wa kawaida	Ka\$	Kiribati	Independence is Normal	AUS
Kuwait	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	KWD	Lesotho	Boikiso ke ntho e tloaelehileng	L M	Libya	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	LD
Malawi	Independence is Normal	MK	Malaysia	emerdekaan adalah perkara biasa	RM	Maldives	Independence is Normal	MRO
Malta	L'Independence hija Normali	€	Mauritius	Independence is Normal	Rs	Myanmar	Irakibawutray har ponemhain parpet	K
Nauru	Independence is Normal	AUS	New Zealand	Independence is Normal	NZ\$	Nigeria	Independence is Normal	NGN
Oman	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	OMR	Pakistan	سواستوراء اعواماء	Rs	Qatar	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	QR
Saint Lucia	Independence is Normal	EC\$	Saint Kitts & Nevis	Independence is Normal	CS	St Vincent / Grenadines	Independence is Normal	EC\$
Seychelles	L'Independence est normale	SR	Sierra Leone	Independence is Normal	Le	Solomon Islands	Independence is Normal	IS\$
South Africa	Uzuzimela kuyinto ajayisekela	R	Somaliland	Madaa-sannawada waas Caadi	SD\$	Sri Lanka	අරිනෙස්තරා ලාලාසෙත්තරා	Rs
Sudan	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	SD\$	Tanzania	Uhuru ni wa kawaida	TSh	Tonga	Independence is Normal	T\$
Trinidad & Tobago	Independence is Normal	TTS	Tuvalu	Independence is Normal	TVS	Uganda	Uhuru ni wa kawaida	US\$
United Arab Emirates	ايرينيستورا لالاقسترا	AED	United States	Independence is Normal	US\$	Vanuatu	L'Independence est normale	VT

There are 195 independent sovereign countries in the World.
 65 countries (32 percent) chose independence over London Rule
 None of these 65 countries required a Section 30 agreement
 None of these 65 countries use sterling as their main currency

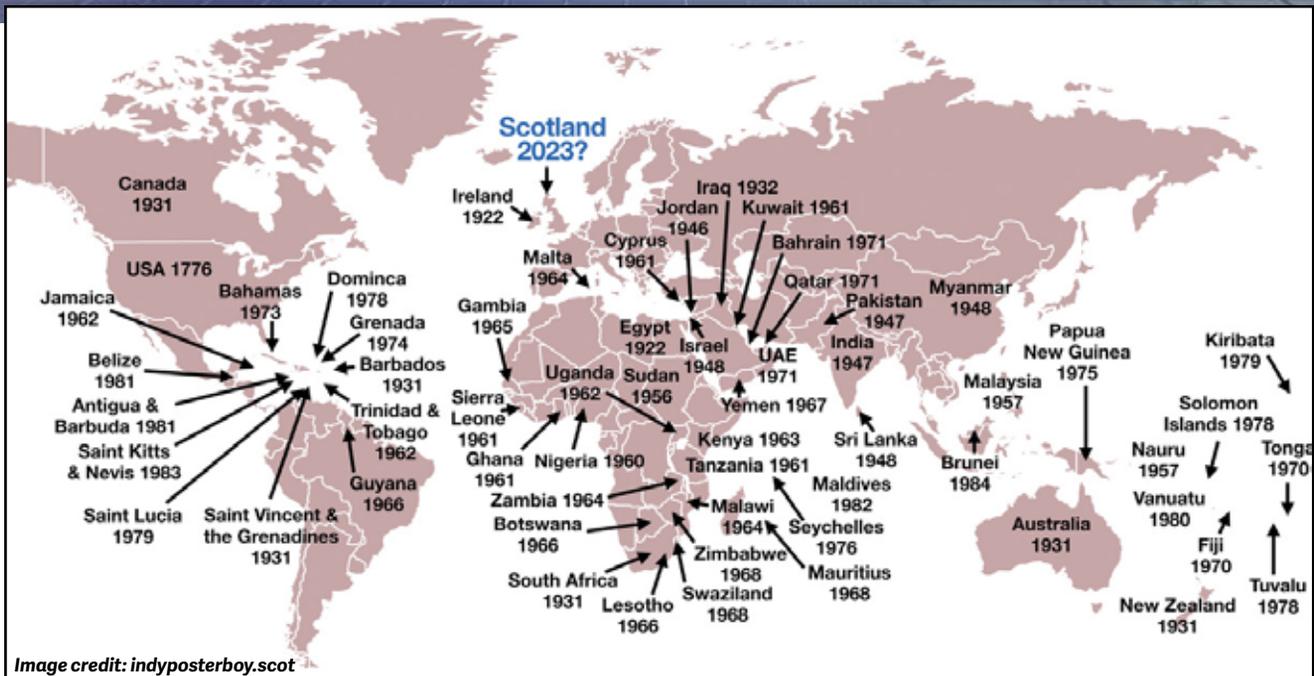


Image credit: indyposterboy.scot

So as we await the outcome of the strategic/foolhardy* (delete according to your own belief!) request to the UK Supreme Court for confirmation of the right to hold our second independence referendum on 19 October 2023, and as we watch the neoliberal pantomime in Westminster continue to trash the UK's already shaky reputation in the world until the inevitable general election (which we absolutely should use as a plebiscite if it happens before next October in any event), what can

If not us, who?
If not now, when?

we, the citizens of Scotland, actually do? We can march, we can gently persuade those not yet onboard, and we can demand that our politicians, and their supporters, set aside any differences – real or imagined – and get everything in place so that we are ready to reassume our independent statehood at the earliest possible opportunity, however that comes about – and the way Truss has started that could be any day now! They've been asked before in various contexts but the following questions should guide all Scottish independistas:
If not us, who? If not now, when?
 The summer holidays are well and truly over...