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**SCOTTISH  
REFERENDUM  
SPECIAL**

**WAITING  
FOR  
WALLACE**

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# A DECISION

# 251NS

## SCOTTISH REFERENDUM SPECIAL

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Unless otherwise indicated, all materials are used without permission. No profit is made from the distribution of this magazine. No attempt has been made to supersede existing copyright. This magazine is not affiliated with any company or service mentioned herein. I mean, obviously. We only mention it to cover our arse. Neither are we affiliated with any organizations or pressure groups mentioned in passing in these pages. You know what's a stupid term? "Indyref". Thank god that'll soon be obsolete.

### **FOR BOB THE FISH MAGAZINES**

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# PARCEL

The man who would be ard rí  
Alban, yesterday.



# OF ROGUES

After almost two years of preparation, voting is finally here. Not coincidentally, after almost two years of assuming that the “No” campaign had it in the bag, suddenly it looks like the SNP might just win. Welcome to squeaky bum time in the referendum.

**T**here’s been a woolly mammoth in the room at Holyrood, squatting on the table for months now. It won’t leave for another week or so - but it will definitely leave, so everyone’s been trying to just go on with things as best they can and ignore it. For most of the last couple of years it’s been peacefully dozing, largely untroubled. But in the last month of campaigning, suddenly its very existence has been called into question, and it looks around, startled, wondering if it’s even real. The mammoth has a name. It is called “Inevitable ‘No’ victory”.

You won’t have heard much about it. After all, this story is years in the making. Everyone involved wants it to reach its climax properly, on time - with the actual voting itself. So they write articles explaining what would happen if Scotland became independent. What their economy would be based on. What they’ll use for currency. Whether they’ll keep the Queen. Whether they’ll just be grandfathered into the EU or what, because obviously they can’t just leave them out altogether, that would be *crazy*, ho ho, what’s Article 49? But in the back of every writer’s head was the inescapable sense that it was futile. That they might as well have been writing about what might happen if Barack Obama became a hen, or all the moss in the world spontaneously turned into Marmite, because it was only marginally less likely than a “Yes” victory.

**WHERE DID THIS NEW POLL  
COME FROM? THE SUNDAY  
TIMES. AND WHO OWNS THE  
SUNDAY TIMES?**

In almost every poll ever published prior to September 2014, “Yes” has come second. Occasionally a slightly close second. Independence topped precisely two polls in three years: one in 2011, by a single percent, and one last August which barely counts as it was actively commissioned by the SNP themselves - and again the margin was a single percent. Generally the gap’s been around seven or eight percent. Occasionally the gap’s narrowed a bit - most notably a completely unexpected surge to within the margin of error in June which was immediately pegged back again; the fact that this poll was run by YesScotland themselves is probably completely irrelevant. Throughout the last three years, the “Yes” campaign has barely scraped past their standing start of just over a third of the Scottish population. Nate Silver, based on the polls a year ago, wrote off the nationalists altogether, and Nate Silver could probably tell you whether or not it’s going to rain on any given day 2020. Not only that, but he could tell you to the nearest five inches how much rain there’ll be, how long it’ll last, and what colour raincoat you’ll be wearing.

But that was then and this is now. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a poll was published a fortnight before



the referendum that put the “Yes” campaign significantly ahead for the first time. The Better Together campaign collectively shat itself. The woolly mammoth had a coronary and was placed on life support. Game on.

## ALEX SALMOND IS BOTH AN ASSET AND A DRAWBACK TO THE YES CAMPAIGN

Where the hell did this poll come from, you might ask. Why, from YouGov and the Sunday Times. That’s certainly *an* answer, but it’s not the whole one. Dig further. Who owns the Sunday Times? Why, satanic ghost-train skeleton Rupert Murdoch, who seriously and genuinely is an agent of evil. He also fervently supports Scottish independence. Partly because his family are Scottish, but mostly because if you slice off the Scots, it brings the remaining UK and America that much closer to socio-cultural osmosis, which has been his dream all along. Plus, if he gets in on the ground floor, he could make an independent Scotland his own pet country, which could be a useful thing to own.

To this end, he’s used his near-omnipotence to throw the cat among the pigeons in this referendum, dropping a poll that’s changed the whole complexion of the campaign in one fell stroke. There’s a non-zero chance that the poll itself could be hookey — and even if it isn’t, it’s just one poll, the lead is only 2% and it includes 7% worth of undecideds. In all likelihood, “no” will probably still win. But due to Murdoch’s manipulations, it’s likely to be in spite of, rather than thanks to, the Better Together campaign, who have completely gone to pieces in the wake of suddenly going behind for a nanosecond (polls published days later — by the non-Murdoch affiliated Daily Record — saw the status quo reassert itself). Of course, the amount of sheer blind panic in the “no” camp might very well have been overstated as a self-fulfilling prophecy by the same people behind the poll. Wheels within wheels.

Whether the SNP perceive that they’re being manipulated by the literal three-dimensional equivalent of C. Montgomery Burns is a moot point, although if we can figure it out and they can’t, they don’t deserve to run an entire nation. Certainly it’s unlikely that Salmond cares, at least at this point. If the referendum has a central figure, and it does, it’s him: a slightly doughy man with carefully trimmed

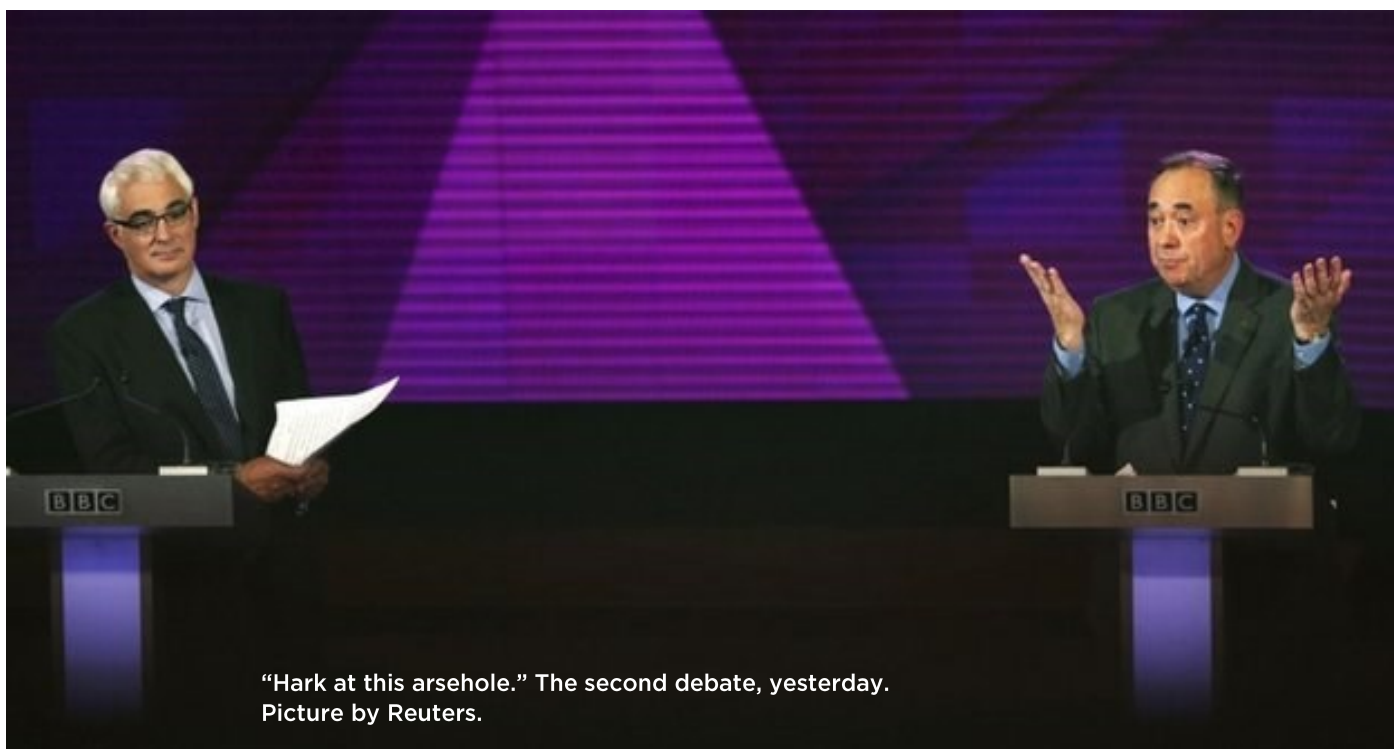


Johnny Winter and...the pro-union side in all their glittering glory, yesterday.

# bettertogether



## A stronger Scotland, a United Kingdom

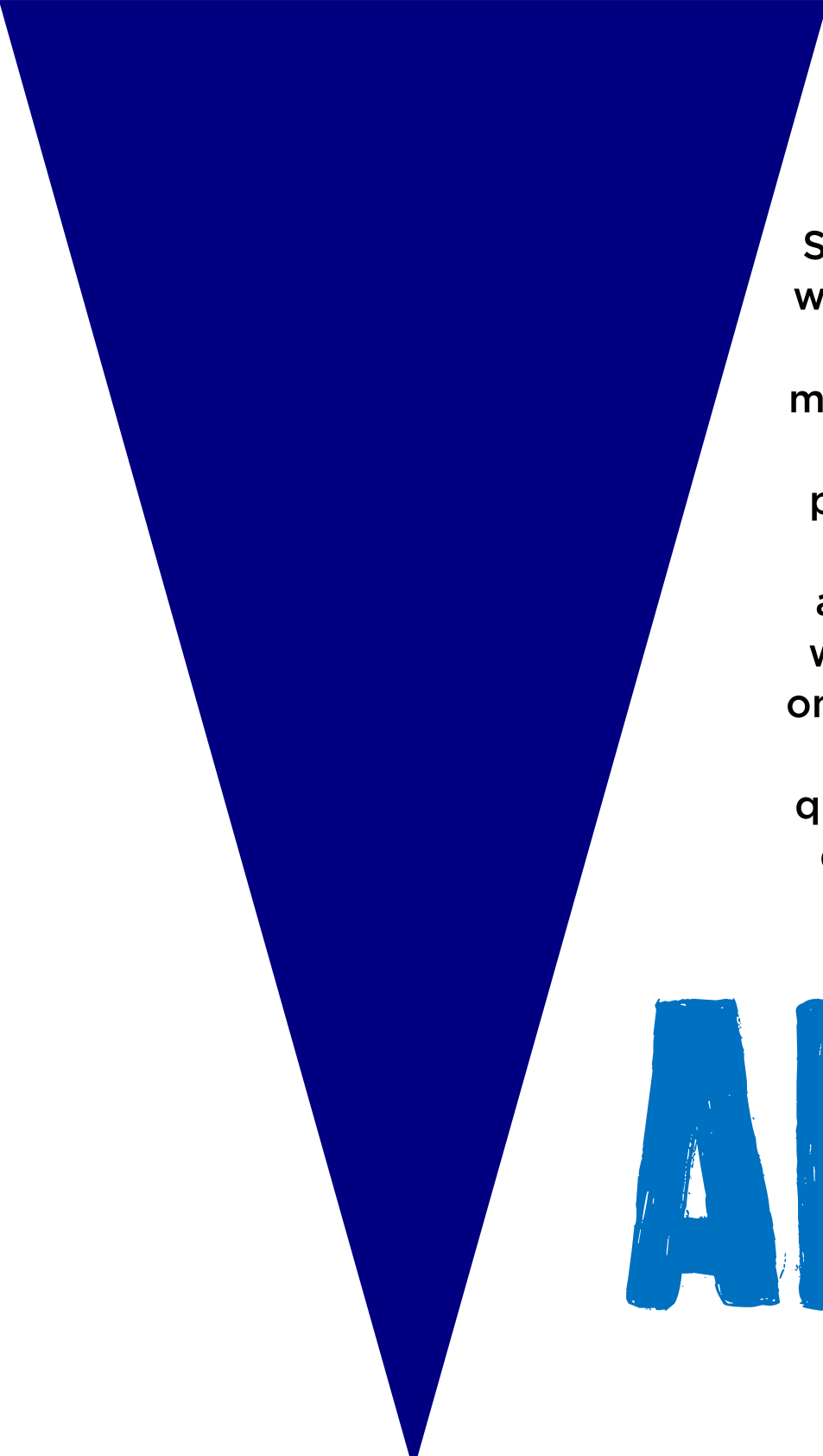


eyebrows and a “balding with dignity” hairstyle, whose faintly detached air offsets his tendency to come across as a monomaniac obsessed with an independent Scotland as an extension of his own gargantuan ego. Salmond is both an asset and a drawback to the Yes campaign. An asset because this was pretty much what he was born to do: organize an entire nation to vote for independence whether it’s a good idea or not. A drawback because should he succeed, he’ll be the first Prime Minister of Scotland and a major historical figure who will be commemorated for years on stamps and currency and everything, and a lot of people can’t stomach that prospect because he’s, frankly, a monumental douche.

But one with a Keating-like knack for pulling victory out of the jaws of defeat. Labour were supposed to win the Scottish Parliamentary Election in 2007, leading handsomely right up to the week before, when the SNP came from nowhere to snatch not only the lead, but ultimately the title belt, by a single seat. Four years later they became the first party to establish an outright lead in Holyrood, despite the fact that the system was supposedly deliberately engineered from the start to stop that from ever happening. So they’re used to upsetting the odds. And those were achieved without the massive power of Murdoch. And the SNP’s opponents in those elections were somewhat more vital and charismatic than Alistair Darling (ie at all). Defeat may have been inevitable for one year and fifty weeks’ worth of campaigning, but it’s a marathon, not a sprint. Actually, that’s not true: it’s a sprint disguised as a marathon. No-one will go to the polls on Thursday giving a fuck about things that happened even six months ago. The more recent the development, the more likely it is to affect the actual voting, on account of how human memory works. Look out for a succession of September surprises. Photos of Alistair Darling bowing to a painting of Edward I. A gruesome sex tape starring Alex Salmond and Blair MacDougall. Jimmy Hill caressing a map of England and Wales and laughing over and over again. Sir Alex Ferguson pissing on the grave of Donald Dewar. This coming week could get quite harrowing. Watch this space. Through your fingers.

## ALEX SALMOND IS BOTH AN ASSET AND A DRAWBACK TO THE YES CAMPAIGN

Either way, there’s less than a week to go. The world is hurtling towards either a historic moment or an extremely wet fart, with the latter remaining the more likely. There are more than enough undecideds, however, that it really can’t be called definitively just yet. It’s close enough for Murdoch to swing it by coughing, put it that way.



So, on the off chance Scotland does secede, how will it actually function? *Will* it actually function? How much thought, in short, have the SNP put into the practical considerations of running Scotland as an actual country on its own, without Britain to fall back on? Well, instead of standing around asking the same question over and over, why don't we fucking well just find out? Eh? EH?

ALBA

MATTERS



# CURRENCY

This is a big one. Shortly after the referendum was confirmed, the question of what kind of money an independent Scotland would have was one of the first to be asked. And the SNP didn't seem to know. They seemed to have figured that the English



would let them share the pound (the SNP were pro-Euro, but at this point that seemed like booking a seat on the Lusitania). But, of course, the English hadn't been consulted, and when it came up they, not unreasonably, asked why the fuck they *should* share their currency with a country that just told them to fuck off. Sir John Majors said it would just leave the depleted UK paying off Scottish debt, and both Gideon Osborne and his actually-competent shadow, Ed's Balls, called the plans "incoherent" and "unworkable". Most damningly, Olli Ruhn, a former EU bigwig, said that if they kept sterling they couldn't join the EU on account of not having a central bank anymore. Despite this, the stated position of Yes Scotland is that a currency union would be best for both sides. The Greens and Socialists want a unique currency that's pegged to Sterling, but aren't opposed to a currency union in principle as a transitional dealie. Should independence actually happen, Salmond is the guy in charge, so a currency union it's likely to be, with a central Bank of Scotland so they can join the EU after all. Speaking of which...

# EUROPE

As long as Salmond and his party have owt to say about it, Scotland are going to be in the EU. Or at least they're going to try their hardest to be let in.

Which could prove difficult, as it would be the first time that part of an extant EU member state has seceded and attempted to re-apply. The SNP spent a good while under the assumption that they'd be re-accepted automatically under article 48. This is the bit of the Lisbon Treaty which allows for speedy amendments (by EU standards). To horribly



oversimplify the process, the Independent Scotland would basically type up a letter saying "aw g'wan" and hand it to the European Council to pass around parliament, who nod solemnly and give it back to the Council, who nod solemnly and pass it to a convention, who nod solemnly and pass it to a conference, who finally ratify it, unless there's a really good reason not to (which there almost never is). But then both the President and Vice-President of the European Commission announced that an independent Scotland wouldn't be allowed to go around invoking EU treaties, on account of they're not in the EU anymore, remember? Instead, they said, Scotland's best hope is Article 49, ie applying properly the usual way, and requiring ratification from every other country in the union — a much taller order, especially that given countries like Spain, with their own, rather more proactive separatist movements, would take a dim view of anyone who'd secede from their own country. In fact, José Manuel Barroso (the President) has bluntly stated it would be "extremely difficult, if not impossible" for an independent Scotland to join the EU. That won't stop them trying, but it'll be a battle to make Maastricht look like the Christmas truce. Expect a huge tide of UKIP pricks immigrating north of the border if they don't manage it.

# ECONOMY

Arguably the referendum's main issue is how Scotland will actually pay for its own existence as an independent nation. What will its economy be founded on, and will it function on its own? Can it? The economic question prisms into three sub-issues: currency, which we've already covered, banking, and Scotland's potential GDP. On the latter the SNP are (again) putting all their chips on a single hand: the oil in the North Sea. They claim there's plenty of that shit to be bottled yet, and besides, it's all Scotland's anyway, you Sassenach *motherfuckers*. Under the Union (they claim) the vast oil reserves which should make them one of the richest nations on Earth have been siphoned off by the English, and more specifically the south of England. Without London drinking Scotland's milkshake, proud Alba can rule the WORLD. Basically, it's all England's fault the Scots aren't fulfilling their economic potential. Obviously unprovable right now; either the SNP truly believe the premise, or they don't think they've got a hope in hell of actually winning the referendum and ending up having to actually prove it. Other resources they can fall back on include coal and, um, beef? And Scotch? Hey, the UK barely exports anything except pasty, overweight, racist holidaymakers anymore, so if an independent Scotland can create any industry at all, good fucking



luck to it.

As for the banks, this is another issue which has caused experts to issue solemn

warnings to the SNP (mind you, pretty much every issue has). The UK Treasury pointed out that should Scotland secede, the massive and unwieldy banking systems they'd inherit would be so disproportionately huge compared to the nation itself, that should they fail and require a bailout, Scotland would be fucked. The SNP's response was that these banks are incorporated in other countries, who could help out should they choose to do so. A bit Blanche Dubois and not especially reassuring. Meanwhile, major Scottish businesses are tugging at their collars and exploring the notion of reincorporating in England on the off-chance. Most notably, Standard Life, a lynchpin of the Scottish financial sector, nonchalantly

**THE SNP CLAIM THE VAST OIL RESERVES SHOULD MAKE SCOTLAND ONE OF THE RICHEST NATIONS ON EARTH**

revealed they were looking into buying new headquarters in London in case the Scots go it alone and ruin their usual strategy of offsetting their losses in Scotland with their profits in the rest of the UK. And then there's Lloyds, one of the UK's oldest and biggest banks, and based in Scotland ever since they took over the Halifax/Bank of Scotland group. They're going to be *obliged* to move house under EU legislation, taking both the B of S and the Scottish Widows with them, which is just silly.







## MONARCHY

Much more frivolous one, this. Oh, bite us, it is. If you disagree, please write a thousand-word essay on what the Monarchy actually does in this day and age that affects anyone in any practical sense, why any given member of the Royal family is inherently at all special, and ultimately what the point is in the whole institution in a modern-day democratic society. Now that's out of the way: the Monarchy. Will Scotland keep it? The Queen, of course, is half-Scottish, and has repeatedly advocated the Union to anyone who'll listen, which is everyone since she's Queen. She still spends her Christmasses there in Balmoral—which she actually owns. As in her specific self, not the legal entity known as “the Crown”. So she's certainly not leaving, no matter what happens. Alex Salmond has said they're definitely keeping her and her family in an Australia-style Commonwealth type thing, although others in his party have pointed to an ancient promise (made long before independence ever looked likely) to hold yet another referendum on the subject should Scotland secede. The Greens and Scottish Socialists want to take the opportunity to declare a republic, but the SNP keep shushing them.

## ARCHIPELAGO

That's right: it doesn't necessarily end here. There's a chance that Scottish independence might just

be the first step in an all out Balkanisation of the more Arctic parts of the country. The inhabitants of the three main northern archipelagos (Orkney, the Western Isles and the Shetland Isles) have all called for separate referendums for them after, or even alongside, the current one. Do they want devolution of their own? Or maybe they want to stay in the UK even if mainland Scotland doesn't? Maybe they want to join the Channel Islands and Isle of Man as Crown Dependencies — effectively autonomous Commonwealth members with a loose affiliation to whatever remains of Britain. Maybe they want to emulate the Faroe Islands instead (which are closer to Shetland than anywhere in Britain anyway) and become self-governed with benefits?

The separate referendums never materialised, but the councils of the three groups met up in 2013 to decide on a future for their islands if Scotland becomes independent. Crown Dependency status was all but ruled out as it would mean killing off their EU funding altogether, whereas more directly affiliating themselves with an independent Scotland could mean more EU money to go around, assuming the Scots make it in at all. Eventually, Alex Salmond pledged to look into devolving greater powers to the islands in the event of a “yes” vote. The various island councils accepted it, while wondering if he couldn't do it anyway, however the referendum ends.



## NHS

This could have been a worry, but fortunately NHS Scotland is already functionally independent of the rest of the organisation and always has been. Plus, the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood has had responsibility for healthcare since its establishment. NHS Scotland would have to officially detach itself and possibly change its name, but very little else would have to change from how this works already. Hooray.





# DEFENCE

This is an interesting one, largely because Scotland happens to be where Trident lives. You know, the expensive nuclear submarines which have never been used and in all likelihood will never be used and frankly we patently don't need while

we've got plenty of far cheaper delivery systems available to us for the approximately eighteen dozen nuclear warheads we have lying about. If we ever needed to fire any of them. Which we don't. And since they're nuclear weapons, if we ever did need to fire them, then one way or another civilisation's number would already be up. So yeah, not the most useful thing in the world, especially when people are freezing in their homes as an alternative to starvation.



**SHOULD SCOTLAND SECEDE,  
WE MIGHT HAVE TO SCRAP  
TRIDENT WHETHER WE LIKE IT  
OR NOT**

And they're based in Scotland. Specifically, the Firth of Clyde, which is the perfect spot because it's the deepest the ocean gets in British territory. For now, anyway. Having our nuclear weapons in their backyard has always irritated the SNP in particular, and many ordinary Scots in general. When they first decided to put them there, most of the Scottish MPs voted "no fuck you". But the English outnumbered them, so they had to lump it. If they vote "yes" on the 18th of September, the atomic boot is on the other foot: the SNP has said they don't want Trident there, they didn't ask for it, it's not even theirs anymore, and there's a pretty high chance that they'll wing the fuckers right back to the UK. In which case, many experts claim, we'll be fucked, because there's nowhere else to put them. The CND gleefully pointed out that should Scotland secede, they'll *have* to scrap Trident whether they like it or not. Since that'll piss off NATO, the Ministry for Defence tugged at its collar and said they reckon they'll come up with something. Plymouth, maybe, since they already go there for repairs. Or maybe the Scots'll let us lease the land, although that's not likely.

Talking of NATO, that's the other major defence-related issue at hand here. The SNP have traditionally turned their nose up at NATO as a confederacy of douchebags who exist mainly to legitimise America's occasional temper tantrums. Which is fairly accurate. However, Salmond announced a couple of years ago an official U-turn in party policy: they were no longer opposed to rejoining NATO in principle in the event of full independence. Several MSPs resigned in protest. Salmond later clarified that his Scotland *might* join NATO, but first they want a promise that they won't have to host any more nuclear weapons, and another promise that they'll only ask them to join in on UN-sanctioned missions, and also a pony. The prospect of Scotland being totally isolated (with the EU being surprisingly unsympathetic) appears to have got to Salmond somewhat, as he's spent a lot of time trying to reconcile the SNP's traditional anti-nuclear stance with the prospect of joining NATO after all. They could always join the Warsaw Pact. Well, it's called the CSTO now, but it's the same countries.

The only other problem is the usual "are we sure an independent Scotland could afford its own army". The SNP reckon they'll make a functioning three-pronged military within eight years or so at a cost of two and a half billion. The Defence Select Committee thought that was far too low, but Scots know how to save money when they need to. One potential drawback is that obviously the UK aren't going to build their ships on the Clyde anymore, bugging off down to Portsmouth instead. The SNP claims not to care. They'll build their own. So nyerr.

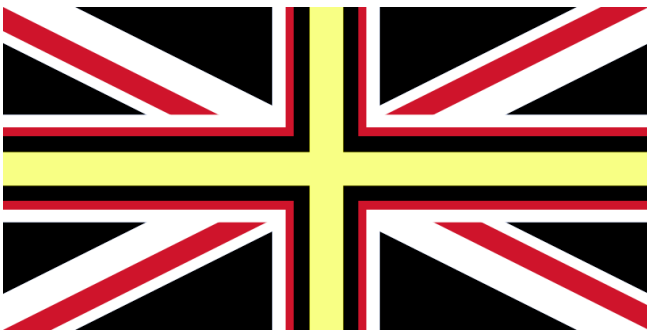
*We'll think of  
something else for  
that "S" to stand  
for, don't you  
worry about that*



*The Royal Bank of ~~Scotland~~*

**Sorry, did you forget we were evil?**

# WARNING FLAGS



Most people's ideas for a new UK flag have Wales, currently unrepresented, becoming involved in some way. This one here (we made it, sorry) turns the blue into black and superimposes the cross of David, on account of the actual Welsh flag being completely incompatible with the Union Jack. The black also represents Cornwall, who totally count you guys seriously.

This (from the Flag Institute) is probably the best mix of the Union Jack and the extant Welsh flag we've seen. It looks like it's sinking. Or been sick. Or wearing particularly unfashionable short trousers. Incompatible designs, you see? One's iconographic and the other's geometric. Hence most people giving up and using the Flag of David, like we did.



The Flag Institute's second design embraces the David cross wholeheartedly. In fact, kind of creepily. Dyeing the blue black is one thing, but dyeing all the whites yellow might be taking it a bit far, especially as the final impression is of some pensioner's copy of the current flag that's been left in an attic for at least a decade and is in desperate need of some dry-cleaning.



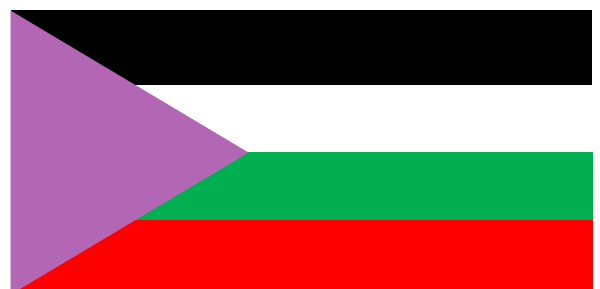
Yes, it's that light-hearted referendum talking point! Because we worry you might be getting bored by all this talk of economic niceties and missile defences and Machiavellian schemes by snakelike media despots and modern day robber barons to manipulate the world in which you have to live even further under their control than it was before, which was plenty. Let's look at the flag of the UK and how it might be affected by one of its component parts breaking off. In actual fact, should the Scots secede (which is still pretty unlikely, to be honest) the likelihood is the flag will stay the same because aw, fuck it. Besides, it would cost a fucking fortune for no good reason. And they're keeping the Queen either way anyway, so there's really no need. But it's bound to come up for debate at least, so some people have already come up with alternatives. Here's a few. Some are legitimate ideas (from other people). Some are a load of old bollocks. See if you can guess which are which.

This one was designed by a chap named John Yates from Milton Keynes and is, from a technical and artistic perspective, by far the best we've seen, if a little hard to look at. It's kind of like Picasso and Mondrian having a fight to the death, with the deliberate asymmetry and the jagged lines. Blue is still involved, however, so maybe a little pointless. And it's probably too arty and unwieldy for its own good. Because we're philistines.



Ian Lucas MP (Lab-Wrexham) suggested simply sticking the dragon on top of the current flag. Does nothing to acknowledge the status of Scotland, but includes Wales, and that's the main thing.

Finally, another one we designed ourselves. A simple tetraband representing the four remaining parts of the United Kingdom, with a spearhead in purple representing the crown. Main drawbacks include horribleness and the fact that it makes the UK look like an impoverished sub-Saharan republic, when in reality we're *obviously so much better than that*.



# SO NOW

## PROS

Scotland declaring independence would make life vaguely interesting.

They won't keep Trident, and while the MoD will do anything short of dropping the fuckers on Glasgow in order to keep the fucking things, it'll bring their existence and the possibility of scrapping them and using the money for, say, hospitals, back into public discourse. And on a personal level, we live near the potential new base, which means we'd die early and quickly in any nuclear exchange.

An independent Scotland would be the perfect place to emigrate when the Tories inevitably ruin everything in the UK. Otherwise we'd have to go to Canada or Australia, which would cost a fortune.

David Cameron would go down in history as the PM who lost Scotland.

The Scots do have a right to self-determination, we suppose.

Maybe English supermarkets won't stock haggises anymore.

## CONCLUSION

# THEN

So after all that, what exactly do we think? We have no fucking idea. None. Let's try and tabulate it, maybe that'll help.

## CONS

Alex Salmond and the SNP don't seem to be after independence for any region beyond blind nationalism, and that's not enough to run a nation on. They don't seem to have much of a plan for the peace; achieving independence is really their main aim. Should they win, they'll suddenly find themselves actually running an independent nation, and might very well have a massive collective breakdown. Which would also make life vaguely interesting.

Rupert Murdoch wants it. He wants it badly. He has a huge yellowing liver-spotted erection over the prospect. And anything that makes that man turgid is a bad thing that mustn't be allowed to happen.

The prospect of Alex Salmond as major historical figure.

Without the drag factor of Scotland, who rarely vote for them, the Tories will find it much easier to win elections. We could be stuck with David Cameron for another fucking five years.

Karen Gillan, Kelly MacDonald, Dawn Steele, Julie Graham, Neve MacIntosh, Ruth Millar, Daniela Nardini, Sharleen Spiteri and Isobel Campbell would all be foreigners and you'd need passports to look at them or something.

Nothing we've seen honestly convinces us that Scotland could really make it on its own, oil or no oil. We can't help thinking that if they do secede, then in six month's time or so they'll reach a point where all the money's run out but only half the infrastructure is complete. We hope that we're just being patronising, but we haven't seen anything to suggest otherwise.

Kind of "heart says yes, head says no" really. We'd still like to see a "Yes" victory, but frankly it looks like it might turn out to be an extremely bad idea. But then again, we don't know what the fuck we're talking about. However, there's that Murdoch connection. Being on the same side as Murdoch is troubling; anything that makes him more powerful than he is already is indisputably a bad thing. That's the main thing that would swing it for us. But then we live about as far from Scotland as you can get while remaining in the UK, so whatever. Go vote already!



**OBLIGATORY PHOTO OF THE FLAG FOR THE BACK OF THE MAGAZINE**

