

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2011

From the Editor: The year now coming to a close has been a year of mixed blessings. The over-riding gloom of the financial crisis with its ongoing impact of lost jobs, public service cuts, increased heating and fuel costs, health service problems and now the real possibility of a Euro collapse - it all makes dismal reading. Yet, the underlying strength of ordinary people also shines through. The magnificent achievements of Scots from all walks of life who contributed to 'Children in Need' is on a par with the care and love provided by untold numbers of carers and volunteers throughout the country. We have seen the outstanding victory of the SNP at Holyrood and the rejection of the unionist parties. Our political leaders at Westminster, with their selfish, corrupt and incompetent ways are in stark contrast to the positive and often selfless actions of ordinary folks. In Edinburgh, alongside the tram debacle there is the fantastic news that China is sending two Pandas to Scotland. To all our members, supporters and friends I wish you Seasonal Greetings and a Happy and Successful 2012

THE CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS



Greetings to all members and supporters of the Scottish Democratic Alliance. This is the first Christmas newsletter we have published, which itself is a sign that we can already regard ourselves with justification as an established Scottish institution. In the two and a half years since I, together with Bob Ingram and Alex Wilson, visited the Electoral Commission and signed the documents that sealed and confirm our official status, we have gone far to making our mark on the Scottish political scene. The initial confusion and even hostility we encountered has now given way to considerable respect as our far-reaching future vision and the professionalism of our research of policies for the future governance of post-independence Scotland have become recognised. In an age of global interdependence Scotland cannot afford government that is bounded by the UK or even Europe. Let it be understood that the Scottish Democratic Alliance stands unequivocally for constitutional independence and a seat at the United Nations. We cannot envisage how Scotland's unique interests in the world can be adequately protected without this minimum status. A great deal of research has still to be accomplished, not least on the nature of post-independence relations within the British Isles. Furthermore, we must also look to the means of supporting future candidates for the Scottish Parliament. Altogether, we are living in exciting times, and there is no lack of work to be accomplished in the immediate and longer-term future. Therefore, in extending my best wishes to everyone for health and happiness in the coming year, may I also underline the need for support and practical assistance if we are to accomplish our vital task and that service to the Community of the Realm of Scotland to which we have set our hand.

James Wilkie

SO? WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

REFORM SCOTLAND:

Following discussions with Reform Scotland, a well respected and listened to think-tank, Reform Scotland now recognise and list the SDA also as a think-tank. Reform Scotland have expressed a keen interest in reviewing our Economy and Taxation policy proposals. They have also been appraised that we are somewhat advanced in drafting a Banking and Finance policy and have declared a positive interest.

THE BLOGOSPHERE:

The swing away from the Main Stream Media (MSM) has continued throughout the year with more and more blogging opportunities in a fairly unrestricted media. This is in stark contrast to the blocking and restrictions placed on blogging by the MSM and the BBC. For most of 2011, the nature of some blogs was designed to challenge the status quo in the mindset of people and encourage new ideas. When the Chairman posted his article on the need for the SDA there was an overwhelmingly positive response from bloggers who had previously been outright hostile towards the SDA, as we were mistakenly perceived as splitting the SNP vote. Now they know that the SDA wholeheartedly support the SNP on their objective towards Independence, although we differ in post independence issues such as preferring to trade in Europe through the EFTA rather than the EU. The more members we have blogging, building and supporting positive debate, the greater the respect and standing gained by the SDA. Jim Wilkie, Alex Wilson, Ron Greer, Ed Means and Dougie Don have been our most prolific letter writers and bloggers.

PRINTING:

This year Dougie Don, our board member for Caithness and Sutherland has set up a small print shop to supply promotional literature to the SDA at cost price. Although now retired, Dougie had previously had a printing business and retained much of his equipment and paperstock which is now being used for SDA purposes. With some financial help from the SDA, Dougie has now set up a comprehensive printing operation which all members can draw upon. For a list of items available, prices etc., you can contact Dougie on sdacaithness@btinternet.com. Dougie is also a prolific writer and distributor of SDA promotional literature - many thanks Dougie.

CONNECT MAGAZINE:

'Connect' is the business magazine dedicated to Inverurie and is published four times a year. During this past year SDA articles submitted by Bob Ingram, our board member for Aberdeenshire, have been published in all four seasonal offerings. Our thanks to Ranald the editor for his support.

THE CONSTITUTION (Discussion Paper):

Two versions of a draft Constitution were compiled and reviewed, with both receiving commendations and significant constructive criticism. The Scottish Constitution Commission considered that our proposals were a significant improvement on what passes as the UK constitution. However there are still structural issues to be worked through before it can be put to the Scots public for debate. A third version has been compiled and it is expected that this version will be out for review during the first quarter of 2012. There has been suggestions from a number of bloggers that we should wait until after Independence before attempting to write a draft Constitution. It is the SDA view however the people are entitled to know, and have a say in, what their rights and government structures are going to be before they sign up for Independence.

AND THERE'S MORE...

ECONOMY & TAXATION:

The discussion paper on the Economy and Taxation proposals is in the final states of research. Regretfully, the author has been ill for most of this year and it is therefore likely that the discussion paper may not be available until the 1st quarter of 2012. At present the author is finalising an introduction for the paper, and that may be available before the end of the year.

BANKING & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Alex Wilson, the SDA board member for Lothian is the Chairman of the recently constituted committee. The committee is currently evaluating a Monetary Policy submitted by one of its members. The monetary policy will be based on a radical, but proven system, utilising sovereign credit rather than sovereign debt. This will enable a sovereign Scotland to escape the sovereign debt trap most - but not all - countries have found themselves in. The committee is also working on the structure for a Scottish Central Bank, an Investment Bank and a Stock Exchange. It is also proposed that Scotland returns to our former currency the 100 pence Merk.

ENERGY POLICY:

Since the SDA Energy Policy was issued in September 2010 there have been significant changes in the energy sphere. Not least we have seen a massive rise in the liquid transport and domestic heating fuels. This period has also seen huge rises in the price of electricity and gas supplies and there is a likelihood of further price increases. Neither the Westminster nor the Holyrood governments appear to have a rational policy with which to respond to the situation. Massive subsidies for alternative energy supplies, including wind and solar, will merely drive up consumer prices with little benefit to taxpayers, since most of the investment is going to foreign firms. In reality, for decades to come, the bulk of our energy supplies will continue to come from fossil fuels. Our governments are not providing sufficient initiatives for the advancement of alternatives, such as community heating and power plants, geothermal power, estuarine and river power generation, hydrogen fuel, electric cars and batteries.

WIND FARMS:

During the year there has been a proliferation of on-shore windfarms, which, apart from the eyesore value, have virtually been proven to be white elephants, costing the taxpayer many millions through extra charges on their electric bills. Caithness has suffered particularly badly in this respect so the Caithness branch has seen fit to become a member of the Caithness Windfarm Information Forum, (CWIF) a pressure group which is trying to slow down, if not actually stop this SNP driven madness. Bob Ingram recently joined a CWIF protest outside the SNP conference in Inverness.

REFERENDUM:

There appears to be a wide void between public opinion and the politicians regarding who should control the raising and spending of Scotland's revenues. The Scottish government has said that they will hold a referendum in the later part of their term in office. The strategy is a good one for at least two reasons. 1) It allows time for the Scots to understand what independence will mean. 2) The UK government and the unionist parties are unable to provide a coherent reason for keeping the union and as a result are in chaos as well as attempting their usual bullying and fear tactics.

The Scots have had enough of the bullying and can see through the lies and propaganda. It should also be borne in mind that the UK government is in violation of Paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, when they oppose the Scots desire for self-determination. As a signatory of the UN charter, the UK government are under an obligation to promote self-determination for 'identifiable peoples' such as the Scots. Nae doot about it, Alex Salmond is a '*canny fella and the sleekist high heid yin aroon the noo*'.

AND MORE YET.....

Pre-Independence:

In preparation for departing the Union with England there will be a need to negotiate a division of assets. Currently Scottish resources provide 9.4% of the UK revenues with 8.6% of the UK population. Contrary to the unionist propaganda there is no evidence that the UK government has ever subsidised Scotland. A strong team of negotiators will be required to obtain our paid up share of UK assets. There will also be a need to identify the functions required by a sovereign state and make preparations to put them in place

INDEPENDENCE:

Independence is on its way, and it is now accepted at international level that it is just a question of 'when' not 'if'. A recent review by an international research team confirmed by modelling evidence, that Scotland will likely become independent and will then successfully grow our economy. Here at home the UK government is also indicating that the union may soon be over. One only has to look at the evidence of the removal of assets from Scotland into England - defence force reduction, selling off of government properties, £1 billion of investment in CCS cancelled - now to be spent on an alternative project south of the border, and so on. In the words of the Bard "Come it will for a' that." Freedom's time has truly come.

Post Independence:

Following the resuming of our status as a Sovereign State there will be a period of reconstruction within Scotland. There will also be a need to formally apply to join the United Nations and some fifty other international organisations. This will apply to all the major European organisations including the European Free Trade Association instead of the European Union.

The Euro Crisis:

Jacques Delors has finally said what everybody with an objective interest in the Euro knew from the beginning, i.e., that the Euro experiment was a failed construct, right from the start. You cannot have a common currency without a common fiscal policy. Too many countries were brought in too quickly, for the wrong reasons. Cheap and easy money for some, expanded markets, for others. The consequence of this decade of recklessness is now well exposed. The Grand Plan for the Euro to be the new 'Reserve Currency' is gone with the wind. If it survives, it will be a vehicle for the core EU countries of the north, which can easily converge. The PIGS never could or should have been involved. Fiscal union can occur within Germany/France and the Benelux but, that's about it.

Scotland/UK never joined, a one off spark of genius from ex-Chancellor Gordon Brown, yet the effects of the failing Euro cost us dear every day. Scotland continues to contribute more money into the EU than we receive back in grants and subsidies, quite apart from the destruction of many traditional industries and communities our membership has cost us. A family of four would save some £30 on their weekly food bill if we were out of the EU.

For Scotland, an energy rich economy, but without full fiscal control and with high levels of unemployment, particularly amongst the young, our ability to effect changes to mitigate the effects of the crisis are minimal. The dream of the SNP to trade within Europe as a sovereign state can still be realised by joining the European Free Trade Association side of the 30-member European Economic Area and staying out of the European Union (if it still exists), whilst trading with in own currency, the Scots Merk. The forthcoming policy from the SDA on Banking and Finance will seek to provide Scotland with a constitutionally based, secure and reliable monetary system backed up by responsible institutions working to a goal of stability and the long term. If the SDA do nothing more than re-build the confidence of our nation in the future of our money and our banks, then we will have exposed the deficiencies of the Union's attitude and help hasten the drive towards Independence.

NEARLY DONE.....

European Union:

The SDA is committed to cooperation on a European level, and to Scottish membership of all of the major intergovernmental European organisations. We are, however, adamant that Scotland should not apply for membership of the European Union, which is the only international organisation in the world that claims to exercise sovereignty over its member states. The EU is a continuing serious economic drain on Scotland, and the structural havoc it has wreaked in the Scottish economy, for example on steel and fishing, will not be made good in our lifetime. Scotland's interests in the world are by no means synonymous with those of landlocked Central European countries and cannot be safeguarded under a common centralised rule. Furthermore, the entire nature of the EU has changed over the years, and membership under the present conditions is simply not in Scotland's interests.

Fishing:

The UK's membership of the EU has been one of the greatest disasters to befall Scotland since the 1707 Treaty of Union. The EU has destroyed tens of thousands of jobs through the application of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). What the figures cannot reveal is the amount of personal tragedy and communal disruption that lie behind them: bankruptcies, the uprooting of individuals and families, the destruction of thriving communities with centuries-old cultural traditions and communal lives. Harbours the length of Scotland, which were once the focus of social and economic life twelve months of the year, are now marinas for a handful of yachts. The logical outcome from the current CFP is the total elimination of the Scottish fishing interests to suit the large commercial fishing companies within the EU. There are those who indeed now doubt that the fishing industry will ever recover, due, not only to the rising sea temperatures and the loss of fish stocks, but also to the ending of the generations of fisher folks whose lives evolved around the fishing industry. Only by regaining national control and the imposition of strict controls on fishing can there be a future fishing industry

Single Police Force:

The SDA support the position that a single police force is acceptable provided that the local sensitivity of policing is also maintained, utilising local commanders. The position of the SDA is similar to that of Reform Scotland. We visualise a National Police Authority with members representing all local authorities, operating within a central procurement system and nationally standardised procedures. Local authorities should contribute a share of, and have a voice in, police funding and expenditure. With a representative National Police Authority the SDA would query the need for a National Chief Constable and any unnecessary tier of administration, but is well aware of the need for the centralisation of the national and international networking of the intelligence and scientific services required to deal with serious organised crime.

News Review:

The SDA is fortunate in having the services of Edward Means, currently resident in California. Due to the time differential Ed can provide us with a review of the latest news before some of us even get out of our beds. Ed is also one of our most effective and regular bloggers. Well done Ed!

Facebook:

Due to the fast paced nature of Social Networking the actual group number fluctuates and it is currently at 49 members; more important than the rising level of membership is that recently, the members have started interacting by starting their own discussions on subjects and asking questions. The Facebook group is unlikely to bring many new subscribing members but it opens a direct route of communication with Scots of all ages and establishes a core vote for the party for future elections. Our thanks to David Campbell, the SDA Facebook group administrator, and board member for Inverness.

AND FINALLY.....

Local Elections - 2012:

At present the SDA will be supporting one candidate. Alex Wilson will be contesting the Leith ward in Edinburgh. Over the past year Alex has been working tirelessly on behalf of the business community in Leith and currently acts as the Membership Secretary for the local small business committee. The SDA will provide background support, printed material and our best wishes for his success. If any other member is likely to be in a similar position please advise and we will provide similar support

Membership & Recruitment:

The range of knowledge and experience within the membership of the SDA is considerable and the quality of the policies and discussion papers produced bears this out. However, there are still significant gaps in our policy and discussion papers which can only be fully met from a wider range of members with different skills and experience. There is also a need to recruit the younger generation so that they can bring new ideas, new technologies and new social methods, to merge with older experience. In particular there is a need for members or contributors with experience of the NHS, care for the elderly, farming, forestry, education, local government and social welfare issues. In an attempt to recruit more young people every university offering political studies was circulated and asked to put up a small poster which we provided. If you have any dealings with colleges and universities it would be helpful if you promoted the SDA at every opportunity.

Subscriptions and Donations to the Scottish Democratic Alliance can now be paid via BACS to Royal Bank of Scotland: Account number 00600830 Sort code 83-2312

Supporters:

The SDA now has a growing number of individuals who are prepared to share their personal experiences with us in order to develop SDA policy and discussion papers. This often takes the form of 'constructive criticism' which is welcomed by the SDA and is extremely important to provide a balanced outlook. We are grateful for those who have taken the role of 'Devil's Advocate'. If you have a comment to make, why not contact us on info@scottishdemocraticalliance.org?

Collaboration offer to the SNP:

The SDA continue to support the SNP in their efforts to achieve Independence. In September 2011 a formal invitation was extended to the SNP headquarters to collaborate on a Security and Defence policy for Scotland. To date no reply has been received from the SNP. However, we have been advised by contacts within the SNP that our draft Security and Defence policy was in circulation amongst SNP members.

So there you have it:

And haven't we done well?

A big thanks to all our Members and Supporters.

Here's wishing you a

Happy Christmas

and a

Prosperous New Year

and all that you would wish for yourself.