The road to the Scottish Parliament

Click on the milestones for detailed information

SECTION ONE: 1296 – 1357
THE WARS OF SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

**1296**
King Edward I of England invades Scotland.

**AUGUST 1296**
Edward I removes the Stone of Scone, the coronation seat of Scots Kings, and takes it to London.

**JUNE 1314**
The Battle of Bannockburn. Robert the Bruce’s decisive defeat of the English at Bannockburn strengthens his leadership and ensures Scottish Independence.

**MARCH 1306**
Robert the Bruce kills John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, and is crowned King of Scotland.

**AUGUST 1305**
William Wallace is captured, taken to London and is executed.

**SEPTEMBER 1297**
William Wallace defects the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, and continues his campaigns for the next eight years.

**1320**
The Declaration of Arbroath is sent by Scottish Nobles to Pope John XXII.

“For so long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will yield in no least way to English domination.”

**1328**
The Treaty of Edinburgh brings the First Scottish War of Independence to a close.

**OCTOBER 1357**
The Treaty of Berwick ends the Second Scottish War of Independence.
The road to the Scottish Parliament
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SECTION TWO: 1560 – 1746
REFORMATION, STEWARTS AND JACOBITES

1560
The Scottish Parliament passes Acts which lead to the Scottish Reformation.

MARCH
1603
The Union of the Crowns. James VI of Scotland also becomes James I of England, following the death of the last Tudor monarch Queen Elizabeth I.

MAY
1707
The Treaty of Union, often known as the Union of the Parliaments. The Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland are joined into a single United Kingdom named Great Britain. The Scottish Parliament is dissolved.

APRIL
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The Battle of Culloden brings a period of Jacobite rebellions to a close.

Another example of the primary source materials written for and against the Union of the Crowns and Union of the Parliaments held in the collections of the National Library of Scotland.

Treatise of the blessed union between the Kingdoms of Scotland and England (1604)
This manuscript, reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland, was written by Scottish lawyer John Russell. He was an enthusiast of the Union of the Crowns but opposed to any attempt to change the fundamental laws of the Kingdom of Scotland.


The road to the Scottish Parliament
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"I … stand out as a Scottish Republican candidate feeling sure that if Scotland had to elect a Parliament to sit in Glasgow it would vote for a working class Parliament."
John MacLean

The Scotland Home Rule Association’s Scotland’s Day Flier (1923). Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Teto Tellini from the collections of the National Library of Scotland.

The road to the Scottish Parliament
Click on the milestones for detailed information

SECTION THREE: 1800-1930
RADICALISM AND NATIONALISM

1820
The Scottish Insurrection links political radicalism and nationalist feelings. “Scotland Free or a Desert.”

1832
The First Reform Act increases the number of people eligible to vote.

1843
The “Great Disruption” 450 Ministers break away from the Church of Scotland over the issue of the Church’s relationship with the State. They form the Free Church of Scotland.

1853
The National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights is founded to campaign for “the preservation of the National laws and institutions of Scotland”.

1886
The Scottish Home Rule Association is founded as a response to increasing nationalist aspirations.

1888
The Scots Labour Party is founded. “I am strongly in favour of Home Rule for Scotland.” Keir Hardie

1897
The Scottish Trades Union Congress is formed, and rapidly becomes a supporter of the Scottish labour movement, and home rule campaigns.

1914
The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) is founded. By 1914 there are 63 branches in Scotland stretching from Kirkcudbright to Wick.

1919
The Battle of George Square

1928
The National Party of Scotland is founded as an amalgamation of various Home Rule groups.

1923
Scotland’s Day Flier

1915
Children demonstrating during the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strike © Herald and Times Group
The road to the Scottish Parliament
Click on the milestones for detailed information

SECTION FOUR: 1934-1997
DEVOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE
POLITICS

1934
The Scottish National Party (SNP) is launched to campaign for “Self Government for Scotland”.

1935
William Gallacher is elected as a Communist Party MP.

1950
The return of the stone of Scone to Scotland meets with widespread approval in Scotland, and helps popularise the Home Rule cause.

1967
The SNP win a by-election in Hamilton. The MP elected, Winnie Ewing declares: “Stop the world, Scotland wants to get on”.

1969
The Royal Commission on the Constitution is set up to “examine the present functions of the central legislature and government in relation to the several countries and regions of the United Kingdom”. In October 1973 the Kilbrandon Report recommends a directly elected Scottish Assembly is established.

1979
The Conservative Party wins the General Election and Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister.

1980
The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly involves political parties working together in reaction to the 1979 Referendum, and the Conservative Government.

1989
The Scottish Constitutional Convention signs The Claim of Right for Scotland, acknowledging “the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs”.

1996
The Stone of Scone is returned to Scotland – again.

1997
Following the election of a Labour government, a Referendum is held, and returns a “yes” vote for the establishing of a Scottish Parliament. Donald Dewar states: “There shall be a Scottish Parliament. I like that”.

1998
The Scotland Act establishes the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive, but upholds Westminster’s Parliamentary sovereignty; Scotland assumes a devolved status, but not independence.

1999
A Scottish Parliamentary General Election is held to elect 129 MSPs to form the first Scottish Parliament to meet for almost 300 years.
The road to the Scottish Parliament
Click on the milestones for detailed information

SECTION FIVE: 1999.... THE DEVOLVED YEARS

12TH MAY 1999
The devolved Scottish Parliament meets on the Mound in Edinburgh.

“The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March in the year 1707, is hereby reconvener.”
Winnie Ewing, Acting Presiding Officer

Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats form a Coalition Government known as the Scottish Executive, and Donald Dewar becomes The First Minister of Scotland.

1ST MAY 2003
The second elections to the Scottish Parliament are held. Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats continue to form the Scottish Executive, and Jack McConnell becomes The First Minister of Scotland.

1ST JULY 1999
The Scottish Parliament is officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II and receives powers to make laws on matters such as Education, Health, Justice and the Environment.

The Westminster Parliament retains legislative power on matters such as Defence, Foreign Policy and the Economy.

5TH MAY 2011
The fourth elections to the Scottish Parliament are held. An SNP majority Government is elected to the Scottish Parliament, and Alex Salmond continues as The First Minister of Scotland.

“This party, the Scottish party, the national party, carries your hope. We shall carry it carefully and make the nation proud.”
Alex Salmond

The First Minister promises to hold a referendum on the question of Scottish Independence before 2015.

3RD MAY 2007
The third elections to the Scottish Parliament are held. An SNP minority administration is elected known as the Scottish Government, and Alex Salmond becomes The First Minister of Scotland.
The road to the Scottish Parliament
Click on the milestones for detailed information

SECTION SIX: 2012... The Devolved Years

25 JANUARY 2012
First Minister Alex Salmond outlines detailed proposals for a referendum in 2014 on whether Scotland should be an independent country.

18 SEPTEMBER 2014
Voting begins on the Scottish Independence referendum.

14 NOVEMBER 2013
The Referendum Bill is passed allowing the people of Scotland to choose whether Scotland should be an independent country.

21 MARCH 2013
First Minister Alex Salmond announces the date of Scotland’s referendum in Parliament.

19 SEPTEMBER 2014
Results show that 55.3% of the population voted ‘No’ and 44.7% voted ‘yes’ meaning Scotland remain in the United Kingdom.

15 DECEMBER 2014
Prime Minister David Cameron agrees to give the Scottish Parliament the power to lower the voting age to 16 in time for the 2016 election.
## Historical timeline – detailed version

### Section One: 1296-1357 - The Wars of Scottish Independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1296</td>
<td>King Edward I of England invades Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>In 1296, King Edward I of England invaded Scotland. He captured Berwick-upon-Tweed and killed thousands of the inhabitants. He defeated the Scottish army at Dunbar and occupied eastern Scotland as far as Elgin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1296</td>
<td>Edward I removes the Stone of Scone, the coronation seat of Scots Kings, and takes it to London.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edward I’s troops raided Scone Abbey in 1296 and removed the Stone (Stane) of Scone, the coronation seat of Scots kings and a treasured symbol of the sovereignty of Scotland. The Stone was taken to Westminster Abbey and positioned under a specially commissioned chair, which became the Coronation Chair. Centuries later (in 1950), the Stone was removed back to Scotland, returned to London the following year, and then (in 1996), taken to Edinburgh Castle where it remains at the present time. There has been great controversy and debate about the authenticity of the Stone, or stones, at all stages of its travels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1297</td>
<td>William Wallace defeats the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge and continues his campaigns for the next eight years.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Together with Andrew Moray, William Wallace led an uprising against Edward I. Wallace launched his campaign by defeating the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in September 1297. Against overpowering opposition, he continued his campaigning for the next eight years despite defeats such as the Battle of Falkirk in July 1298 and the English capture of Stirling Castle in 1304.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1305</td>
<td>William Wallace is captured, taken to London and executed.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>‘I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject.’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In August 1305, William Wallace was captured, taken to London, and executed by hanging, drawing and quartering – the sentence for treason. He said, ‘I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject’. To the present day, Wallace continues to be an archetypal Scottish hero, as evidenced by Mel Gibson’s 1995 film Braveheart. Since his death Wallace has been an inspiration to Scottish nationalists. The front cover of Scotland’s Claim of Right to Self-Determination, presented to the UN by the Scotland-UN Committee in 1980, carries a quote from the 14th century chronicler John of Fordun’s Chronica Gentis Scotorum:</td>
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<td>‘From that time there flocked to him [Wallace] / All who were in bitterness of spirit / And weighed down beneath the burden of bondage / Under the unbearable domination of English despotism.’</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>March 1306</td>
<td>Robert the Bruce kills John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, and is crowned King of Scotland. During the early years of the Wars of Independence, Robert the Bruce swung between supporting Wallace and submitting to Edward. He also spent time in England where he held considerable estates. However, in 1306 Bruce accused John Comyn of being a traitor and a spy for the English, and murdered him. Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland at Scone on 25th March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1314</td>
<td>The Battle of Bannockburn: Robert the Bruce's decisive defeat of the English at Bannockburn strengthens his leadership. The Battle of Bannockburn was a major event in the Wars of Independence. Following a gradual fight back, Bruce's crushing defeat of Edward II at Bannockburn strengthened both his position and support for the struggle against England, which, however, dragged on until 1328.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1320</td>
<td>The Declaration of Arbroath is sent by Scottish Nobles to Pope John XXII. 'For so long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will yield in no least way to English domination.' The Declaration of Arbroath was sent by the Scottish nobles (31 barons and eight earls) to Pope John XXII, requesting the Pope not to support Edward I's claim of sovereignty over Scotland, and to enlist his help to the cause of Scottish independence. The Declaration also condemned the persecutions and injustices of Edward's reign, in stirring and passionate language: 'So long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will yield in no least way to English domination. For we fight, not for glory, nor for riches nor for honour, but only and alone for freedom, which no good man surrenders but with his life.' However, the Declaration had little real effect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1328</td>
<td>The Treaty of Edinburgh brings the First Scottish War of Independence to a close. Signed by Robert the Bruce in Edinburgh in March and ratified by the English Parliament in Northampton in May 1328, the Treaty of Edinburgh was a major document in the history of Scottish independence. It ended the First War of Scottish Independence. The terms of the treaty stipulated that, in exchange for £20,000, the English Crown acknowledged the Kingdom of Scotland as a fully independent nation; Robert the Bruce, and his heirs and successors, as the rightful rulers; and the border between Scotland and England as that established during the reign of Alexander III. The Treaty declared that Scotland is 'separate in all things from the kingdom of England and assured forever of its territorial integrity.' However, the Treaty lasted only five years. It was overturned in 1333 by Edward III's invasion of Scotland, in support of Edward Balliol's attacks the previous year, an event which marked the start of the Second War of Scottish Independence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### October 1357

**The Treaty of Berwick ends the Second Scottish War of Independence.**

The Treaty of Berwick ended the Second War of Scottish Independence, as Edward III of England abandoned his attempt to install Edward Balliol on the Scottish throne in place of King David II, son of Robert the Bruce. David was released from captivity and the Scots agreed to pay a huge ransom of 100,000 merks over ten years. Heavy taxation was imposed to provide funds for the ransom instalments but David alienated many of his subjects by diverting much of the money for his own purposes.

### Section Two: 1560–1746 - Reformation, Stuarts and Jacobites

#### 1560

**The Scottish Parliament passes Acts which lead to the Scottish Reformation.**

In 1560, the Scottish Parliament passed two Acts: The *Confession of Faith Ratification Act* and the *Papal Jurisdiction Act*. The latter act abolished the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland and precipitated the Protestant Scottish Reformation. The first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh in the same year.

#### March 1603

**The Union of the Crowns: James the VI of Scotland also becomes James I of England, following the death of the last Tudor monarch, Queen Elizabeth I.**

The 1603 Union of the Crowns, when James VI of Scotland also became James I of England, united Scotland and England under one monarch. James returned to Scotland only once, in 1617.

The removal of the court to England, and James’ authorisation of a translation of the Bible, to be read by all his subjects in English, led to the Scots language losing its status. English became the new language of power and poetry for the ruling and professional classes in Scotland.

James’ apparent neglect of Scotland caused resentment amongst the Scottish nobility, leading to problems throughout the 17th century as the nobility challenged the rule of the King from London. Although sharing a monarch, England and Scotland continued to be independent states until the Act of Union in 1707.
| May 1707 | **The Treaty of Union, also known as the Union of the Parliaments: The Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland are joined into a single United Kingdom named Great Britain. The Scottish Parliament is dissolved.**

The Treaty of Union declared, ‘That the two kingdoms of Scotland and England shall upon the first day of May which shall be in the year one thousand seven hundred and seven and for ever after be United into one Kingdom by the name of Great Britain.’ The Scottish Parliament dissolved on 25th April, with The Act of Union coming into force on the 1st May 1707.

The Treaty of Union was deeply unpopular with the majority of Scots and perceived as a betrayal of the interests of Scotland for the self-advancement of a small group of the nobility.

Historian, Professor Tom Devine sums up the proceedings thus: ‘The successful negotiations were carried out by a tiny patrician elite resulting in a marriage of convenience passed through the Scottish Parliament in the teeth of both internal opposition and considerable external popular hostility.’

(Devine, TM: In bed with an elephant: almost three hundred years of the AngloScottish Union. Scottish Affairs, no. 57, Autumn 2006.)

Hopes for an independent Scotland continued though. Writing at the time of the Union, the politician and writer Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun stated: ‘This is not the end … Scotland’s Parliament will rise again.’ |

| April 1746 | **The Battle of Culloden brings a period of Jacobite rebellions to a close.**

Following a series of Jacobite rebellions and uprisings (1689, 1715 and 1745), the crushing defeat of Charles Edward Stuart by William Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden brought to a close Jacobite attempts to overthrow the House of Hanover and return the House of Stuart to the throne. A number of Lowland clans supported Cumberland's forces, whilst the Highland clans predominantly aligned with Charles Stuart.

After the Battle of Culloden, England imposed a period of harsh suppression in Scotland, leading to a resentment of English domination, and growing unrest and nationalism amongst the people. At the same time, the Scottish Enlightenment and international developments, such as the French Revolution and the American War of Independence, stimulated pressure for political reform. |

| **Section Three: 1800-1930 – Radicalism and nationalism** |

| 1820 | **The Scottish Insurrection links political radicalism and nationalist feelings. ‘Scotland Free or a Desert’.**

From 1800 onwards, growing discontent against increasing poverty and worsening social conditions spread across Scotland and led to a linking of left wing radical political initiatives with nationalist causes – a theme common throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Galvanised by the August 1819 Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, Scottish radicals organised a demonstration of some 30,000 people in Paisley. Scots Wha Hae was sung, and banners bearing the text ‘Scotland Free or a Desert’ were paraded. The demonstration also revived the 1790s plan of the United Scotsmen to ‘establish a completely independent Scottish Republic’ and dissolve the 1707 Act of Union.

In March 1820, again in Paisley, a further major demonstration (mainly of weavers) followed, at which the entire Committee of Scottish Radicals was arrested. Their long imprisonment without trial, in terrible conditions, caused continuing unrest. Today, the 1820 Society continues to commemorate the events of this period. |

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| 1832 | **The First Reform Act increases the number of people eligible to vote.**
   
   The Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1832 (also known as the first Reform Act) significantly increased the number of Scottish MPs from 45 to 53, and the parliamentary electorate from 4,500 to 64,400. The number of adult males who could vote was one in eight compared to one in five in England.
   
   The second Reform Act extended the franchise in Scotland to all male house owners and occupiers over the age of 21, who had resided at the same place for at least one year, with property ownership no longer being required. However, women still could not vote. These provisions increased the electorate to about 230,000. Scotland’s representation at Westminster was increased from 53 to 60 MPs.
   
   The third Reform Act of 1885 further extended the franchise, and increased the number of Scottish MPs by a further 12. There was now a growing movement for women’s suffrage, formalised by the creation of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies in 1897, growing to 63 branches in Scotland by 1914. |
| May 1843 | **The ‘Great Disruption’ - 450 ministers break away from the Church of Scotland over the issue of the Church's relationship with the State. They form the Free Church of Scotland.**
   
   The Disruption of 1843 was a split within the established Church of Scotland in which hundreds of ministers of the Church broke away over the issue of the Church’s relationship with the State and formed the Free Church of Scotland.
   
   The split came at the end of a bitter 10 year conflict within the established Church and had huge effects, not only within the Church, but also upon Scottish civic life.
   
   The catalyst for the conflict was over who should have the final authority on the appointment of parish ministers: church or state. The Veto Act of 1834 gave congregations an absolute right to veto any Minister proposed by a lay patron (mainly landowners). This was an explicit challenge to secular authority and was rejected by Scotland’s law courts and the House of Lords.
   
   On the 18th May 1843, the first day of the annual General Assembly, the retiring Moderator read out a statement protesting that the British State had infringed the spiritual independence of the national church in Scotland. Later that day, 450 ministers resigned from the existing established church to form the ‘Free Protesting Church of Scotland’. |
| 1853 | **The National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights is founded to campaign for ‘the preservation of the National laws and institutions of Scotland’.**
   
   Founded by the historian and novelist James Grant, and led by Lord Provost Duncan McLaren of Edinburgh, Professor William Aytoun, and a radical journalist Patrick Dove, the Association’s declaration stated:
   
   ‘That the Treaty of Union… asserts the individuality and provides for the preservation of the National laws and institutions of Scotland. That any attempt to subvert or place those institutions under English control … is an infraction of the true spirit of this Treaty … and should be strenuously resisted’. |
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<td>1886</td>
<td>The Scottish Home Rule Association is founded as a response to increasing nationalist aspirations. An increase in Scottish nationalist aspirations, Lowland socialism and Highland radicalism throughout the 1870s and 1880s, together with the re-establishing of the post of Secretary for Scotland and the setting up of the Scottish Office in 1885, stimulated the formation of the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1886. The Association, with close ties to the Liberals and to William Gladstone, campaigned for the establishment of a devolved Scottish Assembly.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| May 1888 | The Scots Labour Party is founded.  
*I am strongly in favour of Home Rule for Scotland.*  
Keir Hardie  
Keir Hardie and RB Cunninghame Grahame founded the Scots Labour Party, with Scottish Home Rule as a fundamental aim. Earlier in 1888, during an election address, Hardie proclaimed:  
*I am strongly in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, being convinced that until we have a Parliament of our own, we cannot obtain the many and great reforms on which I believe Back to timeline the people of Scotland have set their hearts.* |
| 1897 | The Scottish Trades Union Congress is formed and rapidly becomes a supporter of the Scottish labour movement and home rule campaigns. By the end of the 19th Century, trade unionism was expanding in Scotland. The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) was founded in 1897, as an independent and autonomous trade union centre for Scotland, largely as a result of a political dispute with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) of Great Britain.  
The Annual Congress is the governing body of the STUC. From the earliest days, the Congress concerned itself with a wide range of economic and social questions, lobbying MPs, and (from 1999) the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Executive and Scottish Government, on major issues. Hours and conditions of work and the battles around these issues were always a key concern of the Congress, but it has also concerned itself with wider issues such as international affairs, housing, education, transport, peace, racism, and social and economic issues, as well as promoting and supporting joint trades union councils (nowadays known as trade union councils).  
The STUC Archive at Glasgow Caledonian University (www.gcu.ac.uk/archives/stuc) holds all the surviving documentation relating to the STUC and its business from 1897 onwards. |
In 1897, The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) is founded. By 1914 there are 63 branches in Scotland stretching from Kirkcudbright to Wick.

The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was founded in 1897 when 17 different societies from across the country came together to represent every active suffrage society in Great Britain.

During the 19th century the Second Reform Act (1867) and the Third Reform Act (1884) extended the right to vote to many working class men but women, who were also rate payers and subject to the same laws, were not allowed to vote. From the mid-19th century onwards, groups of women joined together to campaign for the vote. They were known as suffragists. In 1867, women’s suffrage societies were formed in five major cities in Great Britain, including Edinburgh.

Suffragist groups existed all over the country and under many different names but their aim was the same: to achieve the right to vote for women through constitutional, peaceful means. The suffragists used lobbying techniques to persuade Members of Parliament sympathetic to their cause to raise the issue of women’s suffrage in debate on the floor of the House of Commons. The suffragists were also involved in marches, rallies, demonstrations and pageants to build public support for their cause but they stopped short of civil disobedience.

By 1913, nearly 500 regional suffrage societies had joined the NUWSS. By 1914, there were 63 societies in Scotland from Kirkcudbright to Wick. One of the most prominent Scottish members was Dr Elsie Inglis. Elsie Inglis was Secretary of the Scottish Federation of Women’s Suffrage Societies, which was formed in 1910.
### January 1919

**The Battle of George Square.**

*I … stand out as a Scottish Republican candidate feeling sure that if Scotland had to elect a Parliament to sit in Glasgow it would vote for a working class Parliament.*

During the period 1910 to 1920, growing social unrest and discontent led to increasing radicalism as evidenced by a series of rent strikes, demonstrations and rallies, especially in the west of Scotland. The situation was exacerbated by World War I.

A schoolteacher, John MacLean, became one of the most prominent leaders for the left. MacLean's blend of nationalism and internationalism proved very popular. His nationalism was part of his communist and republican beliefs.

*I … stand out as a Scottish Republican candidate feeling sure that if Scotland had to elect a Parliament to sit in Glasgow it would vote for a working class Parliament… Scottish separation is part of the process of England’s Imperial disintegration. … My policy of a Workers’ Republic in Scotland debars me from going to John Bull’s London Parliament.*

John MacLean

Extract from speech in George Square, Glasgow

The London government became increasingly alarmed by the militancy of actions on Clydeside, typified by MacLean's famous statement 'We can turn Glasgow into a Petrograd, a revolutionary storm centre second to none'. In an event unique in British history, Winston Churchill dispatched English troops and tanks against a large demonstration in George Square on 31st January 1919.

The event became known as The Battle of George Square. Scottish troops already present in Glasgow were locked in Maryhill Barracks for fear that they might join the demonstrators and precipitate a major revolution. Thousands of English troops remained in Scotland for many months.

These events served to strengthen nationalist feelings and nationalism, as part of the ethos of the radical left. The events of Red Clydeside, and the associated strengthening nationalist trends, also affected more mainstream party politics. For example, the Scottish Labour Party, at its 1918 conference, adopted a resolution stating ‘Some early devolution from Westminster of both legislation and administration is imperatively called for’.

### 1928

**The National Party of Scotland is founded as an amalgamation of Home Rule groups.**

The National Party of Scotland (a left wing group advocating home rule) formed in 1928, following a call to action by John MacCormick of the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association (GUSNA) and RB Cunninghame Graham, who had been a Liberal Party member and then Scottish Labour Party politician. The National Party of Scotland resulted from the amalgamation of GUSNA with the Scots National Movement, the Scottish Home Rule Movement, and the Scots National League.

Established in 1920, the Scots National League advocated the removal of elected Scottish nationalist MPs from the Westminster Parliament to set up an independent Scottish Parliament. It founded the Scots Independent newspaper in 1926.

Many leading Scottish literary figures of the period were involved in the National Party of Scotland, including Neil Gunn, Hugh MacDiarmid (later expelled for his Communist beliefs) and Eric Linklater.

Today, *The Scots Independent* continues to be published as a monthly Scottish political newspaper that is in favour of Scottish independence. The paper is still, in the main, supportive of the SNP and has a circulation of about 6,000.

[Back to timeline]
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<thead>
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| April 1934 | The Scottish National Party is launched to campaign for ‘Self-Government for Scotland’.  
The 1934, the Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed, following the merger of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party.  
The SNP's first annual conference set out its aim of achieving ‘self-government for Scotland on a basis which will enable Scotland, as a partner in the British Empire with the same status as England, to develop its national life to the fullest advantage.’  
The SNP’s aim was reinforced in a later statement in the Scots Independent, 1947: ‘The People of Scotland, as members of one of the oldest nations in Europe, are the inheritors, bearers and transmitters of an historic tradition of liberty. They have in common with the peoples of all other nations an inherent right to determine their own destiny in accordance with the principles of justice accepted by the social conscience of mankind. The aim of the Scottish National Party is therefore Self Government for Scotland.’ |
| November 1935 | William Gallacher is elected as a Communist Party MP.  
Elected as a Communist MP, Willie Gallacher served the constituency of West Dunfermline as MP until 1950. He had been imprisoned for sedition in 1916 and for incitement to riot in 1919. Gallacher, as a Communist MP, typified for Westminster governments the blending of working class socialist radicalism with home rule tendencies.  
From the ending of the Red Clydeside period, in the early 1920s, through to the outbreak of the Second World War, Scotland became involved in the events of the General Strike in 1926 and the Great Depression during the 1930s, and witnessed the growth of communism, the rise of fascism, and the Spanish Civil War. Significantly, Scotland contributed more volunteers to the Republicans’ cause in Spain than any other country. |
| December 1950 | The Return of the Stone of Scone to Scotland meets with widespread approval in Scotland and helps popularise the home rule cause.  
The Stone of Scone, a symbol of Scottish culture and nationalism, taken to Westminster by King Edward I in 1296, was ‘removed’ back to Scotland from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1950. This appealed very much to the Scottish sense of humour and irreverent attitude to the establishment.  
An outraged Dean of Westminster described the removal as ‘A senseless crime, carefully planned and carried out with great cunning. A truly squalid affair’, whilst the London Times headlined it as: ‘Sacrilege at Westminster! A coarse and vulgar crime’. The Daily Worker, taking an anti-imperialist and anti-establishment stance declared: 'The grim humourless English ruling classes cling more and more to its obsolete ceremonies and symbols because they are fearful the whole monstrous system is going to crash about their ears’.  
Many songs have been written about the event. Ian Hamilton’s (who was involved in the removal) book The Stone of Destiny (published by Birlinn in 2008) tells the whole story.  
The Stone was returned to London in 1951, but this event did not conclude its travels (see November 1996). |
| **November 1967** | The SNP win a by-election in Hamilton. The MP elected, Winnie Ewing, famously declares: ‘Stop the world, Scotland wants to get on.’  

The Hamilton by-election, won by Winnie Ewing with a 40% swing to the SNP overturning a huge Labour majority, was a major event in the politics of Scotland, boosting support for the SNP and pushing devolution and independence to the top of Scotland’s political agenda.  

The SNP had already made big advances in the Pollok by-election in March 1967 and gains in local elections, including becoming the largest party in local government in Stirling. |
|---|---|
| **April 1969** | The Royal Commission on the Constitution is mandated to ‘examine the present functions of the central legislature and government in relation to the several countries and regions of the United Kingdom’.  

In October 1973, the Kilbrandon Report recommends a directly elected Scottish Assembly is established.  

The Royal Commission on the Constitution was mandated ‘to examine the present functions of the central legislature and government in relation to the several countries and regions of the United Kingdom’, and to consider whether changes needed to be introduced.  

The Commission started its business under Lord Crowther on 15 April 1969, with Lord Kilbrandon taking over in 1972. The Kilbrandon Report was finally passed, in October 1973, to Prime Minister Edward Heath, leader of the Conservative Government.  

Various models of devolution, federalism and confederalism were considered, as well as the possibility of dividing the United Kingdom into separate sovereign states. The report rejected the options of independence or federalism in favour of a directly elected Scottish Assembly, which would have devolved control over education, environment, health, home affairs, legal matters, and social services. The report also proposed that the number of MPs elected to Westminster from Scottish constituencies should be reduced from 71 to about 51.  

Winnie Ewing, vice-chairman of the SNP, summed up well the feelings of most mainstream devolutionists, when she described it as a ‘step in the right direction’, and said that the proposed Scottish assembly ‘would lead to the self-government the SNP sought’. |
| **March 1979** | Following the 1978 Scotland Act, a Scottish Referendum is held but fails to deliver a ‘yes’ vote for establishing a Scottish Assembly.  

The 1978 Scotland Act provided for a referendum to be held on the establishing of a Scottish Assembly. However, during the passage of the Scotland Act through Parliament, a controversial amendment, introduced by Labour MP George Cunningham, required that the approval at the referendum must be by 40% of Scotland’s total registered electorate, rather than by a simple majority.  

The Referendum was held on the 1st March 1979. Of votes cast, 51.6% were ‘yes’ for the Scottish Assembly, 48.4% against the assembly. However, with a 63.3% turnout, this 51.6% represented only 33.9% of the full electorate, so - under the rules - the referendum failed to deliver a Scottish Assembly. |
May 1979

The Conservative Party wins the General Election and Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister.

The General Election of 1979, the first of three elections won by Margaret Thatcher, marked the start of 18 years of Conservative government. During this period, the cause of Scottish self-determination grew. Following a sustained period of falling support, by 1979 the Conservative Party was widely judged in Scotland to be non-representative of the Scottish people and their political wishes – feelings exacerbated by Thatcher’s three terms as Prime Minister.

The period was marked by industrial and social unrest. Examples include: the Miners' Strike of 1984; the long destruction of Scottish industry (for example, the closure of Caterpillar in Uddingston in 1987, and Ravenscraig Steelworks in 1992); and the long and bitter campaign resulting from the introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland in 1989, a year ahead of England (a divisive act which nationalists claim violates The Act of Union).

The 1980s – ‘The Thatcher Years’ - witnessed a growing apart of political development between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Kenyon Wright in The People Say Yes (Argyll Publishing, 1997) summarises:

‘Thatcherism was seen to be a kind of extreme English nationalism that neither heard nor cared for Scotland. The competitive market ideology together with the obsessive centralisation of power and the persona of Margaret Thatcher herself combined to offend something deep in Scotland’s collective psyche – a profound if inarticulate sense of the values of community, of caring, and of democratic control of limited power.’

Wright goes on to say Thatcher ‘must be seen as one of the midwives of the Scottish Parliament!’

March 1980

The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly involves political parties working together in reaction to the 1979 Referendum and the Conservative government.

The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly was founded in March 1980 by Jack Brand and was later led by Jim Boyack (father of Sarah Boyack MSP). Members of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (mostly from the Labour Party, together with some SNP members) were committed to some form of Home Rule for Scotland. In 1988, the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly committee published the Claim of Right for Scotland, which held that it is the Scottish people's right to choose the form of government that best suits them.

Following previous Claims of Right made in 1689 and 1842, a Claim of Right was drawn up by the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly:

‘We were appointed because, in the opinion of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, Parliamentary government under the present British Constitution had failed Scotland and more than Parliamentary action was needed to redeem the failure. … Our direct concern is with Scotland only, but the failure to provide good government for Scotland is a product not merely of faulty British policy in relation to Scotland, but of fundamental flaws in the British constitution…

‘…We hold ourselves fully justified in registering a general Claim of Right on behalf of Scotland, namely that Scotland has the right to insist on articulating its own demands and grievances, rather than have them articulated for it by a Government utterly unrepresentative of Scots.’

The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly’s Claim of Right for Scotland called for the establishing of a Constitutional Convention. The Scottish Constitutional Convention was established in 1989, superseding the role of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly.
March 1989

The Scottish Constitutional Convention signs The Claim of Right for Scotland, acknowledging ‘the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs’.

The Scottish Constitutional Convention met under the joint chairmanship of David Steel and Harry Ewing. Fifty-eight of Scotland’s 72 MPs, 7 of Scotland’s 8 MEPS, 59 out of 65 Scottish Regional, District and Island Councils, and numerous political parties, churches and Scottish organisations signed the Claim of Right for Scotland.

The Scottish Constitutional Convention’s Claim of Right stated:

“We, gathered as the Scottish Constitutional Convention, do hereby acknowledge the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs, and do hereby declare and pledge that in all our actions and deliberations their interests shall be paramount. We further declare and pledge that our actions and deliberations shall be directed to the following ends:

• To agree a scheme for an Assembly or Parliament for Scotland;
• To mobilise Scottish opinion and ensure the approval of the Scottish people for that scheme; and
• To assert the right of the Scottish people to secure implementation of that scheme.’

The Scottish Constitutional Convention was mandated to devise a scheme for the formation of a devolution settlement for Scotland. The Convention was generally accepted as a major step forward despite the fact the SNP decided not to take part, feeling that independence would not be a constitutional option within the scope of the Convention.

The work of the SCC culminated in the publishing of its final report ‘Scotland’s Parliament, Scotland’s Right’ in November 1995. The report contained proposals for the early implementation of devolution, as was made clear in its Preface:

‘The longing of the people of Scotland for their own Parliament rings clear and true every time opinion is sounded. We believe that the momentum for change is now too great to deny; and that a Scottish Parliament will soon be meeting for the first time in nearly three centuries.’

November 1996

The Stone of Scone is returned to Scotland – again.

On St Andrews Day, 30 November 1996, following lobbying by Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Stone was returned to Scotland and installed in Edinburgh Castle. Over 10,000 people lined the Royal Mile to witness the final stages of the grand procession.

The symbolic significance of the return of the stone to Scotland heartened many of those working for Scottish devolution and home rule. However some campaigners took a less enthusiastic view, judging Forsyth’s intercession as a ploy to gain Scottish support ahead of the forthcoming general election. Others felt that England had continued to act with contempt, given that a stipulation of the return was that it must be returned to Westminster for coronations. Ian Hamilton (see December 1950) has written

‘when the woman next door returns your stolen property on loan you don’t hold a celebration. You look askance at her. That stone belongs not to any royal family but to the people of Scotland’
| September 1997 | Following the election of a Labour government, a Referendum is held and returns a ‘yes’ vote for the establishing of a Scottish Parliament.  

The Scottish Constitutional Convention’s 1995 report formed the basis of the devolution policy presented in the Labour Party manifesto for the May 1997 general election. After the election, the Labour government arranged for a referendum on its proposals set out in a White Paper, Scotland’s Parliament, in July 1997. The referendum, held on 11 September 1997, with a 60% turnout of the electorate, produced clear majorities for the two propositions as follows:  

- That there should be a Scottish Parliament – Agree 74% of votes cast. Disagree 26% of votes cast.  
- That the Scottish Parliament should have tax-varying powers – Agree 63% of votes cast, Disagree 37% of votes cast.  

Donald Dewar greeted the result with his now famous statement: ‘There shall be a Scottish Parliament. I like that’ |
| November 1998 | The Scotland Act establishes the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive, but upholds Westminster’s Parliamentary sovereignty; Scotland assumes a devolved status, but not independence.  

The Scotland Act 1998 is the Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which established the devolved Scottish Parliament. The Act was passed on 17th November 1998 and received royal assent two days later on 19th November. The Act creates the Scottish Parliament and sets out how Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are to be elected.  

The Scotland Act devolves powers to the Scottish Parliament to make laws on a number of matters. The Scotland Act does not specify which matters the Scottish Parliament can legislate on. It specifies those matters that are reserved to the UK Parliament. Those matters not reserved by the Scotland Act are devolved to the Scottish Parliament. |
| May 1999 | A Scottish Parliamentary General Election is held to elect 129 MSPs to form the first Scottish Parliament to meet for almost 300 years.  

On the 6th May 1999, a general election took place in Scotland to elect 129 members to the Scottish Parliament. The parliament was elected using mixed member proportional representation - a combination of first past the post and proportional representation.  

The Labour Party was the largest party, following the election, with 56 seats (nine seats short of an overall majority) and a coalition was formed with the Liberal Democrats who had won 17 seats. The SNP was the second largest party, with 35 seats. The Conservative Party failed to win a single constituency seat but managed to win 18 seats through the Additional Member System. The Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party picked up unexpected additional member seats.  

The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats formed the Scottish Executive, with Labour MSP Donald Dewar becoming First Minister. The second Scottish Parliamentary elections Back to timeline were held on 1st May 2003, the third on the 3rd of May 2007 and the fourth on the 5th of May 2011. |
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<td>‘The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March in the year 1707, is hereby reconvened’. Winnie Ewing, Acting Presiding Officer</td>
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The first meeting of the Scottish Parliament for almost 300 years took place on 12 May 1999 in the Church of Scotland’s Assembly Halls on the Mound in Edinburgh. Acting Presiding Officer Winifred Ewing proclaimed, ‘The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March in the year 1707, is hereby reconvened’. Lord Steel of Aikwood was elected Presiding Officer. The next day, Donald Dewar was elected First Minister.

On 1 July, the Scottish Parliament was officially opened by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth I of Scotland and II of England, and received its full legislative powers.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1 July 1999</td>
<td>The Scottish Parliament is officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II and receives powers to make laws on matters such as Education, Health, Justice and the Environment. The Westminster Parliament retains legislative power on matters such as Defence, Foreign Policy and the Economy. The Scottish Parliament was officially opened by The Queen on 1 July 1999 in its temporary building on the Mound in Edinburgh. The Scottish Parliament took up its full powers on this date. Donald Dewar was Scotland’s first First Minister, 1999 – 2000. Donald Dewar’s speech at the opening of the Scottish Parliament 1 July 1999: This mace is a symbol of the great democratic traditions from which we draw our inspiration and our strength. At its head are inscribed the opening words of our founding statute: 'There shall be a Scottish Parliament.' Through long years, those words were first a hope, then a belief, then a promise. Now they are a reality. This is a moment anchored in our history. Today, we reach back through the long haul to win this Parliament, through the struggles of those who brought democracy to Scotland, to that other Parliament dissolved in controversy nearly three centuries ago. Today, we look forward to the time when this moment will be seen as a turning point: the day when democracy was renewed in Scotland, when we revitalised our place in this our United Kingdom. This is about more than our politics and our laws. This is about who we are, how we carry ourselves. In the quiet moments today, we might hear some echoes from the past: The shout of the welder in the din of the great Clyde shipyards: The speak of the Mearns, with its soul in the land; The discourse of the enlightenment, when Edinburgh and Glasgow were a light held to the intellectual life of Europe; The wild cry of the Great Pipes; And back to the distant cries of the battles of Bruce and Wallace. The past is part of us. But today there is a new voice in the land, the voice of a democratic Parliament. A voice to shape Scotland, a voice for the future. Walter Scott wrote that only a man with soul so dead could have no sense, no feel of his native land. For me, for any Scot, today is a proud moment; a new stage on a journey begun long ago and which has no end. This is a proud day for all of us. A Scottish Parliament. Not an end: a means to greater ends. And those too are part of our mace. Woven into its symbolic thistles are these four words: 'Wisdom. Justice. Compassion. Integrity.'</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 May 2003</td>
<td>The second elections to the Scottish Parliament are held. Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats continue to form the Scottish Executive, and Jack McConnell becomes The First Minister of Scotland. The second election to elect members to the Scottish Parliament was held on 1st May 2003. The Scottish Labour Party returned the largest number of MSPs and continued to form a coalition government with the Scottish Liberal Democrats. Jack McConnell, leader of the Scottish Labour Party, continued in office as First Minister of Scotland. The election results showed rises in support for smaller political parties including the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), and a number of independent MSPs were also elected.</td>
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### 3 May 2007

The third elections to the Scottish Parliament are held. An SNP minority administration is elected, known as the Scottish Government, and Alex Salmond becomes The First Minister of Scotland.

The third election to elect members to the Scottish Parliament was held on Thursday 3 May 2007. The Scottish National Party (SNP) was elected as the largest party with 47 MSPs and formed a minority government, with support from the Scottish Greens on certain issues. Alex Salmond, leader of the SNP, became First Minister of Scotland and the Scottish Executive was renamed the Scottish Government.

### 5 May 2011

An SNP Majority Government is elected to the Scottish Parliament.

> ‘This party, the Scottish party, the national party, carries your hope. We shall carry it carefully and make the nation proud.’
> Alex Salmond, First Minister

The election held on Thursday 5 May 2011 produced the first majority government of the new Scottish Parliament. This was a considerable achievement, as the mixed member proportional representation system of electing MSPs was originally implemented to prevent single party governments.

The SNP took a historic 69 seats and Alex Salmond remained as First Minister. The SNP gained 32 constituencies: 22 constituencies from the Scottish Labour Party (which recorded its worst election defeat in Scotland since 1931), 9 from the Scottish Liberal Democrats and 1 from the Scottish Conservatives. Of the 73 constituencies in Scotland, only 20 were now represented by MSPs of other political parties.

In a post-election address, Alex Salmond, the First Minister, declared that, ‘The SNP have a majority of the seats, but not a monopoly on wisdom’, and that, ‘This party, the Scottish party, the national party, carries your hope. We shall carry it carefully and make the nation proud’.

### SECTION SIX: 2012... The Devolved Years

#### 25 January 2012

First Minister Alex Salmond outlines detailed proposals for a referendum in 2014 on whether Scotland should be an independent country.

The consultation paper - Your Scotland Your Referendum – asked views on:
- what the ballot paper should say
- what spending limits should be set
- how the referendum should be managed and regulated

The consultation closed on May 11, 2012.

#### 21 March 2013

First Minister Alex Salmond announces the date of Scotland’s referendum in Parliament.

The date is contained in the Scottish Independence Referendum Bill, introduced to the Parliament and published today, which also confirms that voters will be asked the question: Should Scotland be an independent country?
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| 14 November 2013   | The Referendum Bill is passed allowing the people of Scotland to choose whether Scotland should be an independent country. The Bill confirmed that:  
|                    | • The people of Scotland will vote in a referendum on September 18th 2014 on the question: “Should Scotland be an independent country?”  
|                    | • The vote will be run to the highest international standards and will be overseen by the independent Electoral Commission.  
|                    | • The vote will be preceded by a 16-week formal campaign period.  
|                    | • The referendum will be conducted under the direction of a Chief Counting Officer responsible for appointing local Counting Officers to run the poll in local areas. |
| 18 September 2014  | Voting begins on the Scottish Independence referendum.                 |
| 19 September 2014  | Results show that 55.3% of the population voted ‘No’ and 44.7% voted ‘yes’ meaning Scotland remain in the United Kingdom.       |
| 15th December 2014 | Prime Minister David Cameron agrees to give the Scottish Parliament the power to lower the voting age to 16 in time for the 2016 election. |
Lyrics and song notes

June 1314: The Battle of Bannockburn – 1. Flower of Scotland

O flower of Scotland
When will we see
Your like again
That fought and died for
Your wee bit hill and glen
And stood against him
Proud Edward’s army
And sent him homeward
Tae think again

The hills are bare now
And autumn leaves lie thick and still
O’er land that is lost now
Which those so dearly held
And stood against him
Proud Edward’s army
And sent him homeward
Tae think again

Those days are passed now
And in the past they must remain
But we can still rise now
And be the nation again
And stood against him
Proud Edward’s army
And sent him homeward
Tae think again

Note

‘Flower of Scotland’ was written by Roy Williamson of the folk group the Corries in 1967. The song refers to the victory of the Scots, led by Robert the Bruce, over England’s King, Edward II, at the Battle of Bannockburn.

The song has been used as a national anthem by the Scotland national rugby team since Billy Steele encouraged his teammates to sing it on the victorious Lions tour of South Africa in 1974. The irony of a Scottish national sports team playing in apartheid South Africa, whilst Scotland (characteristically for a nation so internationally involved in social justice campaigns) was building the strongest anti-apartheid movement in Europe, is of course profound; doubly so given ‘Flower of Scotland’s’ theme of fighting against oppression and domination.

The Scottish Football Association adopted the song as its pre-game anthem in 1997. Flower of Scotland was also used as the victory anthem of Team Scotland at the 2010 Commonwealth Games. For an example of Flower of Scotland being used as a sports anthem, watch this video with for Ronnie Brown (Williamson’s partner in the Corries) performing the song at Hampden Park in 2008.

Flower of Scotland is the most popular choice for Scotland’s national anthem, should God Save the Queen cease to serve that purpose. A 2008 survey of 10,000 people delivered a vote of 41% for Flower of Scotland, followed by 29% for ‘Scotland the Brave’, with other choices making up the balance. Interestingly, Scotland’s First Minister Alex Salmond recently championed another Corries song, Scotland Will Flourish, as his choice of national anthem because it is less backward-looking to past conflicts, and because it promotes reconciliation and unity.
June 1314: The Battle of Bannockburn – 2. Scots Wha Hae

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward’s power
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward’s grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn, and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free!

Note

Scots Wha Hae served for many years as Scotland’s unofficial national anthem before being superseded by Scotland the Brave, and then Flower of Scotland. The lyrics were written by Robert Burns, in 1793, in the form of a speech given by Robert the Bruce before the Battle of Bannockburn, in 1314. Burns used the old Scottish tune ‘Hey Tuttle Tatie’, which, according to tradition, was played by Bruce’s army at Bannockburn.

Burns told his publisher that he had been inspired by Bruce’s ‘glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient’ - a statement often taken to be a covert reference to the radical movement gathering pace at the end of the 18th century, and particularly to the trial of Thomas Muir of Huntershill. Muir was accused of sedition for allegedly inciting the Scottish people to oppose the Government during the 1792 convention of the Scottish Friends of the People Society.
April 1746: Battle of Culloden - Bonnie Dundee

To the Lords o’ Convention ‘twas Claverhouse spoke
E’er the King’s crown go down there are crowns to be broke
So each cavalier who loves honour and me
Let him follow the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can
Come saddle my horses and call out my men
Unhook the West Port and let us gae free
For it’s up with the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

Dundee he is mounted and rides up the street
The bells they ring backward, the drums they are beat
But the provost douce man says just let it be
For the toon is well rid o’ that devil Dundee

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can
Come saddle my horses and call out my men
Unhook the West Port and let us gae free
For it’s up with the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth
Be there lords in the south, there are chiefs in the north
There are brave downie wassles three thousand times three
Cry hey for the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can
Come saddle my horses and call out my men
Unhook the West Port and let us gae free
For it’s up with the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

And awa tae the hills, tae the lee and the rocks
Ere I own a usurper I’ll couch with the fox
So tremble false whigs in the mid’st o’ yer glee
For ye’ve no seen the last o’ my bonnets and me

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can
Come saddle my horses and call out my men
Unhook the West Port and let us gae free
For it’s up with the bonnets o’ Bonnie Dundee

Notes

The Jacobite Risings of 1689, 1715, and 1745 led to the production of a huge array of songs, ranging from the sentimental (such as ‘Will Ye No’ Come back Again’ and the ‘Skye Boat Song’) to satirical and political songs (such as ‘Johnny Cope’ and Burns’ ‘It Was A For Oor Rightfu’ King’). ‘Bonnie Dundee’ recalls some of the doings of John Graham, the Laird of Claverhouse and First Viscount of Dundee, known to his opponents as Bloody Clavers, and to his followers as Bonnie Dundee. Claverhouse was one of the few Scottish nobles who remained loyal to James VII of Scotland (James II of England) following the coming of William of Orange and what is now called The Glorious Revolution; having tried and failed to influence the Convention of Estates of Scotland on behalf of James, he was killed at the Battle of Killiecrankie during the 1689 Uprising.

The song Bonnie Dundee is an adaptation of a long poem written by Sir Walter Scott in 1825; it takes the tune of Johnny’s Escape from Dundee. It is clear that many of the Jacobite songs written in the late 18th and first half of the 19th century were not actually intended to be pro-Jacobite, but were in fact coded messages to stimulate the growing radical movements calling for freedom and democracy.
May 1999: Scottish Parliament reconvenes - A Man's a Man For A' That

Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by --
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine --
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd 'a lord,`
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
But an honest man's aboon his might --
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

Notes
A Man's A Man For A' That is a poem, adapted as a song, written under the title 'Is There For Honest Poverty' by Robert Burns, in 1795. The song takes the tune of Lady Macintosh's Reel.
Burns was inspired to write the song by reading The Rights of Man, a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine; it captures the mood of growing radicalism at the end of the 18th century, and looks forward to the socialist and democratic movements which developed throughout the 19th century. It is an outstanding song of both nationalism and internationalism, looking forward to a time when all people 'shall brithers be'. A powerful song of social justice, it has been appropriated and adapted by many campaigning groups. A Man's A Man has been translated into many languages, and a Russian translation was, on Lenin's orders, inscribed on a statue of Burns in the Kremlin.

A stirring song, A Man's A Man has become one of the songs often cited as a choice for the alternative Scottish national anthem. It was sung to great effect by Sheila Wellington at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in May 1999, and is often sung at funerals, including that of Donald Dewar, the inaugural First Minister of Scotland.