

The Herald

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Scotland Decides



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The secret battle for your vote

THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS INSIDE THE YES AND NO REFERENDUM CAMP HEADQUARTERS

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Landslide still causing sleepless nights

DESPITE CURRENT POLLS, WESTMINSTER STILL FEARS SALMOND LONG SHOT WILL PAY OFF



**IAIN
MACWHIRTER**

AS SCOTLAND prepares to celebrate what could be the last Hogmanay before the break up of Britain, there is an air of unreality about the independence debate. The opinion polls have scarcely moved all year, with support for independence still stuck at around 30%. Yet, the UK cabinet, we are told, is increasingly anxious about the result of September's referendum. Coalition ministers are apparently worried that support for the union remains brittle, and vulnerable to a late surge of support for nationalism.

Questions are being raised about whether Alistair Darling, the former Labour Chancellor who chairs the Better Together campaign, is sufficiently combative against Alex Salmond. However, it's hard to believe that a more belligerent politician could have done much better. Or does David Cameron know something that we don't? Have focus groups detected an early change in the tide of opinion in Scotland?

Certainly, the big event of the year, the publication by the Scottish government of the independence white paper "Scotland's Future" in November did not appear to generate much momentum for nationalism. It was billed as the answer all the questions about independence – over six hundred of them. But critics said it answered all the questions except the ones that mattered.

Now, the white paper was, in many ways, an admirable document. It was very clearly written; it did address lots of technical questions about citizenship, passports etc; and contained a number of rather interesting policy ideas – such as the offer of universal child care, which according to reports is likely to be adopted by the UK



TIES THAT BIND: Scots attitudes are a legacy of the British Empire in which Glasgow was considered the Second City

Labour Party at the next election.

However, as always in politics, the answers you get depend on the questions you ask. There was nothing in the White Paper about what alternative currency an independent Scotland might adopt if it is either denied the use of sterling, or offered a currency union with England on unacceptable terms. The Scottish government insist that there is no prospect of Scotland not being allowed to use the pound and so the question was otiose.

Most independent commentators on the question agree that it is difficult to see how Scotland could be prevented from using a convertible currency that is used all over the world. Most agree too that it would not be in England's interest to refuse to recognise Scottish pounds – in the way London cabbies used to do – because it would damage relations with one of England's biggest trading partners.

However, the question will not go

away, no matter how hard the Scottish government wishes it would. Currency has somehow lodged in voters' minds as a key one in the referendum. Whether this is the result of unionist scare-mongering, a biased Scottish press, or a lack of confidence among Scots hardly matters. The question is there and it won't go away.

One reason, perhaps, is that when people go on holiday, the first thing they do is change currency – often getting ripped off by hidden charges. After the passport, this is the most direct experience of "abroad". Unionists have long used the spectre of border posts to dampen support for separatism. They conjure an image of nosey tartan police and customs officers at Carlisle checking passports, asking impertinent questions about how much currency you are carrying and what you have in your boot.

Now this image may be an entirely false one. As the SNP point out,

there are no border posts between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. And the EU has largely done away with border posts. The reason Scots have to change currency when jetting to the Costas is because Britain has decided to opt out of the euro. But that hasn't dispelled the anxieties.

Now, in Catalonia, which is seeking a referendum on independence from Spain you don't hear much talk of currencies, EU membership, pensions or any of the issues that dominate debate here. These are regarded as the small change of national liberation. Catalans want freedom from what they regard as oppressive rule from Madrid – to be masters of their own destiny.

The SNP would like Scots to feel the same about London rule, and believe that Scots have a legitimate grievance. Too much of the wealth of the country is syphoned off by the financial kleptocracy in the City of London. Scotland's best educated workers tend to drift south because of inadequate job opportunities here. Scottish businesses cannot get capital because it flows south.

But so far the Scots have not seen independence as the answer to these problems. And the White Paper does not appear to have persuaded many

of them. Opinion polls following the publication showed a marginal increase in Yes vote support, but nothing statistically significant.

The White Paper for all its 600-odd answers has not addressed the greatest question of all: why do Scots feel so closely identified with an entity, the United Kingdom, which the Nationalists claim has stolen their oil, their best brains, their biggest companies and given little in exchange other than the Barnett Formula and nuclear weapons on the Clyde? What is it that binds Scots to the union?

The answer is of course history. The three centuries in which Scots mostly regarded themselves as partners, albeit junior partners, in a common project: Great Britain. It is the legacy of an Empire, long gone, in which Glasgow regarded itself as "the Second City", and Scottish soldiers fought as redcoats across the world. Scots have really only started thinking of independence as a practical possibility in the last decade or so – since the creation of the Scottish parliament. It seems unlikely that this weight of history can be dispelled in the nine short months left until the referendum in September.

However, it is not impossible. After all, the Scottish voters have certainly shown that they are capable of voting in very large numbers for the party of independence, the SNP. In 2011, the Nationalists were trailing Labour by ten points in the polls at this stage in the Holyrood elections, and yet Alex Salmond went on to win by a landslide.

This is what is giving civil servants in Westminster sleepless nights. Is it possible that the debate about the currency has largely been taking place in an echo chamber created by the Scottish media? It may be that the debate seems artificial because the Scottish people haven't started thinking seriously about their voting intentions. Once they consider the options, and the possible consequences of a No vote, they may surprise us all. It seems a long shot – but then Alex Salmond, the great gambler of Scottish politics – has already placed his bet. And he doesn't like to lose.



The question will not go away, no matter how hard the Scottish Government wishes it would – currency has somehow lodged in the voters' minds

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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Campaign chief Blair Jenkins of the Yes campaign in the heart of their headquarters in Hope Street, Glasgow, as the battle to convert Scots to vote Yes in next year's independence referendum

Bunker mentality ... how the war of words begins far from the front line

ENTRENCHED IN THEIR HQS, CAMPAIGNERS PREPARE TO WIN US OVER WITH PERSUASION AND PSYCHOLOGY



LUCY ADAMS
Chief Reporter

THIS is the epicentre of the operation to persuade Scots to vote yes on September 18, 2014. The reception area is warm, welcoming and Nordic in style. Giant lightbulbs illuminate blocks of bright white and bold neon colours on the walls. It has a clean-cut, modern style – no frills, no tartan, no shortbread.

Inside the “bunker”, behind the desk of the chief executive, is what looks like a Middle Ages Italian portrait of a demure woman. A Thor-oughly Modern Girl is a contemporary take on an old picture, the flower replaced by a saltire.

It is a “positive” environment and, while parts of the office are untidy, there is a sense that nothing is here by accident. No message is wasted.

Inside the actual hub of Yes Scotland’s campaign offices, the walls are emblazoned with positive messages, and challenging questions. In huge letters running vertical down the far wall a question challenges: “What you are going to do today to convert a voter to say yes?” Fairy lights wink on a small Christmas tree. A4 sheets of positive quotes hang beside boxes of Yes Scotland badges and T-shirts. One quote from Robert Louis Stevenson reads: “To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life.”

This emphasis on positivity has, in part, been attributed to executive coach Claire Howell, of the Really Effective Development Company. Brought onboard by SNP MP Angus Robertson to run workshops with Yes

Scotland in its infancy, she is said to have been behind moves to drop Braveheart-style language such as “freedom” for “transformational”, “exciting” and “historic”.

“The most powerful language is the language that people themselves use,” says Stephen Noon, Yes Scotland’s chief strategist. “I can come up with all these ideas and thoughts but a person who expresses them in their own terms is far more powerful. You know how to speak to your friends and family far better than I do. All I need to provide you with is the information and knowledge.”

“The concept that has been very powerful is this idea of ‘positive psychology’.”

In the US the psychology of political campaigning was developed from sophisticated advertising strategies based on what would persuade consumers to buy certain products.

In 1957, *The Hidden Persuaders* by Vance Packard revealed powerful ad-men were working to tap the irrational in the consumer mind, using the applied psychology and sociology supported by the government during World War II. As more goods came to supermarket shelves, advertisers decided they were no longer selling products but malleable brand “personalities”.

Packard’s insights are not something either side publicly recognises, but both campaigns are deploying strategic persuasive techniques they hope will help turn the estimated one million undecided voters to vote in their favour.

“Politics has become more sophisticated over the years. I wouldn’t want you to think we import meaningless advertising strategies,” says Mr Noon. “I can only persuade you, if I find out what is important to you.”

“The conversation is not me bludgeoning you with information about

independence, it is about finding out what is important to you.”

Publicly, Yes Scotland’s emphasis is on grassroots campaigning: co-ordinating, training, and supporting local groups who will get out and knock on doors. But behind the scenes the strategic methods for persuading people to vote yes are more complex.

Mr Noon admits the “political bubble” of the mainstream media is the most challenging medium for the campaign because it means their views are seen “through other people’s eyes”. As a result they have to persuade voters face-to-face or over the internet.

Stewart Kirkpatrick, the head of social media for the campaign, has already trained dozens of social media “ambassadors”.

But Yes Scotland has been criticised for the unpleasant comments of so-called “cybernats”.

“One of the things we emphasise is when they’re engaging in conversation they need to be relevant and not barking in on someone else’s conversation about baking with a diatribe on Scottish independence.”

“We try very hard to avoid banning people. We’ve only banned a handful of commentators from our Facebook page for obscenity and extreme behaviour.”

Yes Scotland has 109,000 followers or friends on Facebook and 26,000 Twitter followers, compared to Better Together’s 97,000 friends on Facebook and 16,000 Twitter followers.

Better Together say such figures make no difference in a population of 5.2million.

Having identified the undecided voters and those who might not traditionally vote, Yes Scotland ask, on a scale of one to 10, how likely they are to vote yes. Over time, the aim is to gradually steer undecided voters ►

'Every conversation I have, it is in my mind to talk about this in an honest, open way'

► towards independence. Mr Noon says: "The vast majority of people in Scotland are somewhere in the middle and our task is to move people from three to five, from five to seven."

"Our ambassadors are equipped to have persuasive conversations with people but we're not expecting voters to have an overnight Damascene conversion."

Yes Scotland is known for its highly regarded network of separate 'interest groups' that in most cases are co-ordinated and promoted by Yes Scotland, including Business for Scotland and the National Collective, a group of pro-independence artists who have lent the campaign all the artwork in the office.

Over the next 10 months the aim is to use ambassadors and such interest groups to wear down the fear tactics of Better Together.

"The power of hope is far greater than the power of fear," says Mr Noon. "Over time fear erodes. When you first hear that scary noise outside your window it terrifies you but the second time you hear it you work out it is actually just the branch of a tree and are no longer frightened. The No campaign's fear tactics, over time, people will see through them, they will assess them, weigh them and they lose their effect."

Professor Joe Goldblatt, executive director of the International Centre for the Study of Planned Events and a professor at Queen Margaret University, runs the one-day ambassador training as a volunteer. As part of the training the ambassadors have to play the part of someone putting themselves forward to speak at a local event. Other participants play the role of audience.

"It's modelled on interactive training," he says. "It's all about role playing and confidence boosting, so that when people are asked questions they feel able to put forward a positive message about Scotland's future."

"The best way to learn is by doing. It is for them to say why they are voting yes and what Scotland will feel like on September 19, 2014. We emphasise the need to listen to people's questions and how to respond with evidence from the White Paper."

Where the Better Together strategy seems to be to focus on the last few weeks of the campaign, Yes is working on the slow burn of conversion through ambassadors. But the polls show that only 18% are more likely to vote yes – even having read the White Paper.

Sarah Jane Walls, the head of stakeholder engagement and member of the Yes Scotland advisory board, is, in many ways, the perfect ambassador: an eloquent businesswoman, former Labour voter and mother of two.

"I can't give you all the secrets," she says, laughing. "We've got our activists. I get goosebumps thinking about

them. It's about talking about it with your friends and peers, at the office. Every ambassador is tasked with converting 100 people."

Yes Scotland plans to recruit 10,000 ambassadors by May next year.

"Everybody in here is an ambassador," she explains pointing to the other staff in the office. "Every taxi I get in, every conversation I have, it is in my mind to talk about it in an honest, open, non-political way. What we know is that when people are engaged and we have real conversations with them they move towards yes and that scares Project Fear. They get a resource – a back end system – so they can log in to the resources and templates and forums and do different media training."

"We need our ambassadors knowing how to do that. They might, for example, want to do *Call Kaye*. They need to think about what kind of questions to be asking. Different training at different levels. Some of them are at the level where they might go on live telly."

Both campaigns have data systems assessing where and how people will vote and research on what is required to persuade people.

"We know it takes 25 touch points to actually engage with someone," she says. "That is the marketing. You're not going to take someone from one end to the other in just one meeting."

Blair Jenkins, the chief executive of the campaign, is not, at this stage, ready to reveal how many people have signed their declaration for independence nor the level of donations they have received. He says he wrote to Alistair Darling to agree when to collectively publish information about donations but got no response.

"The offer still stands," he says. "We think it should be done in a co-ordinated way and, if not, then we'll wait to see what they come out with. It's very difficult to say anything about campaign funding because, if we say we're short, then people will say there's a problem and, if we say the opposite, then people won't make donations."

He said the declaration had about 400,000 signatories several months ago. "We're doing well," he says, explaining his delight at getting an address on "Hope Street". "We're on a better site. We've got a better office. Ours is bigger and brighter."

BENEATH a glass chandelier in a building designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the head of the Better Together campaign explains that voters will make their decision based on economics rather than emotions.

Blair McDougall, chief executive of the campaign, has been off ill this week. He looks, understandably,



KEY PLAYER:
BLAIR JENKINS



KEY PLAYER:
ANGUS ROBERTSON



BOARD MEMBER:
DENIS CANAVAN



BOARD MEMBER:
PATRICK HARVIE



BOARD MEMBER:
COLIN FOX

WHO'S WHO: YES SCOTLAND

THE chief executive of Yes Scotland is **Blair Jenkins**. He is a former director of broadcasting at STV and head of news and current affairs at both STV and BBC Scotland. He headed an inquiry into broadcasting for the Scottish Government before becoming head of Yes Scotland.

Yes Scotland's advisory board is chaired by **Denis Canavan**, the former Labour MP who served as an Independent MSP after his former party blocked his bid stand for Holyrood.

The political parties behind Yes – the SNP, Greens and Scottish Socialists – are represented by **Nicola Sturgeon**, **Patrick Harvie** and **Colin Fox**.

Actress **Elaine C Smith**, musician **Pat Kane** and chef **Andrew Fairlie** are also on the board.

The advisory panel also includes solicitor and SNP Euro candidate **Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh**, property developer **Dan Macdonald** and businesswoman **Sarah-Jane Walls**.

Sir George Mathewson, the former RBS chairman, is honorary vice-president

of the group but not a board member.

The Yes Scotland board members have taken a more high-profile campaigning role than their opposite numbers at Better Together.

Kevin Pringle, the SNP's director of strategic communications, has a desk in the Yes Scotland HQ in Hope Street, Glasgow, and is an increasingly important figure, co-ordinating the work of the campaign group, the party, the Scottish Government and various pro-Yes fringe groups. He took a more hands-on role with Yes in August, along with another backroom SNP staffer, campaigns manager **Lorraine Reid**.

Stephen Noon is Yes Scotland's chief strategist. A former Scottish Government special adviser and member of the party's independence planning team, he is credited with devising the 'Yes Declaration', the campaign's core claim that decisions about Scotland are best taken by those who live in Scotland. **Colin Pyle** is Yes's head of

development. A former RBS executive, he later worked as a special adviser to Alex Salmond, specialising in business and economic strategy. His role is to liaise with the business world.

Jim Mather, the former enterprise minister, is the campaign's "business ambassador", also spreading the word to corporate Scotland.

Jennifer Dempsie, an events and entertainment PR and another former special adviser to the First Minister, is working for Yes in an advisory role.

She supports **Ian Dommert**, an advertising industry professional, who is Yes Scotland's marketing director.

Online media expert **Stewart Kirkpatrick**, former editor of the Caledonian Mercury news website, is the campaign's head of digital. **Stan Blackley**, a Greens supporter and former head of Friends of the Earth Scotland, co-ordinates Yes community groups. The campaign also employs **Gail Lythgoe** as an executive assistant.

Yes Scotland have hired

Gordon Hay and **Ian McKerron** to handle press and media demands.

Yes Scotland promotes pro-independence groups which, for political or campaign funding purposes, are not part of the main group. The biggest include Business for Scotland, where entrepreneurs **Gordon McIntyre-Kemp** and **Ivan McKee** are regular spokesmen, and Women for Independence, where leading figures include **Jeanne Freeman**, a former aide to Jack McConnell, and **Carolyn Leckie**, the former SSP MSP.

Yes Scotland has promoted the Labour for Independence group, headed by former wrestler **Allan Grogan**.

Liz Lloyd, John Swinney's special adviser, is the main link between Yes Scotland and SNP ministers' aides. SNP press office chief **Ross Ingebrigtsen** liaises on behalf of the party.

SNP Westminster leader **Angus Robertson**, a former SNP election co-ordinator, is consulted on the campaigning techniques.



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WHO'S WHO: BETTER TOGETHER

THE key players in the Better Together campaign are listed here, kicking off with former chancellor **Alistair Darling**.

The Labour MP for Edinburgh South West MP is chairman and the main public face of Better Together.

Blair McDougall is Better Together's campaigns director and a former special adviser to Ian McCartney and James Purnell when they were UK ministers in the mid-2000s.

He also ran David Miliband's unsuccessful campaign for the Labour leadership.

He has taken a public role in the campaign, appearing on television and commenting in the newspapers.

Better Together is guided by a board of directors comprising **Mark McInnes**, an Edinburgh councillor and director of the Scottish Conservatives. It also includes **Craig Harrow**, convener of the Scottish Liberal Democrat, and Labour MSPs **Richard Baker** and **Jackie Baillie**. Marketing guru **Phil**

Anderton, a former chief executive of the Scottish Rugby Union and Hearts FC, was added to the board earlier this year with the aim of bringing business experience to the team. His career has also included spells with Procter and Gamble and Coca Cola.

Working behind the scenes, **Rob Shorthouse** is Better Together's director of communications.

A former media chief at Strathclyde police and the Commonwealth Games bid team, he was also a senior Scottish Government spokesman when Jack McConnell was First Minister. He has become a high profile and often colourful commentator on Twitter.

The campaign's press team includes Labour stalwarts **David Ross**, who used to work for Tom Greatrex MP, and **Ross MacRae**, a former national secretary of Labour students.

Better Together's director of research is Gordon Aikman, another former Scottish Labour press officer and adviser

on constitutional policy. **Jim Gallagher**, a vastly experienced and now retired senior civil servant, who headed the Cabinet Office's devolution unit in 1997 and who later worked on the Calman Commission plan to increase Holyrood's tax powers, has been brought in as a part-time adviser to the campaign.

A research fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, Mr Gallagher is close to Labour and seen as an important figure for making the economic case for Scotland to remain in the UK.

At Westminster, Downing Street's Scotland adviser is **Andrew Dunlop**, a former member of Margaret Thatcher's policy unit in the late 1980s and adviser to George Younger and John Major.

Glasgow-born, he lives in West Sussex, where he is also a local councillor. He is Number 10's voice and ears in the regular Better Together conference call planning meetings.

The former Liberal Democrat candidate

Shabnum Mustapha, special adviser to Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael, and **Ramsay Jones**, the former Scots Tories' spin doctor who now advises Scotland Office minister David Mundell, also works closely with the Better Together team.

Martin McCluskey, adviser to Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland Margaret Curran, is another Westminster figure close to the campaign.

At Holyrood Senior Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem strategists and spin doctors are in the Better Together loop to co-ordinate their parties' messages with the campaign.

The most influential among these figures is **Paul Sinclair**, Johann Lamont's communications chief and a former special adviser to Gordon Brown and Douglas Alexander.

Others include Labour's **Craig Davidson**; **Michael Tait**, press chief for Scots Tory leader **Ruth Davidson**; and **Natalie Coupar**, the Scottish Lib Dems' chief press officer.

drawn but remains clear in what they are aiming to do and how they are going about it. Sitting at a large, dark wood table in their conference room, a room shared with other offices rented at number 5 Blythswood Square, the eye is drawn to the enormously high ceiling, paintings by Peter Howson, ornate gold mirror, formal green leather chairs.

It is difficult not to see the Glasgow-style building with its solid, traditional grand design and elegant ornate white pillars as part of the statement on how they want to present themselves, but they say this office was just the most reasonable one on offer.

Mr McDougall says Yes Scotland are relying on voters to make an "emotional decision" but that in reality, everyone is driven by economics.

"The big thing for undecided voters and the real driver for voting is economics," he says. "Part of our key message is that you need to be 100% certain because unlike a normal election, there is no get out clause."

"There is a different rhythm to the two campaigns. Our pitch and strategy is based the notion that most voters are anxious about the way they are being forced into a choice they are not terribly confident on and that they don't quite understand."

Mr McDougall is one of the key members of a team working behind the scenes to persuade Scots to vote no in 2014. While the public watch Alistair Darling and Alistair Carmichael on television, he is working on the mechanics of the messages, the minutiae of the research and where and who the voters are they need to prioritise.

Despite being consistently ahead in the polls, criticism of the Better Together campaign and its public-facing leaders has heightened in recent weeks. In briefings against figurehead Alistair Darling, the Tories and Labour have labelled him "comatose" and the campaign itself "amateurish" and lacklustre. Complacency is another criticism.

"We can't take this result for granted for a second," says Mr McDougall. "We can take confidence from the polls but cannot be complacent. If we get this wrong there will be no going back."

Like Yes Scotland, they are keen to use members of the public to persuade others.

"The grassroots campaigning is really important because people will want to hear from ordinary people," he says. "People want to hear from a nurse about the impact on public spending and from a financial adviser about the impact on their pension."

"It is not just about finding a language that works. There is a job to do to set the terms of the debate."

Dr Kevin Adamson, lecturer in politics at Stirling University, has analysed the "discursive strategies"

of the two campaigns. "It's a language battle," he says. "There are certain key concepts used, like 'independence' and 'union', that both sides are trying to dominate."

"It is not self-evident what these concepts mean. In political terms they mean what people say they mean. People just take for granted what the messages are. The Yes campaign is trying to control the way we view 'independence'. The No campaign is trying to subvert it all the time. For the No campaign it is the same with the control of 'union'. Yes Scotland tries to subvert this meaning by defining a 'social union'."

"Whoever dominates and controls these symbols will win out."

Mr McDougall describes a gap between the positive messages of their campaign materials and the way the media has viewed their campaign as negative.

"There is an element of double-speak to the nationalists' positive campaign when everything they put out is an attack on something about the UK," he says. "Our materials are positive. In contrast to the Yes Scotland materials that have a crying child on the front of it."

But a throwaway comment by a staff member at Better Together, about calling themselves "Project Fear" has stuck.

The actual Better Together office, at the back of the building, is less grand than the conference room. It has a transient feel, a house not yet unpacked. A huge two-dimensional ampersand is propped up in the entrance. The "and" that is emerging as the most prominent part of what they want people to see.

It is noticeably smaller and quieter than Yes Scotland's office, despite the many people working away on computers. The walls are barer too but there are some posters with the slogans and campaign material. Best of Both Worlds and Better Together. There is also a white, homemade poster with photographs of the staff with moustaches and messages echoing the Lord Kitchener "Your Country Needs You" message.

But Rob Shorthouse denies they are running a negative campaign.

"Questioning is a perfectly reasonable part of the process," he says. "This is not a company trying to sell something, it is our government putting a proposition and questioning that, is all part of the democratic process."

"The negativity stuff gets chucked at us because people say we don't have a positive case to make but I completely disagree with that. During the week of the White Paper we had more than 400 grassroots events across Scotland."

"There is a difference between the grassroots level and what people are saying and seeing in the media."

Richard Baker MSP and member ►



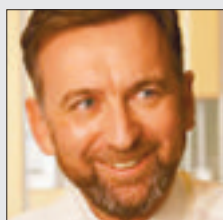
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MICHAEL TAIT



STEP ON UP: The Better Together headquarters in Blythswood Square, Glasgow, is where the No campaign's battle plans are drawn. Picture: Colin Mearns

► of their board, says the grassroots, community-led element of the campaign is key – but commentators agree that YesScotland is ahead in this regard.

“Better Together may be better at the media strategy and they chip away at people's doubts and uncertainties but they're not really at the races when it comes to grassroots strategy,” says Dr Peter Lynch, senior lecturer in politics at Stirling University. “But maybe they don't need to be. The assumption about campaigns is they will shift people's voting positions but that might not be the case.

“From the beginning Yes has done a lot of community-based campaign work. Better Together are going to be more focused on the last few weeks. Perhaps they're right but if they lose that's a dangerous tactic.”

Rob Murray, the national grassroots campaign organiser, says they have 235 groups across Scotland.

“We have doctors, lawyers, students,” he says. “The breadth of the people involved is vast.”

Like Yes Scotland, they are training their volunteers but they are

using very different tools and techniques, which include cold calling swing voters.

“With the Blether Together tool you can log in as a student and speak to other students across the country,” he says. “We can have a pensioner group doing Blether Together calls over their lunch at the community centre. We also have a Train Together training programme and do workshops on telephone skills and campaign skills. In January we'll run media training. For grassroots volunteers there is also public speaking training, and social media training.”

This is just one example of the “Obama-style” tricks and technology the Better Together campaign is using behind the scenes.

“Over the next few months we will be introducing more targets and rewards,” says Mr Murray. “Obama pushed that. If you reach these targets of reaching the swing votes, you will get rewards. A reward could be that a local group gets a visit from Alistair Darling.”

Activists are signed up, vetted and trained in how to start conversations

and given a list of people from the electoral role who may be undecided to call up and persuade. They then feed information back into the centre.

“Linked to Blether Together we have the voter management system called The Patriot,” says Mr Shorthouse. Information from all the conversations, all the grassroots groups and Blether Together are fed into this system.”

The campaign has Obama's digital team, Blue State Digital, working for them. “But we've not even started rolling that out,” says Mr Shorthouse. “We know that many people will not engage with this debate until much closer to the referendum.”

The campaign has refused demands from some for an alternative vision following the White Paper. Instead he says the three parties involved – Labour, Lib Dems and Tories – will publish their individual views on what the next step should be in the Spring. He says they want a debate between these different options, despite the fact detractors say the campaign itself should be putting forward one united vision.



The good, the bad and the ugly of both sides – in terms of their strengths and their weaknesses – are now quite widely known

He says: “We've not got a guru. We don't have people showing us how to use Play Doh but we test our messaging over and over and over again. We test with pollsters and focus groups and opinion polls and creative agencies. We've also got a delivery network. We assign volunteers streets and postcodes to take out packets of leaflets every couple of months. The system ensures we don't deliver to the same streets. Hundreds and hundreds of people are putting leaflets through doors.”

Adam Tomkins, professor of public law at the University of Glasgow, says: “The good, the bad and the ugly of both sides – in terms of their strengths and weaknesses – are now quite widely known. The first eight months of next year I imagine will be similar to the past eight months but with more colour and more passion.”

The over-riding feeling when leaving the offices of YesScotland is a positive one, and that of leaving Better Together is one of anxiety. The question remains as to whether “hidden persuaders” will change the way people vote.



Read the full interview at
heraldscotland.com

The brilliant or bad may win the day

THERE HAVE BEEN RIPPLES IN PUBLIC OPINION BUT THE EBB AND FLOW REMAIN CONSTANT



JOHN CURTICE

BACK in January the Electoral Commission recommended that the question on the independence referendum ballot paper should read: 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' Ever since politicians and campaigners have been doing their best to persuade us the answer to that question should either be 'Yes' or 'No'.

Their efforts have produced little tangible reward. For, as our poll of polls (below) shows, the balance of public opinion is much the same now as it has been throughout the year.

Once the Don't Knows and Won't Says are removed (after all, there will be no chance to give such a response on polling day), on average the Yes vote has stood at 39% in eight polls conducted since the beginning of October. Conversely this same calculation puts the No vote on 61%.

These two figures are exactly the same as the average for 10 polls conducted between July and September – most of which interviewed people in the four weeks immediately prior to the September 18 'a year to go' anniversary.

Meanwhile, the equivalent calculation also produces an almost identical result for the period between February and May, during which nine published polls were conducted. In these Yes stood at 38%, No on 62%.

The No side have spent much of this year emphasising the alleged uncertainties of independence, not least in a regular series of UK government White Papers on the implications and consequences of independence.

Dubbed 'Project Fear' by the nationalist camp, the effort has evidently cut little ice with the public.

Equally, however, the Yes side say their activists have been out on the streets and knocking on doors, and that when they explain the case for independence to people their commitment to the No cause is undermined.

All that can be said, is this has yet to register itself in the published opinion polls.

Mind you, the apparent stability of public opinion is only evident in a poll of polls. Individually, the polling companies are poles apart – as they have been all year.

At one end of the spectrum lies Panelbase. Its two most recent polls, in October and November, both put the Yes vote on 45% (once the Don't Knows are excluded).

Every single Panelbase poll conducted this year (bar one) has put that figure at 44% or 45%, making it consistently the most optimistic poll-



BLUEPRINT: The independence White Paper has not yet been a 'game-changer' according to polls after its launch.

ster so far as the Yes side are concerned.

At the other end sits Progressive Scottish Opinion, who most recently put the Yes vote at 33% after estimating it to be as low as 31% in September.

Other pollsters, such as TNS BMRB, Ipsos MORI and YouGov sit somewhere in between these two extremes. They all currently reckon that the Yes vote stands between 37% and 39% – much as they did at the beginning of this year.

So while there appears to be little

“The apparent stability of public opinion is only evident in the poll of polls. Individually, the polling companies are poles apart”

doubt that public opinion has remained largely unmoved by the year's blandishments and threats, there continues to be considerable uncertainty about exactly how far Yes are behind. If Panelbase is correct, the winning post is at least in the Yes camp's sights. If, on the other hand, Progressive is correct, the task of securing a majority Yes vote looks Herculean.

But what about the most recent White Paper of all, that is the independence prospectus unveiled at the end of the last month by the Scottish

Government? We were told this would address uncertainties about what independence would bring and thus be a 'game changer' in the battle for hearts and minds. Has this not begun to move the pendulum in the nationalists' direction?

Three polls have been conducted since the White Paper was published – by Progressive, Ipsos MORI and YouGov. As we have already seen, Progressive's poll registered a 2% swing to the Yes side since September (once the Don't Knows were excluded). Ipsos MORI also detected a pro-Yes swing – which it put at 3% – while YouGov found one of 1% (in both cases since September).

So the White Paper may have had some impact – but one that looks like a ripple on the sea of public opinion rather than a 'game changer'.

If the Yes side is to make more significant progress, it will need above all to persuade Scots of the economic benefits of independence. Of all the questions people have about what independence might bring, none seems to matter more than whether they think it would herald a stronger or a weaker Scottish economy.

So far the pro-independence campaign has failed to achieve any success in its attempts to advance its economic case.

This can be seen in our second chart, which shows how people have responded when on various occasions during the past three years YouGov have asked them whether Scotland would be economically or financially better or worse off under independence.

As long ago as May 2011, shortly after the SNP's stunning success in that month's Scottish Parliament election, as many as 47% felt the country would be worse off, while only 28% reckoned it would be better off. The latest figures are almost exactly the same; all the Yes side might have achieved is to reverse an even more pessimistic mood evident in October last year.

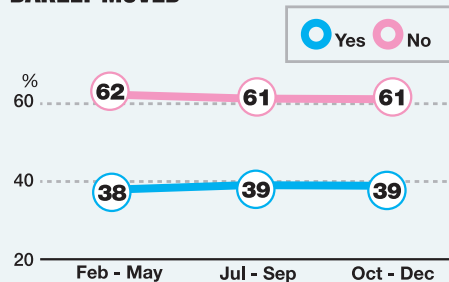
However, even whether that much has been achieved is in doubt. Back in February of last year Panelbase reported the proportion of people who reckoned an independent Scotland would be better off, 36%, almost matched the percentage who felt it would be worse off, 39%.

But in their most recent poll pessimists (44%) clearly outnumbered optimists (32%).

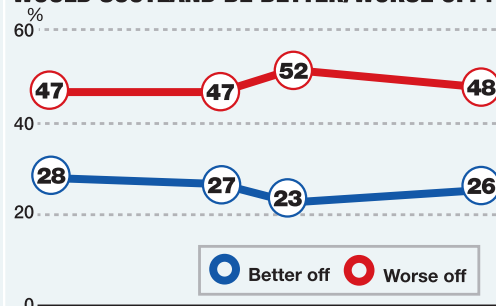
There may still be nine months to go to polling day but a key lesson of the past nine seems to be that many people have already made up their minds. If opinion is eventually to shift, one side or the other will probably need to start campaigning brilliantly – or badly.

John Curtice is professor of politics, University of Strathclyde, and chief commentator at whatscotlandthinks.org, where a comprehensive collection of referendum poll data can be explored.

HOW THE POLL OF POLLS HAS BARELY MOVED



WOULD SCOTLAND BE BETTER/WORSE OFF?



'As things stand right now, it is the only plan for the future of Scotland'

THE WHITE PAPER IS ON EVERYBODY'S LIPS . . . FOR NICOLA STURGEON THAT MEANS IT IS DOING ITS JOB



ROBBIE DINWOODIE
Chief Scottish Political
Correspondent

THERE has been an odd bout of recrimination of late within the side that is well ahead in the polls. Better Together and its leader Alistair Darling have come under friendly fire from so-called "senior sources" in both the Tory and Labour high commands for the performance of the No campaign.

This is strange, given the widespread media monstrosity of the Scottish Government's White Paper on Independence and the continuing lag in the polls by the Yes campaign. Why should the pro-Union side be jittery?

Part of that has to be the fact that they are up against such formidable opponents in First Minister Alex Salmond and his deputy, the "Yes Minister" Nicola Sturgeon.

Her perceived defeat of Michael Moore in a live televised debate was widely seen as costing him his job as Scottish Secretary. Her next opponent, deputy leader of Scottish Labour Anas Sarwar, resorted to ranting and shouting to combat her, while new Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael had a torrid time in his recent encounter with Ms Sturgeon.

She is vastly experienced politically for someone aged just 43. At 34 she was already Holyrood Opposition leader, facing Jack McConnell at FMQs. As Deputy First Minister in minority government she held down the challenging health portfolio for the full term, and just over a year ago she traded posts with Infra-

structure and Investment Secretary Alex Neil but also took on the responsibilities of Bruce Crawford to take on the Parliament and Government Strategy brief. No wonder it is easier to shorten all that to Yes Minister.

We met well into the evening in the still bustling suite of ministerial offices at Holyrood to talk about the recently published White Paper — all 670 pages and 170,000 words of it — and the prospects for the referendum next September.

Did a document this weighty not risk scaring off the punters? Ms Sturgeon thought not: "Actually, I'm pretty happy with the balance we struck. There is a huge appetite out there for information, for answers to questions, about a vision for things we can do if we are independent."

"So I think it was really important that the White Paper covered all of that ground, and it does cover all of

that ground. It gives you this big picture, the case for independence — the democratic case, the social case, the economic case.

"It's got a wealth of detail on the affordability of independence. It gives some very practical detail about how we make the transition from a Yes vote to becoming independent and, perhaps most importantly of all, it uses some of the policy choices that we would make to start to illustrate to people what we could do with the powers of independence. Childcare was a key example of that."

She pauses then adds: "And then, it answered 650 questions. These were questions we've had submitted to us over a number of months either from organisations or from individuals. I think it was really important to bring together in one place the case for independence, how it could help us transform Scotland, and to answer the questions people have."

"I have been struck since we published it by the number of folk who are desperate to get their hands on it."

Even the full version? "Especially the full version. There is a 40-page summary document but people don't want that. They want the full one. It's been going like hotcakes. We're already into the second reprint and I have no doubt we are going to have to print more. We're number one in the Amazon free download chart."

She said that on the website or in ebook format it was fully searchable. "It's meant to be a document that if you want it in its entirety, for the long read, you can have it or can go and find anything. It's almost like an encyclopaedic resource that gives you answers to any particular questions you want."

“There's nothing on the other side to match the Paper . . . You can't get through an entire campaign just saying: 'Ye cannae do that!' and with ever more hysteria and incredible smears

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She added: "I was at a meeting in Livingston last night — two to three hundred people at a public meeting with a lot of genuinely undecided folk — and a number of people who asked me a question referenced the question to something in the White Paper. Now, I am not saying all of them had read it from beginning to end but they had engaged with it, so I think it was really important to put that out there. It is potentially — not in one day or one week but over a period of time — going to seriously change the debate."

She then becomes unusually exercised, tapping the table for emphasis: "As things stand right now, it is the only plan for the future of Scotland. There's nothing on the other side which matches it and I think that is going to become an increasing problem for the other side. You

can't get through an entire campaign just saying: 'You cannae do that!', and with ever more hysterical and incredible fears and smears."

"We're going to have the No campaign making ridiculous arguments and people are going to have to judge whether they stack up or not and I think we are reaching a stage in this campaign where they will say: 'These are the people who say you can't use the pound, your mobile phone bill will go up and you cannae watch Dr Who'."

"I just think folk are seeing through it and folk are starting to think about this in a common sense, rational way."

The indignation fades, she pauses and adds: "The other thing I detect, and it's why I think things like childcare are so important, is that people increasingly want this to be a debate

PICTURE: GORDON TERRIS



about the possibilities of independence. We've set out what Scotland could look like if we were independent. I think the other side have an obligation to do the same, and are going to come under increasing pressure to answer questions about what Scotland would look like if we are not independent."

AND then the indignation begins to roll again: "What powers, actually, would we get? How do you guarantee them? Would there be further cuts to Scotland's budget? What happens if Scotland votes to stay in the European Union and the UK as a whole votes to get out? And how many more kids are going to be living in poverty by the end of this decade if we continue on the path we're on just now?"

“I am not asking people to believe anybody over anybody else. I'm asking them to believe in their own common sense and to ask: 'What is the overwhelmingly likely outcome here?'

"How do we get the economy growing at a rate that matches some of our comparable countries? How do we close the equality gap if we're not independent? These are all serious questions and it's not just me saying they've got to answer them."

"Out and about I talk to a lot of folk about independence. I detect that increasingly the debate is moving into a space where people do want to compare and contrast the competing visions of the future. We've put ours out there in great detail, and there ain't nothing on the other side."

At moments like this you are glad you're not in a televised debate with her, but I venture that it was surely embarrassing recently to rely on a letter from a party activist over EU membership. She responds: "We have a position from the Commis-

sion that says they will only give a formal legal opinion if they are asked for it by a member state. The member state is the UK. We have asked them to do that."

"The First Minister said in the Chamber last week and will keep saying it: 'I will go to Brussels with Alistair Carmichael or whoever from the UK Government that wants next week and we'll ask them to give us the official European position.' So they can't have it both ways. They can't shout uncertainty all the time when they are the ones creating the uncertainty. Well, they can choose to do that if they want. All I am saying is that people are starting to lose patience with that."

But isn't it reasonable to cast doubt on the terms of Scottish membership such as the rebate, opt-outs, the travel zone? "We are arguing in legal parlance for continuity of effect. Now if Scotland was going into this scenario saying we want to renegotiate the whole terms of our membership and having some kind of special deal, then OK, that might be a different scenario. But we're not. We're saying that the terms Scotland is currently in the EU on, in terms of the Euro, Schengen, and so on, we just want to continue."

I suggest she is arguing legally, when the real issue is political. She can't know whether Spain might choose to exercise its veto for its own political reasons. "The point at which law and politics come together on the European question is around the fact that there is no provision. People who say, whether it's Barroso or whoever, that if Scotland votes Yes it puts itself outside ... point me to the European treaty clause which says that. There is no provision to expel European citizens and we are all European citizens. There is nothing in the massive body of European law that would allow that to happen."

So you are asking us to believe the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Scotland but not the President of the European Commission? "It's not actually a decision for the President of the European Commission. I am not asking people to believe anybody over anybody else. I am asking them to believe in their own common sense and to ask: 'What is the overwhelmingly likely outcome here?'. And I am also asking them to factor in the fact that if you vote No there is a huge question over European membership."

She makes a similar case on sharing the pound. "If we were arguing for something on the pound that was against the interest of another sovereign nation, the argument would be different. But this is a sovereign nation (the rest of the UK) that exports more to Scotland than to Brazil, South Africa, a whole host of countries put together, which exports more to Scotland than any country outside the USA."

"We are expected to believe it would say to its own business base: 'We know it would suit you to stay in a single currency with Scotland, we know Scotland wants to stay in a single currency but just to cut off

our noses to spite our faces we're going to force something different on you.' Now, is that credible? I just don't think it is at all."

But whatever the strength of argument, there are things that cannot be guaranteed — EU membership, a shared currency, access to the BBC. "That's like saying I can't guarantee the sun coming up tomorrow morning but I'm damn sure it will. The other side can't guarantee we'll be in Europe if we vote No. We are putting forward a robust, solid, common sense, reasonable, rational case."

REJECTING the suggestion that the Yes Campaign was still struggling in the polls, she says: "The latest TNS poll shows that the No vote has come down by 9%. I think we are going through a process of people starting moving away from No into the undecided category. Last October No was at 53%. Yesterday was 42% — they've lost a fifth of their support in that period."

"I am not suggesting that means we've sealed the deal but, on that direction of travel, the only movement in this debate there has been in the last few months has been away from No to undecided and our job is now to take it from undecided to Yes. You don't hear out there people saying they have gone from Yes to No. You do hear a lot of people going from No to undecided."

What did she make of recent internal criticism within the No camp of Alistair Darling? "I get lots of senses, and the Darling story was one of them, with things you pick up privately, anecdotally, that there is a real jitteriness in the No campaign. They're not sure of themselves and there is a huge unhappiness on the part of Labour activists who loathe the fact that they are in an organisation with the Tories."

"So there are plenty of signs emerging that all is not well on the No side."

But you might equally take the view that you've not seen anything yet? "We've got our plans in place, we have our vision, the White Paper is there. We're up for this, absolutely up for it. There is a confidence and an optimism and a determination on the part of the Yes campaign to take us into 2014 in pretty strong shape."

I ask about her recent suggestion that if there was a No vote there could be another referendum within 15 years — isn't that the politics of the "Neverendum"?

"That was a jokey comment about defining a generation in politics. It was not a literal suggestion that there would be another referendum in 2029. What we are saying is that next September is the only guaranteed opportunity for Scots to seize the opportunity of independence."

She adds, with an intriguing hint at a life beyond politics: "I cannot bind any future Scottish Government. I might not be — indeed there is a high probability that I will not be — in Government in 15 years' time."

Let battle commence for defence of the realm

HOW SCOTLAND WILL PROTECT ITSELF IS SUDDENLY ON THE FRONTLINE OF DEBATE



KATE DEVLIN
UK Political
Correspondent

FEW independence debates generate such heated discussion as that around defence. Recent developments have given more of an insight into what the future shape of a Scottish Defence Force might look like. Recruits have been promised a job for life, troop numbers set out and billions of pounds worth of public spending has been pledged.

However, many of the key issues remain hotly contested between the two sides. Chief among these is, of course, the future of the nuclear deterrent on the Clyde.

In its independence White Paper last month the SNP included a commitment to try to remove Trident from Scotland by 2020.

But how and exactly when any move might actually take place remains unclear, not least because the ageing nuclear weapons system is expected to be a key element of any independence negotiations between the Scottish and UK Governments.

Estimates on how long it might take to move the nuclear deterrent out of the Clyde vary widely.

The Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has calculated it could be done in as little as two years. But a number of defence experts have suggested a much longer timeframe – potentially even decades.

One central problem is there is no immediate place for Trident to go. Creating a home for it in Wales or England risks running into local opposition and potentially costing billions of pounds.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has already warned the price of any such move would be “enormous”, while Lord West, the former First Sea Lord, has even suggested it could trigger unilateral disarmament for the rest of the UK.

One potential solution is to keep Trident on the Clyde even after independence, a “treaty port” solution that would keep “a little piece of Scotland forever in the UK”.

This has specifically been ruled out by the SNP but could be theoretically an option, at least for a short period,

if another party were to win elections in an independent Scotland.

Professor Malcolm Chalmers, from the highly respected defence think tank the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), suggests that what to do with Trident is one of the great unknowns of the entire process.

“The UK would want to study how long it would take and how much it would cost to move Trident,” he said. “Even studying that would itself take a significant amount of time.”

“It might prove impossible to move, it might not. We don’t know because that study has never been done”.

The White Paper also outlines plans to “progressively build to a total of 15,000 regular and 5000 reserve personnel”.

Other proposals include to spend £2.5 billion a year on defence, to retain Faslane as a naval base and joint headquarters of a Scottish Defence Force, to operate 12 Typhoon fast jets from Lossiemouth and to take two frigates, four mine counter measure vessels and four to six patrol boats “from the Royal Navy’s current fleet”.

The gradual approach is part of the SNP’s strategy to ensure a managed transition to a new Scottish Defence Force. But even the equipment it has identified as its “inheritance” has divided experts.

Some academics, such as Dr Colin Fleming, Research Fellow and Project Leader on Defence and Security at the Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change, believe much of what the Scottish Government has asked for is reasonable and could be in the UK’s best interests to provide, not least to ensure its near neighbour is protected.

Others warn, however, it would be costly to operate equipment such as fast jets and an independent Scotland could end up forced to rely on UK expertise for things such as maintenance. Another train of thought is there is an argument to be made for Scotland taking the cash equivalent instead in many cases.

This could allow it to better tailor defence equipment to its own needs, rather than accept hand me downs from the UK Armed Forces, although this potentially also raises questions about timescale.

Think tanks such as The Scotland Institute have also questioned an independent Scotland’s ability to recruit to the new Scottish Defence



Defence in numbers

12,600 highly skilled staff in the industry

£1.8bn total annual sales a year

25% the share of the total aerospace, defence and marine sector in Scotland

Force. The argument goes that soldiers will be attracted to the wider opportunities offered by the UK Armed Forces.

Dr Fleming believes these fears are overblown. He believes a Scottish Defence Force, which would be unlikely to find itself in protracted operations such as Afghanistan and

Iraq, would find it easier to retain staff than the UK Armed Forces, adding: “They are also finding it extraordinarily difficult to recruit reserves (at the moment) because those who might join up know that they will find themselves in a battle ground very very quickly.”

“In a Scottish context I don’t think that would be such a problem.”

Supporting any new defence force – and being supported by it – is the Scottish defence industry. But here again there is intense disagreement over what impact independence would have on the future of the sector. Just last month hundreds of shipbuilders on the Clyde found out that they would lose their jobs amid a large-scale restructuring.

The UK Government has warned the situation would only worsen under independence. Ministers have suggested orders for warships would likely be pulled from Scottish yards,

pointing to the fact the UK Government has never before built such complex and important vessels outside of its own waters.

The Coalition Government’s defence analysis paper also suggested that up to 12,000 defence industry jobs could be lost if Scotland were to leave the UK.

Defence analyst Francis Tusa has predicted that the knock-on effect of the SNP’s plans would be to “support a far smaller work force”, while yards build smaller less complex ships. He has also questioned whether defence facilities currently based in Scotland will gradually migrate south of the border after independence.

For its part the Scottish Government argues independence will allow it to spend more money on defence in Scotland than the UK currently does, getting rid of what it describes as a multi-billion pound “shortfall”.

The SNP also insist that Scottish

PICTURE: JAMES GALLOWAY



skills will allow the industry to win international contracts.

There is much Scottish ministers also say they are prepared to share, including defence bases, which they argue would be again be in the best interests of the rest of the UK.

But the MoD has already rejected one shared vision contained in the White Paper, that of ships being built jointly with an independent Scotland's navy.

Prof Chalmers believes Scotland's defence industry is divided into essentially two parts, "shipbuilding and everything else". He describes much of the rest of the defence industry as "niche capabilities often within broader multi-national companies" and unlikely to move if Scotland becomes independent.

However, on shipbuilding he asks: "Would it really be credible that a UK Government would want to place orders in Scotland? Much will depend

“

For its part, the Scottish Government argues independence will allow it to spend more money on defence in Scotland than the UK currently does

on the defence relationship between the two countries".

One of these issues, he suggests, would be how many defence contracts the Scottish Defence Force was placing with defence companies in the rest of the UK.

Another would be Trident.

"This is one of the reasons why the nuclear option is so important," he said. "If there is a rancour, well then the UK may not play ball".

Of course, all plans for a Scottish Defence Force are dependent on negotiations with the UK Government. And there is an understanding that much may be subject to change during talks.

Such a crucial subject as defence is, after all, unlikely to be separated from other areas of potentially fraught discussion – such as Scotland's share of North Sea oil or its share of UK national debt when it comes to the crunch.

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‘Scotland will be able to spend more on conventional defence’

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER FEARGAL DALTON (RTD)

THE first duty of a government is to provide for the defence and security of its citizens. The White Paper on Scottish independence provides tremendous detail about how this will happen in Scotland after a 'Yes' vote.

As somebody who served in the Royal Navy for 17 years, I am delighted by the prospect of our parliament in Scotland and the Scottish Government making better defence and security decisions after independence.

As a maritime nation we currently find ourselves in the ludicrous situation of being without a single major conventional surface vessel based in Scotland and not a single maritime patrol aircraft; while personnel numbers and defence spending has been disproportionately cut. All of this is happening while the London government plans to spend up to £100bn renewing Trident nuclear weapons that we can never use.

We can do things better.

The White Paper provides the rationale, detail, timeline, costings and commitments for defence policy in a sovereign Scotland. We can provide the appropriate land, sea and air forces with 15,000 personnel, delivering enhanced

capabilities from more appropriately directed Scottish Government spending and our inherited share of MOD assets and defence facilities around the country.

Scotland is in a key geo-strategic location with the north Atlantic to our west, the North Sea to our east and the Iceland Gap to our north. Our neighbours and allies, including the rest of the UK, will depend on Scotland taking its defence responsibilities seriously and the White Paper shows how Scotland can and will deliver.

We will actually be able to spend more on conventional defence, securing more defence jobs in Scotland and providing the appropriate conventional capabilities, including frigates, while saving on hundreds of millions of pounds the MOD wastes. Most importantly, Scotland will always have the appropriate defence policies and priorities, based on the democratically expressed wishes of the people who live here.

That will be a real improvement.

Lieutenant Commander Feargal Dalton Royal Navy (Rtd) is now an SNP Councillor for Partick West

‘The standing of the residual UK would be inevitably reduced’

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR JOCK STIRRUP

THE referendum offers a choice of futures, with many implications. The Scottish people will want to think carefully about a wide range of issues. No doubt the economic consequences will be uppermost in many minds. But the first duty of any state is the security of its citizens and their interests, so it is important to reflect on how a separate Scotland would meet this.

The UK gave up the concept of purely national defence in favour of collective security through NATO.

The Scottish Government, in chapter 6 of "Scotland's Future", proposes to pursue independent membership of the Alliance. But my experience convinces me a separate Scotland, given its size, would have very limited influence over Alliance policy. At the same time, the standing of the residual UK would be inevitably reduced. As a consequence, our combined ability to shape the future of NATO, with which the security of the whole of these islands is closely bound up, would be diminished.

The other defence proposals in "Scotland's Future" are also worth detailed scrutiny. To take just one example, it would be possible to base 12 Typhoon fighters at

Lossiemouth. However, sustaining a cadre of sufficiently skilled and experienced pilots and groundcrew to man the force over the long term is a complex and costly business, as is the provision of adequate logistic support. All of these things become disproportionately expensive, and sometimes simply impractical, with the diseconomies of small scale. The same is true of defence procurement projects. That is why the thrust within NATO is to do more things together rather than separately. Unfortunately, co-operation across state boundaries, even within NATO, is very difficult and of only limited effect. So national size still matters.

The defence proposals in "Scotland's Future" might seem, prima facie, to be mostly achievable. But on deeper examination it is clear they would in some cases be impractical, cost more than allowed for, and come at the price of reduced influence within the decision-making circles of NATO. In defence, as perhaps in many other areas, the UK is more effective together than apart.

Sir Jock Stirrup is a former Chief of the Defence Staff

'If we leave it to politicians, it will become a pretty pointless exercise'

AFTER HIS TV DRUBBING, ALISTAIR CARMICHAEL IS QUOTING NAPOLEON AND HUNGRY FOR THE FIGHT



MICHAEL SETTLE
UK Political Editor

THE bruiser was bruised. But Vikings are a resilient lot and Alistair Carmichael insists his appetite for the fight is undiminished and he is relishing the year ahead, leading the Battle for Britain.

It is just a few days since that televisual encounter when the heavy-weight from Orkney whom David Cameron had sent into the ring to duff up the Nationalists, found himself being duffed up by an opponent half his size; physically, that is.

The live head-to-head with Nicola Sturgeon did not quite require people to watch from behind the sofa when an expression of bewilderment slowly swept across the Scottish Secretary's face as the Deputy First Minister began to pound him with political punches.

"I didn't actually think it was that bruising," declares Mr Carmichael with no sense of understatement. But he then admits: "It wasn't the greatest performance I ever put in. That personally annoys me because I feel I let them off the hook a bit. There will probably be dozens of these debates; judge me at the end of it not just after the first one."

Who was it who said politics was a blood sport? But the consensus is that if the No camp is to maintain its momentum in the court of public opinion, then the Secretary of State will have to up his game to avoid becoming a human punch-bag.

Asked what he had learned from the Sturgeon experience, Mr Carmichael pauses, looks at the ceiling of

his oak-lined Westminster office and says: "From the debate itself, pretty obvious stuff; that I personally need to be better prepared for these things."

"From the commentary around it, I now have a better understanding of the extent that the Nationalists will always play the man rather than the ball. Does that change my appetite for the contest? Not a bit."

In order to give more punch to the pro-Union cause, Mr Carmichael believes that the fear some sectors of Scottish life have about speaking out against independence will dissipate in the New Year, that the pro-Union parties will next spring come together to form some sort of united front about what should happen post the referendum and, most intriguingly, that the silent English will finally find their voice and mount a "stick with us" campaign.

Pro-UK politicians, including Margaret Curran, Mr Carmichael's Labour Shadow, have recently urged Scottish businesses to get engaged in the independence debate with suggestions some are fearful that to do so might harm their prospects, given there is a Nationalist Government in Edinburgh.

The Secretary of State is blunt: "We hear increasingly about people, business voices in particular, being disinclined to enter the debate because they think they will be punished as a result."

Punished? Was he saying Scottish businesses were being intimidated by the SNP Government?

"Intimidation is a strong word but there is certainly heavy influence. And you can imagine a situation as the campaign progresses when the heaviness of that influence does become inappropriate."

He makes reference to the boss of a FTSE 100 company, who told the Scottish Government he could not make

investment decisions in Scotland because of the uncertainty about the tax regime and revealed how "the mood of the meeting immediately became very dark; they became very aggressive".

"This is not an isolated incident," declares Mr Carmichael. "I hear of it time and again. It's always told to me in terms of 'we don't want you to talk about this publicly but'. So people are not yet willing to stick their head above the parapet."

So there is a fear factor here?

"There is very much. This is what business people tell me; that they are scared of the consequences for their business of getting on the wrong side of the Scottish Government."

Without naming names, he notes: "I see it in the media sector. I have seen media outlets feel constrained in their coverage."

Yet the Cabinet Minister insists Scotland's captains of industry will not be able to hold their tongues about their private "grumblings" over independence for much longer.

"They will not be able to sustain that position and you are going to have a wider range of people have a say. Business will start to articulate a view, which will be largely unsympathetic to the concept of independence. They will be prepared to take possibly a short-term hit for the long-term strength of their business."

He mentions the supermarket giants and suggestions they would put up food prices in an independent Scotland because of higher distribution costs north of the border.

"I see this as the first brick out of the dam. Anybody who operates a business over that border is going to be affected and the closer we get to polling day they will want to have their say and they will not be so easily cowed."

He says he is also eager for the



“It assumes people will always vote the same way ... it was the Conservatives who were the only party to get 50% of the vote in Scotland, so these things change over time

pro-UK parties in Scotland to come together to form a united front to voters to convince them the process of devolution does not end with a No vote and a new process will begin the day after polling day.

"I'm keen this goes ahead but I can't control it because it involves other parties and no parties. The only party in Scotland that's opposed to devolution is the SNP."

Another part of the bolstering strategy will be hearing voices from beyond Hadrian's Wall. Sure the Scots have the vote but that does not mean the English, Welsh and Northern Irish have to stay silent. There will be, Mr Carmichael makes clear, a "stick with us" campaign.

"Another thing you will see changing in the coming year is you will hear voices from other parts of the UK; in that respect they will enter the debate

PICTURE: GORDON TERRIS



in the way the First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones has done. They will say as part of the UK family we respect Scotland's decision to stay or to go but they will insist they don't want her to go. That's a perfectly legitimate voice to have in the debate."

HE ALSO attacks what some feel is the SNP Government peddling the politics of difference, saying: "The characterisation of the debate by the Nationalists is that this is Scottish social democracy versus English Conservatism. I completely challenge that for a number of reasons. First of all, it assumes people will always vote in the same way, which we know is not the case because within living memory it was the Conservatives who were the only party to get 50% of the vote in

“

I relish being in the middle of it ... I think that it was Napoleon who said: 'Success has many fathers, failure has only one.' I know that. I knew that when I took the job on



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Scotland, so these things change over time. But also, because there is a variety of views across England, Wales and Northern Ireland as there is within Scotland.

"This goes back to Douglas Alexander's article that, yes, as a Briton he wants to tackle social exclusion and poverty but he thinks that's as important in Preston as it is in Paisley."

But the Nationalists are clearly seeking to frame the referendum debate on their terms – that is to say, they are the agents of change and the pro-UK forces are the agents of the status quo. Is there anything the Coalition can put on the table to counter that view?

Mr Carmichael's eyes half close and he snaps: "This is where the Nationalists don't understand the terms of the debate because they have never been part of it. One of the

great ironies of Scottish politics is the SNP is the only party that has never delivered powers to the Scottish Parliament. It's an anti-devolution party. They sat out the constitutional convention and did not want to know about the Calman Commission."

But then the minister says something interesting, noting how the "hard work of sitting down and thrashing out what the next tranche of powers for the Scottish Parliament inevitably happens on the other side of a No vote". There is nothing specific but reference to the "next tranche of powers" shows an intended direction of travel should Scots vote No.

Of course, the Nationalists insist a No vote would stop devolution in its tracks as the Coalition turns its face away from Scotland. They refer to £4bn of cuts mooted by the Commons all-party parliamentary group on tax.

Mr Carmichael huffs with incredulity. "Look, that's their own Project Fear. That's them scaremongering."

"This government is not going to touch the Barnett Formula. It's a mark of the desperation of the Nationalists when they advance that argument; they justify it with reference to an all-party parliamentary group, which is a collection of who wants to turn up on any given day. The only way of getting rid of the Barnett Formula is to vote for separation."

Highlighting a recent report that suggested North Sea oil and gas revenue would only raise half the amount that goes to Scotland through the Formula, he stresses: "The Barnett Formula is part of the positive reasons for remaining part of the UK."

So Mr Carmichael is up for the fight but what about his boss? Where, one has to ask, is David Cameron, who pledged to fight with his head, heart and soul to keep Scotland in the United Kingdom?

I suggest the Union does not appear to have strong foundations if its chief advocate appears fearful to get involved in the fight. "That is an assertion but it has no foundation in fact," declares the Secretary of State.

So is the Prime Minister of Scotland going to get more involved?

"We still have nine and a half months to go," notes the Liberal Democrat MP. He then pauses. It seems mention of his Conservative colleague often causes the Lib Dems something of a problem?

"No, it doesn't cause me a problem but you're asking me to predict what the Prime Minister's diary is going to be for the next nine and a half months. But what he has said quite properly is that this is a debate to be decided in Scotland, debated by the people in Scotland, and he passionately wants Scotland to remain part of the United Kingdom."

"If I flip it on its head and turn the assertion back; if he were to take any other approach, you would be telling me he was being disrespectful to the people of Scotland, that he was tell-

ing them what to do and it was none of his business."

So as we enter 2014 we can expect Mr Cameron to take a more upfront role? Mr Carmichael bristles. "I don't accept the assertion that he is a back-seat driver. He is the Prime Minister of the whole of the United Kingdom. He spends time in Scotland both personally and politically. He is completely engaged in the debate, I know because I speak to him about it."

"He will take the role he wants to take. Because I don't accept the premise that he is in the background here, I'm not going to commit to saying that he is going to do more or he will do things differently. His approach at the moment is absolutely right and appropriate."

AS SCOTLAND prepares to enter its year of destiny, does Mr Carmichael regard his role as the most important in British politics? "I'm not going to say I have the most important in British politics because I don't think that's a quantifiable proposition for anyone. My job has an importance and relevance in Westminster, Whitehall and in Scotland, which it has not had since 1999 and the introduction of devolution. So to that extent I absolutely relish being in the middle of it."

And yet history could regard the Scottish Secretary as the man who lost the Union if Scots were to be unconvinced by his case and vote Yes on a cold, wet Thursday next autumn.

Mr Carmichael lets out a belly laugh. "Well, yeah, if it goes wrong. I think that it was Napoleon who said: 'Success has many fathers, failure has only one.' I know that. I knew that when I took the job on."

It is never wise to make reference to the French emperor, who got his comeuppance in a Belgian field 200 years ago and spent his later years exiled on a rock in the South Atlantic.

The Secretary of State goes on: "No individual is going to win or lose this debate, no political party is going to win or lose this debate. This has got to be a debate all of Scotland has a voice in because if we, the Scottish people, leave it to politicians and the political parties, then it will become a pretty sterile and pointless exercise. Scots from all stripes and all backgrounds need to have their say."

So when the heat of battle has finally cooled and we know who has won and who has lost, where will the Secretary of State be on September 19 2014? Orkney, Edinburgh, St Helena?

"I would expect on September 19 to be on Orkney and I would expect to be having dinner with my wife because September 19 is our wedding anniversary. It will be 27 years to the day since we formed our own union in a little church in England outside Bath."

So the Carmichaels might be celebrating the success of two unions?

"I devoutly hope so."

Female approval could be vital as key players struggle to make connection



TOM COSTLEY

THE challenge faced by the SNP in converting women to the independence cause is underlined in a new survey of attitudes towards the leading figures in the independence debate.

Winning women's votes could be crucial for the SNP campaign, as polls have long shown that women are less enthusiastic than men about the prospect of independence. The latest TNS BMRB opinion poll, published two weeks ago, shows 22% support for independence among women, compared to 30% among men.

The TNS BMRB survey of how people rate the key politicians in the referendum debate has found that women take a less favourable view than men do of both Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon. There is also bad news for the Better Together camp, whose main figures appear to be struggling to make a strong connection with voters.

A sample of 1004 adults in Scotland were asked to rate politicians on a scale of one to 10, where one is "do not like at all" and 10 is "like a lot". In the analysis, a ranking of seven to 10 is regarded as liking the politician, a ranking of one to four is regarded as disliking. While Mr Salmond was liked by 28% of all adults, this rises to 35% among men and declines to 22% among women. Two in five (40%) dislike Mr Salmond, including 42% of women and 37% of men.

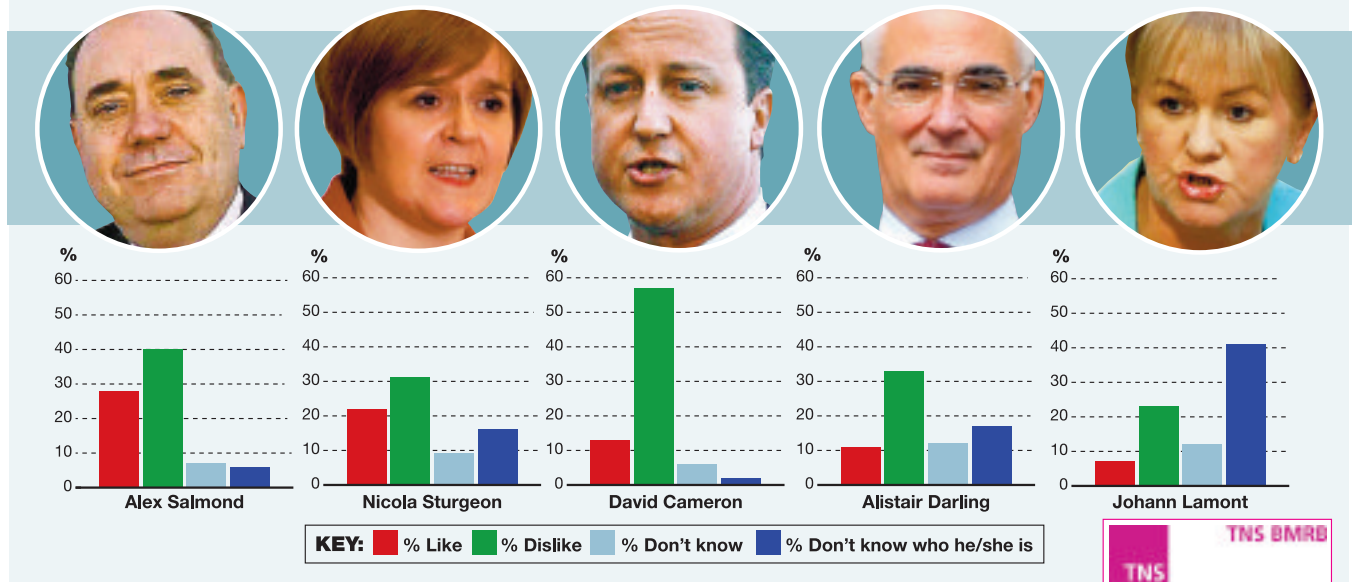
Ms Sturgeon is liked by 22% of adults, more so by men (25%) than women (19%) and nearly a third (31%) do not like her. Perhaps worryingly for the SNP, given Ms Sturgeon's prominent role in the independence campaign, one in six (16%) say they have never heard of her and that includes 20% of women.

It will be interesting to see whether the low personal ratings for the leading SNP figures will be affected by the Scottish Government's White Paper Scotland's Future, which outlined a number of "female-friendly" policies such as universal childcare. Our survey was almost entirely completed before the paper's publication on November 26.

The major political figures lining up to back a No vote also suffered from a negative perception among voters in Scotland. A minority (13%) like the Prime Minister, including roughly equal proportions of men and women. Men are disproportionately inclined to dislike Mr Cameron, with 61% awarding him scores of one to four, compared to 54% of women.

POLITICIAN POPULARITY

% Base: All adults aged 16+ in Scotland (sample 1004)



RATING OF KEY POLITICIANS IN THE REFERENDUM DEBATE

	Alex Salmond	Nicola Sturgeon	David Cameron	Alistair Darling	Johann Lamont
Like (score of 7-10 out of 10)	28%	22%	13%	11%	7%
Neutral (score of 5-6 out of 10)	19%	22%	22%	27%	17%
Dislike (score of 1-4 out of 10)	40%	31%	57%	33%	23%
Don't know	7%	9%	6%	12%	12%
Don't know who he/she is	6%	16%	2%	17%	41%

BY GENDER

	Alex Salmond		Nicola Sturgeon		David Cameron		Alistair Darling		Johann Lamont	
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Like (score of 7-10 out of 10)	35%	22%	25%	19%	12%	13%	12%	10%	8%	6%
Neutral (score of 5-6 out of 10)	18%	20%	21%	23%	21%	23%	31%	24%	16%	18%
Dislike (score of 1-4 out of 10)	37%	42%	33%	30%	61%	54%	36%	31%	29%	18%
Don't know	6%	7%	9%	9%	5%	6%	9%	13%	11%	14%
Don't know who he/she is	4%	8%	12%	20%	1%	3%	12%	22%	36%	45%

BY AGE

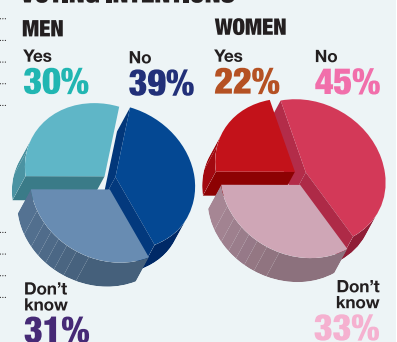
	Alex Salmond			Nicola Sturgeon			David Cameron			Alistair Darling			Johann Lamont		
Age	16-34	35-54	55+	16-34	35-54	55+	16-34	35-54	55+	16-34	35-54	55+	16-34	35-54	55+
Like (score of 7-10 out of 10)	23%	30%	31%	13%	24%	27%	11%	10%	16%	6%	6%	19%	3%	7%	10%
Neutral (score of 5-6 out of 10)	25%	21%	13%	27%	22%	18%	24%	22%	21%	23%	29%	29%	13%	17%	20%
Dislike (score of 1-4 out of 10)	31%	37%	51%	16%	33%	41%	54%	61%	57%	25%	41%	33%	13%	23%	32%
Don't know	8%	8%	4%	8%	10%	8%	7%	6%	4%	13%	12%	10%	9%	14%	14%
Don't know who he/she is	14%	4%	1%	36%	10%	6%	4%	1%	2%	33%	12%	8%	62%	39%	24%

11% of adults liked Alistair Darling and 33% disliked him and he had a similar level of awareness to that recorded for Ms Sturgeon. In contrast, four in 10 of adults claimed not to be aware of Johann Lamont, the Leader of the Labour Party in Scotland.

Politicians on both sides of the debate are finding it hard to break through to younger voters. Well over half of 16-34 year olds (62%) say they do not know who Ms Lamont is: the corresponding figures for Nicola Sturgeon and Alistair Darling are 36% and 33% respectively. Even Alex Salmond does not register with 14% of this younger age group.

Older voters are most inclined to have definite opinions on the political leaders. For example, 31% of the over-55s have a positive view of Mr Salmond, against the overall average of 28% and 51% are negative (compared with 40% overall). The pattern is repeated for Nicola Sturgeon, Alistair Darling and

VOTING INTENTIONS



Making a good personal impression is essential in making a political case successfully

Johann Lamont. However, while 16% of this older age group dislike Mr Cameron, against 13% overall, dislike for the Prime Minister is strongest among the 35-54 age group, at 61% compared to 57% overall.

Overall, Mr Salmond scored an average of 5.1 among men and 4.4 among women, averaging 4.8 among all voters. Ms Sturgeon also averaged 4.8, Mr Darling 4.3 and Mr Cameron lagging on 3.6 – in all three cases, there was a relatively narrow gap between men and women.

Ms Lamont scored an average of 4.3, scoring more strongly among women, with an average of 4.5, against 4.1 for men. This suggests that she could make more of an impact, especially among women, if she was heard more strongly.

The survey suggests the choice of Alistair Darling as a uniting force in the unionist camp to lead the Better Together campaign was a good one,

as his approval ratings are virtually identical among supporters of the three main unionist parties, running at about one in six of voters.

Today's political culture is increasingly driven by personalities: the 2010 general election was widely seen as a contest between David Cameron and Gordon Brown. So making a good personal impression is essential.

Unlike a general election, the referendum is not about voting for a party to form a government or for an individual to become PM. However, with the role the media plays in communicating the respective advantages and disadvantages of the two options, the public's attitudes towards and opinions of the leading 'players' in the debate will be important. Our survey suggests that, in this referendum campaign, gaining approval among women could bring rich rewards.

Tom Costley is head of TNS Scotland

Voices of the people

The politicians are keen to emphasise it is the people of Scotland who will make the final decision on whether independence will be achieved. But what do the people think? We hear from individual voices, each with their own personal take on the story so far ... and on what may yet come



June Baird, 41
Carer, single mother of one
Glasgow East End

"IT is fair to say my positivity towards the Yes campaign has strengthened since it really turned up the heat and got its message out there. The White Paper for independence was released

and I believe it's an optimistic and realistic blueprint of things we can achieve.

"I haven't heard one logical argument from the Better Together campaign, only over-romanticised notions of a messy 'divorce' and upsetting the status quo

"If it ain't broke why fix it? Well it is broken. Cynics say we will be in financial ruin; as part of the UK we are already crippled with debt! Scaremongering has become rife with threats of taking away the pound and banishing us from the EU.

"It's Scotland's pound, too, and with us being the second biggest exporter of goods from England it would not be in their best interest to force us into another currency."



Jon Haylett, 68
Retired teacher/shopkeeper
Kilchoan, Ardnamurchan

SCOTLAND joined the Union at a time of financial crisis. The last thing I want is for Scotland to face financial problems and a declining standard of living, if it regains independence. As a floating

voter, I'm worried by the undermining of the Yes side's economic promises by reports such as that from Glasgow University's Centre for Public Policy for Regions on the balance between the oil income Scotland would gain against loss of income under the Barnett formula.

"The Yes camp also has work to do on NATO, EU membership, sterling and the division of UK assets, as well as ensuring the transition will be amicable and constructive, and not destabilising.

"The No camp badly needs to guard against smugness and negativity. I think many of us struggle to find hard facts amongst the smokescreen of reassurances and point scoring from both sides."



Eva Rodriguez, 23
hospitality worker,
Edinburgh, (moved from Spain 2010)

"I WILL be voting Yes since I think it is important for Scotland to establish its own independence. I believe no nation that has a strong national identity, advanced

political system and stable economy should remain silent and be tied to another country in what appears to be an unequal union.

"As an economy graduate, I recognised Scotland as an economically developed country that has a great potential to sustain its future independence on a financial and political level.

"I have carefully analysed my decision and I am aware such a revolutionary act poses potential risks, and once the deed is done there is no way back. However, I strongly believe the people not only should be given a chance to express their opinion but hope Scotland will succeed in its quest for independence."



Linsey Macdonald, 32
Nutrition graduate and
full-time mother
Bridge of Earn, Perthshire

"THE No campaign really needs to step it up. I hear about it on Facebook updates but you rarely hear anything, while the SNP are visible everywhere. They're doing a

better job. The No campaign has to buck up.

"The democratic deficit, which has often seen Scotland ruled by Tory governments it didn't vote for, is not a good enough reason to vote for independence. I know it angers many but all electoral systems have problems and there's arguments against proportional representation.

"Our country isn't in a great state and things have to improve but I don't how going independent is going to fix it. Just having the referendum is costing a lot of money, and could that not be better spent on other things?

"I'm not saying the status quo is brilliant but I'm just being cautious."



Kinga Gorecka, 35, Chef
Edinburgh (formerly Lodz)

"AS a mother of a six-year-old boy my responsibility and priority is to provide the best possible future for my son. I also feel strongly about living with my family in a free and independent country. As my family chose to relocate from

our native country we have made all the needed affords to embrace the Scottish culture and lifestyle.

As we think of Scotland as our home, I feel that is my duty to give full support to a country I strongly believe in. From an economic point of view, since Scotland has so far proven to me to be economically stable even in the time of the global downturn, I am very confident once it will become an independent country it will be able to grow in strength. I admire the drive and confidence but also solid political and economic argumentation provided by the Scottish Government for the voters. I am going to vote 'yes'. I have no doubts."



John McNaught, 46
Artist/printmaker
The Black Isle, Ross-shire

"THE dropping of Michael Moore in favour of Alistair Carmichael as Lib Dem Scottish Secretary is not helping the Better Together Campaign. He has been exposed a couple of times as

not really being up to it. This is on top of Alistair Darling, who has been unremittingly negative, which is totally counterproductive. I doubt he is persuading many.

"In stark contrast, Patrick Harvie of the Greens really is a breath of fresh air in the whole debate and underlines this is not just about the SNP.

"The White Paper is what the SNP would do in government if we vote yes. They are managing change but there are plenty who'd like consideration of arguments for a republic and our own currency. The latter would get us away from this obsession about sterling. Most understand if your economy is OK, your currency eventually will be as well."

HOW TO CAST YOUR REFERENDUM VOTE

TO vote in the independence referendum you must be resident in Scotland and over the age of 16 on polling day, September 18 next year.

Provision has also been made for some groups, military personnel for example, who live abroad.

You must be a British, Irish, other European Union or qualifying Commonwealth citizen. Qualifying Commonwealth citizens are those who have leave to enter or remain in the UK or do not require such leave.

Registration is not automatic. You have to fill out forms sent to your home by your local Electoral Registration Office (usually based at your local council.)

If you have not received your form, contact your local Electoral Registration Office to request one.

You can get their details by putting your postcode into the Electoral Commission's website - aboutmyvote.co.uk.

There is no qualifying period for the length of time you have lived in Scotland in order to vote.

But there is a deadline for registering - midnight on September 3, 2014. Your application to go on the voters' roll has to be received by your Electoral Registration Officer by that time.

Your Electoral Registration Office can also answer any questions on whether you qualify to vote in the referendum.

Government and election officials are on track to deliver a properly-run referendum, the Electoral Commission has declared. The Scottish Independence

Referendum (Franchise) Bill was introduced at Holyrood in March to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. It became law in August.

The other piece of legislation paving the way for the historic vote - the Scottish Independence Referendum Bill - was passed by MSPs last month.

It sets out the conditions for the referendum, names the date and gives the questions that will be put to voters: "Should Scotland be an independent Scotland?"



Derek Young, 59
Educational psychologist
Denny, Falkirk

"I LIKED a lot of the ideas in the White Paper but in a way it was used by the SNP to highlight policies they would introduce in an independent Scotland and I feel that was not the best place to do that.

Everyone would agree more funding for childcare would be good but there is no guarantee the SNP would be the biggest party so that may not be a priority for others.

"The White Paper was also very positive about most aspects of independence when a lot of the future outcomes would have to be negotiated, so it wasn't as clear cut as it was made to sound.

"There is not a lot of support among my friends for a Yes vote.

"I don't think the White Paper has made much difference.

"They are concerned about whether there would be enough money to support their pensions."

Campaign diaries: days

Blair Jenkins of the Yes campaign believes there is now an inexorable move from undecided to pro-independence and attributes this to positive aspirations about how we want to live our lives

WHEN I went in for my pre-Christmas trim, my hairdresser for the past 20 years said he had some good news for me. He'd been out with three old pals the night before and, for the first time, the subject of the referendum had come up. It turned out that all three were voting Yes. He was surprised, partly because he himself is still officially undecided. Oh, and his wife was also now voting Yes, after watching a television programme in which someone was going on about how much Scotland was subsidised by England.

I have these kinds of conversations all the time. They confirm what our own research is telling us, and the reports we get from all around the country, that the movement in the referendum campaign is in one direction only – towards Yes.

The publication of Scotland's Future a few weeks ago will only have accelerated this trend.

Ideas do matter. It was already the case that all of the energy and ideas in the debate are coming from the Yes side. What the White Paper did was to collect and describe a lot of the best ideas about how an independent Scotland would be fairer, wealthier and more democratic.

What the referendum debate is really about is what kind of country we want to live in – what kind of society, based on which values and what principles.

The process I would ask everyone to go through – this week and in the coming months – is the process of looking at the consequences of a Yes vote or a No vote.

Ask yourself what you really care about, what is most important to you, what are your top priorities for yourself and the people you love? And then ask yourself honestly which outcome in the referendum next year is most likely to produce the things you want, the kind of Scotland you desire for yourself, your children and grandchildren.

It is that process that is moving

more and more people towards voting Yes. We know there are three key arguments:

- The democratic case: only a Yes vote gets Scotland the governments it votes for all the time, instead of governments and policies we haven't voted for, from the poll tax to the bedroom tax.

- The economic case: only a Yes vote allows us to fulfil our potential as a prosperous country, going straight into the top 10 of the world's wealthiest countries on day one of independence, able to use our vast natural resources to grow a stronger economy with better jobs and more opportunities.

- The social justice case: only a Yes vote allows us, with our refreshed democracy and our increased prosperity, to bring more fairness into Scottish life, to look out for one another and to create a socially just Scotland, rejecting the policies of successive UK Governments who have made the UK the fourth most unequal country in the developed world.

Scotland has what it takes to be a successful independent country. We have the evidence to support that. What we need next year is the courage and the confidence to grab this great opportunity to transform our country and build a better Scotland.

I know we will.

OUR vision for Scotland is a positive one, based on high ambitions and realistic goals. However, I fully acknowledge that part of the attraction of independence for Scottish voters is the things we get to leave behind with a Yes vote: no more Tory governments, no more House of Lords, no more threats to our public services, no more weapons of mass destruction on the Clyde.

A Yes in 2014 gives us a range of opportunities to grow Scotland's economy and create more jobs. People are saying to us all around the country that they fear the consequences of a No vote – more cuts to Scotland's

schemes having to be fully-funded causing potential problems under independence.

May 21: Scottish Government publishes another paper on how more levers of power could boost economic performance.

June 11: The report of the Expert Working Group on Welfare, looking at the cost, delivery and transition to a separate system is published.



ONE DIRECTION: Blair Jenkins of Yes Scotland is confident his team is building momentum. Picture: Gordon Terris

budget and the imposition of the marketisation and privatisation of public services that are so rife now in England.

We know that more than 80% of the adult population are likely to vote next September.

We know that the level of interest in the debate is increasing, that more than two thirds of the population are still open to the idea of voting Yes, and that as people become informed about the issues they are much more likely to move to Yes.

“What we need is the courage and the confidence to grab this great opportunity

We know we are winning in debates, winning online and winning on the ground.

We have always set a positive tone, which we will maintain all the way to September. Project Fear is becoming very afraid, and with good reason.

We will continue to reach the undecided with our positive and aspirational messages.

We will work hard and we expect to run a very good campaign ... but it is the people of Scotland who will win the referendum.

THE STORY SO FAR

March 21: The First Minister announces to Parliament the date of the referendum, kick-starting an 18-month political campaign.

April 14: Scottish Government publishes a balance sheet of public finances showing Scotland's strong financial position.

April 25: The institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland highlight EU rules on cross-border pensions

June 27: MSPs pass the Bill which will give the vote to 16 year olds at the referendum.

July 11: Alistair Darling of Better Together delivers lecture entitled We Belong Together: The Case For A United Kingdom.

July 17: UK Office of Budget Responsibility predicts long-term slide in North Sea oil and gas receipts.

July 25, to September 2: Alex Salmond travels around the country outlining how political and economic independence still leaves intact five other “Unions”: the EU, the Monarchy, currency, Nato and the social union.

July 31: Institute for Fiscal Studies claims pensions and welfare “less sustainable” under independence.

August 29: Former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England described

plans to share sterling “seriously, perhaps fundamentally, flawed.”

September 2: Panelbase poll commissioned by the SNP puts Yes in the lead by 44% to 43%, the only such poll lead in recent months.

September 3: The fifth in the Scotland analysis series of UK Government reports is published looking at cross-border trade and the future of oil.

into weeks ..into what?

Looking back to the devolution referendum of 1997, when two-thirds of Scotland's voters turned out, Blair McDougall, director of Better Together, warns that complacency is the greatest danger

IT MAY not be shared by an already campaign-weary population but, as we close in on 2014, I am excited to be entering the year of the referendum.

I love the energy and activity of campaigns. The late nights waiting to see how a story lands in the first editions of the papers and the early starts preparing for the morning programmes.

Through campaigning I have made my best friends, met my wife and felt the pride that comes from playing a bit part in making a big difference to our country.

I am envious of the new, young activists experiencing campaign life for the first time in this historic contest.

What a democratic apprenticeship they are enjoying.

My first real experience of the adrenalin of a hard-fought democratic contest was as a young Labour activist in the 1997 general election.

There was an urgency and expectation to that election that created a landslide and a big turnout.

By contrast, the campaign for devolution in the referendum that took place later that summer felt very different.

The 1997 referendum was conceived as a rubber stamp of authority on something most Scots knew most Scots wanted: devolution. That sense of inevitability created a real issue over how you motivate people to vote for an outcome that they wanted but assumed was never really at risk.

Of course, now we know that these concerns turned out to be misplaced. Almost two-thirds of Scots did turn out and the "settled will of the Scottish people" could be read loud and clear as the results flashed up from around the country.

I have been struck by how different this referendum campaign is. Throughout the 1990s the Scottish Constitutional Convention created a genuine national consensus and an

agreed plan for the Parliament that reflected the clear wish of a clear majority of Scots.

This time around, it is only after the campaign to break up the UK was launched that the owners of the referendum proposition have attempted to manufacture the appearance of a national consensus out of a minority position.

It was a year and a half into the campaign before they published their proposition.

There are familiar feelings though. With polls suggesting strong leads for Better Together, once again most Scots know most Scots want devolution.

That will become increasingly clear as the choice is set out as being between devolution and separation.

Once again the risk is that people assume the only conceivable outcome of the referendum is devolution.

In fact, the risks of complacency are greater this time around.

If the nationalists scrape a victory on a low turnout it will be too late to complain that it doesn't represent the will of Scotland.

If people value devolution, they will have to vote for it.

THE post-White Paper opinion polls have suggested that what had been described as a "game changer" by the SNP has in fact fallen flat.

I don't think any member of our campaign team needed it, but any temptation to slacken the pace of the campaign was dispelled with a reminder of how ruthless the nationalists can be. Spending £800,000 of taxpayers' money on billboards, newspaper ads and door-to-door political propaganda shows just how far Alex Salmond is willing to go in order to get what he wants.

If the calls to our campaign office are anything to go by, this blatant misuse of public money has made people really angry.

I share their anger but it is the hopefulness and energy of our young supporters that has me so optimistic



CHOICE: Blair McDougall believes the risks of complacency are greater than in 1979. Picture: Colin Mearns

for 2014. The title of the White Paper manifesto, Scotland's Future, seemed like an odd choice for an SNP campaign obsessed with the grievances of the past and which is literally losing the battle on Scotland's future.

There was a large majority for remaining in the UK in a referendum of students at Glasgow University. This was followed by a 75% landslide against independence across Aberdeenshire schools in Alex Salmond's own backyard, which

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Once again the risk is that people assume the only conceivable outcome is devolution

must have been humiliating for the First Minister.

Mock referenda at schools across Scotland have overwhelmingly resulted in votes to keep the United Kingdom together. From Nairn to Gryfe, Stranraer to Cumbernauld, school pupils are choosing a future where their opportunities are not limited by borders.

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September 4: Poll by TNS BMRB shows record low backing for Yes vote at 25%, down from 33% in February but No vote also falls back, with undecideds up.

September 12: The Scottish Independence Referendum Bill receives its Stage 1 debate.

October 2: Scottish Government publishes paper on creating an oil fund.

November 14: The Scottish Independence Referendum Bill is passed by MSPs.

November 19: Scottish Government publishes paper on economic policy under independence.

November 26: The SNP White Paper, Scotland's Future, is launched in Glasgow at the Science Centre. It is 670 pages and 170,000 words long, and includes the answers to 650

questions: Alistair Darling attacks it within 10 minutes of launch. The document defends continuing to share sterling as in the interests of both Scotland and England, and claims, as Scotland already fully complies with EU rules and Scots are EU citizens, we could be fast-tracked into continuing membership. The Paper also highlights much improved childcare and pre-school education as the kind of policy an independent Scotland could achieve.

November 27: Spanish Premier Mariano Rajoy, with an eye to his own problematic Catalan question, rains on the White Paper parade by insisting Scotland would be a "region outside the EU" in the event of independence. The SNP cannot decide which is more insulting – his view of the EU rules or his description of Scotland as a "region".

December 4: Unnamed senior Tories criticise Alistair Darling's "comatose"

leadership of the No Campaign, with similar unsourced comments a few days later from his own party.

December 9: Major supermarkets say prices could go up in Scotland in the event of independence.

December 10: The members of the Scottish Cabinet put themselves in the firing line at the first of a series of public Q&A sessions on the White Paper.

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