



# Newsletter

## SNP Dumfries Branch East June 2013



### *Word from Editor*

Hi folks

First I am sad to say we are about to lose our vice convener Ahsan Khan. Ahsan has resigned in order to take up new position with Alloa council. I'm sure we would all like to wish him well in his new employment and thank him for his support over the years.

The market stall did well (see page 6). The weather was shining on us and we had a really good response from the public. Yowann won the cake and Patricia Pluckett won the bear.

We are now taking orders for our calendar, they cost £7 each. The first print run is nearly all sold with only 1 left to sell. Anyone wanting to order one please get in contact with me. This is one way we are hoping to raise funds which will go towards fighting for independence next year.

The branch decided to have a stall at the Dumfries and Lockerbie show at Park farm this year. This we hope will raise funds and help promote the SNP in Dumfries and surrounding area. So in that vein we are looking for members to help staff the stall as well as contribute items to sell. So far we have hand made cards, artists prints from around the area, home baking and tablet, 2014 calendar, saltire flags, t-shirts, CDs as well as the usual guess the weight of the cake and guess the name of the Teddy. So if you can't help with the stall please come and support us by buying the goods we have to offer. All this effort will help us pay for the upcoming fight to win our independence.

Dr Aileen McLeod MSP sends her apologies for being unable to write her column citing pressure of work not with standing everyone pulling together to fight the Donside by-election.

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#### Deadline

All reports, letters, items to be included in the next newsletter must be submitted to the editor at the latest by the **16th of August 2013**

### AGENDA

#### SNP Dumfries East Branch Meeting

**Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 7pm**  
**Moreig Hotel, Annan Road, Dumfries**

1. Members Present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of May Branch Meeting
4. Business Arising therefrom
5. Office bearers reports  
(as in newsletter)
6. Councillors' Reports  
(as in newsletter)
7. Resolutions for National  
Conference
8. Stall at Dumfries & Locherbie  
Show
9. AOCB.
10. Date and place of next meeting.

**Please note that the next meeting is on a  
Wednesday instead of the usual Monday**

#### Further Scheduled Meetings

There is no July meeting

26th August -30th September

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# Office Bearers Reports

## Convenor:

The branch Day of Action in Dumfries town centre on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May was a great success, and my thanks to all who helped. This has already been mentioned in the minute of our branch meeting of May 27<sup>th</sup>, but it's worth while reiterating. I found it curious that the public reaction seemed more positive than what was experienced only three short weeks earlier at the 'Yes' stall. It would be nice to conclude that things are moving swiftly in our direction, but we must guard against complacency. There's a lot to be done between now and the referendum next year.

On a more reflective note, it was sad to hear of the passing of one of our supporters, Bob Kerr of Dumfries. Bob died suddenly of a heart attack on 24<sup>th</sup> May and his funeral, which I attended with others from the branch, was held at the Roucan Loch on 4<sup>th</sup> June. His son Bob gave a moving eulogy, all the more poignant considering that it was only in the Autumn last year that he performed the same task for his mother. Bob was a larger than life character with his big handlebar moustache and deep infectious laugh. He stood twice for the party in local elections and came very close to being elected.

As well as his patriotism Bob also had many other interests, one of which was his amazing collection of stuffed animals and birds, due to his self-taught skill as a taxidermist. He had an equally remarkable collection of Scottish military memorabilia, displayed in his home in Newall Terrace which doubled as a guest house, run for some years with his wife Rosie. It must have been quite an experience for visitors who had bed and breakfast at the Ben, though an enjoyable one, as many frequently returned to be regaled by Bob with his tales and jokes, and perhaps to be taken wildfowling on the Solway marshes, another of Bob's hobbies. Truly, those of us who knew him will long remember him with affection.

## Treasurer:

The past month has been much better financially for the branch, with more money coming in to the account than going out. We had the proceeds of the stall amounting to £136.42 and £49 from Isobel Gibson for a 'whisky game' she had organised last year. This had been won by the late Bob Kerr and returned by the family, for which we are grateful. We have also had some profit from the sale of our own calendars which have been produced by two of our branch members.

## Political Education Officer :

The most common reason given by people who say they are undecided about Scottish independence is that they feel that the Yes and No campaigns have not given them enough information. It's easy for us who are already committed to independence to get exasperated by this, because we know that the minute you start to offer them information they yawn and can't be bothered listening any further.

So here are some very, very short and simple facts to convert the as yet unconverted – you can always crunch the details later (if they're still listening!).

1. Scotland is a rich country, especially in renewable energy as well as oil and gas. Why should that wealth go to London to decide how much of it we can spend?
2. In Scotland we already run our own schools and hospitals and many other services. (And we do a much better job of it than Westminster does.)
3. We will save 250 million pounds immediately by getting rid of nuclear weapons and 50 million pounds a year by no longer paying for politicians at Westminster.
4. We will stay part of Europe. EU law doesn't allow for Scotland to be kicked out after independence.
5. We have a wealth of talent and enterprise. For our size, we have more world-class universities than any other nation. We have a really promising future, and our bright kids go to university for free.
6. If we vote no, Westminster will take its revenge and punish us even further financially. (With one Scottish Tory MP, why would they be nice to us?)

It's clear that the media, generally speaking, are on the side of the Bitter Together campaign, so we have to counter that by every means available to us. We shouldn't underestimate word of mouth, and persuading the people we meet every day. The golden rule is supposed to be never to talk about sex, politics or religion, but I think in this case we need to start wearing our saltires and Yes badges and taking every opportunity to get people thinking and talking positively about independence.

## Secretary:

The information about the Autumn Conference has been received by me and was given out at the last Branch Meeting.

Please note that the date of the meeting is now **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7.00.**

Sometime ago I started to sell boxes for a whisky square. I had difficulty in selling these, but at last finished them. I opened the envelope which gave the winning number, and saw that Bob Kerr had won the bottle of whisky. Almost immediately the 'phone rang to tell me that Bob was dead. I spoke to his son, Andrew, at the funeral and he told me to keep it for a good cause, so the branch now owns a bottle of Grant's Standfast Whisky.

## Organiser:

- A. On the 1st of June I attended national council see page 7 for full report.
- B. Sadly, one of our branches stalwarts Robert Alexander Kerr "Bob" died suddenly two weeks ago. Most of the branches officers and some members were present at the funeral.
- C. I'm in the process of organising an event to take place in Dumfries in the Autumn. It will showcase Scottish entertainment, mostly music and will hopefully cost little and yet make a profit and gain publicity for the party and the branch. I will let you have further information on the venue in your August newsletter.

# Councillors' Reports

## **Cllr Andrew Wood:**

I would like to start by apologizing for not being able to submit last months, due to being away in Poland, but will try to catch up with work taking place at present.

As per usual, there are the parent councils and school awards that have been taking place along with the usual community council meetings, with main issues being dog fouling, windfarm applications and allocation of such funds, potholes and most recent the growth along road verges.

Many of you will also have seen the debate on court closures and I can sympathize to a certain degree with those local communities such as Annan and Kirkcudbright that will be affected, though the reality is that there really are too many rural courts within Scotland and a long overdue rationalization of these facilities should bring much needed savings.

We are also trying to address the learning town concept with the possibility of a Super School costing an estimated £30 million and I am keen to see this progressed, as I fully believe that we cannot stand still with the education of our children and while accepting that some might not like change, if it brings about the increased opportunities, added learning potential and improved academic results for our youngsters, then I'm all for it.

School clustering has also now been agreed which will assist with the sustainability of our rural schools and the ability to provide head teachers within each cluster.

First time permanent repairs to our road network, is proving worthwhile, though I accept that it has created a delay in sorting the many potholes within our infrastructure and would hope that we will all see a marked difference by the end of this year.

Finally, Guid Nychbarris is now upon us once again and I have been privileged to have been chosen by the Provost, to be one of the four Baillies that accept the keys to the Burgh, on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>, prior to the crowning of the Queen. Wishing you all the very best.

## **Cllr Alastair Witts:**

At long last there appears to be hope for progress with a project I have been involved in for a long time, the River Nith Harbour Authority, and we are hopeful that six trustees will be appointed by the end of this month. Two councillors, myself included, have already been appointed by the Area Committee.

I attended the opening ceremony (a 'Turf Cut') to mark the start of renovation work on the Dock Park. More controversial are the proposals for the area around Burns Statue. Officials have been taking decisions, like the re-routing of buses, without proper consultation with councillors. This will cause delays.

Discussions over 'Dumfries Learning Town' continue to rumble on and it looks like there will be more delay before a decision is reached. One of the main reasons is that it looks like 'Option 2' has been revised to propose that the spare capacity in the secondary schools which would be created if the top three years went to a 'super school' could be filled by taking in primary school pupils and thus creating all through schools for 5-15 year olds (3-15 if nurseries were included). As this would have a knock-on effect for the existing primary schools this latest amended proposal needs much more time for discussion and consultation.

Welfare reform and its implications are being considered. A special sub-committee has been formed to look at this and I recently attended a meeting. On the same topic I attended an Independent Living Support luncheon. They provide good volunteer support for those in need and one of the guests, Russell Brown MP, cited the bedroom tax as one of the reasons why people were finding it harder to make ends meet. But had I known that at the same time his leader Ed Milliband was refusing to confirm that a future Labour Government in Westminster would abolish the bedroom tax, I would have been sorely tempted to heckle him!

Finally, the SNP councillors on Dumfries and Galloway Council held our AGM recently. There were no changes made to those holding office bearer positions, and Brian Collins, councillor for Castle Douglas and the Glenkens, remains leader.





## Your MSP Joan McAlpine



This month I have been busy helping to elect Mark McDonald to Aberdeen Donside and by the time you read this the campaign will be over. It's been very helpful working with such a professional team as exists in Aberdeen Donside where the late Brian Adams was a seasoned campaigner, and having knocked hundreds of doors I am struck by the number of people Brian helped personally.

Mark McDonald resigned his parliamentary seat as a regional MSP in order to fight for this constituency where he was born and brought up and he deserves every support for that sacrifice.

The by-election work meant that I haven't spent as much time in Dumfriesshire as usual over the last few weeks however, in parliament I was able to use a debate on youth sport to highlight the successes of Dumfriesshire in relation to ice sports, particularly curling and ice hockey. I recently attended a volunteers event at Dumfries Ice Bowl to drum up support for the World Curling Seniors Championships and the Mixed Double Championships which will be held next year and will attract thousands of visitors to the town. At the end of the debate in parliament I received assurances from Sports Minister Shona Robison that she recognises the importance of curling to Scotland and in particular the south west.

Readers might be interested to know that I recently became co-convener of the cross party group on carers. There are over 650,000 unpaid carers in Scotland – and they face an array of challenges due to the UK welfare reforms. More positively, the integration of health and social services in Scotland, and new legislation in self-directed support should give carers, and those they care for, more freedom and better support.

The campaign to improve south of Scotland TV continues and I was pleased that ITV Border took STV's excellent series 'Road to Referendum', although it is shown at a different time in the Border area. I will continue to press ITV, Ofcom and the UK government to improve both Scottish and local coverage for viewers in our region.

## Kerry's Yes Dumfriesshire Column

Apologies for being a little quiet this month, I have been ill and then trying to catch up with everything I've missed. The recent sunshine has been very welcome – I hope it returns soon for all the upcoming gala activities and evening leafleting work!

I hope everyone has been enjoying the ITV series, *The Road to the Referendum*. It is great that Border have agreed to show it at 10.35pm on a Thursday night. It may not be the Tuesday evening 8pm slot that other parts of Scotland have, but at least we are able to see this informative series. I've been encouraging lots of friends and family to watch – it's a good way to break the ice and get them thinking about independence issues.

Also of interest was the BBC2 Scotland Rory Bremner show, *Rory goes to Holyrood* – it was great to see Joan featured showing him around the Parliament when he visited earlier this year. I think it's fantastic to see someone like Rory engage with the referendum debate and introduce some satire into the proceedings.

I am just waiting for the new Choices booklets to be available and then we will be starting weekly leafleting rounds. Please contact me if you are interested in getting involved. We will be working in groups so please don't feel worried about coming along and taking part – I'm hoping it will be good fun too.

The Ambassador Training will start in July locally. Please contact me if you are interested in taking part and let me know what times and locations suit you to help with planning the sessions.

We will have a Yes Stall at the Dumfries Show on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please also let me know if you'd like to spend some time manning the stall so I can get an idea of how many people would like to help. There is no need to be there all day – even if you can just come and help for a short period of time that would be great. As always, please contact me at [yesdumfriesshire@gmail.com](mailto:yesdumfriesshire@gmail.com)

**Kerry Willacy**  
**Phone: 07894642284**

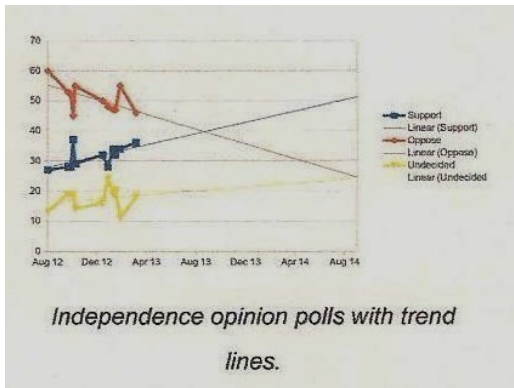
## Arc of Prosperity Scottish Independence from a Scandinavian Prospective

**Yes will overtake No in five month's time.**

(posted on 28.03.2013 by Thomas)

[OpenOffice](#) is able to compute [trend lines](#) for data in a graph.

I took the most recent [Scottish independence opinion polls](#) (since August last year), put in the trend lines and extended them until the day of the referendum, 18th September 2014. The results can be seen in the graph below.



Basically, No is falling quickly, while Yes and don't know are rising at a more moderate pace.

The effect is that according to current trends, Yes will overtake No on 1st of September 2013, and by the time of the referendum, there will be more than twice as many Yes voters than No voters.

Obviously it's very unlikely that current trends will continue for next 18 months, and of course, opinion never shifts in such a neat, linear fashion. However, it does show that the Yes side is building up momentum, and that it is indeed possible, perhaps even likely, that Scotland will vote yes to independence.

Taken from: [www.arcofprosperity.org](http://www.arcofprosperity.org)

**Even the Scandinavians believe we can do it.**

**Submitted by: Cyril Mitcheal**

## Our Favourite Recipes

### Pistachio & Cranberry Biscuits



#### Ingredients:

175g butter  
85g golden caster sugar  
½ tsp vanilla extract  
225g plain flour  
75g pistachio nuts  
75g dried cranberries

#### Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4
2. Put butter, sugar, flour and vanilla extract in food processor and pulse until the ingredients become bread crumbs continue until they bind together.
3. Roughly break up nuts.
4. Empty contents of food processor onto a board and work in nuts and cranberries.
5. Form into a two logs about 5cm across, wrap in cling film and put in fridge for 1 hour or freeze for up to 3 months\*.
6. Slice logs into 1cm-thick rounds place on tray lined with greaseproof paper and bake for in 12-15 mins in oven.
7. Completely cool in tray.

\*These can be made up to 3 months in advance, just defrost dough overnight in fridge and cut up and bake as normal. You will always have fresh baked biscuits when needed. I freeze half the dough and cook the other half.

#### Scottish Quotes

- \* Better keep the devil out, than have to put him out.  
(too late No campaign is here)
- \* Say but little and say it well. (Yes )
- \* Never argue –simply keep repeating your assertion.  
(We can do it, we can do it)

#### Wee Jokes

‘Are you looking for work Jock?’  
‘Not necessary –but I’d like a job.’



At an auction in Glasgow a wealthy American announced that he had lost his wallet containing £10,000 and would give a reward of £100 to the person who found it.

From the back of the hall a Scottish voice shouted, “I’ll give £150.”



Scotsman13/06/2013 by: Frank Boyle



# Did you know?

## The King's Kindly Tenants



After Bannockburn King Robert the Bruce settled his veteran soldiers near Lochmaben in four villages, Hightae, Heck, Smallholm and Greenhill which are still known as the Four Royal Towns. These were the men who stood fast, foot soldiers, facing the terrible charge of medieval knights and saw them break on a hedge of spears at Bannockburn. They were what is known as "Kindly Tenants".

"Kindly Tenants" pay no rent, but King Robert was generous and he gave the families security of tenure passing down from the fourteenth century until the present day. Usually in the Lowlands of Scotland the rights of Kindly Tenants disappear after two generations. They also had other privileges. Although they were commoners they had fishing and hunting rights over the land granted to them, just as if they were nobles. They answered directly to the king and his successors.

In the Old Statistical Account, published in the 1790s, for the Parish of Lochmaben the Reverend Andrew Jaffray comments on the fertile land belonging to the Four Royal Towns and adds that the villagers grew flax. The women spun the flax and the men wove it.

Mr. Jaffray also says that "if possessing the same lands from father to son, for many generations denominates an old family, and gives the appellation of gentleman, here are numbers who have a just claim to that title, having possessed the same ridges and acres for 500 years." He adds that some of the names common in the villages, such as Richardson and Rae, are found among the companions of Wallace and Bruce in the Wars of Independence.

The rights of the King's Kindly Tenants were renewed by both James VI and Charles II and confirmed by the Court of Session in 1726.

Submitted by : Isobel M Gibson

## SNP Stall Saturday 25th May

The stall was a great success. We made a good profit signed up 20 to the yes declaration and signed on 1 new member.

The committee would like to thank those people who helped at the stall and those who came along to support us.



## **Report from National council**

(National Council on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013 at Menzies Hotel, Dyce Aberdeen)

**Report by:** Iain Rogers (Delegate for Dumfries East Branch)

In view of the forth coming by-election on 20<sup>th</sup> June in Aberdeen Donside the business element of the meeting was considerably curtailed.

The Resolutions were as follows:

1. Learning Disability services.
2. Social enterprise.
3. Fair access to the Scottish Legal profession (financial help).
4. Provision of healthy school lunches (re: provision of free school meals for all students).
5. SNP Health and Wellbeing policies (support for breast feeding in Scotland).
6. Taking up of unused European funds.
7. National Women's Officer: Tasmina Ahmed-Shiekh
  - 7.1 She is responsible within the national executive committee for the promotion of gender equality, for the development and support of the party's network of women officers and for chairing the women's forum (she reported that the majority of branches had not yet appointed a women's officer but she hoped that the numbers would rise in the near future).

All resolutions were passed unanimously by acclaim with no opposition.

The meeting was then addressed by the party leader Alex Salmond which was the customary rousing address with special interest in the forthcoming by-election. He was followed by our candidate for Donside who greatly impressed the delegates with his style and confidence in an SNP victory on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June.

After the meeting closed delegates left to canvas and leaflet the streets of Donside.

## **Infrastructure exists for Scottish welfare system**

**SNP press release: Tue, 11/06/2013 - 15:40**

A new report has underlined the affordability of an independent Scotland's welfare system – and says the infrastructure to deliver benefits and pensions already exists.

The independent report of the Expert Working Group on Welfare has concluded the Scottish Government's forecast on the cost of a welfare system in an independent Scotland is a "reasonable estimate".

In assessing the Scottish Government's forecasts of the costs of welfare in an independent Scotland, the group also concluded: Spending on social protection (including welfare) as a share of GDP is estimated to have been lower in Scotland than in the rest of the UK in each of the past five years

There has been a relative decline in welfare expenditure in Scotland as a proportion of that spent in Great Britain from a peak of 9.7% in 2002/03 to 8.9% in 2011/12

'Scotland delivers almost all parts of the current UK benefits system to people living in Scotland from locations within Scotland' and 'Scotland provides a wide range of services to England. Some of these services are significant...and involve a claimant count measured in millions rather than thousands'.

All options for the delivery of welfare at the point of independence - including a stand-alone Scottish system of administration - are possible but recommends a transitional period of shared administration

Welcoming the report, Deputy Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee Jamie Hepburn, said:

"These are very welcome findings that underline not only can an independent Scotland afford its own welfare system, it also already has the infrastructure there to deliver it.

"People will be rightly reassured by this report that backs up the Scottish Government's forecasts on welfare costs.

"The group highlights how all benefit payments to people in Scotland – including pensions – are already administered from locations within Scotland.

"And as the Deputy First Minister says in light of a Yes vote, there would be a transitional period of shared administration during which the Scottish Government could take forward important reforms such as the abolition of the bedroom tax. The fact that Northern Ireland already has policy flexibility within a system of shared administration suggests that such an arrangement is perfectly possible.

"And we already know the most recent GERS figures show Scotland spent 14.4% of public spending on social security compared to 15.9% for the UK, demonstrating the fact it is more affordable in an independent Scotland.

"This report has given us a firm foundation to ensure a smooth delivery of welfare in an independent Scotland.

"The Westminster system is creating a society that does not reflect Scotland's values. An independent Scotland with our own constitution, where economic and social rights are embedded, would work towards a system that better reflects our needs and circumstances."



# Know your Scotland Quiz



Questions	Answers
1. Where is the Gulf of Corryvreckan which has the 3rd largest whirlpool in the world?	
2. Which Island in the Outer Hebrides has the worlds 2nd largest Northern Gannet colony?	
3. What is the capital of the Shetland Islands and Britain's most northerly town called?	
4. Which Viaduct is the highest extant railway Viaduct in Britain?	
5. What is the shortest river in Scotland?	
6. Which is the oldest still surviving bank in the UK and the first in Europe to print its own bank notes?	
7. How many hills was Edinburgh built on?	
8. What is the beast of Stirling?	
9. In 1130 Stirling was created a Royal Burgh by which King?	
10. What year was Stirling granted city status?	
11. Which village in Dumfries and Galloway is also known as ninemile bar?	
12. In which town can you find a statue of Robert Burns Highland Mary (bonnie Mary O'Argyll)?	
13. Where did the worlds first international rugby match take place in 1871?	
14. Where in Dumfries and Galloway will you find the statue called the clasped hands?	
15. Where does the southern uplands way begin?	
16. Which famous Scot was born in Linlithgow on the 31st December 1954?	
17. Which artist painted "The Singing Butler"?	
18. In which Gallery is the painting "The Skating Minister" by Sir Henry Raeburn hanging?	
19. Which institute cloned Dolly the Sheep?	
20. Which Castle in Scotland is said to be the most haunted?	

**Answers in August issue or contact the editor and she will email the answers out to you.**

**Good Luck**

**Answers to May Quiz:**

1. The Greatest Scot. 2. The Tweed. 3. Campbell and MacDonald. 4. Edinburgh. 5. Colin Montgomerie. 6. Brodick. 7. Islay. 8. 1890. 9. 1957. 10. 2001. 11. A rotating boat lift. 12. 130. 13. Near Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway. 14. Alba. 15. The Duke of Athol. 16. The Athol Highlanders. 17. Skibo Castle. 18. Fish. 19. 1865. 20. The Tay rail bridge.