

# Outsiders barred from SNP's private grief

### Early optimism quickly gave way to despair as party faithful endured death of their dream, writes Mike Wade

faithful love Nicola: they roared their delight.

Could the tide be turning? It seemed unlikely. The creeping gloom at the SNP party was quickened by an early closure of the bar in Dynamic Earth.

One leading campaign activist remained phlegmatic. "It's still too early to say," he said. "Obviously no one is punching the air yet, especially after the first result. The champagne corks are not popping."

This campaign started on May 6, 2011, when the SNP won its startling election victory, taking an overall majority in Holyrood's proportional representation system, which was pur-

pose-designed to keep the nationalists at bay. In the months and years that followed, a brilliant grassroots campaign took shape.

Jonathan Mackie, one of the main SNP players in its communities team, said he had been taken aback by the level of activism and participation. "In the last two months in particular it's gone completely bananas," he said.

"Since the turn of the year the biggest group of people coming forward are people from no political background whatsoever . . . people who haven't chapped a single door in their lives but they are coming out for this one."

One of the key planks of the strategy

was social media. Stewart Kirkpatrick, head of digital at Yes Scotland, said they had "bypassed the old media campaigning paradigm" by organising tens of thousands of supporters to persuade others to vote Yes.

As first sparrows began to squawk in the Edinburgh dawn, any optimism had leaked away. Any hope that remained was tied up in the need for a resounding Yes victory, in Glasgow, christened "Freedom City" last month by Alex Salmond in anticipation of its pivotal role in this ballot.

Well, it fell to Yes, but only by 30,000 votes. Not nearly enough to stave off the Union City Blues.

There are good ways and bad ways to host a party when you're spinning towards defeat. The Scottish National Party probably picked the worst possible option for their all-nighter to mark the historic referendum.

The party faithful gathered from about midnight at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, a modernist glass bowl within a stone's throw of the Scottish Parliament. However, by 4.30am no-one here was throwing anything, least of all victory streamers. Or indeed eggs.

Not that outsiders were invited in to witness what was going on. The SNP, for so long approachable and friendly as they led their now famous carnival of democracy across Scotland for three years, suddenly had a team of heavies on the door and security tape to hold back the crowds lest passing midnight tourists had the urge to press their noses against the glass.

However, even from the distance of the security cordon, it was easy to see what was going on. Glum-faced guests stared up at a huge television, which from about 4am began to play a succession of disastrous results. There were cheers, but they came only from the television sound system, broadcasting the delight of Better Together campaigners the length and breadth of Scotland.

From the party tables, packed with

Exclusive to members

Live news  
- Full results and interactive map  
- Live blog: reaction through the day  
- Analysis: what happens next?

thetimes.co.uk

the nationalist glitterati, only silence, as Midlothian, then East Lothian, Stirling and Falkirk delivered resounding votes for No. SNP strongholds Angus and Perthshire were soon taken by No. Aberdeen, so close to Alex Salmond's heartlands, gave one of the most resounding votes of the night for the Union. All met with stony faces in Dynamic Earth.

Insiders had known as soon as the first results came in that the game was up, and some veteran campaigners began to drift away early. Clackmannanshire and Orkney were first and second to declare, the numbers involved almost ridiculously small — a total of 50,000 votes between them.

However, No triumphed in Clackmannanshire, seen as a likely nationalist stronghold, and the proportion of the Yes vote in both was 10 per cent lower than would be required to achieve a majority across the country.

Briefly, about 4.15am, the venue was animated by a sense of optimism. Dundee declared Yes, the first constituency to do so. West Dunbartonshire quickly followed suit, and on the television above, the image of Nicola Sturgeon hove into view, draped, as ever, in her lucky red campaigning jacket. The

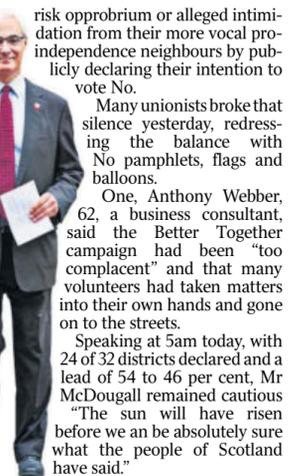


The results at 6am

Aberdeen	40%	60%
Aberdeenshire	39.6%	60.4%
Angus	43.7%	56.3%
Argyll and Bute	41.5%	58.5%
Clackmannanshire	46.2%	53.8%
Dumfries and Galloway	34.3%	65.7%
Dundee	57.3%	42.7%
East Ayrshire	47.2%	52.8%
East Dunbartonshire	38.8%	61.2%
East Lothian	38.3%	61.7%
East Renfrewshire	36.8%	63.2%
Edinburgh	38.9%	61.1%
Eilean Siar	46.6%	53.4%
Falkirk	46.5%	53.5%
Fife	45%	55%
Glasgow	53.5%	46.5%
Highland		
Inverclyde	49.9%	50.1%
Midlothian	43.7%	56.3%
Moray		
North Ayrshire	49%	51%
North Lanarkshire	51.1%	48.9%
Orkney Islands	32.8%	67.2%
Perth and Kinross	39.8%	60.2%
Renfrewshire	47.2%	52.8%
Scottish Borders	33.4%	66.6%
Shetland Islands	36.3%	63.7%
South Ayrshire	42.1%	57.9%
South Lanarkshire	45.3%	54.7%
Stirling	40.2%	59.8%
West Dunbartonshire	54%	46%
West Lothian	44.8%	55.2%



Edinburgh votes: a fiery piper leads "yes" voters to the polling station in Craigmillar, above, while, left, a "short walk to freedom" march progresses through a residential area and, right, a No campaigner stands up for the continuation of the Union. Below, Alistair Darling was jeered as he cast his vote



## Salmond prepares bid to salvage devolution deal

Continued from page 1

a new constitutional settlement later today to quell the growing backbench.

Ed Miliband faces questions over Labour's failure to deliver all its heartland areas, notably Glasgow which voted "yes" by 53 per cent to 47 per cent.

The Union was instead secured by voters in the north and east of Scotland, vindicating claims by Ruth Davidson, the Scottish Conservative leader, that a "silent majority" had proved decisive.

Having failed to deliver for his party, there will now be pressure on Mr Salmond to quit as SNP leader, although he has previously said he would stand for Holyrood again in 2016. He is also expected to try to salvage an extended devolution deal for Scotland, although

Yes campaigners may be quick to accuse the Unionist parties of reneging on the pledge they made this month.

Speaking exclusively to *The Times* before the result, Mr Salmond sent a blunt warning to Mr Cameron that he must accept his legal "responsibilities" to deliver the best deal for Scotland. The move was seen as an opening salvo in the post-referendum negotiations before the outcome was known.

He said that he would accept the will of the people if the vote went against him but warned that all should accept that once "it is over, it is over" — particularly politicians who are not the story in this referendum, in my estimation". He added: "They have an obligation to lead positively."

# Unionists' quiet hope becomes a victory roar

### Scotland decides



Kaya Burgess

The cheers booming around Better Together's overnight headquarters in Glasgow grew in intensity as dawn approached and Scottish districts lined up to reject independence.

What had started yesterday afternoon as cautious, almost bashful optimism among No campaigners on the streets grew into a party atmosphere in the conference suite of the Marriott hotel. Senior Labour figures mingled with bleary-eyed activists to watch the results come in and await an expected appearance from Alastair Darling, who led the No campaign, with what they hoped would be a victory speech.

The polls had just closed last night when *Come Together* by The Beatles blared out over the crowds. John Lennon's plea for togetherness came too late to sway any voters, but it provided



an early soundtrack to a sense of growing confidence as districts including Aberdeen and Falkirk resoundingly voted against secession.

Unionists watched news of 80 and 90 per cent turnouts filter through on the big screens before greeting the declaration of No votes in Clackmannanshire and Orkney with a great roar.

"The turnout is astonishing," said Blair McDougall, the campaign director for Better Together, shortly before midnight. "Thousands of Yes activists have been throwing parties and celebrating. We've been out on the doorsteps and focusing on undecided voters right up to the last minute."

Asked whether Scotland would be a resentful country after the vote, he said that, right from the beginning, about a third of the population had been staunch "yes" voters and a third had been committed "no" voters, leaving another third of the population "in the middle" and less likely to feel bitter at the result.

"The idea of more powers for Scot-

land [in the case of a 'no' vote] will appeal to those who voted 'yes,'" he said. "People on both sides will have to work to bring the country back together."

Dan Snow, the historian leading the separate Let's Stay Together campaign, said he was dismayed that the vote was still so close in some places.

"If you had told me a year ago that we would be cheering 54 per cent, I'd have said it was a sad day — sad that millions of people want to leave our country."

He argued that, in the case of a "yes" vote, all national party leaders should resign. "I couldn't vote for anybody who had contributed to the break-up of the UK," he said.

The arrival of Jim Murphy, the Labour MP whose campaigning tour of Scotland saw him egged by Yes supporters in Kircaldy, was greeted with a rapturous cheer shortly before 2am.

Speaking after Clackmannanshire's declaration he said: "This is the first piece in a 32-piece jigsaw. We won't win them all, but I'm confident we'll have had a very good night. We've spent two years focusing on our differences, now Scotland has got to come together."

Noting that turnout in the Scottish referendum was up to six times greater than in the 2012 police commissioner elections, Mr Murphy said: "And it was a million times more important."

He called on the rest of the country to follow Scotland's lead in allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote, branding the idea a "spectacular success".

The former home secretary Lord Reid of Cardowan said that, if Scotland wakes up to a "no" vote, then three things must happen: "First, we need respect for the verdict of the people and respect for each other and for people to stop blaming everything on Westminster and England.

"Secondly, we need reconciliation as this has been deeply divisive for Scotland. Thirdly, we need to rethink the whole value of Britishness."

After five districts returned a majority "no" vote, the crowd was briefly crestfallen at news from Dundee of a 57 per cent "yes" vote, as the overall national tally narrowed to just 51 per cent in favour of a "no" vote at 4am.

Within an hour, the "no" vote had pulled back to a 56 to 44 per cent lead and the crowds jeered Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP deputy first minister, as she appeared on the big screens.

Yesterday, a people's army of No supporters broke cover and took to the streets to declare their support for the Union.

Badges and posters bearing the "No thanks" logo have been far outnumbered by Yes stickers and flags in cities such as Glasgow and Dundee in recent weeks. Pro-Union campaigners talked, instead, of a "silent majority" who were reluctant to

risk opprobrium or alleged intimidation from their more vocal pro-independence neighbours by publicly declaring their intention to vote No.

Many unionists broke that silence yesterday, redressing the balance with No pamphlets, flags and balloons.

One, Anthony Webber, 62, a business consultant, said the Better Together campaign had been "too complacent" and that many volunteers had taken matters into their own hands and gone on to the streets.

Speaking at 5am today, with 24 of 32 districts declared and a lead of 54 to 46 per cent, Mr McDougall remained cautious