The Referendum Question
Should Scotland be an independent country?

“...there are known knowns, there are known unknowns... there are also unknown unknowns...”
—Donald Rumsfeld

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RSGS: helping to make the connections between people, places & the planet
Scotland is a country defined by its geography, its ‘separateness’ growing out of its physical isolation from the rest of Britain. Its original boundary was the River Forth to the south, and the river and the surrounding bog lands made it virtually impassable. Indeed this is reflected in many of the early maps of Britain, depicting Scotland as an island, or connected to the rest of Britain only by the causeway bridge at Stirling. It is this geographical distinction which underpinned the wider popular adoption of ‘Scotland’ as an idea, though it was not until the 13th century that it became seen as a single national entity and was recognisably the land area we call Scotland today.

For this edition of The Geographer, we reflected on this history to provide a context to the current debate around the independence referendum, we looked to international voices to understand what impression the independence debate has overseas, and we asked a wide range of academics and public figures to provide useful and impartial information on the issues of most concern to our members. We received dozens of questions from members, through letters, emails and social media, and have used these to guide the commissioning of articles which seek to answer as many questions as possible. (These questions, and longer versions of two of the articles, are on the RSGS website.)

The RSGS remains impartial in this debate, but we felt it would be wholly inappropriate for us to ignore it, so we have attempted instead to do what we always try to do, and provide perspectives and expertise that you will find both enlightening and interesting reading. Indeed, we hope that the issues raised and the arguments led will help to inform your choice in September of this year.

As ever, any opinions expressed remain those of the authors and cannot be taken as those of the RSGS. I would particularly like to thank our new Chairman, Professor Roger Crofts, and Professor Iain McLean from Oxford University, who have helped advise and source authors and articles for this edition.

Mike Robinson, Chief Executive

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Polar Honour for Vice-President

Congratulations to RSGS Vice-President David Hempleman-Adams on being awarded the Polar Medal. The honour was presented by HRH Prince William at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in March.

The Polar Medal may be conferred on those UK citizens who have personally made conspicuous contributions to the knowledge of polar regions, or who have rendered prolonged service of outstanding quality in support of acquisition of such knowledge, and who, in either case, have undergone the hazards and rigours imposed by the polar environment.

Scotland Rocks 2014

The RSGS and the University of St Andrews were delighted to be working in partnership again to run Scotland Rocks 2014, a two-day conference about Higher geology, held in late March. More than 70 people from around Scotland attended, including school pupils, mature students, geography teachers who are interested in offering geology in their schools, and key industry and university representatives. We had an exciting programme of events, including a keynote presentation by RSGS President Professor Iain Stewart, and a live link-up to a Mars Science Laboratory scientist, Professor Sanjeev Gupta, to explore the research findings of the Mars Curiosity Rover Expedition. We hope that the conference will further highlight the importance of retaining an Earth Science qualification in the senior phase within Curriculum for Excellence.

Fair Maid’s House

The Fair Maid’s House will reopen to the public on Tuesday 8th April, and it now has an eye-catching new public presence. Thanks to donations received from the Jimmie Cairncross Charitable Trust and the Glover Incorporation of Perth, we have been able to install colourful ‘window vinyls’ that are designed to attract attention, and to identify the building much more closely with geography and the work of the RSGS.

Fair Maid’s House
Opening Times 2014
12:30pm to 4:00pm
Tuesday to Saturday
8th April to 25th October

We are now making plans to further improve the interpretative displays and facilities of the visitor centre; in particular, we want to transform the ‘garden’ into an exciting outdoor learning and visitor space, celebrating the 19th century Scottish scientist James Croll.

We rely on volunteers to man the Fair Maid’s House. If you are making a special trip to visit us, please contact us first to make sure we will be open. If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch.

A Gift for the Future An RSGS Member

I hadn’t heard of the RSGS until I was introduced to its collections a few months ago, and I am very disappointed to learn how much I have been missing for so many years. I am a keen collector – books and maps on the Scottish mountains and islands, Himalayan expeditions, the history of railways, books on geology and the development of plate tectonics, photo-books of the Earth from space, and, particularly, books on exploration of the Antarctic – I cannot resist them.

But, my book collection is now filling my house, and my daughters will certainly not want to be left with them all. So when I first saw the Fair Maid’s House and the Shackleton Room (which are both just fabulous!) and learned of the care and dedication of the Society’s Collections Team, the route ahead became clear. I will continue to buy books and maps, which I love, but I have changed my Will to leave them to the Society, to add to and enhance its collections.

Two further points. Firstly, I want my books to improve the Society’s collections, and so it must be free to choose which it retains, there being no point in storing duplicates or books unconnected to geography – ‘Keep the Best and Sell the Rest’. Secondly, I know that storage costs money, so I will leave a cash legacy too, to help with the care, conservation and cataloguing. My book collection reflects my lifetime’s interest, and although I hope it will be many years until I die, I am now very happy that it will be appreciated when I go.

New SEPA flood maps

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency’s new flood maps (available at map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm) give more information than ever before about the sources and potential impacts of flooding. The maps will be a key tool in planning for flood risk for the public, local authorities and emergency responders, and it is hoped they will enable better planning decisions, to avoid unnecessary development in flood-risk areas.
Recognising that, whatever the outcome, the referendum on independence will have profound implications for our futures, a new organisation has formed which is promoting respectful, honest and civil dialogue in all the relevant debates.

Those involved believe that how we engage with each other in Scotland, and with those outside Scotland, may be just as important as the outcome, and that it is in the interests of a flourishing Scotland that all discussions, before and after the referendum, continue to be conducted with civility and dignity. See www.collaborativescotland.org for more details.

Ordnance Survey – RSGS Corporate Benefactor

We are delighted to welcome Ordnance Survey (OS) as a new RSGS Corporate Benefactor. The three-year agreement will see Ordnance Survey supporting the RSGS in developing and delivering a range of geographical education activities, including the Society’s imaginative work with schools, engagement with academic audiences, and inspiring programme of public talks.

RSGS Chief Executive Mike Robinson said, “We are delighted to receive this support from Ordnance Survey, which reflects our shared desire to promote geography in education and to the public. Like the RSGS, Ordnance Survey has a long history of working in education, providing resources and materials that are essential tools for geography teachers, pupils and academics across the country.”

Ordnance Survey has already made a generous donation to the Society of a full set of Explorer Maps for Scottish regions; these are available to view in the Explorers’ Room of the Fair Maid’s House.

Photography exhibition

Lukasz Warzecha is a leading adventure photographer and film-maker. He has travelled all over the world to capture stunning images and footage of some of the world’s most extreme athletes.

From deep-water soloing in Vietnam and ice-climbing in Canada, to rock-climbing in South Africa, the Fort William Downhill MTB World Cup, the Ice World Cups, and the recent Winter Olympics in Sochi, Lukasz has a wealth of tales and experience to share. His work has been published all over the world in the outdoor press, and closer to home in national newspapers.

We are delighted that Lukasz has agreed to exhibit his work at the Fair Maid’s House, from 6th May to 15th June, when he will give a talk for the RSGS as part of the Perthshire Adventure Festival weekend.

Do please come along to see Lukasz’s remarkable photographs. If you are interested in attending his talk, please see www.pkc.gov.uk/adventurefestival or phone 01738 472236 for details.

Snow Pillar

This unusual meteorological phenomenon was captured by an RSGS member recently on holiday in Canada. If you have geographical images you would like to share, please send them to fraser.shand@rsgs.org.

Perthshire Adventure Festival

On the weekend of 13th-15th June, the RSGS will once again team up with Perthshire Adventure Festival. Run by Perth & Kinross Council’s Outdoor Education team, the festival offers cultural and environmental sessions, as well as an array of adventure activities that include canoeing, mountain biking, and a zip wire down Perth High Street!

The Explorers’ Room in the Fair Maid’s House will host a number of intimate daytime talks on 14th and 15th. And on the Saturday evening, at Perth’s North Inch Community Campus, the RSGS will host Stephen Venables talking about his adventure In Shackleton’s steps across South Georgia, preceded by two shorter talks. These talks will take place from 7:00pm; tickets are £8 for RSGS members if pre-booked, £10 on the door. See www.pkc.gov.uk/adventurefestival or phone 01738 472236 for booking details.

Chamonix yoga. © Lukasz Warzecha

Collaborative Scotland

Recognising that, whatever the outcome, the referendum on independence will have profound implications for our futures, a new organisation has formed which is promoting respectful, honest and civil dialogue in all the relevant debates.

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Argyll schoolchildren join the drove
A class of 16 Rockfield Primary School pupils experienced the life of the ancient drovers of Argyll, when they drove a small herd of Highland cattle, cooked bannocks over an open fire, sang traditional songs, and shared in storytelling tradition. The experience was delivered completely in Gaelic. Before embarking on their drove, the children learned about driving in Argyll and the old drove routes, made clay Highland cows, and held an auction where their cows were sold.
The project, based on the outcomes of last summer’s Stories in the Land, was a partnership involving RSGS, Sally Harkness from Storyline Scotland, and Argyll & Bute Council’s education service.

Another Inspiring Talks Season
As the 2013-14 talks season comes to a close, the RSGS would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of Local Group Committees who have given their time to provide vital help. We would like to extend a particular thank-you to those long-serving committee members who are standing down: David Langworth, Chair of our Borders Committee, and Katy Haddock, Secretary of Stirling.
A number of our committees are looking for additional support from members; if you would like to volunteer to help at talks, please contact HQ.
We’ve had some fantastic speakers this season, and some superb turn-outs to talks. Talks by our Explorer-in-Residence Craig Mathieson, and President Iain Stewart were especially popular, along with great attendances at talks by Doug Scott and Paul Braithwaite. We hope to continually improve the talks and would be delighted to hear any feedback or suggestions members might have for next season’s programme; contact Fraser on fraser.shand@rsgs.org or 01738 646141.

New Zealand flag vote
New Zealand’s Prime Minister, John Key, has announced a referendum to decide the future of the country’s flag. New Zealanders would vote between the current flag, the Southern Cross, and a design which would likely remove the union flag and be based around New Zealand’s unofficial emblem, the silver fern, and the national colours of black, white and red ochre.

Joint Event with RGS North West England
RSGS Livingstone Medallist Rory Stewart will speak at the first joint talk between the RSGS and the North West England Branch of the Royal Geographical Society. Rory’s new talk, ‘Borderlands: A walk through the vanished kingdom of the Middleland’, will be about the Border country, its past history and its present identity.
The talk will take place in Carlisle Cathedral Fratry on 5th September; ticket details will be available in the next edition of The Geographer.

Members for 60+ years...
The RSGS was sorry to note the deaths, in February, of two of its longest-standing members.
Dr Sandy Crosbie joined the RSGS in October 1956. He was a vociferous member of the RSGS Council, on which he served for three terms during the 1980s, and he was a popular Chairman of the Edinburgh group in the early 1990s.
Gordon Ruffle joined the RSGS in September 1952. A professional accountant, he was the Society’s Accountant for more than 30 years, and continued to take an interest in the Society’s affairs and well-being well after his retirement.
If we vote ‘Yes’ on 18th September 2014, we do not know what we will get, apart from the departure of Scottish MPs from Westminster. To borrow Donald Rumsfeld’s useful phrase: the remaining terms of independence are ‘known unknowns’. The Scottish negotiations must enter discussions with several counterparties, such as the European Union, NATO, and the rest of the United Kingdom (rUK). I discuss seven of the ‘known unknowns’.

The Scottish Government acknowledges that “it will be for the EU member states… to take forward the most appropriate procedure under which an independent Scotland will become a signatory to the EU Treaties”. Scotland wants to enter under Article 48 of The Lisbon Treaty. Many doubt whether that is feasible, but if it is, the parties would be the UK and the European Council. Scotland would not be a party at all. Under the more plausible Article 49, it would be in control of its own application. But it would not automatically inherit the various opt-outs and rebates that the current UK has secured from the EU, such as the contributions rebate and an opt-out from the Schengen common travel area. The outcome of those would emerge from negotiations with a counterparty (the European Council) whose composition is currently unknown.

NATO

The Scottish Government wants both to join NATO and to get rid of the Trident submarine fleet from Faslane and the armaments store from Coulport by 2020. I cannot say how NATO’s Council would respond to these two commitments. But, as the Council acts by unanimity, I can say that its position would be determined by whichever member state was both most hostile to Scotland’s proposals and prepared to threaten a veto.

Rest of the United Kingdom (rUK)

After a ‘Yes’ vote, there would have to be negotiations with representatives of rUK over a huge range of issues, including:
- splitting UK assets and liabilities;
- sharing some existing UK services, including overseas embassies and consulates, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), and the BBC;
- the Common Travel Area currently comprising the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man (this negotiation would also involve the other counterparty governments);
- sterling and the Bank of England;
- Faslane and Coulport.

For some of these, international law offers a default position. Were the parties, after failing to agree, to submit their dispute to arbitration, there are principles of international law that would determine which party got what. Unlike in a divorce, I do not think it is remotely likely that Scotland and rUK would have to go to arbitration on any of these issues. But the common knowledge of what would probably happen if they did go to arbitration will set limits. On other matters – most obviously Faslane and Coulport – principles of international law will not help the negotiators. On those, a purely political bargain must be struck.

Splitting immovable assets – land and buildings – is easy. Those located in Scotland go to Scotland. Those located in rUK go to rUK. Immovable assets located outside the present UK would fall to the rUK as the ‘continuator’ state, although the Scottish Government wishes to negotiate for the shared use of UK diplomatic premises. Movable, tangible assets such as tanks and computers would be assigned according to their purpose rather than their location. In most cases, this would have the same consequence as a split by location, but in some cases (for example, military equipment, or equipment relating to UK government functions currently carried out in Scotland) it would not.

Splitting liabilities could be more controversial. In relation to the UK’s existing stock of government bonds on issue, HM Treasury has stated that “the continuing UK Government would in all circumstances honour the contractual terms of the debt issued by the UK Government. An independent Scottish state would become responsible for a fair and proportionate share of the UK’s current liabilities. An entirely separate contract between the continuing UK Government and an independent Scottish state’s Government would need to be established. The respective shares of debt and the terms of repayment would be subject to negotiation.”

Various principles for apportioning liabilities between Scotland and rUK have been suggested. The Scottish Government says, “The national debt could be apportioned by reference to the historic contribution made to the UK’s public finances by Scotland, or on the basis of our population share. We may choose to offset Scotland’s share of the value of UK assets against our inherited debt.” The problem with the ‘historic contribution’ proposal is that there cannot be an uncontroversial starting date except 1707. Data are scanty for the first 200 years or so of the Union. But any later starting date may be seen as arbitrary and chosen to maximise bargaining advantage. As there is no default position in international law for the ‘historic contribution’ apportionment, for most liabilities the choice would be between ‘population share’ and ‘relative GDP’. Population share is simple and an obvious default. Considerations of ability to repay may, however, push the parties towards an apportionment based on relative GDP.
The Scottish Government insists that, once North Sea activity and tax receipts are assigned to Scotland, Scottish GDP per head will be higher than that of rUK on Independence Day. A relative GDP assignment of liabilities would therefore be less favourable to Scotland than a population share assignment. For the liabilities and contingent liabilities arising from the UK bailout of failing banks in 2008-9 (including RBS and the then Bank of Scotland group), I am not aware of any agreed principles of international law that may be applicable.

**Shared services**

This should not be difficult, so long as the distinction between assets and institutions is borne in mind. As recently explained by Adam Tomkins, John Millar Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow, “international law shows you that, in the context of a state succession of this nature, there is every difference between institutions and assets. Institutions of the UK become institutions of the rest of the UK, but assets of those institutions fall to be apportioned equitably.” The assets of the DVLA and the BBC (studios, computer systems, vans, etc) may be apportioned equally. But as institutions, they would be institutions of rUK after independence. It is only common sense that Scotland should then seek to buy some services from them, but that would be a matter of contractual agreement.

**Common Travel Area (CTA)**

The CTA should be easy, on two conditions: (i) that the EU does not insist on Scotland joining the Schengen Area, which would normally be part of the acquis communautaire; and (ii) that Scotland is willing to co-ordinate its policy on migration with rUK, Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. Condition (i) is a matter of common sense, which I hope will prevail. Condition (ii) may be more problematic if the Scottish Government after independence maintains the current Scottish Government’s wish to “take forward a points-based approach targeted at particular Scottish requirements… [and] a new model of asylum services separate from immigration.” An immigrant to one member of a common travel area is an immigrant to all of them. Therefore, in negotiations to remain in the CTA, all of the other parties would have to approve Scotland’s migration policy.

**Monetary policy, and Nuclear policy**

This leaves the two most difficult areas. The Scottish Government insists that Scotland would remain in the sterling area, and would seek membership of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England. It argues that that is in the interests of rUK as well as of Scotland, because the present UK is what economists label an ‘optimum currency area’. The UK Government insists that the rUK government would not agree to that; a stance backed by both the Liberal Democrat and Labour finance spokesmen. Sterling is an institution, not an asset. Therefore, after independence, it would become an institution of rUK. Its negotiators may then reconsider whether admitting Scotland to a currency union is indeed in the interests of rUK. The ‘optimal currency area’ argument should have some traction; but so too will arguments which conclude that the near-collapse of the eurozone from 2009 onwards occurred, among other reasons, because some eurozone members were fiscally undisciplined. rUK would insist that if it admitted Scotland to a common currency area, Scotland would have to agree to harsh rules capping its maximum public debt and deficit.

Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, said in Edinburgh in January that “Any arrangement to retain sterling in an independent Scotland would need to be negotiated between the Westminster and Scottish Parliaments.” He went on to point out that a monetary union requires close co-operation between its member states on budgeting and bank regulation. On bank regulation, for instance, “The European process illustrates the difficulty of building the institutional arrangements for a common insurance scheme across sovereign states. This is unsurprising since mutualised deposit guarantee schemes imply a pooling of risk and loss of sovereignty. All member states must be persuaded that they won’t simply be left with the bill for the mistakes of others.” Whereas on currency and banking Scotland’s position appears weak, on Faslane and Coulport it appears strong. An independent Scotland could not be a nuclear weapon state, because of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970. Therefore it is proper for Scotland to give notice to rUK that the nuclear-armed submarines and warheads would need to be removed from Scottish soil. What is unclear is how the rUK would respond. In any case, the UK political parties and the armed services are in the middle of arguments about how, or whether, to replace the present Trident deterrent force. These arguments cut across parties (and services). I cannot predict the stance to be taken by the UK government which will be elected in 2015. Even if negotiations are started by the current coalition government, its position on Trident and Faslane may be altered by the new government. Apart from the terms of the NPT, international law is no help here. The outcome, whatever it is, will be intrinsically political. I also predict that deals on these difficult issues will be linked, even though they are conceptually separate. There is no logical connection between Scotland’s currency and rUK’s nuclear-armed submarines, but there will certainly be a political connection. I do not know how this most important pair of known unknowns will end up.

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**Scotland’s Choices**

is our Reader Offer this quarter; see the back page for details.

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*Professor McLean is one of the authors, with Professor Jim Gallagher and Guy Lodge, of Scotland’s Choices: The Referendum and What Happens Afterwards (Edinburgh University Press, April 2013).*
A conspiracy of silence?

Professor Jim Gallagher, Research Fellow in Politics, Nuffield College, University of Oxford

The thing most ignored in the present Scottish independence debate is the thing which is most likely to happen after it. There is something of a conspiracy of silence about the new tax powers which will come to the Scottish Parliament as a result of the Scotland Act 2012. In fact, they represent a substantial addition to the powers of the Scottish Parliament, all the more remarkable in a state with such a tradition of fiscal centralisation as the United Kingdom.

When the Scottish Parliament was created in 1999, it built upon the foundation of administrative devolution which had grown up over the previous century or more. Most of the domestic functions of government in Scotland were decentralised, to a territorial Secretary of State. This in its turn was built on the preservation of the separate Scottish legal system, educational system, and church since the Act of Union in 1707.

The Scottish Office that administered the services had an immensely wide range of responsibilities: health, education, justice, transport, economic development, agriculture, and many others. Indeed, virtually the same range of responsibilities as the Scottish Parliament has today. But it was, in the jargon, a spending department of government: it disbursed monies or spent them directly, and was funded by UK taxation collected by the Treasury. The only exceptions were local taxes such as council tax and non-domestic rates.

In consequence, the Parliament created in 1999 was lopsided. It had immensely wide spending responsibilities – as wide as those in any federal state – but only vestigial taxing responsibilities. The UK is internationally unusual in that virtually all taxes are collected and gathered centrally by the Treasury. Most other countries, and certainly federal countries, have some decentralised taxation.

Against this background and in response to the election of an SNP minority government in 2007, the UK Labour Government, supported by a majority of members of the Scottish Parliament, decided to set up the Calman Commission, to review the powers of the Parliament and in particular its fiscal accountability. The analysis was thorough, setting out how the Scottish Parliament fitted into the wider UK union, and how it could be made more fiscally accountable by tax decentralisation.

The essential recommendation was that a proportion (about one third) of the Scottish Parliament’s budget should be funded by taxes it levied itself, rather than by transfers from the UK Exchequer. A number of smaller taxes, such as stamp duty land tax, were recommended for wholesale devolution. But the main recommendation was that income tax – one of the three biggest taxes, and the most perceptible – should become a shared tax, levied on the same tax base by both the Westminster and Holyrood parliaments.

As a result, the rate of UK income tax applying in Scotland would be reduced by 10p in the pound, and the grant to the Scottish Parliament from Westminster reduced by a commensurate amount. The Scottish Parliament could then choose an income tax rate of its own, and would receive the resultant revenue. So the Parliament would be required to make a tax decision, and would control the total of its budget by setting a higher or lower rate.

These recommendations were accepted by all the main UK parties, and despite opposing it until the last moment, the SNP majority administration elected in 2011 eventually consented, and the scheme was enacted as the Scotland Act 2012. The legislation will be put into effect in 2016, so that the Scottish Parliament elected then (assuming Scotland has decided against independence) will have substantial income tax powers.

Three things are remarkable about this. First, the UK is probably the most fiscally centralised state in the Western world, and agreement to decentralise roughly half of the income tax in Scotland might not have been predicted. Second, the process of securing agreement to substantial constitutional change across two general elections (Scottish and UK) and two changes of administration (in Edinburgh and London) was without precedent. It shows a remarkable degree of careful policy-making against a background of virulent political disagreement.

The third remarkable thing is how little this is remarked upon. During the referendum debate, it obviously suits the SNP to argue that the present constitutional arrangements are inflexible and fail to give Scotland powers it might reasonably expect. So they never talk about the Scotland Act 2012. It’s perhaps less obvious that each of the pro-union parties – who should be able to take credit for a creative policy change that moves substantially in the direction of median Scottish opinion, which is in favour of more devolution – do not appear to be giving it the attention it merits, even as they consider whether there is scope for yet more change.

But if the polls are correct, and the Scottish people decide against independence, we have a very clear picture of what Scotland’s territorial constitution will be like in 2016, and this will surely set the pattern for any further development of the devolution settlement. Devolution will move on to its next phase.
Currency and exchange rates
Professor Gavin McCrone FRSGS

There are reasons for thinking that a small independent country may sometimes do better economically than if it were a region of a larger country. This applies particularly if it has a very different economic structure or is at a different stage of development. The ability to tailor economic policies closely to its needs can give it a better chance of success than relying on the one-size-fits-all policies of a larger state. This applies particularly to the exchange rate. A country has to pay its way with its trading partners, and movements in the exchange rate are one of the principle ways in which it ensures it is competitive.

A region does not have to do this; its surplus or deficit will be evened out by the larger country of which it is a part. A competitive exchange rate can ensure that there is investment in the economy and low unemployment, but a region has to work with whatever the exchange rate happens to be for the larger economy, whether or not that suits it.

Scotland’s economy, without North Sea oil, is similar to and closely integrated with that of the UK as a whole. Independence would affect that integration and would involve costs. Moreover, because of the substantial but declining income from the North Sea, Scotland could be subject to very different pressures from the rest of the UK. Both its balance of payments and the government’s budget would be subject to volatility.

The Scottish Government’s declared policy is to retain monetary union with the rest of the UK after independence. This is a central issue in the independence debate, but the intervention by the Chancellor in a speech in Edinburgh in February, and the rejection of a currency union by spokesmen for the other two main UK parties, make it most unlikely that a formal union, whereby the Bank of England would act as central bank and lender of last resort for both countries, would be negotiable. There could be advantages in an independent Scotland having its own currency, even if it were pegged to the pound to give it greater stability, because it would mean that the exchange rate could be altered in a major crisis.

But it would also mean that Scotland’s currency would be exposed to many of the pressures of a petro-currency. Moreover, those doing business across the border with the rest of the UK would face transactions costs and at least some degree of exchange risk.

This would also apply to those who had mortgages or pensions in sterling. A mortgage with a UK lender would be in sterling, while the asset against which it was provided was in pounds Scots. To avoid the exchange risk, borrowers would need to re-mortgage with a Scottish lender or a branch of a UK lender able to lend in Scots currency.

This is just one of a number of major uncertainties as Scotland goes into the referendum. Another is whether or how quickly Scotland could become a member of the European Union in its own right, thereby safeguarding its position in the EU single market. Would it have to take its place in a queue of candidate countries seeking membership, with much uncertainty over its position in the meantime? Or would it be possible to retain membership by the quicker and easier process of treaty amendment? Whatever the outcome, it would have to have the agreement of the 28 existing member states, any one of which could exercise a veto.

Scottish Ministers have rightly pointed to Scotland’s wealth of resources, not only in offshore oil and gas but also in renewable energy. But, with the exception of hydro electricity, renewable energy has had to be subsidised by consumers across the whole UK. Onshore wind power is becoming more economic and, if present trends continue, may be competitive later in this decade. But this does not apply to offshore wind or to wave and tidal power, which are still at a very early stage of development. Would consumers in the rest of the UK be prepared to continue subsidising renewable power in Scotland after it became an independent state? This would probably depend on whether they could get the electricity they require from other cheaper sources.

These are just some of the uncertainties as the date of the referendum approaches. It is only realistic to accept that much is likely still to remain unknown as people go to cast their votes.

“…those doing business across the border with the rest of the UK would face transactions costs and at least some degree of exchange risk. This would also apply to those who had mortgages or pensions in sterling.”

Professor McCrone was Chief Economic Adviser to the Secretary of State for Scotland, and successively Head of the Industry Department for Scotland and the Scottish Office Environment Department until retiring in 1992. He is the author of Scottish Independence: Weighing Up the Economics (Birlinn, August 2013). A new edition of the book is being prepared.
The relationship with the EU
David Crawley

“Arguably Scotland has understood the value of its links with Europe better than other parts of the UK.”

The current debate about how and when an independent Scotland might join the European Union as a full member – vital though that is – risks obscuring the extent and nature of Scotland’s current links with the rest of Europe, and the long-term importance of our European relationships whatever the outcome of the referendum. Scotland has long had a strong relationship with Europe as part of the UK. We have played an active part in many sectors – notably farming and fisheries, but in many others which touch closely on Scottish interests, including environment, justice and home affairs, regional development, and the single market. Before devolution, Scottish Ministers and officials were routinely involved in EU Council meetings as part of the UK team negotiating on key issues like the Common Fisheries Policy, the regular Common Agricultural Policy discussions, the environment, food and animal health. After devolution, a set of formal agreements known as concordats between the UK and Scottish Governments have provided for continuing Scottish involvement, and Scotland has pursued its interests through its representation in Brussels, which has operated alongside the UK representation and which, unusually among EU regional representations, was allowed the huge advantage of full diplomatic status. We have developed links with many European regions and member states, and now have a strong reputation in Brussels built around Scottish culture and our core priorities of farming, fisheries, food and the environment. We have also been able to access substantial EU resources for regional and rural development. Also important, our links with non-members of the EU have depended on common interests – notably in the case of Norway, with whom we share common concerns in oil and fisheries, and a long cultural history.

If Scotland votes for independence, the economic, social and cultural case for Scotland remaining within the EU as a full member looks unarguable.

Access to the single European market, which is a major destination for Scotland’s exports and a major source of goods and services, would be central to future Scottish economic policy. Our place within Europe is a key factor in inward investment; we would remain a substantial beneficiary of European funding; and the flow of people and skills in both directions would create huge opportunities. I believe Scotland also understands the wider political case for the EU, and its record in cementing peace across the whole of Europe and in developing a European culture alongside existing national and regional cultures. For Scotland, there are no credible alternatives – the option of joining countries like Norway in the European Economic Area has few attractions, given that it involves most of the costs and responsibilities of EU membership without involvement in the decisions.

Arguably Scotland has understood the value of its links with Europe better than other parts of the UK. The recorded view of the Scottish people is relatively positive, and it seems clear from polling that a substantial majority think Scotland should stay in the EU if it becomes independent. Yet European membership is no free ride. Scotland would have to move to a much more grown-up version of its European role. It would be one of the more prosperous member states of the expanded EU and would have to bear its share of responsibilities and costs. It would have to work hard at alliances and would need to recognize that small states tend to do best if they support European ideals and objectives.

The road by which an independent Scotland would become a member of the EU faces awkward obstacles. It would require complex negotiation with all member states within the framework of the European Treaties: the EU is based on agreements between states, not peoples. It still seems likely that most other member states would welcome Scotland, but there are no guarantees and it is already clear that there would be opposition. This would require hard thinking about how far to press for similar opt-outs to those of the UK, or for special measures on the euro or fisheries. We are likely to be disappointed in the hope of quick and seamless entry, however strong we feel our case to be.

If Scotland votes to stay in the UK, our European future will be tied to that of the wider UK, with the possibility of an in/out referendum during the next parliament. I would expect that, after much debate, the UK will vote to stay in the EU and that Scottish involvement will help to ensure that. If, on the other hand, Scotland were to vote for independence and the remainder of the UK were to vote to leave the EU, Scotland would be forced to make some very difficult choices. However much we wish to remain part of the EU, therefore, we can only look forward to a period of intense uncertainty.

David Crawley was head of the post-devolution Scotland Office (2002-05), and was the Brussels-based European Director for the Scottish Executive during the last UK Presidency of the EU (2005-06). He has significant background in the planning and implementation of Scottish devolution since 1997. His main expertise is to do with public policy and organisations at Scotland, UK and EU levels.
Population growth in Scotland has continued to increase over the past decade and looks likely to meet the Scottish Government’s official population target, which is to match average European (EU15) growth from 2007 to 2017. Population growth has long been viewed as a key priority for the devolved Scottish Government, and at the core of its strategy for economic growth in Scotland. The latest population growth in Scotland is slightly lower than the EU15 average; however, for most of the period since 2007 it has exceeded this level. Scotland’s population has grown by 3% since 2006-7, whereas the average across the EU15 countries has been 2%. Therefore Scotland seems on track to meet its population target. Immigration plays an important role in maintaining this population growth in Scotland, and the Scottish Government sees continued population inflows as central to maintaining this demographic growth. However, Scotland still has a relatively small immigrant population (c7% of usual residents) compared with other European (EU27) nations.

Figure 1 reveals the geography of international migration to Scotland. Poland emerges as the most common non-UK country of birth in Scotland, despite being ranked 18th in 2001. As the most populous of the ‘Accession 8’ countries, Poland has been the biggest sender of East-Central European migrants since the enlargement of the European Union in 2004. Polish migrants now form 15% of all foreign-born residents living in Scotland.

In contrast to crude binary comparisons between England and Scotland, this article builds on the work of McCollum et al (CPC Briefing Paper 10 2013) and argues that a more pertinent argument is true for other regions of England. Moreover, establishing migration policies suited to the different needs of regional economies is a policy option that has been taken up by some states such as Canada, and is an option open to the Scottish and UK governments regardless of the outcome of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence.

In examining Scotland alongside regions within England, it is apparent that London has a much more diverse population than anywhere else in England. In fact, London stands in contrast to many areas of the country, particularly geographically ‘peripheral’ regions such as the South-West, the North-East, and Scotland. The ‘London effect’ clearly has a bearing on the UK and English averages in relation to most migration statistics, which underlines the importance of examining the data at a range of scales, rather than defaulting to considering only aggregate Scottish/English data.
The questions of defence and security, surprisingly to some, have been some of the most hotly debated and contentious of the independence referendum campaign. The sheer number of different topics connected with defence means that it has rarely been out of the news. There have been clashes over issues as diverse as the nuclear weapons now based in Faslane, shipbuilding on the Clyde, the future of the historic Scottish Regiments, and whether or not Scotland should be a member of the NATO alliance. Needless to say, with that many issues, different interest groups and political pressures have exerted themselves in many different ways.

One of the best ways to see these conflicting pressures is in the rather tortuous discussions over Faslane and Britain’s nuclear deterrent. The west of Scotland not only hosts all of Britain’s nuclear submarines, it also is the base for Britain’s nuclear weapons. The ‘Yes’ campaign has received consistent and energetic support from a group of campaigners, sometimes associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which would like all nuclear weapons withdrawn from Scotland almost immediately after independence. Therefore the ‘Yes’ campaign has had to stress its anti-nuclear credentials regularly.

On the other hand, basic economics mean that the jobs attached to these facilities are important. At present, the MOD employs around 6,500 civilian and military personnel on the Clyde, and therefore it is one of the largest employers in one of the economically less well-off parts of the nation. This has led the ‘Yes’ campaign and the Scottish Government to try and craft an anti-nuclear policy that also would protect many of these jobs.

Since the launch of the Scottish Government’s White Paper, what is interesting is how the anti-nuclear stance, in the short term, has become a second priority to the protection of jobs. This can be seen in two parts of the document. In the first case, far from requiring that the rUK’s nuclear weapons be removed from Scotland as soon as possible, the Scottish Government actually set out a very flexible policy on Trident. While it was stated that the Government has a ‘view’ that the weapons should be removed by the end of the first Parliament (2020), this in no way is a hard and fast deadline. Instead, it opens the door for the nuclear weapons to remain in Scotland until the government of the rUK decides what it wishes to do with Trident. On the other hand, it would allow any Scottish government considerably more time to decide what it would base in those facilities once the nuclear weapons had been removed.

The second area was in the definition of a non-nuclear Scotland. The White Paper did not call for a non-nuclear policy along the lines of New Zealand, which bans all nuclear weapons from its soil and territorial waters at all times. Instead, anti-nuclear seems to be defined for Scotland as meaning that the Scottish government will not build, maintain or base nuclear weapons. However, there is no provision to ban them from visiting warships. This important proviso is a way of reassuring NATO, which defines itself as a nuclear alliance, that a Scottish government would take the necessary steps to make Scotland a co-operative part of the organization. In the end, the strong political pressure being placed by one element of the ‘Yes’ campaign seems to have lost out to the need to appeal to those employed by the MOD in the west of Scotland, and crucial international partners such as the United States.

Another way that the politics of independence seem to have arisen is the question of shipbuilding on the Clyde. In November 2013, the UK Government announced that all of the Type 26 Frigates (the next generation, most advanced warship that Britain will build during the next 20 years) will be constructed on the Clyde. Yet, at the same time, they announced that the actual construction process will not begin in earnest until 2015. It seems to be a classic example of a carrot and stick political approach to the question. The west of Scotland shipyards have received priority over those in England – Portsmouth will now be downgraded to a facility that can refurbish existing warships but will have a great deal of difficulty constructing new ones. At the same time, those communities eagerly anticipating that work were made aware that if independence were to be voted in, the contracts could still be shifted.

Together, these two issues show the different political impulses driving the discussion of defence within the independence debate. Ultimately it is the economic benefits of independence or remaining in the Union that have become the focus of the debate.
Scotland’s Pensions Future
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland

Pensions have emerged as one of the most fiercely debated topics pre-referendum, along with the more overarching issues of currency, and membership of the European Union. Perhaps this is not surprising, as security in retirement matters to us all.

The challenge for the Scottish Government is to demonstrate that an independent Scotland would be better placed to deliver a pensions system which meets citizens’ needs while ensuring that they would at least be no worse off in retirement.

The State Pension
From a public expenditure perspective, the State Pension is significant. In 2011-12, State Pension payments of £87bn were made by the UK Government, representing 41% of all social benefit payments and 12% of UK expenditure.

In Scotland’s Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland, the Scottish Government confirms an intention that current pensioners would continue to receive their pensions as now, on time and in full, and that accrued rights would be protected. A ‘triple lock’ would be adopted for the first parliamentary term of an independent Scotland to protect the value of the State Pension (and single-tier pension and guarantee credit) over time against prices or earnings, with a minimum annual increase of 2.5%.

The new single-tier pension would be introduced in an independent Scotland, as planned for the UK, in April 2016. This is to be paid in full to those with 35 qualifying years of NI contributions, with a proposed minimum qualifying period of seven to ten years. This could mean that someone who worked in England for six years during their working life and in Scotland for the remainder would need to work an additional six years to achieve 35 qualifying years of NI or credits, as is the case for workers from other EU states currently working in the UK.

Accepting that the State Pension Age should rise to 66 by 2020, as proposed by the existing UK timetable, Scotland’s Future commits to a review of this age and notes the possibility of postponing the planned further changes as laid out in the Pensions Act 2007. There is some uncertainty as to how to interpret the lower average life expectancy in Scotland. Scotland’s demographics, with a higher projected ratio of pensioners to those of working-age population, mean that this is likely to be more of a challenge. Economic growth and inward migration may be possible solutions.

Public Service Pensions
Scotland’s Future confirms that all public service pension rights and entitlements which have been accrued would be fully protected and accessible, and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency would deliver public sector pensions in an independent Scotland. This comes with assurances that the Scottish Government would take on responsibility for the pensions of active, deferred, and pensioner members of unfunded schemes, including members of UK-wide schemes living in Scotland.

Private Sector Pensions
ICAS believes it would be advantageous for the Scottish Government to continue, at least in the early years of independence, to adopt existing UK arrangements for pension regulation and protection, and to develop these over time. According to Scotland’s Future, the Government intends to roll over UK law, and to form a similar regulatory framework and Scottish equivalent of the National Employment Savings Trust.

There would be significant cross-border issues for schemes which currently operate UK-wide. Under EU law, schemes which operate in more than one member state must fund their liabilities in full, and any under-funding must be rectified immediately rather than through a staged recovery plan. Scotland’s Future lays out a three-year transitional grace period, which ICAS believes is wholly insufficient for many schemes which are currently funding their deficits over much longer periods. The European Commission’s plans to reform the Pensions (IORP) Directive could provide an opportunity for the rules around cross-border schemes to be altered in a manner which eases the problem.

The ability of an independent Scottish Government to deliver the proposed pension policies laid out in Scotland’s Future is largely dependent on future negotiations with the UK Government, the European Union, and other bodies.

“There would be significant cross-border issues for schemes which currently operate UK-wide.”

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) is a professional body of 20,000 members who work across the UK and in more than 100 countries across the world. ICAS is participating in the independence debate from a public interest perspective and does not have a position on the referendum outcome. The information in this article is based upon the ICAS Report Scotland’s Pensions Future: Have Our Questions Been Answered?, which is available online at icas.org.uk/ScottishIndependence.
Scotland’s universities are one of the country’s major success stories. Scotland has three universities in the world’s top 100; given that there are approximately 10,000 universities worldwide, this means that we have three universities in the top 1% globally. Per head of population, this puts Scotland as a country at the top of the world league. In addition, according to Universities Scotland, the annual economic impact of Scottish universities on the economy now stands at £6.7bn, and export earnings from outside Scotland generate some £1.3bn for the Scottish economy.

Given the global reputation of Scotland’s universities and their financial importance to the Scottish economy, it should come as no surprise that the sector takes a very keen interest in the outcome of the independence referendum, although the universities themselves are taking no official view of which outcome they would prefer. Nonetheless, there are three main areas of pressing interest to the sector: student visas; research council funding; and the financial status of rest of the UK (rUK) students in an independent Scotland.

Formed in 2008, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) operated a stringent student visa system which made life particularly difficult for universities wishing to recruit international students legitimately from outside the EU. Not only did this have a negative impact on international student recruitment directly, it also damaged the UK brand more generally in many countries overseas. In March 2013, UKBA’s functions were incorporated into the Home Office as UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), but there has been little change in approach. An independent Scotland would have the opportunity to reconsider this, and to develop a system more in tune with Scotland’s long tradition of internationalism. For Scottish universities, this presents an opportunity, but one which would have to be managed carefully to ensure that we maintained a positive student experience in the light of potentially significantly increased numbers of international students.

Scottish universities, reflecting their high global standings, currently attract over 15% of all the research income expended by the UK Research Councils (RCUK). With just over 8% of the UK’s population, Scottish universities are, once again, punching above their weight. It is the same story with some of the major charity funders of research, such as the Welcome Trust, Cancer Research, and the British Heart Foundation.

The concern for universities is whether we would still have access to these UK-wide sources of research income. The White Paper states that the Scottish Government “believes that [it will be able] to justify objectively the continuation of our current policy [ie, continuing to charge fees to rUK students]”, but this statement’s lack of clarity, lack of conviction, and degree of uncertainty currently give Scottish universities little cause for comfort.

Scottish universities face increasing challenges in an increasingly international and globalising world. The challenge for our university leaders is to ensure that Scotland retains and enhances its hard-won but well-deserved reputation, and that it continues to be one of the jewels in the Scottish crown. Whether we have a better chance of doing this as part of the UK or as an independent state is another of the questions which voters will have to think about in the run-up to 18th September.
An \textit{environmental perspective}\footnote{\textcopyright{} Fergus Gill}

Lloyd Austin

So, battle is joined! The opposing ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ camps are dominating the headlines. What, if anything, does this mean for Scotland’s environment and those who care for it, such as our NGOs or learned societies? The Scottish Parliament has responsibility for the environment, and a range of other matters affecting our natural heritage, such as planning, transport, agriculture and fisheries. The powers of the Scottish Parliament and how they might be used should therefore be of great interest to those who care for our environment. The debate is not purely constitutional. Many are also debating the use of powers, or ‘the kind of Scotland we wish to live in’, including how we manage the environment and sustainability.

The referendum on independence takes place on 18th September. The Scottish Government has published its prospectus in its White Paper \textit{Scotland’s Future}, although there are other views (for example, Greens). Meanwhile, those campaigning for a ‘No’ vote are also developing proposals for further devolution, reflecting a broad dissatisfaction with constitutional arrangements in the UK. The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties all have their own internal commissions (or similar), while there are also groups promoting ‘devo-plus’ or ‘devo-max’. Whatever the result in September, it is clear that there will be developments (significant and/or gradual) in the constitutional arrangements between Scotland and the rest of the UK. These can be summarised as: (1) \textit{status quo} plus Scotland Act 2012; (2) \textit{status quo}, 2012 Act, and further unspecified devolution; and (3) independence. The exact nature of independence would, of course, be dependent on post-referendum negotiations, as well as on the policies adopted by an independent government.

For NGOs, such as charities or learned societies, this debate raises two issues. First, would any particular result be better or worse for matters about which we care – for Scotland’s natural heritage? Second, responsible corporate governance means that we have to assess the risks and opportunities, and ensure that our organisations can manage the consequences of any outcome.

Seeking to address the first question, Scottish Environment LINK published \textit{Referendum Challenge}. This challenged both campaigns with environmental questions – asking both to explain why their constitutional option would be preferable for the interests of wildlife, landscape, environmental justice, etc. The responses of both ‘Yes Scotland’ and ‘Better Together’ have been published on LINK’s website. Both campaigns, of course, argue that they would deliver better environmental outcomes. However, it could equally be suggested that these contributions are evidence-light and assertion-heavy. Both argue that ‘their’ politicians will make the better decisions because they will be located in the ‘better’ place with ‘more influence’ or ‘more interest’ in those issues. These are, therefore, matters of judgement or opinion and cannot be evidenced. By contrast, most NGOs, especially the charities, have concluded that neither outcome is significantly better, or worse, for their environmental outcomes. They have, thus, concluded that neutrality is the only position to take.

That, however, is not the end of the matter for NGOs or learned societies. With changes afoot whatever the outcome, the management of any responsible organisation needs to assess potential changes. This applies especially to organisations working across the UK or further afield. Already on the way are the new income tax powers under the Scotland Act 2012, which will permit the Scottish Government to vary income tax for “Scottish residents” by +/- 10p. This means that payrolls will need to deal with different rates in different jurisdictions. For organisations working in multiple jurisdictions, this will already be a second nature, but others will need to adapt. The 2012 Act also devolves landfill tax and stamp duty. The former is a positive environmental measure, and, to date, the Scottish Government is proposing to maintain it. The latter includes charitable relief which the Scottish Government proposes to continue. In these cases – as in any proposals for further devolution – environmental organisations will want to assess the impact of change, both on the delivery of environmental policy and on their ability to operate as effective organisations.

There is no doubt that we live in interesting times and, whatever the outcome in September, they will continue for years to come. For the environment, the main hope is that politicians, as well as conducting their constitutional debate, are able to focus also on the global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. The Scottish Government should be making more progress now than it is on reducing carbon emissions and reversing biodiversity losses. On carbon, there is good progress on renewables, but on energy efficiency, housing and transport, progress is poor. Meanwhile, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy has recently been refreshed and is encouragingly ambitious – however, the actions and means to deliver these ambitions are lacking; for instance, we need better progress on marine protected areas, on a national ecological network, and on funding wildlife-friendly farming.

To date, despite positive words from all parties, the evidence of rising emissions and declining species suggests that both camps have, so far, failed the environmental challenge.
Is Scotland really a single identity? Surely not, as its history from the beginnings of time to the present day clearly demonstrates. Geography gives us an overall perspective of a highly variable and diverse country of past and present, and it gives us a window on how to address the future.

Do those living in The Machars of Wigtownshire have a common heritage and a similar outlook to those living in Scotland’s most northern settlement of Baltasound on Unst? Unst folk, like many Shetlanders, call those from further south 'soothmoothers' in a mildly derogatory way. They feel a great affinity with their Nordic compatriots across the North Sea, maintaining a long-standing historical link. They are surrounded by some of the most unusual rocks in the country, originating from the ocean’s mantle, which are host to endemic plants. They are more exposed to the weather and climate of the North Atlantic than other communities. And they have a strong sense of isolation from the centres of power in Lerwick and further afield. Whereas, those living in The Machars maybe feel part of the often forgotten south-west of the country, part of the old kingdom of Galloway. They can see the hills and coast of Cumbria across the Solway Firth, and have something of a common heritage with the west of the British Isles, through the early Christian settlements and the strong Nordic influence as manifest in some of the place names. They reside over the sediments laid down in an ocean thrust above sea level aeons ago. And they are less prone to Atlantic weather and climatic influences.

It is easy to recognise so many other geological, geographical and cultural variations within Scotland, and their connections with other countries over many millennia which have added to the diversity. Take, for example, the influence of the Nordic seafarers on the genetic makeup of future generations, and their contribution to models of governance resonant in place names such as Tingwall. And how could St Magnus Cathedral have been designed without cross-cultural connections with designers of the Romanesque cathedrals on the continent?

Let us also remember that the base of Scotland – its rocks and tectonic structures – represent five different components until the great continental collisions around 400 mya brought them together. At that time, ironically in the context of the present debate, the ocean separating nascent Scotland and England became dry land and we were joined together.

Two maps can perhaps best capture on the one hand the natural diversity of the country, and on the other the range of issues which any government following the referendum will have to face.

Scotland’s biogeographic regions, all 21 of them developed by Scottish Natural Heritage, represent the dominating effect of the natural elements on the country. Rock type, tectonic structures, topography, precipitation, the length of the growing season, soil types, plant and animals species are brought together to identify these regions. And inevitably, whatever the technical and economic prowess of people over the millennia, these natural attributes have a dramatic influence on the distribution of population, the fertility of the land, and the cost of servicing dispersed communities. These regions are meaningful in assessing the needs of the communities and the availability of natural resources. By contrast, the material on social and economic well-being, derived largely from the Census of Population, provides a view on relative wealth and deprivation throughout the country. The maps of multiple deprivation allow, for example, areas of greatest need to be identified in contrast to those where there is greater prosperity. These maps are now being used to target the distribution of resources.

These two maps, essential geographical tools, are key data sets in the armoury of the policy maker involved in the difficult task of deciding which areas and which groups of people and natural assets are in need of greater public assistance than others. They place in sharp relief the diversity of Scotland’s nature and people. To those who feel ‘one size fits all’ for Scotland, these maps are an essential knowledge tool to ensure that this outmoded philosophy is no more. Using these maps, and the data sets from which they are derived, will definitely help decision makers in government and in parliament to be more sensitive to the diverse needs and circumstances of our varied country, and ensure that they create appropriate policies and approaches.

So let’s celebrate Scotland’s diversity of people and place, of hill and lowland, of mainland and island, of rock and soil. And let’s ensure that, whoever is in positions of power after the referendum, they recognise our country’s diversity and rise to meet the challenges and opportunities which it brings.
That there is a referendum on Scotland’s constitutional future reflects a rapidly changing political landscape in Scotland, one that has undergone significant transformation since the introduction of devolution in 1999. This changing landscape also reflects UK political change, and in particular the election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition UK Government in 2010, which gained relatively little support in Scotland.

As it has been since the late 1970s, the political environment in Scotland is markedly different from the rest of the UK, and in particular from the situation that exists in England, with the SNP and Labour by far the most popular political parties. Even since 1999, things have changed dramatically. Then on the eve of devolution, New Labour ruled from London and the first Scottish Government was a Labour–LibDem coalition. Now Scotland has a majority SNP Government and the UK Government is Tory dominated. This gulf is reflected across a range of policy and political contexts, but few more so than the issue of welfare.

A key aspect of the independence debate has come to revolve around issues of welfare. Indeed we can go further and argue that in important respects the debate is not about a UK state or a Scottish state, but about the kind of welfare state that Scotland should have and how this is to be achieved. This is largely a reflection of the changing political geography of welfare across the UK today. UK Government welfare reform has been seized upon by the SNP and the ‘Yes’ campaign to claim that only full independence would protect Scotland from such policies, policies that are widely unpopular in Scotland. This has been given political expression in the Scottish Parliament. In December 2011, for example, SNP and Labour MSPs voted to withhold legislative consent for the UK Welfare Reform Bill.

Key social welfare areas, such as taxation, benefits and employment policy, remain under the control of the UK Government, and it is the further devolution of these, or their incorporation in a Scottish welfare state in the context of an independent Scotland (or a Scotland with more devolution), which is becoming central to the constitutional debate. The political debate in Scotland around social welfare is distinctive. In part this emerges not so much from what is happening in Scotland, but from developments taking place in England. There is, for example, no privatisation of the NHS in Scotland (a process that appears to be developing apace in NHS provision in England), there are no academy schools, and higher education funding is also very different. Differences in other aspects of social policy making and in criminal justice policy mean that the policy landscapes of Scotland and England appear increasingly different.

In addition to the policy landscape there is a question of public and social attitudes, although the evidence for significant differences between Scotland and the rest of the UK is hard to come by. However, UK Government welfare reforms have been criticised by the SNP, not only as out of step with the wishes of voters in Scotland, but also as seriously at odds with ‘Scottish values’. Much of this is related to other claims that Scottish voters and the wider public in Scotland are less hostile to benefit recipients and are more egalitarian inclined. SNP politicians speak readily of Scottish values and attitudes underpinning social policy and equity, promising a Scottish welfare system that would be driven by social justice and social democracy. There was also an added dimension to such claims – that the UK Government’s welfare reforms were not only ‘eroding the social fabric’ of society but also marked a radical departure from the foundations of the post-war British welfare state.

The territorial politics of welfare has reached a new level of development across the UK. In no small part this has been driven by devolution in 1999 for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but it also reflects changes in the geography of welfare across England and the hugely uneven impact of UK Government ‘austerity’ policies. That we should be critical of claims that there is a distinctive set of largely egalitarian Scottish values and attitudes should not blind us to the political potency of such ideas, and playing to these claims has had and continues to have political purchase in Scotland.

“A key aspect of the independence debate has come to revolve around issues of social welfare.”

The Open University has freely-available learning resources on the Scottish independence debate on its OpenLearn website at www.open.edu/openlearn/society/politics/people/policy-people/society/politics-the-debate-on-scottish-independence.
“There was an earlier sense of the king as representing ultimate authority. This was not linked to law and custom, but was grounded in geography.”

What is a nation? The answer changes over time. When new ideas of nationhood take root, more nations come into being. The nations that already exist usually survive and adapt to the new ideas. The previous ideas that spawned the older nations, however, persist at some level. If we peel back the layers far enough, we eventually arrive at an era when geography was the prime factor.

In the 19th century it was thought that nations were defined by language and culture. It was on this basis that many of today’s European countries became independent after the First World War, and again after the fall of the Iron Curtain. However, the basic idea of national sovereignty – that peoples should be independent and self-governing – first took shape in the decades after 1200. In the 13th century, government changed fundamentally. Previously, government was experienced spasmodically when the king on his travels stopped by in your locality. From 1200, administrative developments meant that royal authority became accessible continuously. It no longer depended so much on the king’s personal availability. A king was now only regarded as a king if he could exercise this new kind of authority. As a result, all kingdoms which survived into the 13th century were regarded as of equal status. It was also assumed that each had its own uniform laws and customs. This sense of sharing laws and customs

under the ultimate authority of a king made it natural to assume that each kingdom constituted a distinct people. They survive as national identities to this day, for example in England, France, Norway and Scotland.

But these were not ‘nations’ in the 19th-century sense. Although medieval people were acutely aware of differences in language and culture, this was not necessary for a sense of national identity. What defined a Scot or an Englishman was allegiance to the king of Scots or the king of England as the latest in a long line of kings. In the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), the ancient freedom of Scots was asserted through their obedience to an unbroken line of 113 kings. Even when kingdoms were later united under a shared monarch, their national identity continued.

Although the 13th-century idea of ‘nation’ was different from that of the 19th and 20th centuries, it was possible to imagine long lines of kings, however fictional they might be. Most of the 113 kings mentioned in the Declaration of Arbroath were concocted in a Pictish king-list written 350 years earlier. How, though, could Scotland or Pictland be regarded as an island?

Look at the earliest map of Britain in the 1250s and you may be surprised that Scotland north of the Forth is only joined to the rest of Britain by Stirling Bridge. This idea of the landmass north of Stirling as an island occurs repeatedly. It reflected the fact that the terrain west of Stirling was formidably boggy in the Middle Ages. For medieval travellers it was best to go by boat across the Firth of Forth. It is thanks to this notion of a northern island that it was possible to imagine Britain as two ancient kingdoms. It was this basic idea that was updated in the 13th century into Scotland and England as sovereign kingdoms. At the same time, the idea that the king of England ruled all Britain also persisted, an idea that Edward I tried and failed to make reality. The question of Scotland’s status in relation to Britain has deep roots, and is likely to continue, whatever happens on 18th September.
Agnese’s 16th Century British Isles
British Library

This map of Great Britain and Ireland, with the narrow join at the Firth of Forth, is taken from *Atlas of the World in thirty-three Maps* by Battista Agnese, 1553. Agnese (c1500-64) was a cartographer from the Republic of Genoa, who worked in the Venetian Republic.

This is a portolan chart, from the Italian ‘portolano’, meaning ‘related to ports’. Portolan charts are based on direct observation and first-hand experience, and have a practical purpose for mariners. They note only coastal locations, omitting most internal detail. Place names are written at right angles to the coast, the more important ports in red ink. The lines which cover the map are lines of constant bearing known as rhumb lines. These radiate from compass roses and allow the sailor to plot a course from harbour to harbour using dividers and straight edges.

The chart is decorated in the Catalan style with figures of rulers dominating. The rulers shown appear to be figurative and are bearded, despite the likelihood that this map was published during the reigns of the young Mary Queen of Scots and either the boy King Edward VI or Mary I of England and Ireland.
“Scotland’s landscape tells a story of a journey from deep in the southern hemisphere over 500 million years ago to our present position on the globe.”

In this referendum year, it is pertinent to look back on Scotland’s past. Not just to those years documented in history books, but back further to look at the story written in the rocks and landscapes that record a history stretching back through ‘deep time’. Deep time was a concept recognized by James Hutton, the ‘Father of Modern Geology’, who lived in Edinburgh a little over 200 years ago. Like many who lived through the Scottish Enlightenment, he was a polymath, interested in a wide range of topics stretching from his initial education in medicine, through chemistry and his work on producing the chemical sal ammoniac, to his love of agriculture. On the way, he produced some fundamental thoughts on the nature of geological time and on the processes that formed the Earth. These ideas today form the foundation of our modern understanding of how the Earth works, a concept geologists describe as ‘plate tectonics’.

Hutton conceived that geological time had to be very much greater than the 6,000 years envisaged by Archbishop Ussher of Armagh. He saw the rocks at Siccar Point in Berwickshire as being the key evidence of major compressions forming mountains, followed by a long period of erosion before the next set of rocks were laid down. He also recognized that volcanoes could produce molten rock, and that this had to be driven by a ‘heat engine’ in the Earth’s core.

When Alfred Wegener, a German polar explorer and meteorologist, in 1912 first proposed the idea that continents could move, the scientific world ridiculed him. This, despite the evidence from the geographical fit of Africa and South America, and strong scientific evidence in the distribution of fossil plants and land-living animals on either side of major oceans suggesting that these continents had at one time been joined. They had forgotten the significance of Hutton’s heat engine.

From these beginnings in Alfred Wegener’s theory of ‘continental drift’ emerged the unifying paradigm of plate tectonics which involved many scientists globally. In North America, Marie Tharp showed the dramatic topography of the ocean floor with mid-ocean ridges and deep trenches. Two young British geophysicists, Frederick Vine and Drummond Matthews, and also, independently, Lawrence Morley of the Canadian Geological Survey, demonstrated that the magnetic signature in the volcanic rocks making up the ocean floor was produced by repeated reversals of the Earth’s magnetic field. The symmetrical pattern either side of the mid-ocean ridge suggested magma welling up along the ridge and moving outwards. This was supported by evidence of the age of these rocks becoming progressively older away from the ridge. Dan McKenzie in Cambridge used his mathematical, geophysical and geological skills to provide a workable model based on convection in the mantle, which explained the movement of the Earth’s crust and plate tectonic movements. So emerged the paradigm of plate tectonics, a mechanism for moving continents and the opening and closing of oceans.

But what does all this have to do with the evolution of Scotland, and the contemporary issue of the referendum on independence? Scotland’s landscape tells a story of a journey from deep in the southern hemisphere over 500 million years ago to our present position on the globe. This journey has involved travelling through many latitudes with many climates recorded in the rocks. The Carboniferous rocks of Scotland record the tropical climate we had when positioned around the Equator, with tropical forests producing coal swamps and shallow tropical seas producing limestone. During the Permian period, Scotland lay around the latitudes of the present-day Sahara Desert, and the Permian rocks are the beautiful red desert sandstones of Dumfries and Mauchline.

But if we travel back in time to just before 440 million years ago, Scotland is part of a major continental area called Avalonia which included much of Greenland and North America. England and Wales were at the same time part of a minor micro-continent called Armorica, and the Scandinavian countries were part of another ancient land mass called Baltica. Between these continental areas was a major ocean, the Iapetus Ocean. Around 440 million years ago, these three continental land masses collided together, pushing up a major mountain chain of comparable altitude to the Alps, which extended down the eastern seaboard of present-day Norway, across the Scottish Highlands, and into the Appalachian Mountains in America.

So, from the geological perspective, separation from England and Wales is certainly not new – prior to 440 million years ago, there was devolution of the geological structures which only came together in the first Act of Union, 440 million years ago!
The Union
Professor Christopher A Whatley, Professor of Scottish History, University of Dundee

Nations and states rise and fall. Sometimes they vanish. Union states too split asunder, the most spectacular recent example being the Soviet Union, seemingly impregnable during the Cold War, but after 1991, gone. In September this year, the electorate in Scotland will decide the future of the historic union that has held Scotland and England together for over three centuries.

Opinion polls suggest that not much more than a third of the electorate will vote for Scottish independence, but that the Scots strongly approve of devolution and want greater powers for Holyrood. During the union era, it is when the Scottish dimension has been ignored by Westminster that demands for reform of or challenges to the British union state have arisen. Only since the 1960s has there been serious enthusiasm for independence, ignited by the SNP which prior to the Second World War attracted a mere 1.1% of the vote (in the 1935 general election).

It can come as a surprise that it was a Scot, John Mair, who first proposed a union with England, in the 1520s. For too long Scotland and England had been at loggerheads, periodically resorting to war. Others agreed. It made sense for the countries which shared the same island to unite. After the Reformation, the dominant religion of both was Protestantism, while English was the main language. By the later 17th century, there was a common enemy, France, under Louis XIV who aspired to universal monarchy. He was also a Catholic, and in Protestant Britain there was a visceral hatred of the Church of Rome. By this time England and Scotland were already joined in a dynastic union, which had come about in 1603 when Scotland’s King James VI became James I of England.

The regal union, however, did little to reduce Anglo-Scottish tensions. Monarchs of the joint kingdom favoured England over their Scottish subjects. Hostility towards England mounted. Nevertheless there was also sporadic interest from Scotland in a union of trade. Scotland wanted to secure legal commerce along with the protection by England’s royal navy of Scottish merchant vessels on the pirate-infested high seas. Closer to home the English market was vital, but at risk if relations between Scotland and England deteriorated.

English politicians, however, were inclined to ignore Scotland. Monarchs were different. James VI and I had advocated closer union, but found few supporters at his London court. It was a century later, during the reign of Queen Anne, that the present parliamentary union was forged, in the winter of 1706-7. Anne’s anxiety over her successor, allied to worries about a possible alliance between Scotland and France, led to the conclusion south of the border that a parliamentary union was the surest way of securing the Protestant succession – and England’s northern border from a French invasion from Scotland.

The Scots, then as now, were deeply divided on the union issue. Some were simply confused. Strong support came from those Scots who had been behind the Revolution, which had restored Presbyterianism and established constitutional monarchy. Under the Stuarts, many Scots (known as Whigs) had been fined or imprisoned. Some were tortured or executed or forced into exile. ‘Presbyterian memory’ convinced many that, to secure the gains of the Revolution, union with England was necessary – to resist the Jacobites who King Louis XIV and Pope Clement XI were actively promoting. For the Jacobites, union was anathema.

Urged by King William, union negotiations were held in 1702-3, then again more fruitfully early in 1706. Doubters were swung by the compensation won for the country’s massive financial losses over the ambitious but failed colonial expansion venture at Darien near Panama.

Few Scots though were enthusiastic about sacrificing their parliament. In order to placate angry crowds in Edinburgh, the government was forced to promise that the records and regalia of Scotland should remain in Scotland in perpetuity. Recognising the strength of Scottish national feeling, the Scots union negotiators insisted on maintaining the ‘fondamentals’ of Scottish civic society. These included the Church of Scotland as well as the legal system and the courts, the schools and universities, and the Convention of Royal Burghs.

That Scotland was able to operate semi-independently after 1707 is one reason that the union lasted, unchallenged, for so long. Scotland flourished as never before economically, benefiting from, and contributing to, Britain’s global empire. External threats – France at first, and in the 20th century Germany – also held the nations together.

The circumstances and concerns that brought Scotland and England together are of little relevance now, although, as in 1706-7, economic considerations loom large and may be decisive. Industrialisation is in the past. The empire has gone. Westminster government, however, became more centralised in the decades after 1945, and has seemed unresponsive to Scottish needs, and oblivious to Scottish sensivities. Politically the nations have diverged. Yet for many Scots, union can be likened to a long-indulged habit. Most of the time, it hasn’t done much noticeable damage. There are those who believe otherwise, and that if the Scots kick the habit the nation will be better for it. If a majority of voters are persuaded of this, Great Britain will become yet another victim of the churning forces of history, an outdated geographical expression.

“The Scots, then as now, were deeply divided on the union issue.”

See www.rsgs.org/publications for a longer version of this article.
**Norway at the dawn of sovereign statehood**

**Professor Øyvind Østerud**, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo

Norway became a sovereign state in 1814, after more than 400 years as a province governed by Denmark. In the Kiel treaty of January 1814, after Napoleon’s defeat at Leipzig, sovereignty over Norway was transferred from the Danish to the Swedish king. The Danish king had been allied to Napoleon, while Sweden supported the victorious powers.

There were no state institutions on Norwegian soil during Danish reign. How could Norway emerge from the Napoleonic wars with sovereign statehood?

First, Norwegian statehood from 1814 had two distinct sources. It was a gift from the great powers who forced Denmark to surrender Norway, as punishment for Denmark’s support of Napoleon. Then there was a political self-awareness among the Norwegian elites and parts of the broader public, together with the ambitions of the Danish viceroy in Norway, who volunteered to be crowned as head of the new Norwegian state. The viceroy was prince of Denmark. He gave direction to Norwegian patriotism, even if his long-term vision might have been a reunification with Denmark. He was forced by Sweden to resign from the Norwegian crown (but he made his come-back as king of Denmark in 1839).

Second, the Swedish royal authorities accepted the Norwegian constitution of 17th May with few modifications. The decision-making competence of the Norwegian Parliament, the Storting, was preserved within a personal union headed by the joint king, even if Sweden was the major royal power base. Sweden did not enforce supremacy in Norway in the immediate aftermath of the Kiel treaty, since their military forces were preoccupied with the allied march against France. When they turned to Norway in the summer of 1814, after the rebellion of the constitutional assembly, the newly elected king capitulated quickly and promised to leave the country. Sweden, on the other hand, compromised and accepted the strong position of the Storting. The union with Sweden, which lasted until 1905, was quite loose. Under this union, foreign policy was a royal prerogative, but otherwise Norwegian institutions reigned supreme. In legal affairs, the royal veto could postpone decisions made by the Storting, but not block them with finite force. The two countries had quite separate economies with a different economic base. The populations had not been extensively mixed and they retained, or even cultivated, their separate cultural identities.

Even without state institutions, Norway as a separate political entity had a flying start with the university in Christiania (now Oslo) from 1811. Many notables in the new state saw the national university as a cornerstone of emerging administrative institutions. The major Norwegian elites had their background as prominent figures in the dual kingdom of Denmark-Norway. Many of them had nurtured Norwegian patriotism as students in Copenhagen during the last decades of the 18th century. This experience, as public figures and officials, made it easier to construct state institutions in Norway. Major ministries were organized already in the autumn of 1814. The Supreme Court was established the year after. The military forces were easily separated from the Danish army and navy, with Norwegian officers. And the Bank of Norway was established in 1816.

When Sweden accepted the establishment of national institutions in Norway, this was also acceptable to the great powers of the time. On the other hand, Russia and Britain were on guard against Swedish predominance in the north. Therefore Denmark, despite its support for Napoleon, was allowed to keep the West Nordic and Arctic possessions that had been attached to Norway prior to Danish subjugation – the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of these smaller powers were at the mercy of the interests of the major players.

National mobilization for secession from Denmark would have been unsuccessful without the support of great powers and patterns of alliance on the one hand, and the amenability of the new senior partners on the other. Additionally, a heavy Swedish hand on Norway would have been counterproductive to the priorities of Sweden. In practice, the union was never vital to Swedish economic or political interests, as it became clear a century later.

Norwegian officials, finally, and successfully, pressed for extended sovereignty in foreign affairs parallel to the development of Norwegian interests in maritime matters.
The USA has yet to take much notice of the forthcoming Scottish referendum. For most average Americans, despite some religious (especially Presbyterian), cultural and romantic roots, little will change. Decision makers in Washington DC are more aware, but what concerns them are the effects of Scottish independence on the UK, Europe and NATO. Scotland itself receives little attention. Despite the historic links between Scotland and America, average perceptions tend to be crudely based upon whisky, tartan and Braveheart. Heritage does matter, and a narrative of persecution and struggle for liberty, connected to the plight of those who crossed the Atlantic during the Highland Clearances, resonates among some of the 4.8 million Americans who identify themselves as being of Scottish descent. However, their impression of Scotland is unlikely to change with independence, and they only comprise 1.7% of an American population which includes a multitude of other European heritages, not to mention the growing African, Hispanic and Asian communities. Even Ireland worries about the relevance of the US-Irish relationship to a USA with a changing population. Independent or not, Scotland will find itself… merging with Europe as part of the UK if Scotland left without Britain. The economic uncertainty around the UK’s break-up could complicate US-EU trade agreement negotiations. US investors will also watch how Scotland proposes to develop its oil, gas and banking sectors, and whether it will seek to undercut the UK or Ireland to attract investment. Equally, there are worries that any US investments could find themselves helping to foot the costs of independence. Finally, there is the future of Trident. Like Britain, the US itself is preparing to modernise its Trident system. Britain abandoning Trident, in part as a consequence of Scottish independence, could cause disruption and extra costs for the Pentagon at a time when its budget is under pressure.

The nuclear debate also has a strong geopolitical element. The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Turkey still have US nuclear weapons operated on dual-key systems. A UK without nuclear weapons may play a role in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium deciding to follow suit, leaving only France and Turkey as nuclear-capable states. This, combined with the splitting and further weakening of Britain’s military, will only add to American weaknesses on defence.

As events in Ukraine show, Europe and its borders may not be as safe as some like to think. Scotland’s bid for independence is driven by a benign nationalism, which is not necessarily found outside Europe, and its repercussions may be more dangerous for European security if ties with Washington are damaged. So, does Scottish independence matter to America? The process and potential consequences could deeply impact on Washington’s strategic outlook, and this will be taken seriously as the referendum approaches. However, while Scotland will remain a part of America’s history, any independent Alba-America relationship will not be a particularly important one.

The view from decision makers in Washington is more nuanced. Until recently, few thought the issue mattered, and if they did they believed independence was unlikely. The USA administration is, as always, too busy handling immediate issues like Ukraine’s sovereignty. However, several themes of debate are emerging. Dealing with separatist movements is not a distant problem. Some in DC would lose respect for the UK if Scotland left without Britain putting up a determined argument. Some struggle to understand how a union, one which once defined the world, could potentially disappear quietly into the history books. For the lawyers especially, the UK’s failure to move to an inclusive federal system can seem baffling. In dealing with the issue of Quebec, the US faced similar questions to those about Scotland and Europe. During Quebec’s 1995 referendum, Washington was quick to squash Quebec nationalists’ expectations that Quebec would automatically join NATO, the North American Free Trade Area, and the US-Canadian air defence arrangement of NORAD. Washington will therefore watch closely how the EU approaches Scotland.

Some also worry that Scotland’s referendum could fuel other referendums that weaken the EU, America’s largest economic partner. Other regions could vote to split their states, some states could vote to leave the EU, and some states might hold referendums on immigration or the euro. And the US has its own small, but politically frustrating, independence movements in Alaska and Hawaii. The economic uncertainty around the UK’s break-up could complicate US-EU trade agreement negotiations. US investors will also watch how Scotland proposes to develop its oil, gas and banking sectors, and whether it will seek to undercut the UK or Ireland to attract investment. Equally, there are worries that any US investments could find themselves helping to foot the costs of independence.

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After the constitutional referendum, whatever the outcome, we may be able to turn our attention back to the dynamics of the world in which we live. Dynamics which we shall have to address, and to which our constitutional preferences may not be very relevant.

Every individual country in the world is affected by forces which are global but with consequences which are local. Those forces may be economic, climatic, demographic, technological, biological or ideological.

We can remember from before the process of debate leading towards the constitutional referendum, before even the banking crisis and its economic consequences, we had deep concerns about the potential long-term effects of climate change, and were beginning to understand the potential breadth of the effects of changing demographic structures.

One of my strongest personal concerns is that, in Scotland, we have allowed ourselves to be diverted from thinking about the inexorable nature of the effects of demographic change on labour supply. There are potentially far-reaching social and economic consequences, irrespective of whether we choose to seek to adjust our economy and public services to a smaller workforce, or to achieve levels of immigration for which Scotland has not in the past proved an attractor. A smaller workforce would imply the adoption of less labour-intensive ways of delivering goods and, more particularly, services.

One potential consequence is greater concentration of activity, potentially accelerating changes in settlement and/or travel patterns. Another is that the public sector may find itself unable to compete effectively with the private sector for scarce labour, with consequences for the way in which the most labour-intensive of our public services are delivered. Those consequences may not sit at all easily with another direct consequence of demographic change – greater demand for precisely those public services.

Other global issues are coming more fully into our awareness. We see that the vulnerability of our collective or individual security and privacy, which is the other side of the coin of the positive capacity created by the growing ubiquity of electronic communications, has become a substantial reality before many of us had begun to understand the potential risk. Cyber attack is now a more present threat than missile attack, and one with the potential to affect a whole country more perversely, in ways which we analysed to a degree in the extensive planning for resilience against the now largely forgotten concerns about the Millennium Bug.

Cyber security is an example of an issue which we first perceived as sporadic and later came to understand as part of the new normal. We may be in that transition on other issues. We had a brief period of grappling with the potential for the more rapid spread of pandemics, when we and other countries raced to put in place a convincing response to the threat of avian flu. We had a rise and fall in our level of concern about global terrorism, following the attempted bombing of Glasgow Airport. Those issues remain part of the environment in which our future will unfold; and dormancy is not, of course, the same as reduced probability.

In addition to all these external forces, we have broad issues to face which exist more within our own boundaries, even if a number of other countries also face similar challenges within their boundaries. Our post-war model of delivery of a range of public services delivers very effectively for some in society, but the evidence of six decades tells us very clearly that it does so much less, or scarcely at all, for others. Consequently, we need to ask what complementary model would enable us to mitigate these profound inequalities. In my discussions with those elsewhere in the world interested in these issues, which are recognisable in other countries with well-developed systems of social provision, Scotland is regarded as having made radical efforts to begin to tackle this challenge. We have important decisions to take about whether and, if so, how to build on that.

I haven’t dwelt on the economic challenges of rising global competition, the rise of consumer power in parts of the world to which we have less proximity than our former and current main export markets, or our long-standing challenges with relative levels of productivity and new company formation. In part, this is because our economic concerns have held their place in our attention alongside the constitutional debate better than other issues. Also, I am conscious that some people believe that the constitutional debate is essentially about how best to be positioned to deal with these challenges. So perhaps the only thing we can all expect to agree on in relation to economic challenges is that, like all the other issues I have discussed, their tides will be in flow whenever we can spare time from our constitutional preoccupations to observe what is going on around us.
In February 2014, I helped launch the report *Imagining Scotland’s Future: Our Vision*. The report is based on the views of over 900 people who attended 32 community events run by the Church of Scotland as an alternative national debate on the referendum. The events were held right across Scotland in 2013. We asked people to think about what kind of Scotland they wanted to live in; to do this, participants were asked to write down the values they felt were important, the issues they considered a priority, and what actions we should take to make Scotland a better place. The results were fascinating, and here are a few examples of the conclusions.

- The referendum is about far more than the simple question, “what is in it for me?”. The idea that being £500 better off or worse off would affect how people voted was conspicuous by its absence in all the 32 events. Instead, participants prioritised the building of local communities on the principles of fairness, justice, and sharing of resources.
- There is dissatisfaction with the political system at all levels, not just Westminster. Holyrood also featured strongly. Participants wanted to see integrity, accountability and transparency, being able to hold politicians accountable between elections, and for the party system to be less powerful.
- There was a call for radical changes, including far greater local decision-making, and for politicians to see themselves as public servants in a more participative democracy.
- A modern, successful economy needs limits placed on free-market forces; business models should be more focused towards the employee and more value-driven. There was a willingness to consider alternative and more progressive models of taxation to build a better society.

There was a strong expression of the need for prayer and for the Church to be involved in social action and in promoting Christian values such as love, hope, respect and forgiveness, as the fundamental building blocks which would contribute to the common good.

**Our common values**

The top ten values mentioned in the meetings (see table) are all about our relationships. While these appear to be about relationships between people, care and concern about Scotland – the place, the natural environment, and our stewardship of the land and nature – were also big concerns.

A strong theme running through the contributions made about the environment was recognition of the beauty of Scotland’s natural environment, and that the resources within it should be protected and shared. Concern for the natural environment was matched by discussions about the urban environment, its quality and safety, and global environmental issues including our impact on climate change.

Such concerns started in the same discussion of values that started all the meetings, suggesting that care for each other and care for the environment are not two irreconcilable aims but are strongly linked together and have a common ethical origin.

How do we relate these findings to the current referendum debate? We asked no-one how they intended to vote in the referendum, though in such a cross section of Scottish society we would surely have encountered people who will vote no, some who are committed to independence, and a number who are uncertain or uncommitted. What is striking is that the responses from people in opposite camps should have so much in common, and that the values underpinning the debate could be repeated so many times in such different circumstances.

This really encourages me and helps give substance and depth to the public debate. We can all ask the same question and encourage this debate together: what kind of Scotland do we want to live in?

### Top Ten Values

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The report *Imagining Scotland’s Future: Our Vision* is available from www.churchofscotland.org.uk.

“...care for each other and care for the environment are not two irreconcilable aims but are strongly linked together and have a common ethical origin.”
Reflections on the *Economics of Constitutional Change*

Professor Andrew Goudie, Visiting Professor and Special Adviser to the Principal, University of Strathclyde

With only a few months to go until the referendum, there is inevitably great heat in the debate over the future constitution of Scotland: the stakes are massive for the UK and its constituent regions, for Scotland and its people, for the political parties and, not least, for the personalities leading the campaigns. But are the critical economic questions that should shape the outcome of the referendum – and the discussion surrounding all the constitutional arrangements that entail increased economic powers – sharply defined? Is there, indeed, any consensus about what they are? Moreover, is there any sense of agreement across the political divide on at least some of the answers to our key economic questions? Or, rather, have we failed to narrow down the crucial areas of dispute upon which we might have usefully focused our thinking? As a brave generalisation, I would suggest that the key questions are now reasonably well understood, but there has been little convergence or agreement on these critical challenges.

The reality of this phase in our political history was that the debate would always be frenetic, and, in a country such as Scotland in which the intensity and vigour of exchanges can sometimes impede the quality of discussion, the danger was that clarity of argument would be lost in the maelstrom of exchange. Certainly, there has been much confusion of objective facts and legitimate subjectivity and blind speculation and unsubstantiated assertion. This is a pity, as the open acknowledgement of what we do and don’t understand, and where we have good objective evidence and where we simply don’t, is a key step towards the promotion of a better, more insightful debate. But let’s be real: few political leaders in the world would believe that they could concede that their cause – especially one of such historic and fundamental importance – is uncertain in its outcome, and retain credibility.

The key economic questions While it might not have been the case a couple of years ago, the debate is now underpinned by a range of high-quality analysis and thought, and the key objective for the country should be for the political debate to make a thoughtful and considered use of these insights. Perhaps the glaring exception here is that, while the independence option has, quite appropriately, received considerable attention, the paucity of meaningful discussion around the alternative options (‘devo-plus’, ‘devo-more’, etc) is striking. Were enhanced devolution to be the basic political choice, the economic thinking around a coherent and economically meaningful set of new powers would need serious development. What might we identify as the consensus view of the key economic questions that should preoccupy us now?

From the most fundamental political economy perspective, is the critical economic question for the people of Scotland, “under which constitutional arrangement, whether based on enhanced powers within the UK or on political independence, will I be economically better off?”; or is it, “irrespective of my future economic circumstances, do I wish national self-determination – albeit one that will be constrained in significant ways by the reality of the global economy, and by any monetary union that we may choose to enter – to drive my economic future?”

The Social Attitudes Survey (January 2014) has suggested that the electorate do see the economy as the key issue, and would be significantly more likely to support a politically independent Scotland if they were £500 worse off (52%) than if they were £500 worse off (15%). Interestingly, therefore, this tends to suggest that economic self-determination – rooted in a sense of national identity and nationhood – is less important than certain economic benefit. However, herein lies the paradox: while people may wish to make the economy (and, notably, their personal economic gain) the critical and decisive determinant of the outcome of the referendum, it is an area of inevitable uncertainty and indeed speculation. The knowledge base is simply too weak to provide the clarity that allows this to be
the central issue upon which the electorate can form a considered and informed judgement. At the macroeconomic level, there is no convincing evidence of the relative benefit to economic growth of differing constitutional arrangements. Indeed, there are similar weaknesses in assessing the net impact or credibility of particular policy promises or priorities in areas such as income tax, corporation tax or welfare. So, how is this paradox resolved? If people feel that their major concern is going unanswered – whether because it is unanswerable at this time or because the answers are riddled with apparent contradiction or confusion and complexity that leaves them none the wiser – the issue will be, what will then drive their thinking instead? Will people adopt a broader understanding of their likely economic net benefit that encompasses the benefits from the public services that they enjoy or the benefit they derive from the potential gains in their environmental and equity perspectives?

The generosity of the welfare system has been a prominent issue in this regard, although the argument rests on the underlying values of Scottish society and the extent to which they are distinctive and sustained over decades. Indeed, it highlights a key piece of the debate: are Scottish values substantively distinct in a wide range of areas of economic, social and environmental life from those prevailing across the UK as a whole and over a sustained period? If they are shown to be such, then the case for greater powers and, in extremis, political independence, is significantly more compelling.

It is worth noting that, if people are indeed motivated by personal economic outcomes, then, while the technical debate may seem dry and obscure, it is nonetheless pivotal.

At the level of the fundamental economic system, I would suggest that there is an emerging consensus that currency choice is one of the top, if not the top, challenge. This single decision has such far-reaching ramifications for the definition of the entire economic system that, while a careful analysis of the policies that each currency choice might permit or necessitate is important, ultimately we must revert to the most basic and, arguably, the first decision that should be determined: the currency one. So, firstly, which currency system would facilitate the attainment of society’s primary objectives and, secondly, therefore, which constitutional arrangement would facilitate the currency system that Scotland thus requires?

The striking interventions of the UK Chancellor, Scottish First Minister, and other politicians in February demonstrated the centrality of the currency question. The declaration by pro-union leaders that an independent Scotland would not be able to formally adopt sterling invites many critical questions. If this position is seen as irreversible, then the advocates of independence will be under immense pressure to define a new currency position that they can (or, more probably can) deliver. If the position is seen as reversible, not least in the face of an actual decision to support independence, then little has changed. It will be the post-referendum negotiations that are crucial.

However, there are deeper issues at stake here. For example, even if the UK Government’s position is indeed final, there is still the key question of whether global markets find this a long-term, credible situation. In the event of a financial crisis in Scotland, for instance, would the rest of the UK, in an informal sterling union, stand aside and not provide support, even when there was a UK self-interest in a stable union? And, given that the Scottish economy constitutes almost 10% of the present UK economy, a share significantly in excess of the size of Hong Kong or Panama relative to the dollar zone, would the UK not wish, in reality, to have an up-front agreement that provided some ex ante reassurance about the conduct of Scottish policy?

From a UK perspective, how risky therefore would Scottish

“…this tends to suggest that economic self-determination… is less important than certain economic benefit.”

Continued on page 26
participation be in an informal union? Moreover, from a Scot’s perspective, just how different would an informal sterling zone be from a formal sterling monetary union? Some argue that Scotland would de facto be equally subject to the UK’s monetary policy under either scenario.

Interestingly, while the UK self-interest in a continuing sterling monetary union that included an independent Scotland has been strongly asserted as a clear reason for the UK agreeing to such a formal union, the case has been advanced primarily on the basis of the increased transaction costs that would be imposed on UK businesses, consumers and visitors, were Scotland compelled to adopt a non-sterling currency. Important though transaction costs would undoubtedly be, this consideration is dwarfed by the far greater questions regarding the fundamental stability of the sterling union, and the costs that might be incurred were the union to prove unsustainable and unstable. It is here that the UK pro-union advocates see the greatest threat to the UK interest. Events in the EU since 2009 have been advanced primarily on the basis of the increased transaction costs that would be imposed on UK businesses, consumers and visitors, were Scotland compelled to adopt a non-sterling currency. Important though transaction costs would undoubtedly be, this consideration is dwarfed by the far greater questions regarding the fundamental stability of the sterling union, and the costs that might be incurred were the union to prove unsustainable and unstable. It is here that the UK pro-union advocates see the greatest threat to the UK interest. Events in the EU since 2009 have

Similarly, UK dependence on the strength of Scottish trade and exports (especially Scottish North Sea assets) has often been cited as an important factor in the UK interest. This analysis begs the question of who actually owns the North Sea assets that are being exploited and who benefits from the profits: to where is the profit directed? – to within Scotland, the UK, the USA, or elsewhere? And, moreover, would the North Sea assets be actually traded in sterling? It is also interesting to consider that, while there may be monetary policy arguments for a strong currency, few economies in practice are unhappy to see their competitiveness enhanced through modest depreciation. Indeed, many have argued that if the benefits of the North Sea were to accrue primarily to Scotland, the UK would not be averse to seeing its currency weaken to facilitate the development of other tradable sectors. The UK interest here is therefore not clear-cut.

In any event, the heart of the currency debate should arguably be about the conditions that would, or could, create sustainability and mutual benefit within a common currency area, not about second-level concerns and not drowned under the noise of political manoeuvring. It could be argued that – with appropriately designed institutions, risk-sharing, oversight, and the pooling of sovereignty, amongst other key elements – a mutually beneficial currency union might be constructed. The key point is whether or not the terms of such an arrangement would be agreeable to all parties, and whether or not it would be preferable to having no agreement.

Inherent in this second key question is the heart of the constitutional debate: to what extent does political independence facilitate meaningful and substantive economic independence? Or are most currency options – and, notably, that of a formal sterling currency union – necessarily constrained, in that monetary and fiscal policy are heavily limited by the conditions imposed on a union by the members of that union? The intervention by the Governor of the Bank of England in January, though carefully crafted to avoid overt political comment, was nonetheless insightful in demonstrating his view that the effective and sustainable working of a monetary union necessitates a high degree of co-ordination and collaboration. It requires a relatively sophisticated pre-determination of the rules that would shape behaviour within the union and, importantly, a high degree of risk-sharing and risk-pooling within the union, with all that that implies for the sovereignty of the two states. In the present political climate, it is difficult to see UK Ministers rejecting the Governor’s perspective.

It would seem inevitable that any formal monetary union would entail a complex negotiation in which the nature of the conditionality imposed on each other by the membership was determined. In this circumstance, the relative power and influencing capacity of the partners to the monetary union are central to the strategic and policy outcomes that emerge. The key question in the event of a pro-independence vote, in which a formal sterling monetary union is the preferred option, is: are the perceived benefits of the monetary union sufficiently great as to outweigh the perceived constraints and conditionality of the union, or is the newly gained political independence seen to be too heavily compromised, and the proposed conditionality deemed both politically and economically unacceptable, such that an alternative option – one’s own currency – is preferred?

And, directly relevant to the previous point is the question: what are we learning from the traumatic experience of the European Monetary Union (EMU) over the course of the financial crisis and subsequent protracted recession? Certainly there have been strong indications of an emerging consensus, whether we like it or not, of a clear need to establish greater co-ordination and collaboration through banking and financial sector unions, and through closer economic and fiscal union. Are these apparent lessons directly applicable to a possible
sterling monetary union? And what do we learn from the experience over recent times of other small independent European economies that have successfully maintained stable economic systems outwith the EMU and indeed outwith the EU? There is much in these questions to understand still.

To date, the debate has been somewhat casual about what is really of direct interest to a constitutional question for which the outcome is presumably a new arrangement that could span decades, if not centuries. Arguably it is not the capacity of a new arrangement to handle the big current economic policy challenges, but rather the capacity to respond to the challenges that might be anticipated over the very long term, and indeed the challenges whose nature and import is absolutely speculative. The central challenge is: would the new economic system display the characteristics that we would require to promote a stable and sustainable economy in the face of the huge global challenges that might be encountered over the coming decades?

We should pay close attention to any adjustment or transition process from one economic system to another (which is, of course, a separate consideration from any short-term and temporary economic challenge, such as a recession or banking crisis, that happens to be important at a particular point in time). If adjustment is anticipated to take years or even decades, then most people would probably seek long-term benefits that were more substantive and more certain. So, the analysis of the long-term outcomes is again a key part of this debate.

One grossly under-discussed question is whether the status quo is in fact an option at all. The Scotland Act (2012) moves us on from the original 1999 devolution settlement, but it would, for example, appear extremely unlikely that a UK Government will not revisit the basic UK equalisation question. Is the current approach (founded on a considerably dated, underlying Needs Approach to equalisation, and the marginal adjustments determined through the Barnett formula) sustainable, or will the pressures for revision be overwhelming? A revision would be a very significant step away from the status quo. Moreover, such is the public support for enhanced devolution, it seems inconceivable that, were independence to be rejected, more powers would not be granted to Scotland.

**Concluding thoughts**

The answers to many questions are simply unknown at this time. They may depend on institutional structures yet to be negotiated and whose precise form is therefore unknowable. They may also depend on the impact of policy choices where our knowledge is too soft to provide the clarity that we seek. Evidence may be lacking or only exist for economies other than Scotland, or new powers and new policy simply create an economic system for which we have no history of how individual economic agents and businesses might respond. This is not a failing of analysis: it is a reality about any non-marginal economic policy change that creates a new set of incentives and behaviours that an economy has never seen before. We can, and should, offer the insights that theory and other economies can provide, but we can’t know with certainty.

Thus, there is a reality here. Choices in the referendum, and indeed choices post-referendum about the precise detail and form that enhanced devolution or independence might actually take, cannot be founded on hard fact and hard evidence as we might wish. Our thinking and our conclusions need honesty in this respect. Indeed, one striking conclusion would appear to be the importance of acknowledging openly the intractability of some challenges and the obvious risks and, instead, providing a focus on the management of risk and uncertainty, much as the private sector has done for years. Risk and uncertainty are not per se reasons to forego an opportunity, but a motivation for contingency planning.

While policy impacts will remain highly uncertain, this does highlight the critical nature of the post-referendum phase, and the negotiations that would follow around the institutional structures and multilateral agreements that would be necessitated by any constitutional change.

Political debate has a tendency to move rapidly from one issue to the next, rarely pausing for long to allow an issue to be analysed and challenged with a desirable intensity and care that would be more likely to expose both the real strengths and the weaknesses of the conflicting views. Nonetheless, I would argue that it is to these primary questions that the debate needs to continually revert, as we strive to gain better insight into their real meaning and application to the various constitutional options with which the Scottish people are confronted, and from which a choice must inevitably be made. Those who advocate the constrained self-determination of independence and enhanced devolution, irrespective of its precise impact on the economy and upon Scottish society, must surely see the value of understanding these immense challenges.

The ultimate challenge is this: given our incomplete understanding, do the uncertain net benefits of greater economic powers appear to sufficiently outweigh the uncertain net benefits of the current powers? Or is the fact of greater self-determination, necessarily constrained within an integrated global economy, with all its uncertainties, a strong enough motivation?

“…do the uncertain net benefits of greater economic powers appear to sufficiently outweigh the uncertain net benefits of the current powers?”

Many of the economic questions and debate around independence are analysed in detail in Professor Goudie’s new book, Scotland’s Future: the economics of constitutional change, a compilation of papers from outstanding experts in the key economic perspectives most relevant to the constitutional debate. The central challenges are drawn together in The Six Tests (chapter 2), while the subject-specific chapters each conclude with an explicit statement of the critical questions to be confronted. The book includes a useful table that sets out the primary options for constitutional change that have been advanced over recent years (both UK-based and independence-based models), together with their primary characteristics.
This is the first of three extracts from Professor Pacione’s forthcoming book, Scottish Geography: A Historiography. Written to mark the 130th anniversary of the founding of the RSGS, the book will provide an authoritative account of the origins, development, and changing nature of Scottish Geography, explaining the role of the RSGS in the promotion of geography, and demonstrating the significant contribution of geography and geographers in addressing contemporary issues in society. Information on how to obtain a copy will be published in the next edition of The Geographer, which will also include the second of the three extracts.

The Scottish Geographical Society was founded in Edinburgh on 28th October 1884, at a meeting in the Chamber of Commerce presided over by the Lord Provost, the Right Honourable Sir George Harrison, in which Professor James Geikie proposed “that this meeting, recognising the scientific and general utility of a National Society for the promotion of Geography, resolves that a Geographical Society for Scotland be now formed”.

Two key figures who were instrumental in convening the inaugural meeting of the Society were J G Bartholomew, of the Edinburgh map-makers, and Mrs A L Bruce, who was the daughter of David Livingstone and well-connected socially. Bartholomew’s idea was discussed at a gathering of friends with a common interest in world travel and geography, at the home of Mr and Mrs A Livingstone Bruce at North Berwick on 20th July 1884. As Bartholomew recorded, “the project of forming a Scottish Geographical Society came up rather as a sort of ‘remote’ ideal that had little prospect of realisation. It had been proposed before and discouraged by various kind friends! But Mrs Bruce’s eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, and she said it was just what her father would have welcomed. As we talked on, the possibilities became more hopeful, and eventually, when Mr Bruce appeared an hour later, all difficulties seemed to vanish under the influence of his cheery optimism. Before midnight a prospectus was drafted, and by next day Professor Geikie had given it his blessing. That was the beginning of the Scottish Geographical Society.”

The grand launching ceremony took place in the Music Hall, Edinburgh on 3rd December 1884, with an inaugural lecture by H M Stanley who had been persuaded by Mrs Bruce to travel to Edinburgh from Berlin where he had been attending the Congress Conference. On the following day, Stanley opened the first rooms of the Society at 80A Princes Street. On the evening of 5th December, the Society entertained Mr Stanley at an inaugural banquet at which he proposed the toast to the Society, which elicited an interesting exchange with Scotland’s own Africa explorer, Joseph Thomson: “What can I say more except to wish long years of useful existence to the Scottish Geographical Society. I do hope with all my heart that the Society will not forget their countryman, Mr Thomson, and that if they have got any severe or dangerous mission to explore, they will send Mr Thomson.” Mr Thomson in reply, “lamented the fact that the romance had gone out of African exploration; that Mr Stanley was now wandering about in the Congo, loaded with cotton goods and Birmingham ware, and that if this sort of thing were to go on he would prefer to go to (the) North Pole, and be done with Africa.”

Almost immediately, the Society resolved to establish branches at suitable centres throughout Scotland. The first was formed in Dundee on 26th November 1884, with the first meeting held on 7th December being addressed by Mr Stanley; others followed in Glasgow and Aberdeen in early 1885. Today there are a further nine of these local groups, in Ayr, the Borders; Dunfermline, Dumfries, Helensburgh, Inverness, Kirkcaldy, Perth and Stirling.

Within three months of its foundation, the Scottish Geographical Society had a membership of more than 800, that included distinguished individuals from a wide range of intellectual endeavours, and by 1912 the Society roll recorded 2,064 members. An increasing membership was not only a mark of the Society’s progress but was also essential for attainment of its objectives since, as today, “by far the greater part of the Society’s annual income depends on the subscriptions received from its members”. The membership also supports the Society in kind. From its earliest time to the present, the work of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society has been dependent upon the contributions of volunteers, both as members of Council and its various committees, and in the more general work of Headquarters.

“Mrs Bruce’s eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, and she said it was just what her father would have welcomed.”
On becoming an explorer
Craig Mathieson

I made the decision to become an explorer at the age of 12, after reading Cherry-Garrard’s The Worst Journey in the World. Already a bit of a feral child, I would spend many weekends wild camping in the woods around my home village of Buchlyvie, living off fish caught in the River Forth and the endless supply of rabbits from the surrounding fields. To me, even at this young age, it was all part of training to become an explorer one day.

Unfortunately, being an ‘explorer’ was not on the list of career options which I was given by my guidance teacher on reaching 16 years old. Quite simply, “people like you don’t do that sort of thing” was the advice I was given. However, I was never one for giving up easily, so I decided that the only person who could make this work was myself; therefore, over the following years, that’s exactly what I did.

Starting by joining the military, I was able to gain some of the skills required for successful exploration. However, I would always seek out anyone who could give me any advice; I would listen and practise any new skill until it became a natural instinct. I would also read any book which could help me get into the mindset of being an explorer. Needless to say, I began to see the explorers of the ‘Golden Age’ as my role models. For me, the professionalism and attitude of Amundsen and Nansen shaped the way I would plan and train for expeditions, whilst the inspiration to achieve would come from the likes of Scott, Shackleton, Bruce, and of course Sir Wally Herbert.

All the years of hard work came to fruition when, on 28th December 2004, having skied 730 miles, I reached the South Pole. There are no words which can describe the sense of accomplishment of a life-long goal; indeed, many people could ask if, having achieved the Pole, it left me with a sense of anti-climax. Nothing could be further from the truth; to ski to the South Pole is one of the greatest privileges in exploration. I often think about the actual moment I reached the Pole and what it took to get there – the training, the sponsorship, the pain, and the commitment from my wife and children to help me achieve. Therefore, instead of a sense of anti-climax, it fills me with an enormous sense of pride, as well as giving me the privilege of now being able to share my own experiences with others.

After the South Pole, I conducted an extensive lecture tour of Scottish schools. I would tell the pupils of my experiences, but at the same time ask them who inspired them and what did they want to achieve in life? Over the many months of lectures, I began to identify a section of pupils within every school who would have fantastic aspirations but no confidence or belief that they would achieve anything significant in life.

This troubled me, so I set out to demonstrate that anyone with the right training could change their attitude to achieve any goal, regardless of previous beliefs. Therefore, I took Chris Struthers, a very normal, shy teenager with a serious lack of confidence, on a journey that would change his life – skiing to the Geographic North Pole.

Preparation for any expedition has to be meticulous, but more so when dealing with youths. We trained hard, and over the months I could see Chris’s confidence grow. The expedition was flawless and on 24th April 2006, shoulder to shoulder, we reached the North Pole.

Chris returned to school, worked hard, and used the skills he had learnt to eventually gain enough qualifications to be accepted into university. A very confident Chris and his mother visited me last summer to say thank you; they had just returned from his graduation ceremony at Aberdeen University. They explained that the North Pole expedition had changed their lives forever: life no longer had barriers, just opportunities. There are thousands of youths all over Scotland who are just like Chris when I first met him. I know, as I still talk to schools all over the country. I consider myself to be exceptionally privileged to have had the opportunity to undertake my expeditions. However, with this privilege comes a duty. A duty to pass on all the life lessons learnt, to share the images I’ve seen on my travels, and to inspire the next generation. I now devote all my time to establishing the Polar Academy, a Scottish charity which seeks out the ‘Chrises’ of this world and gives them the responsibility and trust needed to enable them to join me in scientific expeditions to the Arctic. Whereby, on their return, they go into schools and inspire their peers with the message that any goal can be achieved.

Next time, I’ll write on where we are at with the Polar Academy: the selection of the pupils, the training, and what it means to them and their families and communities to be part of the Polar Academy. If, in the meantime, you would like to know more, please feel free to contact me through the RSGS or on 01506 825115.
Heat
Adventures in the World’s Fiery Places
Bill Streever (Back Bay, December 2013)
A bestselling scientist and nature writer who goes to any extreme to uncover the answers, Bill Streever sets off to find out what heat really means. Let him be your guide and you’ll firewalk across hot coals and sweat it out in Death Valley, experience intense fever and fire, learn about the invention of matches and the chemistry of cooking, drink crude oil, and explore thermonuclear weapons and the hottest moment of all time – the Big Bang. Written in Streever’s signature spare and refreshing prose, Heat is a compulsively readable personal narrative that leaves readers with a new vision of an everyday experience – how heat works, its history, and its complete connection to daily life.

Round About the Earth
Circumnavigation from Magellan to Orbit
Joyce E Chaplin (Simon & Schuster, December 2013)
For almost 500 years, humans have been finding ways to circle the Earth – by sail, steam, or liquid fuel; by cycling, driving, flying, going into orbit, even by using their own bodily power. The story begins with the first centuries of circumnavigation, when few survived the attempt. Starting with Ferdinand Magellan’s dangerous voyage, Joyce Chaplin takes us on a trip of our own as we travel with early pioneers Francis Drake, William Dampier and James Cook, right through to modern space travellers like Yuri Gagarin and John Glenn. Through it all, the desire to take on the planet has tested the courage and capacity of generations of bold men and women.

What’s up with Catalonia?
The causes which impel them to the separation
edited by Liz Castro (Catalonia Press, October 2013)
On 11th September 2012, on Catalonia’s National Day, 1.5 million people from all over Catalonia marched peacefully through the streets of Barcelona, behind a single placard: Catalonia: New State in Europe. Fifteen days later, President Artur Mas called snap elections, in order to hold a referendum that would let the people of Catalonia decide their own future. The rest of the world and even Spain were caught by surprise. In this new book, 35 experts explore Catalonia’s history, economics, politics, language, and culture, in order to explain to the rest of the world the fascinating story behind the march, the new legislature, and the upcoming vote on whether Catalonia will become the next new state in Europe.

Bus-Pass Britain Rides Again
More of the Nation’s Favourite Bus Journeys
edited by Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries (Bradt Travel Guides, August 2013)
Discover the spice of modern Britain from the top deck of a bus. We may complain about the quality of our local bus services, but Britain is blessed with a very fine network of local bus routes. That network takes in celebrated coastal and mountain landscapes as well as gritty industrial towns and unsung suburbs. In Bus-Pass Britain Rides Again, following on from Bradt’s hugely popular Bus-Pass Britain, 50 bus travellers retrace journeys that have particular meaning for them, along the way revealing the diversity of modern Britain. Evocative and fun, often witty and perceptive, the book gives a fresh perspective on communities across Britain. Just the ticket for travellers of all ages.

Scotland’s Choices
The Referendum and What Happens Afterwards
Iain McLean, Jim Gallagher & Guy Lodge (Edinburgh University Press, April 2013)
Following the signing of the Edinburgh Agreement in October 2012, Scotland’s voters are promised a referendum on independence in autumn 2014. If they reject independence, the proposed changes from the Calman Commission’s review on Scottish Devolution will most likely be put in place. But what will happen after the referendum? How will Westminster and the rest of the UK respond? What would a Calman regime entail? Is it even clear what independence will mean? What about the oil? What will the currency be? What will happen to the Old Age Pension pot if the UK splits? This book explains what will happen after the referendum in clear language, presenting the facts without taking sides, and focusing on how each of the options would be practically put into place. A handbook for voters who want to fully understand their options, it looks at the key issues: independence within the EU, the Calman Commission recommendations, the welfare state, money issues, and oil revenues.

Readers of The Geographer can buy Scotland’s Choices directly from Edinburgh University Press for only £11.00 (RRP £12.99) plus £3.50 p&pc. To order, phone 0131 650 4334, and quote the reference ‘6JG’.

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