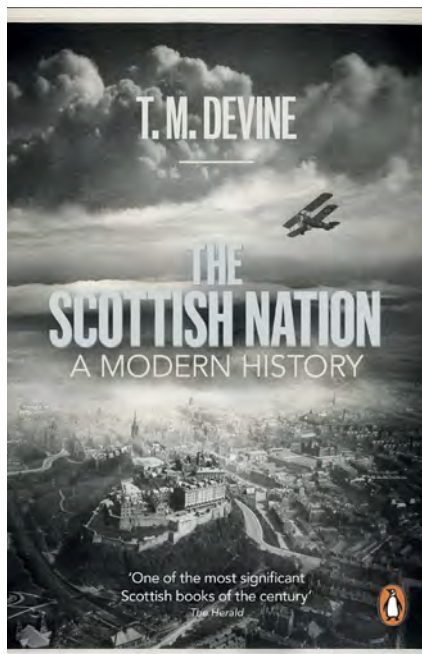


Scotland in

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