



# BRITISH POLITICS REVIEW

*Newsletter of the British Politics Society, Norway*

Volume 2, No. 1 Winter 2007



*A Scottish builder apprentice with the first "named" stone of the new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. Devolved parliamentary power today challenges the Union of Parliaments of England and Scotland, which sealed the construction of Great Britain in 1707.*

*Reproduced by permission of the British Geological Survey. © NERC. IPR/85-46C*

## A relationship under construction: 300 years of Anglo-Scottish Union

Thorbjørn Jagland: Parliament, Union and a special relationship

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: Anglo-Scottish relations - past, present and future

Atle L. Wold: The Union of 1707 and the government of Scotland

Richard Wyn Jones: British devolution and Blair's political *post scriptum*



*British Politics Society, Norway, established in June 2006, is politically neutral and has no collective agenda apart from raising the interest and knowledge of British politics among the informed Norwegian public.*

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**British Politics Review**  
Volume 2, No. 1 Winter 2007

*British Politics Review* is a quarterly newsletter issued by the British Politics Society, Norway. With contributions from academic and journalistic sources, the *British Politics Review* is aimed at everyone with a general interest in political developments in Britain.

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**British unity under challenge**

*How should the anniversary be celebrated? As we enter the 300th year of Anglo-Scottish parliamentary union, the question remains unresolved. British unity is under challenge by devolution, which has given birth to a Scottish Parliament as well as a National Assembly in Wales. Meanwhile, Britishness is a contested concept in political debates, related to the devolution issue as well as multiculturalism and ethnic diversity in Britain.*

*It is in this contemporary setting that the Anglo-Scottish anniversary is set. The current issue of **British Politics Review** puts the relationship and its state of health today under scrutiny. **Atle L. Wold** gives a timely historical overview as well as an account of how a British identity has been cultivated over the years. **Thorbjørn Jagland** focuses on the continuity of Parliament, Britain's global role and its ties with Norway. **Sir Malcolm Rifkind** draws the longer lines of Anglo-Scottish relations.*



*Britannia, the mythological representation of Britain*

*Turning to the current political debates, **Helle Linné Eriksen** accounts for the process through which devolution became a Labour Party policy. **Richard Wyn Jones** gives a critical perspective on the prime minister's vanity and the dangers of letting the Scottish National Party advance its agenda. **Øivind Bratberg** discusses the British model of sub-national government and how it handles the conflicting demands from below and above. **Annette Groth**, finally, gives a timely account of Northern Ireland, a region much on the outside of British devolution.*

**Facts on the Union of 1707**

**January:** Scottish Parliament ratifies Articles of Union (16th)

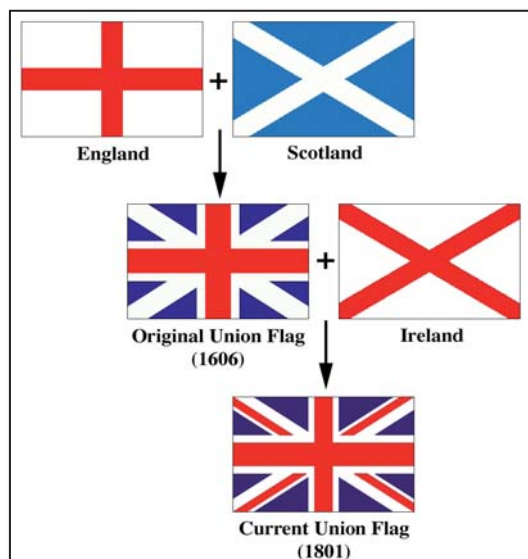
**March:** The Act of Union joins the kingdoms of England and Scotland under the name of Great Britain (6th). The Act provides that the Princess Sophia of Hanover and her Protestant heirs should succeed to the Crown of the new united kingdom; that there would be one Parliament at Westminster to which Scotland should send 16 elective peers to the House of Lords and 45 members of the House of Commons; that no more Scottish peers be created; that Scots Law and the Scottish legal administration remain unchanged; that the Episcopal Church in England and Presbyterian in Scotland be unchanged; and for the adoption of a common flag - the Union Jack - a common coinage, and free Anglo-Scottish and colonial trade.

**April:** Final dissolution of the Scottish Parliament (28th).

**May:** Union of England and Scotland comes into effect (1st).

**October:** Second Parliament of Anne reconvenes as first Parliament of Great Britain.

Source: Jeremy Gregory and John Stevenson (1999), *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century, 1688-1820*.



**The road to the Union Jack**

*Named after King James VI & I, who became the first Anglo-Scottish king a century before the Parliaments were formally united. The original union flag was further adjusted with the Union of 1801, to include the Irish flag of St. Patrick. The history behind the UK's common flag testifies to the diverse constitutional history of the British Isles.*

# Parliament, Union and a special relationship

By *British Politics Review* Guest Writer *Thorbjørn Jagland*,  
President of the Norwegian Parliament

***Thorbjørn Jagland has a long and distinguished career in the Norwegian Labour Party. Among a number of key positions he has been prime minister (1996-1997), foreign minister (2000-2001) and Labour Party chairman (1992-2002). Jagland has also played a pivotal role in the party's international work with particular emphasis on the Middle East. First elected MP in 1993, Thorbjørn Jagland was awarded the post as President of the Storting in 2005.***



Ever since, their descendants have kept coming to Britain. Fortunately, the Norsemen have mellowed over the centuries. Civilizing forces have been at work, such as Christianity which was introduced to Norway by the first King Olav. He had been baptized and confirmed while in England.

We have been on opposite sides in war. The blockade of Norway by the British fleet during the Napoleonic war caused hunger and left scars which took a long time to heal. This is at the present day of no relevance to our relationship. But in the years following this event, it contributed to forging Norway's foreign policy orientation. Rather than risking being at war with a powerful nation like the United Kingdom, Norway looked for an ally there.

The first King to occupy the Norwegian throne since Norway regained its independence in 1905, was King Haakon VII, whose Queen Maud was the daughter of King Edward VII. She won a place in her new countrymen's hearts, and strengthened the ties between the Norwegian and British royal families and their people.

In 1908, during a British naval visit, the Norwegian Prime Minister Gunnar Knudsen stated the following regarding Norwegian security interests and their reliance on British naval power in the North Sea: "We think that there never will be trouble [...] and if there is, we shall place our trust in the British nation, mindful of the new link forged by our Queen".

Norway expects a lot from Britain, and we have done so for many years. Our King and Government resided in Britain at a most difficult time in our history, during the second World War. We hoped for your support, and we got it.

Today, we still expect a lot from Britain. In present days, however, our expectations are rather linked to the role we see that Britain may play at the international level.

Sometimes we need the big players to take a lead. Britain did this for Africa during its G8 chairmanship. Norway is a donor country which spends a substantial proportion of its GDP on development aid, but without the biggest economies of the world on board the volume will never be sufficient. Britain turned G8 focus towards Africa, in full compliance with Norwegian foreign aid priorities.

The world is waiting for progress in the Middle East. During my visit to Israel recently I felt the urgent need for the international community to engage actively in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to do it right now. The people who suffer under the conflict deserve it, and the whole region needs a solution to this conflict in order to stabilise and democratise the rest of the Middle East. It seems to me that we need Europe and in particular countries like the United Kingdom to take a lead. If we wait for the US alone to move, we may wait too long.

More generally, I hope to see the EU develop into a stronger force on the international arena. In the negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme the EU3 demonstrated what clout the United Kingdom and the other big EU powers may have when they act concertedly.

Energy security is seen to be a major challenge of our time. It is on top of the European agenda. Today, Norway supplies a substantial amount of Britain's petroleum imports, and the operation of the Langede gas pipeline marks another major step in our bilateral relationship.

Climate change and energy are interlinked. There must be incentives to invest in new technology to reduce emissions. CO2 capture and storage is on top of the bilateral agenda between Norway and Britain. Together we must move Europe forward, and also export our technology to other parts of the world.

The anniversary of the unification of Scotland and England 300 years ago reminds us that Norway is geographically closer to Scotland than to England. Nowhere in the United Kingdom are Norwegian names and vocabulary seen as much as in parts of Scotland. In present days more than 300 Norwegian enterprises are established in the United Kingdom, of which one third are located in Scotland. Parliamentary relations between Norway and the United Kingdom include frequent exchanges with the Scottish Parliament.

From my position as President of the Storting I look forward to enhancing the parliamentary cooperation between Norway and the United Kingdom. Hopefully the 300 years' anniversary of the United Kingdom will provide us with ample opportunities to do so. We should continue to pool our resources in a common European and international engagement for parliamentary democracy, and for peace and development in the world.

This year marks the 300 years' anniversary of the establishment of the Union of Great Britain. One of the effects of this was a unified Parliament. In Norway we recently had our anniversary of the dissolution of the union with Sweden. The revolutionary acts of the Storting ensured Norwegian independence in 1905. In our societies, Parliament plays a crucial role, and has done so for a long time. As president of the Storting our common traditions of parliamentary democracy springs to my mind when I take part in the anniversary of Great Britain. I paid my first official visit abroad in my new capacity in 2005 to the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Norway and the United Kingdom have an excellent bilateral relationship, based on history, our Royal families, economic ties, culture, and much more. At the same time, being neighbours sometimes also means conflicting interests and a scramble for resources.

Some 1220 years ago – in the year 787 – three Viking ships brought the first Norsemen to England. The friendly Anglo-Saxon natives who came to welcome the foreign visitors were immediately cut down with swords. Clearly, the Vikings had not travelled so far crossing the perilous North Sea just to make social contact. Heathen Norsemen went on to plunder monasteries and cause havoc with rape and slaughter.

"Norway expects a lot from Britain, and we have done so for many years.... In present days, however, our expectations are rather linked to the role we see that Britain may play at the international level."

# Anglo-Scottish relations - past, present and future

By British Politics Review Guest Writer Sir Malcolm Rifkind,  
MP Kensington and Chelsea

**Sir Malcolm Rifkind is one of the Conservative Party's most prominent spokesmen on Scotland as well as on foreign affairs. Elected MP for Edinburgh**



**in 1974, he began his parliamentary career as the opposition's spokesman on Scottish Affairs in 1975-76. Sir Malcolm's career in government since then comprise senior postings as Secretary of State for Scotland (1986-90), Transport (1990-92), Defence (1992-95) and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1995-97). After an eight-year spell outside Parliament, Sir Malcolm was returned to the House of Commons in 2005 from Kensington and Chelsea and is now Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.**

Devolution has been the dominant theme of Anglo-Scottish relations in recent years. But constitutional questions have never been far away from any political discussion involving the two nations. The Act of Union celebrates its 300th anniversary this year and the debate about the future of the Union is as strong as ever. Some argue that Scotland would achieve greater prosperity if granted independence. Others insist that life apart from England would be unworkable. These debates have been conducted in one form or another for hundreds of years, but the Union will live on, strengthened by devolution, a shared history and common values.

There is nothing unique about the devolution debate in the United Kingdom. Within Europe, a number of similar constitutional settlements have developed in the last forty years. Spain has had to accommodate demands for autonomy from Catalonia and the Basque Country. The Northern League in Italy reflects demands for independent local decision-making. Belgium's political system has been similarly moulded to give expression to the aspirations of both Flemings and Walloons. The host of states that emerged from the ruins of the Soviet Union all sought political

independence. A Scottish longing for political power, in this respect, is no different.

The origins of devolution in Scotland are deep rooted. One can hear echoes of the contemporary devolution settlement in the words of Andrew Fletcher, a Scottish politician and strong opponent of the 1707 Act of Union which created the Kingdom of Great Britain and common parliament in Westminster. Fletcher believed that "if, instead of one, we had twelve cities in these Kingdoms possessed of equal advantages, so many centres of men, riches and power, would be much more advantageous than one". He envisaged a system that combined maximum autonomy with the benefits of a close political relationship with England. Today, Westminster remains in control of foreign policy, taxation and defence matters; the Scottish Parliament controls health and education.

However, the benefits accrued from close association with England have been mutual; the dependency has worked both ways. The British Empire, for example, was a joint venture run, not by England, but by Britain as a whole. The Scots were particularly receptive to the opportunities that emerged from Britain's position as a global power. Scottish traders, missionaries and regiments were ubiquitous. Glasgow was known as the second city of the Empire and Scottish migrants founded many settlements in the Dominions. Indeed, many Scots saw the British Empire as an 'imperial partnership' and it forged a strong political consensus on both sides of the border.

While the Empire has disappeared, the geographical fact of sharing an island off the north-west coast of Europe has not. Living in close proximity surrounded by the sea has encouraged the psychological and political assumption that sharing political institutions is only natural. It is surely inconceivable that, had both territories been part of mainland Europe, the bonds of kinship would have been so long-lived. The English language has similarly played a vital role in binding the Anglo-Scottish relationship into a Union. The nationalist parties in both Scotland and Wales emphasise native

linguistic traditions, but the reality is that language is not the political issue that it is in countries such as Belgium or Canada

Even when Scottish nationalism rears its head, its components reflect more an irritation with England than a deep-seated resentment. English condescension is the most that Scottish nationalist leaders can point to, and this explains the paucity of inspirational figures within the movement for independence.

Most important, the Union should be valued for what it represents. This is an age of fragmentation and factionalism. The fall of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have, in Europe, resulted in a plethora of new states and a resurgence in ethnic hatred and warfare. Unfortunately, the trend, as we see in Kosovo, Chechnya and a series of disputes in the Caucasus, shows no sign of abating. The disintegration of nations is destabilising and dangerous. But the United Kingdom is a testament to the transcending of historic rivalry and the establishment of a free and equal citizenry under common political institutions.

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Britain's unity demonstrates that nationalities do not necessarily need states. An Anglo-Scottish divorce would send a discouraging message to the world. Rejection would be seen to prevail over solidarity; division over unity. Indeed, democracy and citizenship rest upon notions of reconciliation and the brokering of co-operation amongst those who are, in some way, different.

Another significant factor militating against Scottish independence is that it would hurt employment, prosperity and business confidence. The United Kingdom embodies both a recognition that mutual interest has been a component of enlightened self interest, and, more broadly, that an ideal is achievable, one in which nationhood, tolerance and liberty live alongside one another in tranquillity.

# The Union of 1707 and the government of Scotland

By *Atle L. Wold*

Celebration in order. 16 January 2007 marks the 300th anniversary of the day when the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh ratified the Articles of Union, thereby agreeing to abolish itself in return for Scottish representation in the English Parliament in Westminster. This decision marked the beginning of a process which would be brought to completion on 1 May, when the Anglo-Scottish union came into effect.



*Atle L. Wold is a Senior Lecturer at the Dept. of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, Univ. of Oslo.*

Through this “Union of Parliaments”, the two kingdoms of Scotland and England – which had already been joined in a personal union or “Union of Crowns” since 1603 – were brought together into one single state: *Great Britain*. This article provides a brief outline of the background for the union, its immediate consequences, and discusses one of the main problems of the union arrangement: the future government of Scotland.

The regal union of 1603 – whereby the Scottish King James VI inherited the English throne when Elizabeth I of England died childless – was never meant or intended to be anything more than just that, a personal union where one monarch would rule two, still, separate kingdoms. King James, however, had greater plans, and shortly after acceding to the English throne, he set about working for a closer political, or institutional, union of his two kingdoms.

To prepare the ground for this, James and his advisors issued a whole barrage of state-sponsored propaganda, and resurrected the old name of *Britons*, arguing that the peoples of his kingdoms should forget their difference of the past, and begin to view themselves as British, rather than Scottish or English (or Welsh or Irish, for that matter). Only if it was accompanied by such a “union of hearts and minds” or “union of love” as James himself phrased it, could institutional union be carried through successfully. One of the more lasting emblems of this campaign was the “Union Jack”, the new British flag, which was designed in 1606 (see figure elsewhere on these pages).

The Scots and the English, however, continued to be suspicious of each other,

and were apprehensive of any closer institutional alignment between the two countries. When the English Parliament rejected James’s proposals for institutional union in the summer of 1607, the project gradually fizzed out.

The subsequent decades were turbulent ones, marked by civil war and the short-lived republican regime of Oliver Cromwell. Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the establishment of a more stable government, however, institutional union re-emerged on the political agenda, and would remain there for nearly fifty years. This raises at least two important questions: *why was a political union now perceived to be desirable and, when that was the case, why did it take so long to reach an agreement?*

The impracticalities of one monarch ruling two countries with separate governments and, potentially, separate foreign policies, was perhaps the most obvious answer to the first question. Moreover, for the Scots the wish to gain access to English markets, including the overseas colonies and the lucrative English job-market, as a way of relieving the economic problems and poverty of Scotland, was a major spur to union; while, for the English, the problems of a semi-independent Scotland posed literally “in their back”, made closer union seem an attractive alternative.

Multiple attempts were therefore made to reach an agreement after 1660, but for a long time without success. There were always too many issues the English and the Scots could not agree upon, not the least what kind of union it was going to be. Generally speaking, the English favoured an arrangement on the model of the Anglo-Welsh union of 1536, whereby Wales had become a part of the English kingdom, while the Scots wished to retain a formally equal status for Scotland in a future union with England.

When an agreement could finally be reached in late 1706, it was primarily because the need to settle the matter by then had become acute, particularly for the English. According to the Scottish historian Christopher A. Whatley, it was

war which formed the “crucial link in the chain reaction that would lead to union”. Faced with involvement in the Spanish War of Succession, and posed against the overwhelming military might of Louis XIV’s France, it was seen as vital by the English government to keep the war away from mainland Britain. The dangers of a Scottish government, threatening to pursue its own foreign policy (unless the Scots were granted access to the English colonial markets) and, it was feared, perhaps reaching some agreement with the French monarch, were too grave to be ignored.

Were the Scots then, as many Scots nationalists have claimed, cajoled and threatened into union, and the corrupt Scottish aristocracy in the Parliament at Edinburgh “bought and sold for English gold”? The debate amongst present-day historians continues, but there were, at least, many Scots who actively sought institutional union, and who did so for a variety of reasons. Among these, the most important was probably a hope of lifting their country out of its abject poverty.

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The final Treaty of Union, which was ratified by the English Parliament on 6 March (following the vote in the Scottish Parliament on 16 January), was arguably a compromise solution, catering to both English and Scottish interests. The separate Scottish Parliament ceased to exist and Scotland was incorporated with England into a single British state, which, from then onwards, was to pursue one foreign policy, decided upon in Whitehall, London. Yet, the Scottish negotiators and Parliamentarians were able to avoid a repetition of the Anglo-Welsh union by securing the continued existence of several key institutions in Scotland. The crucial one at the time was probably the Church of Scotland – the *Kirk* – which was to remain the official Scottish Church alongside the Anglican Church of England.

More important in the longer term was the retention of the Scottish legal system. The new British Parliament in Westminster could clearly pass laws for Scotland and well as for England, but the basic framework of Scots Law was not to be altered and, in practice, this meant that laws often had to be modified and given a distinct wording for Scotland.

# Continued: The Union of 1707 and the government of Scotland

By Atle L. Wold

Moreover, Scotland also retained her separate electoral system, system of local government and education system. All combined, this was intended to, and did, secure a Scottish society quite distinct from that of England and Wales.

The two Parliaments had thus been successfully merged, but the executive part of government was yet to be decided. It seemed clear that the centre of government for the future would be London, but nothing more was stated in the treaty about the old executive part of government in Scotland, the Scottish Privy Council, other than that it would be left at the mercy of what the new British Parliament in Westminster would "think fit". What Parliament thought fit was to abolish the Scottish Privy Council within a year, but without providing for a clear replacement. As would become evident over the course of the eighteenth century, finding a workable solution for the government of Scotland was easier said than done, and has remained a problem to the present day (devolution is, arguably, the latest attempt to find a lasting settlement).

Two main alternatives presented themselves to begin with. Either, a specific Scottish Secretary of State could be appointed as, indeed, had been the case after 1660 or, Scotland could be governed directly from London as a northern extension of England. The former alternative was most in tune with the agreements reached in the Treaty, and for most of the time between 1708 and 1725, and again from 1742 until 1746, a Scottish Secretary of State was appointed. He was, however, invested with little government patronage (a crucial element in eighteenth century politics) making the authority of the office dependent on the informal power and influence of the individual who held it at any given. Furthermore, since the office was not safeguarded by the Treaty of Union, it could be set up and dispensed with as the British administration of the day found appropriate; hardly the basis for a lasting solution.

The alternative of direct rule from London also posed problems, however, and they were linked to the retention of old Scottish institutions. This inevitably created a distance to the central government in London, beyond that of mere geography. English ministers, clerks

in public offices, and public officials in general could be expected to know little or nothing about the Scottish legal system, or of old Scottish traditions and methods of administration, and this was only all too evident in their handling of Scottish affairs. When Scottish matters lay before English government officials they tended to be delayed, simply ignored, or "lost" in the central bureaucracy in London. Such arrangements were hardly promoting the

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integration of Scotland in the Union, nor were they satisfactory to Scottish interests. Gradually, therefore, an alternative and more informal system of government emerged through what came to be known as the Scottish "manager" or "minister".

The idea was for the (unofficial) position as manager to be held by someone who was loyal to the government, and had substantial influence among the Scottish elite. The manager would need to be well acquainted with Scottish law and traditions of government in general, so that he could provide the government with advice on Scottish affairs, and to reinforce his position, ministers would leave him in charge of most of government patronage for Scotland. Theoretically – and as far as the governing of Scotland was concerned – the system could be seen to improve the situation as viewed from both sides of the border.

While the manager's knowledge of "Scottish ways" and his personal contacts in Scotland would make him well suited to represent the government's interests in Scotland, it would also enable him to forward Scottish requests and views on to London.

The problem with the manager system was partly that it relied very heavily on the personal abilities and connections of whomever held this unofficial post (only two politicians became managers in the eighteenth century), partly that a very successful manager could become too independent of the central government, and emerge as a kind of petty King of Scotland (as indeed some contemporaries claimed was the case when the second, and most successful Scottish manager, Henry Dundas, stood at his peak of

influence in the 1790s). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, therefore, no lasting solution had yet been found to the conundrum.

The Great Reform Act of 1832 led to a major overhaul, not only of the Scottish electoral system, but also of the Scottish system of local government, whereby the whole basis for the manager system disappeared. It took until the late nineteenth century, however, before a permanent replacement had been set up in the shape of the Scottish Office and Secretary of Scotland; both in 1885. In 1892 the Scottish Secretary was finally given a seat in the Cabinet, and in 1926, he became a Secretary of State.

In the meantime, a movement seeking the re-establishment of a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, though within the Union, had emerged in the shape of the Scottish Home Rule Association, and in the wake of World War 1, several movements emerged seeking full independence for Scotland, eventually uniting in the Scottish National Party in 1934.

The nationalists remained on the fringes of Scottish politics until the 1960s, when they achieved their electoral breakthrough on the basis of the acute economic difficulties the Scots experienced as the old Scottish heavy industries tottered on the verge of collapse. The growing strength of, and perceived threat from, the Scottish separatists then frightened the Labour Party into an attempt at instigating devolution to Scotland in

"[I]t was not until the new Labour government of Tony Blair came into office in 1997, that devolution and the re-establishing of a Parliament in Edinburgh could be carried through successfully. Will it provide a lasting solution for the government of Scotland within the union?"

1979 (addressed by Helle Linné Eriksen elsewhere on these pages), but this did not succeed, and it was not until the new Labour government of Tony Blair came into office in 1997, that devolution and the re-establishing of a Parliament in Edinburgh could be carried through successfully.

Will it provide a lasting solution for the government of

Scotland within the union? In light of recent opinion polls revealing a majority in favour of Scottish "independence" both in Scotland and in England, as well as the problems which have beset Labour's devolution project since the new assemblies were opened in 1999, the final outcome is, at the moment, anyone's guess.

# Scottish devolution and the Labour Party: how a snowball started rolling

By Helle Linné Eriksen

A perilous journey. In addition to the anniversary of the Union, the year 2007 also marks the ten-year anniversary of the 1997 New Labour Government. The very first public Bill of this Government, introduced only a fortnight after the election victory, legislated for devolution referendums to be held in Scotland and Wales and resulted in the setting up of a Welsh Assembly and a Scottish Parliament within two years. Devolution had become a New Labour project, in spite of the fact that the policy had originated in the need to placate the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish electorate a couple of decades earlier.



Helle Linné Eriksen recently defended her MA-thesis "Walking the Tartan Tightrope: The British Labour Party and the Scottish Question 1974-1979" at the Dept. of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo, and currently works as a student advisor at the same institution.

been the party of centralisation, and had successfully resisted any suggestions of devolving power to elected assemblies in the peripheries of the kingdom.

When a Royal Commission set down by Labour concluded in favour of some measure of devolution, and this coincided with a strong support for the SNP in the February 1974 general election, however, a change of policy took place within weeks. The lack of a lengthy debate at all levels of the party resulted in a high degree of dissent within Labour, weakening the devolution Bills on their journey through Parliament. When a Scotland Act was presented in 1979 it did not convince the electorate, and was thus rejected in a referendum on 1 March. Anti-devolutionists within Labour had fought their own campaign, making it easier for Labour voters to oppose the Scotland Act without feeling that they betrayed their party. The break-up of the United Kingdom was frequently projected by the anti-devolutionists, and it was feared that an Assembly or Parliament in Edinburgh would provide the SNP with a platform to promote its policies of separation, and to gain increased support for the party.

By 1997, opposition to devolution had all but disappeared within the Labour Party, and favouring such constitutional reform was now perceived to be consistent with the new ideology of the party. Devolution to Scotland and Wales was seen by New Labour as a way of keeping a diverse kingdom united, by giving the regions or nations a measure of self-government

instead of regarding their individual national identities as threats. Still, the few anti-devolutionists left in Labour were not convinced, and named as one of their main fears that devolution would serve as a stepping-stone to full independence for Scotland. What will eventually be the result remains to be seen, eight years after a Scottish Parliament was established, but it is worth noting that, in late November 2006, the Sunday Telegraph could present an ICM opinion poll which showed a clear majority in favour of full independence for Scotland. It was supported by 52 per cent of Scottish voters, and perhaps more surprisingly, by 59 per cent of English voters. The latter figure points to a growing English nationalism, a tendency also found in another part of the poll, which revealed

68 per cent in favour of a separate English parliament.

The ICM poll also revealed that support for the SNP stood at 34 per cent in Scotland, which put them five points ahead of Labour. When support for the SNP climbed to similar heights in 1974, Labour's desperate reaction was to

"In the post-war era the Labour Party had been the party of centralisation, and had successfully resisted any suggestions of devolving power to elected assemblies in the peripheries of the kingdom."

propose devolution, in spite of the major break with party policy this entailed. What will be the answer this time, at the Scottish Parliamentary elections draw closer? And will the anniversary year of 2007 be the year Scotland chooses an SNP representative as the leader of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood?

## Union and devolution - a bibliography

**Literary platform.** There exists a plethora of good and informative literature on both the Union of 1707 and on issues related to the government of Scotland, or to Home Rule and Devolution. This list is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but presents some of the more recent works to be published on these topics, useful for those who might wish to study them more in depth.

### Union:

- Christopher A. Whatley (2006): *The Scots and the Union*.
- Michael Fry (2006): *The Union: England, Scotland and the Treaty of 1707*.
- Paul Henderson Scott (2006): *The Union of 1707: Why and How*.
- Christopher A. Whatley (1994): *Bought and Sold for English Gold? Explaining the Union of 1707*.

### Devolution:

- Vernon Bogdanor (2001): *Devolution in the United Kingdom*.
- H.T. Dickinson, and Michael Lynch, eds. (2000): *The Challenge to Westminster: Sovereignty, Devolution and Independence*.
- Alan Trench, ed. (2005): *The Dynamics of Devolution: the State of the Nations 2005*. [latest book in the State of the Nation-series, an annual publication addressing the developments of the devolution project since 1997].

# British devolution and Blair's political *post scriptum*

By Richard Wyn Jones

**Contestation.** What will the price be of Tony Blair's vanity? In this particular case, it is possible to express the value of vanity in rather precise terms: in order to satisfy the prime minister's desire to see out ten years in office, both Blair and his party seem to have accepted that a referendum on Scottish independence is a price worth paying.



Richard Wyn Jones is Director of the Institute of Welsh Politics, University of Wales, and currently a guest researcher at NUPI, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. He has published widely on Welsh politics.

To serve as prime minister for ten years is an achievement whose meaning is wholly symbolic. There will be no reward for Blair for staying in power until that milestone is reached on 1 May 2007 beyond having his ego burnished and achievements intoned by a diminishing band of admirers. Certainly, there are no benefits accruing to either party or government from the celebration of this anniversary. On the contrary, to delay the handover is simply to delay the much-needed attempt to reinvigorate a tired government and governing party. Continuing delay also deprives Labour of the short-term boost in popularity that would accompany a change in leadership, and this at a time when such a boost is sorely needed. Three difficult elections are looming on the political horizon: for Scottish and Welsh devolved legislatures as well as English local government, all on the 3 May. Yet despite the fact that all this is widely known and accepted in the Labour party, the party is content to allow Mr Blair to celebrate a decade in 10 Downing Street before being sent out to pasture, or, at least, the golden troughs of the international statesman circuit.

An agreement to allow Blair to serve out a decade as prime minister was the result of Labour's near implosion in the summer of 2006, when both Blairites and Brownites pulled back from the brink. Essential to the compromise was that Blair would be allowed to sit until May before the much-vaunted "orderly transition". After all, what difference would another year or so make in the great scheme of things?

Among Labour's electoral challenges, forget the English local government elections. By now setbacks for the governing party at mid-term local elections have become part of the natural order of things in British politics. And although it pains me to say this, forget also the Welsh elections. Wales has long been regarded in government circles as Scotland's "smaller and uglier sister". Here, the costs of miscalculation are relatively lower: while support for devolution has increased rapidly in Wales since the wafer-thin referendum majority in 1997, the debate is about when real legislative devolution should be introduced rather than about establishing a separate state.

No, the real action is north of the border and the real story is the surge in support for the Scottish National Party (SNP).

While the results of individual opinion polls differ, the pattern is relatively clear: Labour is struggling in Scotland while Alex Salmond's SNP are buoyant. The SNP is a long way behind Labour following the 2003 election, while the electoral system also favours Labour. Nevertheless, on current trends there is every prospect of the Nationalists ending up as the largest party in Scotland next May. Should this occur, there is no realistic prospect of a governing coalition without SNP involvement; and there will be no SNP involvement in government without agreement on an independence referendum. More than this, it's not just the poll numbers that favour the Nationalists. Rather, even the most casual observer of the Scottish political scene must be impressed that the broader momentum of debate is with the Nationalists. Unionists, by contrast, are on the defensive with many proponents of the Unionist cause sounding increasingly shrill and uncomfortable.

We've been here before, of course. Seasoned Labour campaigners remind us that previous nationalist tides have ebbed away with remarkable rapidity. Just wait, we are told, for the real campaigning to begin. When faced with the prospect of separation, the Scottish electorate will balk. Even seasoned nationalists are fearful of the disappointment that awaits them should they raise their hopes too high and it is certainly true that the SNP has wilted before in the face of a sustained unionist onslaught. But will this inevitably be the case again before May? There are at least three reasons for thinking that this may not be the case.

The first is the very fact of devolution itself. Constitutional change of such magnitude has profound effects on political culture, and this has certainly been the case in Scotland. Devolution has impacted on every aspect of political life from party organisation to political rhetoric. This is part of the reason that those Labour UK "cabinet heavyweights" who lined up to "bash the Nats" at the recent Scottish Labour conference in Oban appeared so heavy-handed and out of touch. The fact of the matter is that, since devolution, they are out of touch. Their rhetoric and arguments for the union are relics of the pre-devolution era: an era that may have formed them but which has now passed.

A second new development is the sheer contempt in which Labour is now held among large swathes of its traditional supporters. Most graphically demonstrated at the recent

Westminster and Assembly by-elections in the Welsh constituency of Blaenau Gwent, where lavishly supported Labour campaigns were trounced by ramshackle and barely-solvent independent campaigns, leaving the party's credibility in tatters. As a result, the pronouncements of leading figures carry much less weight than in the past. So, for example, did anyone at all believe Dr John Reid's warning that independence would make Scotland more vulnerable to terrorist attack?

Finally, it appears that by whatever as yet dimly understood process, the union has become a loveless marriage. Determinations as to whether or not to divorce appear now almost entirely pragmatic in character. That is certainly the case in Scotland where the future of the union is subject to the kind of cost-benefit calculation that has underpinned the country's financial services industry. In England, the prevailing attitude is best characterised by the catchphrase of today's somnolent youth – "whatever..". Nobody seems to care. It seems,

"[O]n current trends there is every prospect of the Nationalists ending up as the largest party in Scotland next May. Should this occur, there is no realistic prospect of a governing coalition without SNP involvement; and there will be no SNP involvement in government without agreement on an independence referendum."

in fact, that the only people capable of being stirred to a passionate defence of the union are those who benefit most obviously from its continuation, namely London-based Scottish Labour politicians: hardly the most persuasive of advocates.

With only a few short months before the Scottish elections, it appears that one of the few developments that might make a

difference to the outcome is the resignation of Tony Blair and his replacement by a Gordon Brown government. This is not because of some particular bond between Mr Brown and the Scottish electorate – the Chancellor is a divisive figure in his homeland. Rather, any boost would depend on Brown's ability to inject new dynamism and hope into the Labour body politic. No chance of that, say sceptics, pointing to the undeniable fact that Brown has been implicated in every aspect of the New Labour story-so-far.

Others will warn of the dangers of underestimating a man who has almost certainly been planning his first hundred days as prime minister since the morning after that dinner at the Granita restaurant. But in truth, it is almost certain that we will never find out one way or the other what difference a Brown premiership would have made to the result of the Scottish election. Blair will be allowed to celebrate his tenth anniversary as prime minister, and if the price to be paid for that is a vote on Scottish independence, then so be it. But make no mistake, whatever its result, such a referendum would permanently alter the nature of the United Kingdom state.



# What Britain could learn from multilevel Europe – and vice versa

By Øivind Bratberg

## Constitutional entrepreneurship.

From a European perspective, Britain represents a rather particular arrangement with regards to the distribution of power between different levels of government. While differing from most other European countries in this regard, the British system has shown itself capable of representing different national, regional and local constituencies on the European level. Inside Britain, however, the scope for local government appears less than fully developed.



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A country without a written constitution leaves a large scope of action for political entrepreneurs. In Britain, the leeway for such action is often heavily restrained by tradition and convention, but this is not the case with regard to the organisation of local government. One need only look to the Thatcher period to see how carefully developed local rights and privileges were transformed, most notoriously in the abolishment of the Greater London Council. In contrast with Scandinavia and most of western Europe, local councils in Britain are allowed to perform only what government statutes permits (the *ultra vires* principle), leaving little room for independent initiative. This is compounded by the fact that financing is heavily dependent on the shifting priorities of London. In sum, Britain is, or at least, it has been, a heavily centralised unitary state – with Westminster as its undisputed power centre and little of the local patriotism of French *communes* nor the steady regional affiliations of German *Länder* if we put Scotland and Wales aside.

This may leave a bleak impression of sub-national autonomy in Britain, pragmatically developed but with little hope of innovation or democracy from below. That is, however, a somewhat outdated picture. Local and, in particular, regional autonomy, have undergone massive changes during the last few years and have come to represent an interesting political domain. Britain represents with surprising clarity some of the greater challenges with which contemporary democracy is faced: Europeanisation, aspirations for grass roots democracy, and for regional autonomy, in Scotland and Wales.

The devolution issue, advocated with such success during the Blair era, feeds into

debates in Europe on diversified regional autonomy. Aside the particular solutions in Spain and Belgium, Britain represents a singular example on devolution. Most of all, it is a fascinating example of how sub-national loyalties can be met by a flexible constitution. At the regional level, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the Greater London Authority – all established during Blair's first government – are particular examples of enhanced autonomy. Scotland and Wales may both be on a trajectory towards further devolution; in London the renewed Authority has been met with considerable popular acclaim. Meanwhile, efforts to expand regional autonomy, such as in the North-East, have been quietly abandoned. Regional affinities vary greatly in strength in Britain, and little indicates that this is likely to change. However, the logic of European integration is one of the forces bringing regional attachment in Britain into the limelight.

In research on the European Union, the model of *multi-level governance* has been given increased attention in recent years. The idea relates to the administrative as well as the political domain. A central factor is the move from *government* (hierarchical political authority) to *governance* (leadership as facilitation and coordination of market exchange) in an increasingly integrated Europe. As sources of finance and influence changes, so does the way in which politics is conducted. Politics and administration today relate to a multitude of different actors, located at different levels of government. Local and regional representatives are drawn into the policy processes in Brussels. Regions in particular is a category that is often applied by the EU itself in policy development and in the distribution of finance. The idea of a "Europe of regions" is, of course, something to which Welsh and Scottish nationalists are willing to subscribe. How it fits with the outlook of other British regions remains to be seen.

One of the indicators of stronger European integration is that cleavages that previously followed nation-state borders now *cut across* these borders. Networks of national administrative agencies are formed, political parties reunite on the European arena, and local and regional interests lobby in Brussels independently of their national representatives. The British government's permanent delegation (UKRep) is regarded as remarkably efficient also in representing the variety of sub-British interests. Collecting and promoting these interests is, however, a challenge that is likely to increase in the years to come,

with new member states and new policy domains entering the machinery.

Meanwhile, within the British sub-national government structure itself, concerns for efficiency and grass-roots democratisation go hand in hand. Often, the tension between the two leads to uneasy compromises. The Labour government seems to represent this balancing act, promoting, on the one side, efficiency through executive agencies, and, on the other, the legitimacy of local councils. Arguably, the balance under New Labour has often tipped towards efficiency rather than local democracy. A curious attempt to move beyond the conflict is reflected in the perception of citizens as *consumers*, who are to be serviced by local and central government. Arguably, this does the market-oriented individual more service than it does the idea of local democracy. Again, Britain represents an excellent case to study, and, again, its left-of-centre government has gone further than any model of British prudence would predict.

Of all constitutional topics in Britain, how to organise sub-national government may be the one most prone to reconstruction. In the years to come, the British constitutional settlement will have to respond to pressures from above (European integration) as well as from below (Scottish/Welsh nationalists and grass roots activists). How this balancing act can be resolved remains to be seen.

"Of all constitutional topics in Britain, how to organise sub-national government may be the one most prone to reconstruction."

Europe could learn from the British example about pragmatism and the benefits of a flexible constitution. In Britain, meanwhile, one should perhaps reflect more upon the consequences of European integration for local and regional government at home. Related to this, a closer look at the various national experiences would be useful. Ask the local mayor of a French *commune* what local democracy implies there – or, just as pertinently, look towards the virtues of small-scale democracy in Scandinavia. "Efficiency first" may, unfortunately, be one of the legacies of New Labour in Britain, just as war towards hostile local councils became a hallmark of the Thatcher era. Does local democracy not deserve better?

# Northern Ireland: outside devolution

By Annette Groth

**History's burden.** The unionists in Northern Ireland are fierce defenders of the United Kingdom. To defend the union with Great Britain against a united Ireland is for many of them their *raison d'être*. But if you meet them abroad and ask them what nationality they are, you may get the answer: "I am Irish".



Annette Groth is a journalist with the Norwegian national broadcast NRK. Previously a correspondent in London, Groth has published extensively on issues of British and Irish politics.

This is one of the many historical paradoxes in Northern Ireland. Another one is that the green island was divided at all. When you travel around you notice the small differences between Ireland and Northern Ireland. But geography and culture still give the impression of one country, and the division is hardly clear on the surface.

Northern Ireland was created with a pencil on a map. And when borders are created in this way, trouble will usually follow. The unionists today call their country Ulster, but if Northern Ireland was to comprise the whole of Ulster, there wouldn't have been a Protestant majority. And accommodating the Protestants in Ireland was a main target for the British when the island of Ireland was divided in the 1920s.

So they cut off the three counties Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan and kept the other six counties, which became Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. With a

narrow Protestant majority. And as we all know – the Troubles came.

Last December I stopped a few days in Belfast, where I have been many a time, especially during the Troubles. There is now a cease-fire and The Good Friday Agreement is still holding. But in Sandy Row, a Protestant enclave in the city centre, nothing has changed. There are Union Jacks everywhere, and the edge of the pavement is painted red, white and blue. The 12th of July is the year's greatest day for the people here. Then they march to remember the battle of the Boyne on this day in 1690, where the Protestant king William beat the Catholic king James. The night before is bonfire night. And in Belfast Sandy Row would always have the biggest bonfire. Everyone in Sandy Row, grown-ups and children, will gather in the streets when the fire is lit at midnight.

They call themselves loyalists, as if the word unionist is not strong enough. They are loyal to the British government and the Queen and their battle-cry is "No surrender".

Northern Ireland has been a disputed territory since the division of the 1920s, with the last thirty years marking the heyday of the Troubles. It has been the dream of a united Ireland *versus* the dream of a status quo, on a backdrop of overwhelming power on the unionist side.

To Britain, Northern Ireland has been nothing but a problem. Billions of pounds

have been poured into this British province. Tens of thousands of British soldiers have done their duty here. The IRA and other paramilitary groups on both sides of the divide have wreaked havoc both in Northern Ireland and in mainland Britain and on the European continent. More than 3,000 people have been killed. Every poll taken in Britain about the status of Northern Ireland shows that a majority of the British want Britain to let Northern Ireland go. But British governments have said that the majority should be able to decide – and there is still a narrow unionist majority in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has still got its Good Friday Agreement. The local politicians, with their arms twisted behind their

"Northern Ireland was created with a pencil on a map. And when borders are created in this way, trouble will usually follow."

backs by the British and Irish governments, in 1998 agreed to cooperate and rule themselves. It didn't last long, and still the province is ruled directly from London.

At the moment they are trying for political solutions

again. The British and Irish governments have threatened to dissolve the local parliament and take the generous wages away from the politicians. Whatever momentum this may bring to the process, Northern Ireland is today miles away from the devolution process of Scotland and Wales. With a constitutional status always disputed, it is very difficult indeed to see a consensus arriving as to what Northern Ireland should be or where it should constitutionally belong in the future.

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# British identity – then and now

By *Atle L. Wold*

**Unification.** Through the Treaty of 1707, a political union had been formed and a single British state forged, but was it likely that the inhabitants of the British Isles would ever come to see themselves as *British*, rather than – or at least in addition to – Scottish, English, Welsh or Irish? Arguably, they would, though for a long time it was the Scots and to a lesser extent the Welsh who promoted the use of the term *British*, while the English remained reluctant to adopt this terminology, and most of the Irish never accepted any notion of being *British*, even after Ireland had been incorporated into the British state through the Union of 1801 (the establishment of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland).



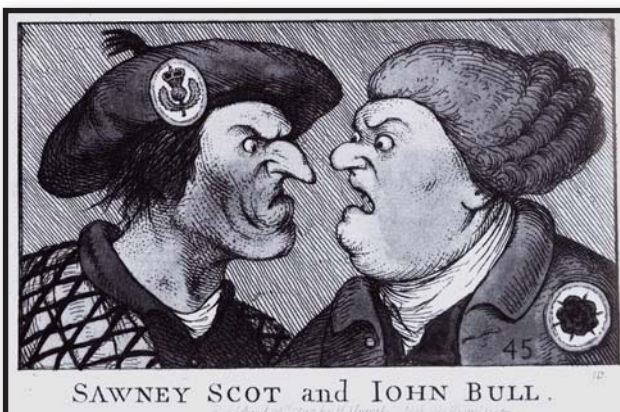
*Atle L. Wold is a Senior Lecturer at the Dept. of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, Univ. of Oslo.*

precisely, Catholic France throughout the eighteenth century, and the long series of wars Britain fought against this formidable enemy. This threat frightened the British into unity.

On a more positive level, perhaps, the English, Scots and Welsh could also unite in a common interest in commerce, Colley argued, exemplified by the focus on trade and empire (after 1707, the Scots were usually the keenest imperialists), making this a genuinely *British* preoccupation. Furthermore, over the course of the century, the aristocracy in Britain became *de facto* British, through widespread intermarriage, and from his accession to the throne in 1760 and until he was finally debilitated by mental illness around 1810, King George III successfully built up an image of himself as a British monarch. It was during his reign that the monarchy became a truly British national symbol for the first time. Finally, by the end of the century, during the long and desperate struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France from 1793 to 1815, signs of a genuinely British patriotism also began to emerge among the people at large across the island, and the monarchy played an important role in this.

The British historian Linda Colley – herself part Welsh, part Irish and part English – has presented a highly influential argument that a new and genuinely British identity was forged over the course of the eighteenth century. The inhabitants of mainland Britain may not necessarily all have adopted the concepts of British, Britons or even Great Britain very readily, but they did, in Colley's view, become more British in a real sense as the century unfolded. This "Colley thesis" rests on a number of key pillars, which she saw as instrumental in the process of forging a new British identity.

One was the Protestantism of most people in Britain, which, combined with their status as an island people, functioned both as an internal "glue" holding them together, and as an element that set them apart from the Catholics in continental Europe (and Ireland). Closely linked to this religious dimension was the near-permanent threat of war posed by,



## Sawney Scot and John Bull, 1792

*Unlike previous English caricatures, which had tended to present a one-sided picture of the Scots as impoverished, violent, backwards and unrefined, Sawney Scot and John Bull, a satire published in London in 1792, also contains a fair measure of self-mockery, and perhaps reflects the emergence of a gentler tone between the English and the Scots by the end of the eighteenth century. Sawney Scot is still a bit rough looking, but John Bull also takes on the, by now, familiar figure of a rather well-fed, bad-tempered and bullish Englishman.*

since they saw themselves as the first inhabitants of the ancient *Britannia*, the original Britons).

Whereas the English continued to use the term *England* for the new British state and

seemed entirely happy to conflate the words *English* and *British*, the intellectual and professional elites in Scotland strove to promote the concept of "North" and "South" Britain, arguing that this pair ought to be used in the place of "Scotland" and "England".

Labelled "North Britishness" by some historians, this Scottish insistence on the use of Britain and British can be seen as an attempt to ensure that the new state of Great Britain did not merely become an England writ large. Through their achievements in

"British identity has come to live an increasingly precarious life, and this has particularly been the case after 1945."

"arms and letters", that is, the disproportionate number of Scots who served in the armed and empire services, and the contributions of the "Scottish Enlightenment" (David Hume, Adam Smith and

others), the Scots of the eighteenth century were in practice also able to put their distinctive stamp on the modern Britain that emerged in the century thereafter.

Although the English have arguably never stopped using the terms *England* and *Britain* interchangeably, their reluctance to see Great Britain as something more than *England*, and to accept the Scots as their equals in the union, did, to some extent at least, wither away in the nineteenth century, which marked the high-tide of *Britishness*.

Since then, however, British identity has come to live an increasingly precarious life, and this has particularly been the case after 1945. Following the growth of "Celtic nationalisms" in Scotland and Wales after World War 2, and the more general disillusionment with the British state which has marked parts of the Scottish electorate since the 1960s, the proportion of Scots identifying themselves as "British" has steadily declined, to a degree where around a third of respondents in surveys now-a-days see themselves as emphatically "not British".

The English have, arguably, yet again been late in the day, holding on to their British identity for longer, though more recent developments might indicate that there is an English backlash developing, caused at least in part by Scots nationalism and some of the more unfortunate effects of devolution. Whether this means that *Britishness* is currently facing its end, or whether the forces binding people in Britain together will prove stronger in the longer term, remains to be seen.

## Seminar announced: 300 years of British Union



British Politics Society  
Norway

British Politics Society, Norway has the pleasure of inviting you to a seminar on "300 years of British Union", due to be held at the University of Oslo in April or May this year (for further details, see updates on the BPS website [www.britishpoliticssociety.no](http://www.britishpoliticssociety.no)).

Guest speakers are professors **Christopher A. Whatley** (University of Dundee), **Allan Macinnes** (University of Aberdeen), **Bill Miller** (University of Glasgow) and **Charlie Jeffery** (University of Edinburgh). Chair of

the session will be **Atle L. Wold** (University of Oslo).

The seminar will cover issues ranging from the Union of 1707, via Nationalism and Devolution in the twentieth century to the state of the union today.

Members of the British Politics Society, Norway are welcome to attend. Please give advance notice to scholarly responsible Atle L. Wold at [atle.wold@ilos.uio.no](mailto:atle.wold@ilos.uio.no)

## British Politics Society, Norway – the inaugural year in retrospect

**A humble beginning.** The initial efforts to establish a forum for individuals and institutions interested in British politics were made during the early spring of 2006. Originator Øivind Bratberg wanted to establish a society which would be politically neutral, with a solid academic foundation, but which would also welcome contributions from journalistic, political, and other relevant sources. Bratberg contacted various people whom he thought could be interested in taking part in one way or another. Over the course of the summer, ideas were shared over innumerable cups of coffee, and the British Politics Society, Norway gradually began to take form.

In the beginning of June, the quartet constituting the current board had their first joint meeting, following which the process picked up momentum. During the eventful weeks that followed, fundamental issues such as names, logos, and the format and content of the society's first newsletter fell into place, followed by official registration, preparation of regulations, and the establishment of the official website, [www.britishpoliticssociety.no](http://www.britishpoliticssociety.no).

In July, the first issue of the quarterly newsletter *British Politics Review* was sent out in print and by e-mail to a wide range of individuals and institutions known to take an interest in British politics, culture, and

society. The topic of the first issue was New Labour's nine years in office, with articles ranging from devolution via Blair's foreign secretaries to his political contenders. In addition to contributions by the acting board members themselves, the British ambassador to Norway, David Powell, and journalist Annette Groth both made contributions to the newsletter. Following this first edition, the launch of the society was given an official welcome by the British Embassy in Oslo, and made mention of in the periodicals *Lektorbladet* and *Språk og Språkundervisning*. The society also received positive feedback from a large number of readers.

In August, the society's first Annual General Meeting was held at café Tekethopa in Oslo. In accordance with formal regulations, Øivind Bratberg was elected President for a period of two years, Kristin M. Haugevik Vice President for one year, Atle L. Wold scholarly responsible for one year, and John-Ivar S. Olsen secretary and accountant for two years. In October, the autumn issue of *British Politics Review* was sent out. This time, British diplomacy and intervention was the topic of attention, containing articles on the Suez crisis, the Sierra Leone intervention, the ten year anniversary for Hong Kong's independence, and idealism and diplomacy in British foreign policy. Guest writers this time were the Norwegian ambassador to London, Bjarne Lindstrøm, and publishing

director of Fagbokforlaget, Jan Erik Mustad.

The British Politics Society received financial support in 2006 from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo. In addition, the society had income from paying members (22 as of December 2006). These available funds have, without exception, been directed at covering the expenses for the society's everyday management, including the rental of a Post Office box, maintenance of [www.britishpoliticssociety.no](http://www.britishpoliticssociety.no), and the printing and distribution of *British Politics Review*.



The board of British Politics Society, Norway:  
From upper left Kristin M. Haugevik, Øivind Bratberg, Atle L. Wold and John-Ivar Svinsås Olsen.

## Membership

Would you like to become a member of the British Politics Society, Norway? Membership is open to everyone and includes

- Subscription to four editions of *British Politics Review*
- Access to any event organised by the society
- The right to vote at our annual general meetings

Your membership comes into force as soon as the membership fee, NKR 50,- for one year, has been registered at our account 6094.05.67788.

For more information see our website at [www.britishpoliticssociety.no](http://www.britishpoliticssociety.no)

## Forthcoming edition of British Politics Review

What is the current health - and lasting legacy - of British liberalism?

The next issue of *British Politics Review* takes Britain's liberal tradition into consideration. A word with many different connotations, liberalism could refer to elective democracy, civil rights, the state of law, as well as free trade - or it could, of course,

refer to the Liberal Party, once a dominant force in British politics.

Among this wide array of perspectives, *British Politics Review* will put under scrutiny topics such as: the march from liberalism to neo-liberalism; the precarious position of the Liberal Democrats; liberalism and foreign policy; civil rights and the

war against terror; and liberal vs. authoritarian values in multi-cultural Britain.

Contributions on the subject from readers of *British Politics Review* are very welcome. Please get in touch with the editors for further details.

The spring edition of *British Politics Review* is due to arrive in April 2007.