

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 that Union, and its aftermath. Evidenced by historical analysis and political commentary, much of it published

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in the following century, over the next few issues we'll continue to look at how and why the Union came about and whether it has ever been the benefit to Scotland claimed by its supporters. Last month, in the first part of this series, we explained 'How Scotland was manipulated towards Union with England'. This month – after a few necessary paragraphs of historical scene-setting – we'll pick up the story at the beginning of the eighteenth century and look at...

Part 2: How Scotland was forced into an unwanted Union with England

In 1603, when the Scottish king, James VI, son of Mary Queen of Scots, ascended to the English throne, thus uniting the crowns of Scotland and England, it would have been reasonable to assume that he had finally brought about what various treaties had failed to achieve over many centuries – peace between two independent nations. But to understand the events that would follow at the end of the 1600s, leading to the political Union in 1707, we need to reflect further on the royal shenanigans of previous centuries.

When Robert the Bruce forced the English king, Edward III, to sign the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, as described last month, it was intended to establish a lasting peace between Scotland and England. Yet within five years the English had reneged on the agreement and Edward III invaded Scotland again. Indeed,



King James IV of Scotland married Margaret Tudor as a condition of the Treaty of Perpetual Peace. © Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons



the Union



by Gordon Craigie

the following three centuries would see the English regularly attack Scotland until the Treaty of Perpetual Peace was signed in 1502 between James IV of Scotland and Henry VII of England. This should have settled the matter conclusively – “perpetual peace”. As part of the treaty, 30-year-old James agreed to marry Henry’s 13-year-old daughter Margaret, a marriage that would effectively enable the Union of the Crowns a century later...

However, this treaty did not live up to its rather grandiose title as, 11 years later, James declared war on England – thereby upholding Scotland’s Auld Alliance with France – as England had attacked France. After that skirmish had been settled, English aggression towards Scotland continued, including the so-called Rough Wooing between 1543 and 1551. The main reasons for this particular reign of terror appear to be twofold – the English king, Henry VIII, wanted Mary Queen of Scots to marry his son Edward and thus unite the crowns of Scotland and England, and he also wanted to ensure that France could not use Scotland as a base from which to attack England under the Auld Alliance. His “rough wooing” was ultimately unsuccessful – Mary did not marry Edward – and this particular conflict eventually needed two treaties to resolve it, the Treaty of Boulogne and the Treaty of Norham.

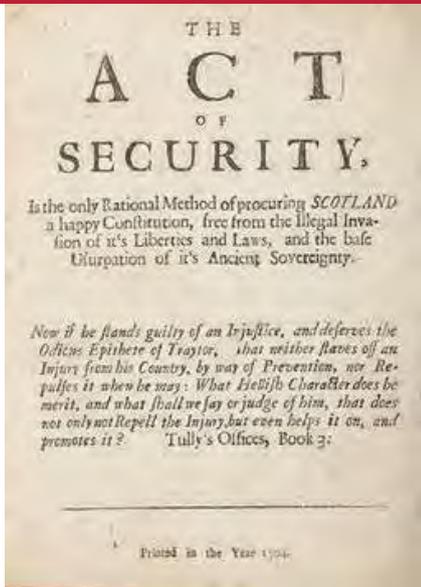
When their Queen Elizabeth – Henry VIII’s daughter – died in 1603 without an heir, the English were forced to look to the lineage established by the 1503 marriage of James IV and Margaret, which gave James VI of Scotland a legitimate claim to their throne too. And so, finally, the crowns were united. As was pointed out last month, on moving to London, James promised to return to Scotland every 3 years – he only returned once, 14 years later. This united reign of the House of Stuart would be

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Queen Anne of Great Britain, the last monarch of the House of Stuart. © Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons

interrupted twice in the 1600s – once by the English Civil War and the establishment of Oliver Cromwell’s “commonwealth”, and again after the death of Mary II, daughter of James VII, when her husband, William of Orange, succeeded her. On his death, in 1702, Mary’s sister Anne would become the last Stuart monarch and would oversee the political machinations that led to the Treaty of Union.



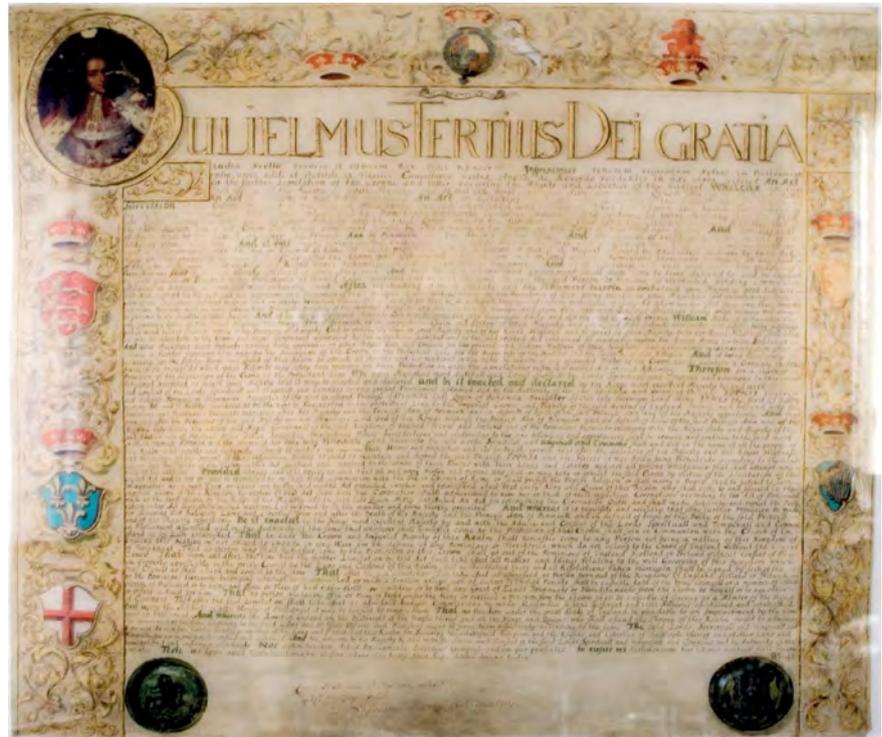
The Act of Security was designed to ensure Scotland continued to choose her own monarchs, and was Scotland's response to the provocative English Act of Settlement

Historian Jenny Eeles is curating an online searchable archive of Scottish history on her *Random Scottish History* website, www.rsh.scot, which boasts an impressive collection of contemporaneous accounts from the 1700s and 1800s. Jenny has provided many of the extracts quoted in this series, and she takes up the story: "In 1701, the English Parliament enacted the Act of Settlement to ensure that the line of royal succession, for England and Ireland, would remain Protestant. They decided on Sophia of Hanover as the successor to Queen Anne without any consultation with the Scots." John Spottiswoode, a prominent advocate, gave this speech to the freeholders of Berwickshire in 1702:

We cannot fancy a more deplorable state than ours has been since King James the Sixth came to the throne of England. Our nation has been despised, our interests neglected both at home and abroad – our princes and statesmen under the influence of the English, who make us partake with them of the calamities of war, but we enjoy none of the conquests, and when peace is made we are not so much as named; so that the benefit of the treaties and leagues of commerce which we had before the year 1603 are lost, and we are more enthralled by the English than if we were conquered by them.

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

"The Scottish Parliament, in retaliation for that English Act of Settlement, then enacted the Act of Security in 1704, the aim of which was to ensure that any future heirs should be descendants of the Scottish throne. It stated that an



The Act of Settlement ensured that all future English monarchs would be Protestant. ©Torsten Bätge

English successor would only be chosen should there be no other valid choice." The English Parliament was not best pleased by this move, as exemplified by quotes such as this, from Lord Haversham:

There are two matters of all troubles, much discontent and great poverty; and whoever will now look into Scotland will find them both in that kingdom. It is certain the nobility and gentry of Scotland are as learned and as brave as any nation can boast of; and these are generally discontented. And as to the common people, they are very numerous, and very stout, but very poor. And who is the man that can answer what such a multitude, so armed, so disciplined, with such leaders may do – especially since opportunities do so much alter men from themselves!

(N. E. R., 'The Flying Squadron', Newcastle Chronicle, 28 August 1886)

In his book *The Scottish Nation*, Professor Tom Devine explains more of the detail of the Act of Security: "In addition, the Union of the Crowns would be preserved only if in the current parliamentary session 'there be such conditions of government settled and enacted as may secure ... the freedom, frequency, and the power of Parliament, and the religion, liberty and trade of the nation from English or any foreign influence'. This read like a manifesto for independence and was intended to be deliberately provocative." He concludes that this legislation, in 1703, "was the catalyst for Parliamentary Union because it convinced Westminster that Scotland could no longer be governed effectively within the Regal Union". He goes on to cite other critical factors in the English unease, such as the Scots reluctance to accept the English view of regal, Protestant, succession and the fear of French support for the Jacobite movement in Scotland.

Jenny continues: "The English Parliament responded to Scotland's Act of Security within a year by formulating the Alien Act, whereby Scots in England were to be immediately treated as foreign nationals, or aliens. Scots were to be denied the right to inherit any property on the death of English relatives, Scottish produce was banned from importation and no English exports were to cross the border into Scotland – specifically arms,

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